

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



**Belfast  
City Council**

20th November, 2023

## **MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet in the Lavery Room and via Teams on Friday, 24th November, 2023 at 9.30 am., for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

John Walsh

Chief Executive

### **AGENDA:**

#### **1. Routine Matters**

- (a) Apologies
- (b) Minutes
- (c) Declarations of Interest

#### **2. Restricted Items**

- (a) Financial Reporting – Quarter 2 2023-24 (Pages 1 - 22)
- (b) Revenue Estimates 2024-25 and Medium-Term Financial Planning (Pages 23 - 28)
- (c) Discretionary Payments (Pages 29 - 36)
- (d) Targeted Acquisition (Pages 37 - 40)
- (e) Update on Smart Belfast Programme (Pages 41 - 48)
- (f) Appointment of Strategic Director of City Operations (Pages 49 - 52)

**3. Matters referred back from Council/Motions**

- (a) Motion - Mental Health Accessibility Audit (Pages 53 - 56)
- (b) Motion - Childcare Provision (Pages 57 - 60)
- (c) Motion - Rugby World Cup (Pages 61 - 62)
- (d) Motion - Right to Food - Response from Department of Education (Pages 63 - 68)

**4. Governance**

- (a) Schedule of Meetings 2024 (Pages 69 - 72)
- (b) Change of Date of Council Meeting (Pages 73 - 76)
- (c) Code of Conduct - Disclosure of Restricted Information (Pages 77 - 82)

**5. Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues**

**6. Physical Programme and Asset Management**

**7. Finance, Procurement and Performance**

- (a) Update on Contracts (Pages 83 - 90)
- (b) Accounting Treatment of Belfast Investment Fund (Pages 91 - 94)

**8. Equality and Good Relations**

- (a) Minutes of the Meeting of the Shared City Partnership (Pages 95 - 106)
- (b) Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 – Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Annual Monitoring Return (Pages 107 - 114)

**9. Operational Issues**

- (a) Minutes of the Meeting of the Party Group Leaders' Consultative Forum (Pages 115 - 120)
- (b) Update to Health and Safety Policy Statement (Pages 121 - 126)

**10. Issues Raised in Advance by Members**

- (a) Request for Update on Motion on Overdose Prevention Facility in Belfast (Councillor Smyth to raise)



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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Motion – Mental Health Accessibility Audit</b>
<b>Date:</b>	24th November, 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer

**Restricted Reports**

Is this report restricted? Yes  No

Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.

Insert number

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

- After Committee Decision
- After Council Decision
- Sometime in the future
- Never


**Call-in**

Is the decision eligible for Call-in? Yes  No

1.0	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
	To bring to Members' attention a motion in relation to a Mental Health Accessibility Audit, which the Standards and Business Committee considered at its meeting on 24th October.
2.0	<b>Recommendation</b>
	The Committee is asked to consider the motion.
3.0	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><b><u>Key Issues</u></b></p> <p>The Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 24th October, considered the following motion which had been received for submission to the Council on 1st November:</p> <p><b><u>Mental Health Accessibility Audit</u></b></p> <p>“Northern Ireland (NI) has the highest prevalence of mental health problems in the UK.</p> <p>It is estimated that only 40% of people in NI who seek help can access effective mental health care and 79% of those do not receive the service they need.</p> <p>This Council will conduct an online survey open to everyone who lives in the Council district to assess accessibility to mental health support within each District Electoral Area.</p> <p>The survey will include but not be limited to assessing stakeholders' ease of access to mental health support, sample stakeholders' understanding of their rights regarding mental health, document the source of stressors and the number of services perceived to be providing mental health and well-being support in the district.</p> <p>As leaders in the field of mental health provision, this Council will work with MindWise in co-designing and hosting the survey and will invite a representative from MindWise to give deputation to the relevant or interested Committee or Committees.”</p> <p>Proposer: Councillor Garrett  Seconder: Councillor McCormick</p>
3.2	The motion calls upon the Council to undertake a survey to ascertain ease of access to mental health support. Whilst the Council has no statutory responsibility for mental health



	<p>services, it does, in the Belfast Agenda, under Theme 1: Our People and Communities – Health Inequalities, have a strategic intent to promote and improve positive mental health and emotional wellbeing by raising awareness of support and services available and actions which can be taken at an individual level to improve or maintain good mental health. The motion was, therefore, referred, in the first instance, to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.</p> <p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p>
3.3	<p>None at this stage.</p> <p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p>
3.4	<p>This motion, if agreed, may have potential equality, good relations and rural needs implications and should be subject to our normal screening process as appropriate.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	None

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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Motion – Childcare Provision</b>
<b>Date:</b>	24th November, 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer

**Restricted Reports**

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  7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

**If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?**

After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Call-in**

Is the decision eligible for Call-in? Yes  No

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
	To bring to Members' attention a motion in relation to Childcare Provision, which the Standards and Business Committee considered at its meeting on 24th October.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
	The Committee is asked to consider the motion.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
	<b><u>Key Issues</u></b>
3.1	The Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 24th October, considered the following motion which had been received for submission to the Council on 1st November:  <b><u>Childcare Provision</u></b>  “This Council recognises childcare as vital social and economic infrastructure, a crucial form of early intervention, early education, an anti-poverty tool and a means by which to improve productivity and gender equality in the labour market across the Council area; believes that childcare should be child-centred, high quality and accessible to all children; and commits to reviewing how the Council can support childcare provision in the area, including reviewing whether schemes supported by the Council during school holidays can be expanded.”  Proposer: Councillor Maghie, Secunder: Councillor Bower
3.2	The motion calls upon the Council to review how it can support childcare provision in the area. There is currently a motion in the system on a childcare strategy, which falls within the remit of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, which that Committee, at its meeting on 20th October, agreed to keep open. This latest motion was, therefore, referred, in the first instance, to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.
	<b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b>
3.3	None at this stage.
	<b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</u></b>
3.4	This motion, if agreed, may have potential equality, good relations and rural needs implications and should be subject to our normal screening process as appropriate.

4.0	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	None

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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Motion – Rugby World Cup</b>
<b>Date:</b>	24th November, 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Information relating to any individual</li> <li>2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual</li> <li>3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)</li> <li>4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter</li> <li>5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained</li> <li>6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction</li> <li>7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime</li> </ol>	
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	
Sometime in the future	
Never	

<b>Call-in</b>	
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
	To bring to Members' attention a motion in relation to the Rugby World Cup, which the Standards and Business Committee considered at its meeting on 24th October.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
	The Committee is asked to consider the motion.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
	<b><u>Key Issues</u></b>
3.1	The Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 24th October, considered the following motion which had been received for submission to the Council on 1st November:  <b><u>Rugby World Cup</u></b>  "This council recognises the historic success of the Irish rugby team in the Rugby World Cup 2023 and agrees to hold a civic reception in its honour."  Proposer: Councillor Lyons, Seconder: Councillor Maghie
3.2	The motion calls upon the Council to hold a civic reception for the Irish Rugby World Cup team. The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee is responsible for the provision of hospitality and, if the motion is adopted, there will be cost implications. The motion was, therefore, referred to this Committee for consideration.  <b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b>
3.3	As referred to in paragraph 3.2 above.  <b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</u></b>
3.4	This motion, if agreed, may have potential equality, good relations and rural needs implications and should be subject to our normal screening process as appropriate.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	None





<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Motion - Right to Food - Response from Department of Education</b>
<b>Date:</b>	24th November, 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer

<b>Restricted Reports</b>													
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>												
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<p><b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b></p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;">After Committee Decision</td> <td style="width: 5%; text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>After Council Decision</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sometime in the future</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Never</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>		After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>		Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>		Never	<input type="checkbox"/>	
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Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>												
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>												

<b>Call-in</b>	
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	To present the response received from the Department of Education in relation to the motion on the Right to Food Campaign.

<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the response.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p>The Council, at its meeting on 4th October, considered the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Doherty and seconded by Councillor McCusker:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">“This Council recognises the impact the scourge of food poverty is having on families right across our city, made worse by the cost-of-living emergency and recent price rises and gives its formal backing to the Right To Food campaign, joining cities like Liverpool and Manchester in becoming a Right To Food city.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">We believe that the British Government and any restored Executive must prioritise food poverty, implementing a range of new measures including universal free school meals, support for community kitchens and enshrining the Right To Food for all through legislation.”</p> <p>The motion was amended by the Council to provide for the inclusion of the following two paragraphs:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">“This Council also notes the School Holiday Food Grant was a crucial element of government support to tackle child food insecurity, targeted at those most in need, and helped struggling families cover the cost of food at times when their children did not have access to Free School Meals.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">This Council will write to the Permanent Secretary at the Department of Education calling for the urgent restoration of the School Holiday Food Grant Scheme and to request that the Department protect and prioritise the needs of the most disadvantaged children and young people when making decisions regarding the allocation of its resources.”</p> <p>3.3 Accordingly, Democratic Services wrote to the Permanent Secretary. A response has been received from the Director of Transport and Food in Schools, on his behalf, a copy of which is attached.</p> <p>3.4 The Director begins by stating that the Department of Education recognises the challenges which are being experienced by many families in accessing affordable and nutritious food. She explains that the Department of Education works closely with other departments to tackle food poverty, with the Department for Communities being the lead department in the development of the Executive’s Anti-Poverty Strategy, which seeks to bring focus to the Executive’s collective efforts to tackle the root causes of poverty and impacts of inequality. The issue of holiday hunger for children of school age will continue to be considered in the development of that Strategy.</p> <p>3.5 She points out that, since July 2020, the Department of Education, on behalf of the Executive, has been in receipt of additional ring-fenced funding to facilitate the payment of the School Holiday Food Grants payment scheme. This reflects the urgency of the scheme being developed in the early stages of the pandemic and the ability of the Education Authority to use the payment mechanisms already in place for its provision of uniform grant payments to low-income families. However, the additional funding ended in April 2023 and, despite recognising the important support which the School Holiday Food Grants payment scheme provided for low-income families who are struggling financially, the Department had no option but to discontinue the scheme from 31st March.</p>

<p>3.6</p> <p>3.7</p> <p>3.8</p>	<p>The Director then states that, based on the budget allocated by the Secretary of State for 2023-24, there remains an estimated funding gap for the Department of Education in the region of £300m. Faced with this extremely challenging financial position, the Department has, in addition to the decision on the School Holiday Food Grants payment scheme, taken significant decisions, including reductions to the Aggregated Schools' Budget, the Education Authority's Block Grant and the cessation of the Engage and Healthy Happy Minds schemes from the end of March, 2023.</p> <p>She goes on to point out that the Department of Education recently published an Equality Impact Assessment Consultation Report on the 2023-24 Resource Budget. However, in view of the available budget, decisions could not be delayed until the Equality Impact Assessment had been completed in full. The Equality Impact Assessment would enable the Department to better assess the impacts of the budget and provide valuable insight to inform future decisions, should additional funding become available.</p> <p>The Director concludes by confirming that responses received during the consultation period are being considered currently, with the final consultation report to be published on the Department's website in due course.</p> <p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p> <p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
<p>4.0</p>	<p><b>Document Attached</b></p>
	<p>Response from the Director of Transport and Food in Schools, Department of Education</p>

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**DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORT AND  
FOOD IN SCHOOLS**



Louise McLornan  
Democratic Services Officer  
Belfast City Council

Rathgael House  
43 Balloo Road  
Rathgill  
BANGOR  
BT19 7PR

Via email:  
[McLornanL@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:McLornanL@belfastcity.gov.uk)

Email: [margaretrose.mcnaughton@education-ni.gov.uk](mailto:margaretrose.mcnaughton@education-ni.gov.uk)

Our Ref: STOF-0297-2023

7 November 2023

Dear Ms McLornan

Thank you for your letter of 13 October 2023 to Dr Mark Browne regarding the Right to Food. I have been asked to reply on the Permanent Secretary's behalf.

The Department of Education recognises the challenges that are being experienced by many families in accessing affordable and nutritious food. It also understands the importance of the role played by the Department of Education as part of cross-departmental work to tackle food poverty, led by the Department for Communities as the lead department in the development of the Executive's Anti-Poverty Strategy. This strategy will aim to bring focus to the Executive's collective efforts to tackle the root causes of poverty and impacts of inequality.

The issue of holiday hunger for children of school age will continue to be considered in the development of the Anti-Poverty Strategy. Since July 2020, on behalf of the Executive, the Department of Education had been in receipt of additional ring-fenced funding to facilitate payment of the School Holiday Food Grants (SHFG) payment scheme. This reflected the urgency of this scheme being developed in the early stages of the pandemic and the ability of the Education Authority to use the payment mechanisms already in place for its provision of uniform grant payments to low-income families. From April 2023 this additional ringfenced funding ended and therefore SHFG could no longer be made.

The Department recognises the important support the SHFG scheme has provided for low-income families who are struggling financially, particularly with recent cost of living rises and realises the disappointment this will have been for parents. It was therefore with great reluctance that the Department had no alternative to discontinuing the SHFG scheme from 31 March 2023.

Based on the budget allocated by the Secretary of State for 2023-24, there remains an estimated funding gap for the Department of Education in the region of £300m and the Department is currently facing an extremely challenging financial position.

Faced with this extremely challenging financial position, in addition to the decision on the SHFG scheme, the Department has taken significant decisions including reductions to the Aggregated Schools' Budget, the Education Authority's Block Grant and the cessation of the Engage and Healthy Happy Minds schemes from the end of March 2023.

The Department recently published an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) Consultation Report on the 2023-24 Resource Budget. In view of the available budget, decisions could not be delayed until the full completion of an EQIA. In addition, the financial constraints are at a level that will significantly inhibit the Department's ability to reinstate funding, even where impacts are substantial.

The EQIA will enable the Department to better assess the impacts of the budget; and provide valuable insight to inform future decisions should additional funding become available. Responses received during the consultation period are being considered and it is anticipated that the final consultation report will be published on the DE website in due course.

Yours sincerely



**MARGARET ROSE McNAUGHTON**  
**Director of Transport and Food in Schools**



<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Schedule of Meetings 2024</b>
<b>Date:</b>	24th November, 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
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<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
<b>After Committee Decision</b> <b>After Council Decision</b> <b>Sometime in the future</b> <b>Never</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	To advise the Committee of the dates and times of the meetings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee between January and December, 2024.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	The Committee is requested to approve the schedule of meetings, as set out below, and to agree to the holding of additional special meetings, if required, to consider the rate-setting process, on dates to be determined in consultation with the Chairperson.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
	<b><u>Key Issues</u></b>
3.1	The monthly meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee is normally held at 9.30 a.m. on the 3rd Friday of each month.
3.2	However, it is necessary on occasions to move some meetings to earlier/later in the month.
3.3	Members will also be aware that a special meeting is normally scheduled in January, in case it is required for the consideration of the rate-setting process.
3.4	There is always the possibility that additional meetings may be required for this purpose. If so, these meetings would have to be arranged at short notice. The Committee is being asked, therefore, to agree to the holding of such meetings on dates and times to be determined in consultation with the Chairperson.
3.5	The following dates have been identified for meetings of the Strategic Policy Committee for the period from January to December, 2024: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friday 12th January at 9.30 a.m. (Rate setting, if required)</li> <li>• Friday 19th January at 9.30 a.m.</li> <li>• Friday 23rd February at 9.30 a.m.</li> <li>• Friday 22nd March at 9.30 a.m.</li> <li>• Friday 19th April at 9.30 a.m.</li> <li>• Friday, 24th May at 9.30 a.m.</li> <li>• Friday 21st June at 9.30 a.m.</li> <li>• No monthly meeting in July</li> <li>• Friday 23rd August at 9.30 a.m.</li> <li>• Friday 20th September at 9.30 a.m.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friday 25th October at 9.30 a.m.</li> <li>• Friday 22nd November at 9.30 a.m.</li> <li>• Friday 13th December at 9.30 a.m.</li> </ul>
3.6	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
3.7	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	None

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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Change of Date of Council Meeting</b>
<b>Date:</b>	24th November, 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer

<b>Restricted Reports</b>					
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
<p><b>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</b></p> <p><b>Insert number</b> <input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Information relating to any individual</li> <li>2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual</li> <li>3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)</li> <li>4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter</li> <li>5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained</li> <li>6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction</li> <li>7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime</li> </ol>					
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>					
<b>After Committee Decision</b> <b>After Council Decision</b> <b>Sometime in the future</b> <b>Never</b>	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 30px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td style="width: 100%; height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 100%; height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 100%; height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 100%; height: 20px;"></td></tr> </table>				

<b>Call-in</b>	
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	To consider a change to the normal date for the monthly Council meeting in January.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	The Committee is recommended to agree to move the Council meeting in January from Tuesday, 2nd to Monday, 8th.

<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
	<b><u>Key Issues</u></b>
3.1	The Council's Standing Order 1 states that:  <i>"Monthly meetings of the Council will be held on the first working day of each month except in August. Monthly Meetings shall not, however, take place on a Bank or Public Holiday, Friday, Saturday or Sunday, but shall be held on the next following weekday instead."</i>
3.2	In previous years, Members have commented that the date scheduled for the monthly meeting of the Council around the New Year period means that some cannot attend due to holiday commitments. The same can be said for officers, some of whom are also on holiday around that time.
3.3	In 2024, the January meeting of the Council is scheduled to be held on Tuesday, 2nd, the first working day following the New Year public holidays. There would not be any difficulty in moving this meeting to Monday, 8th January at 6.00 p.m., as no other meetings are scheduled for that date.
3.4	It is, therefore, proposed that the January meeting of the Council take place on Monday, 8th at 6.00 p.m.
3.5	<b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b> None associated with this report.
3.6	<b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b> None associated with this report.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	None.



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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Code of Conduct – Disclosure of Restricted Information</b>
<b>Date:</b>	24th November 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Walsh, Chief Executive
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor / Director of Legal and Civic Services

**Restricted Reports**

**Is this report restricted?** Yes  No

**Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.**

Insert number

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

**If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?**

<b>After Committee Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>After Council Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sometime in the future</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Never</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Call-in**

**Is the decision eligible for Call-in?** Yes  No

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	At the Council meeting on 4 <sup>th</sup> October, the Chief Executive, in response to a Member's query, agreed to consider in conjunction with the City Solicitor, any internal measures which could be taken in respect of Members posting restricted information on social media, particularly when there were commercial sensitivities.
1.2	The City Solicitor has provided this report, which outlines the general duty of confidence in this regard and the steps that may be taken if a Member discloses confidential information.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. note the contents of this report, including the provisions within the 2014 Act and the Northern Ireland Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors in respect of the treatment of restricted information;</li> <li>ii. note the steps that may be taken should a disclosure of confidential information be suspected; and</li> <li>iii. consider the proposal to include a reference to 'restricted' reports and the duty of confidence in the Chairperson's statement.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><u>Access to Meetings and Documents</u></p> <p>Part 8 of The Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 ("the 2014 Act") sets out the rules around public access to council meetings and documents.</p> <p>A meeting of the council must be open to the public at all times, except where the council by resolution has excluded the public during an item of business whenever it is likely, due to the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during that item, that either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 'confidential information' would be disclosed to the public in breach of the obligation of confidence, or</li> <li>- 'exempt information' would be disclosed to the public.</li> <li>-</li> </ul> <p>'Confidential information' means 'information provided to the council by a government department upon terms (however expressed) which forbid the disclosure of the information to the public; and information the disclosure of which to the public is prohibited by or under any statutory provision or by the order of a court'.</p>



	<p>'Exempt information' is defined in Section 51 and Schedule 6 of the 2014 Act.</p> <p>The Council has the power by resolution to mark certain reports as "restricted" and to exclude the public from proceedings whilst such reports are discussed. Reports which are marked restricted are required to describe the nature of the 'exempt information' from the categories listed in Schedule 6 of the 2014 Act.</p>
3.2	<p><u>The Northern Ireland Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors</u></p> <p>The Code of Conduct for Councillors Paragraph 4.15 is clear that a Member must not disclose any confidential information to the public unless authorised to do so. Confidential information includes any information discussed during a closed session of a council meeting.</p> <p><i>Code paragraph 4.15</i></p> <p><i>"You must not disclose confidential information or information which should reasonably be regarded as being of a confidential nature, without the express consent of a person authorised to give such consent; or unless required to do so by law."</i></p> <p>The Commissioner's Guidance for Councillors includes the following guidance in relation to the disclosure of confidential information:</p> <p><i>"Confidential information may take a number of forms. Sometimes, the confidential nature of the information will be explicit, such as when a document is marked 'confidential'. In other cases it will be clear from the nature of the information or from the circumstances in which it was provided to you that the information is confidential: all of the following types of information are confidential in nature:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• commercial information, such as information relating to a contract or a contractor's business;</i></li> <li><i>• personal information such as information relating to a person's employment;</i></li> <li><i>• information which is confidential as a result of a statutory provision. For example, the Commissioner's investigations must be conducted in private and therefore all information relating to his investigations should be regarded as confidential;</i></li> <li><i>• information discussed in the closed sections of meetings should always be treated as confidential; and</i></li> <li><i>• legal advice obtained by your council, whether it was provided by external lawyers or by your council's own legal staff, is covered by legal privilege and should not be disclosed without the permission of the council".</i></li> </ul>

3.3	<p><u>What are the next steps if a disclosure of information is suspected?</u></p> <p>It is clear from reading the provisions in both the 2014 Act and the Code of Conduct that Members are not permitted to disclose any confidential or exempt information which is the subject of discussion during a closed session of a council meeting.</p> <p>If such an occurrence takes place, whether intentionally or otherwise, there are a number of steps that could be taken, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- that the Council deal with the matter internally;</li> <li>- that the Council may refer the matter to the Commissioner for Standards; or</li> <li>- that any person may refer the matter to the Commissioner for Standards.</li> </ul>
3.4	<p><u>Steps the Council may take Internally</u></p> <p>In the majority of cases, the Chief Executive or the City Solicitor may recommend that the Council deal with the matter internally and will immediately alert the Member concerned to their duty of confidence under the Code of Conduct. This may take place during the council proceedings or immediately afterwards if the disclosure is not apparent at the time. The Member will also be advised to remove any such disclosure of confidential information from social media or any other medium where it may be viewed or listened to.</p> <p>(Note: Whilst the Council has developed an Internal Dispute Resolution Protocol, it can only be used to deal with potential breaches under “Code Paragraph 4.13(a) – You must show respect and consideration for others”. The Protocol is not designed to deal with complaints made under any other provisions of the Code and such complaints should be made directly to the Local Government Commissioner for Standards).</p> <p><u>Recommendation to add to the Chairpersons statement re restricted items</u></p> <p>As Members will be aware, prior to dealing with restricted items the Chairperson reads a statement seeking approval to exclude members of the press and public from the meeting (see excerpt below).</p> <p><u>Proposal to Exclude the Public from the Committee Meeting</u></p> <p><i>“That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the Press and public from the Committee meeting during discussion of agenda items &lt;&gt; to &lt;&gt; inclusive as, due to the nature of those items, it is likely that there would be disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42 (4) and Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.”</i></p> <p>It is recommended that the following short sentence is added to this statement:</p>

	<p><i>“Members are reminded that the content of ‘restricted’ reports and any discussions which take place during closed session must be treated as ‘confidential information’ and that no such information may be disclosed to the public as per Paragraph 4.15 of the Code of Conduct”.</i></p> <p><b><u>Member Training on the Code of Conduct</u></b></p> <p>Members are also reminded that Council officers offer regular training on the Code of Conduct with the last session having been provided after the election in June 2023 and delivered by the Chief Executive, the City Solicitor and the Commissioner for Standards. Members are encouraged to avail of this training as and when it is offered.</p>
3.5	<p><b><u>Council may refer a matter to the Commissioner for Standards</u></b></p> <p>Depending on the nature and seriousness of the disclosure, the Chief Executive or the City Solicitor may in certain circumstances decide that it is in the interests of the Council that they refer a matter to the Commissioner for Standards to investigate an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct. These instances are rare and often involve allegations of serious misconduct and/or conduct which could cause reputational damage to the Council.</p>
3.6	<p><b><u>Any person may refer a matter to the Commissioner for Standards</u></b></p> <p>Any person can refer a matter to the Commissioner for Standards with respect to an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct for Councillors. Such referrals will usually be from another Councillor or from a member of the public and will often be in relation to allegations of serious or clear breaches of the Code of Conduct.</p>
3.7	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>There are no financial or resource implications connected to this report.</p>
3.8	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>There are no equality or good relations implications connected to this report.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	None

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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Update on Contracts</b>
<b>Date:</b>	24th November, 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Sharon McNicholl Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Corporate Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Noleen Bohill, Head of Commercial and Procurement Services

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek approval from the Committee for tenders and Single Tender Actions (STA) over £30,000</li> </ul> <p>And to ask the Committee to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• note contract modifications to contract term and retrospective Single Tender Actions (STAs);</li> <li>• note an update on quarterly reporting on STAs and Contracts &lt;£30k – see section 6.0 of this report; and</li> <li>• advise if CPS should arrange condensed training for Members via Teams to talk through the STA process and guidance provided to officers.</li> </ul>

<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• approve the public advertisement of tenders as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 (<b>Table 1</b>);</li> <li>• approve the award of STAs in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions as detailed in Appendix 1 (<b>Table 2</b>); and</li> <li>• approve the modification of the contract as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 (<b>Table 3</b>)</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Competitive Tenders</b>
3.1	Section 2.5 of the Scheme of Delegation states that Chief Officers have delegated authority to authorise a contract for the procurement of goods, services or works over the statutory limit of £30,000 following a tender exercise where the council has approved the invitation to tender.
3.2	Standing Order 60(a) states that any contract that exceeds the statutory amount (currently £30,000) shall be made under the Corporate Seal. Under Standing Order 51(b), the Corporate Seal can only be affixed when there is a resolution of the Council.
3.3	Standing Order 54 states that every contract shall comply with the relevant requirements of national and European legislation.
3.4	The Committee is asked to approve the public advertisement of tenders, as per Standing Order 37a, detailed in Appendix 1 ( <b>Table 1</b> )
	<b>Single Tender Actions (STAs)</b>
3.5	The Council's current Single Tender Action (STA) process, which has been in place since 2020, provides assurance that the Council continues to comply with its obligations under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 'PCRs' and internal governance arrangements including required controls and approvals. It mirrors the PCRs setting out the exceptional and specific circumstances when a STA can be used (see STA/ Direct Award Reasons Table in Appendix 1).
3.6	To support officers' understanding and to build capability CPS also offer STA Process training on a regular basis. To date, 89 officers have been trained.
3.7	CPS would welcome the opportunity to take Members through this STA process.
3.8	In line with Standing Order 55, the following STAs are being submitted for approval:

3.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a contract for up to £73,000 for up to 2 year, awarded to Bravosolutions UK Ltd, for the support and maintenance of E-Bravo tendering solution. Annual license for the continued use of E-Bravo until new Finance system is in place. Bravosolutions UK Ltd are the only supplier of the current platform and associated licences/software;</li> <li>• a contract for up to £210,000, for up to 3 years, awarded to Belfast Tradfest (a Social Enterprise) for the provision of a city centre weekend music programme as part of the overall St Patrick’s day celebrations. A formal tender process was carried out which resulted in a NIL return. A direct award is being made to a local social enterprise who has experience in delivering musical festivals; and</li> <li>• a contract for up to £36,000, for up to 3 years, awarded to Kinetics Solution for the booking system for Belfast Castle (BC) and Malone House (MH). Continued use of the booking system at BC and MH until a replacement system can be procured. Based on current programme of work within Digital Services, capital investment required and associated planning required it is unlikely this would be actioned until 2 to 3 years. Kinetic Solutions are the only supplier of the current booking system and associated licences/software.</li> </ul> <p>Further details on these STAs is set out in Appendix 1 (<b>Table 2</b>) including the reason selected to support justification of each STA.</p>
	<b>Modification to Contract</b>
3.10	<p>The Committee is asked to approve the following modification of the contract as per Standing Order 37a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to an additional 4 months, for Contract T2335 Procurement of a Local Area Energy Plan for Belfast and Queens Island (Fully funded), awarded to Energy Systems Catapult. Requesting a 4 month extension of contract period up to 31 March 2024 to due to implementation delay. No additional expenditure.</li> </ul>
3.11	Further details on this contract modification is set out in Appendix 1 ( <b>Table 3</b> ).
	<b>STA and Contracts &lt;£30k Reporting</b>
3.12	The Committee, at its meeting on 20th October, agreed that 'the quarterly finance report should, in future, include information on expenditure on Single Tender Actions and on the number and value of contracts under £30,000'.

3.13	Information on expenditure broken down by individual STA contract records is not readily available from the Council's current financial system.																																				
3.14	However, CPS centrally records the number and maximum total value of STA contract records that are approved by the SP and R Committee. Quarter 2 2023/24 is provided below as a sample:																																				
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="4"><b>FY 23/24 Qtr 2</b></th> </tr> <tr> <th><b>Type of Contract</b></th> <th><b>No.</b></th> <th><b>Maximum total contract value</b></th> <th><b>Average Contract Value</b></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><b>Retrospective Single Tender Actions</b></td> <td><b>7</b></td> <td><b>£355,476.11</b></td> <td><b>£50,782.30</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Over £30,000</td> <td>5</td> <td>£339,476.11</td> <td>£67,895.22</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Under £30,000</td> <td>2</td> <td>£16,000.00</td> <td>£8,000.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Single Tender Actions</b></td> <td><b>26</b></td> <td><b>£939,027.99</b></td> <td><b>£36,116.46</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Over £30,000</td> <td>8</td> <td>£653,100.00</td> <td>£81,637.50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Under £30,000</td> <td>18</td> <td>£285,927.99</td> <td>£15,884.89</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Grand Total</b></td> <td><b>33</b></td> <td><b>£1,294,504.10</b></td> <td><b>£39,227.40</b></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<b>FY 23/24 Qtr 2</b>				<b>Type of Contract</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Maximum total contract value</b>	<b>Average Contract Value</b>	<b>Retrospective Single Tender Actions</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>£355,476.11</b>	<b>£50,782.30</b>	Over £30,000	5	£339,476.11	£67,895.22	Under £30,000	2	£16,000.00	£8,000.00	<b>Single Tender Actions</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>£939,027.99</b>	<b>£36,116.46</b>	Over £30,000	8	£653,100.00	£81,637.50	Under £30,000	18	£285,927.99	£15,884.89	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>£1,294,504.10</b>	<b>£39,227.40</b>
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3.15	Similarly, records for contracts (including title; supplier name; value; duration etc) valued below £30,000 are not centrally held. These records are maintained on Departmental registers.																																				
3.16	CPS recently sought an annual return on this information for contracts awarded during 2022/23. The returns provided have been incorporated into the first Annual Procurement Report, which is planned for issue to the SP and R Committee in Q4.																																				
	<b>Financial and Resource Implications</b>																																				
3.17	The financial resources for these contracts are within approved corporate or departmental budgets																																				
	<b>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</b>																																				
3.18	None																																				
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>																																				
	Appendix 1 Table 1 - Competitive Tenders Table 2 - Single Tender Actions Table 3 - Modification to Contract																																				



**Table 1: Competitive Tenders**

Title of Tender	Proposed Contract Duration	Est. Max Contract Value	SRO	Short description of goods / services
Maintenance, repair and inspection of grounds maintenance plant and equipment	Up to 5 years	£750,000	D Sales	Maintenance, repair and inspection of grounds maintenance plant and equipment to fulfil the requirements of the OSS service
Telephone service provision - calls / lines / broadband	Up to 12 months	£152,131	P Gribben	The corporate telephony solution required so that all devices and users have ongoing service provision
Planned preventative maintenance for backup generators to 7 Council Properties	Up to 3 years	£120,000	S Grimes	Recurring contract for backup generators to 7 properties to cover callouts, repairs and planned maintenance
MTC for fire and intruder alarms maintenance	Up to 3 years	£210,000	S Grimes	Recurring contract which covers callouts, repairs, planned maintenance and small works to fire & intruder alarms systems to all council properties
Online civic engagement platform	Up to 4 years	£78,000	P Gribben	Current contract for civic engagement platform expires in Aug 24
Collection and recycling of scrap metal and abandoned vehicles	Up to 4 years	£900,000 (Income)	C Matthews	Recurring contract to ensure the Council recycles scrap metal and maximises associated income.
Supply and delivery of office furniture including office design and fit-out service	Up to 5 years	£250,000*	N Largey	<p>Various departments and buildings in the ongoing office furniture needs covering simple repair/ replacement requirements through to new office fit out and redesign services.</p> <p>* Estimated £50k per annum spend. Spend is cross-departmental and not solely L&amp;CS.</p>
The provision of external mail collection service for outbound mail from the centralised mailroom	Up to 3 years	£400,000	P Gribben	To provide the continued operation and support of the mailroom and outbound post

**Table 2: Single Tender Actions**

Title	Duration	Est. Max Contract Value	SRO	Description	Supplier	STA Reason Code
Support and maintenance of eSourcing tendering solution	Up to 2 years	£73,000	P Gribben	Licenses for the continued use of eSourcing until new finance system is in place	Bravosolutions UK Ltd	3
Provision of a city centre weekend music programme as part of the overall St Patrick's day celebrations	Up to 3 years	£210,000	J Greer	A formal tender process was carried out which resulted in a NIL return. A direct award is being made to a local social enterprise with experience in delivering musical festivals.	Belfast Tradfest	1
Booking system for Belfast Castle and Malone House	Up to 3 years	£36,000	P Gribben	Continued use of the booking system at BC and MH until a replacement system can be procured. Based on current programme of work within Digital Services, capital investment required and associated planning required it is unlikely this would be actioned until 2 to 3 years. Kinetic Solutions are the only supplier of the current booking system and associated licences/software.	Kinetics Solutions	3

**Table 3: Modification to Contract**

Title of Contract	Duration	Modification	SRO	Description	Supplier
T2335 Procurement of a Local Area Energy Plan for Belfast and Queens Island (Fully funded)	Up to 11 months	Additional 4 months	J Tully	Requesting a 4 month extension of contract period up to 31 March 2024 to due to implementation delay. No additional expenditure	Energy Systems Catapult

\* See STA/ Direct Award Reasons in table below.

**STA/ Direct Award Reasons**

<b>Reason Code</b>	<b>Reasons in line with Public Contact Regulations</b>
1	No response following advertised procurement exercise
2	Creation or acquisition of a unique work of art or artistic performance
3	Competition is absent for technical reasons (no reasonable substitute exists)
4	The protection of exclusive rights, including intellectual property rights
5	Extreme urgency brought about by events unforeseeable by BCC, the time limits for a procurement cannot be complied with.
6	Products manufactured purely for the purpose of research, experimentation, study or development
7	Additional deliveries which are intended either as a partial or extended replacement of supplies or installations where a change of supplier would result in supplies of different technical characteristics causing incompatibility or disproportionate technical difficulties in operation and maintenance
8	Supplies quoted and purchased on a commodity market
9	Supplies or services on particularly time-limited advantageous terms e.g. supplier winding up its business activities
10	New works and services consisting of the repetition of similar works or services, provided that the possibility of a direct award is disclosed during the original tender process
11	Other – Reason not in line with Public Contract Regulations (PCR 2015)

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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Accounting Treatment of Belfast Investment Fund</b>
<b>Date:</b>	24th November, 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Trevor Wallace, Director of Finance
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Trevor Wallace, Director of Finance

**Is this report restricted?** Yes  No

**Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.**

Insert number

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

**If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?**

<b>After Committee Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>After Council Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sometime in the future</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Never</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Call-in**

**Is the decision eligible for Call-in?** Yes  No

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To provide the Committee with information on how the accounting treatment of the Belfast Investment Fund.

<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the report.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	At the Council meeting on 1st October, the Chief Executive agreed that a report would be submitted to a future meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee outlining the accounting treatment in relation to the allocation of funding for the Belfast Investment Fund..
3.2	The Belfast Investment Fund was first set up to support partnership projects across the city, with a recurring amount included in the revenue estimates of £3.27m. The intention being to borrow the money to pay for the projects with the recurring budget covering the borrowing costs.
3.3	Due to slippages in delivery of projects to date, the majority of projects have been funded by the recurring budget without the need to borrow. As at period 7 (31 October 2023), the fund has an amount of £5,379,365 allocated to it.
3.4	The fund would be designated as a cash backed fund, however, this does not mean that the Council has £5.4m sitting in an account waiting to be spent on Belfast Investment Fund projects. Similarly, it does not have cash/investments to support all its useable reserves. For information, as at 31st March 2023, the Council had useable reserves of £87,787,629 but only held cash and cash equivalents of £19,140,662.
3.5	This is due to the Council using its cash to fund capital expenditure, referred to as internal borrowing, and then only using external borrowing as and when required to ensure it has adequate working capital.
3.6	By applying this approach to managing its cash balances the Council minimises its cost of carry, i.e., the difference borrowing rates and investment returns.
	<b>Accounting Treatment</b>
3.7	As mentioned above, the annual amount include in the estimates is £3.27m. Every month 1/12 <sup>th</sup> of this amount is debited to the cost centre and credited to the balance sheet, BIF Account. At the end of the financial year an amount is transferred from the BIF balance sheet account to finance the capital expenditure incurred on Belfast Investment Fund projects.
	<b>Financial and Resource Implications</b>
3.8	None

	<b>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</b>
3.9	None
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	None

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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Minutes of the Meeting of the Shared City Partnership</b>
<b>Date:</b>	24th November, 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	David Sales, Strategic Director of City Operations
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Jim Girvan, Neighbourhood Services Manager Godfrey McCartney, Good Relations Manager

**Restricted Reports**

**Is this report restricted?** Yes  No

**Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.**

Insert number

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

**If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?**

<b>After Committee Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>After Council Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sometime in the future</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Never</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Call-in**

**Is the decision eligible for Call-in?** Yes  No

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	To report to the Committee the key issues discussed at the meeting of the Shared City Partnership on 6 <sup>th</sup> November.

2.0	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to approve the minutes and recommendations from meeting of the Shared City Partnership Meeting of 6<sup>th</sup> November, including:</p> <p><b><u>Schedule of Meetings 2024</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Partnership approved the schedule of meetings for 2024 and agreed that all meetings would commence at 1.30 p.m.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Shared City Partnership Membership (Verbal Update)</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>That members note the verbal update and agree the approach provided by the Good Relations Manager detailed in the attached minutes.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Good Relations Scope of Work</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Partnership recommended to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it note the update provided and also that an updated Action Plan would be submitted to the December meeting of the Partnership which would aim to further build sustainable good relations within communities.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Update on Peace Plus</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Partnership recommended to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it note the update provided.</li> </ul>
3.0	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><b><u>Key Issues</u></b></p> <p>The Shared City Partnership is a Working Group of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee which consists of Elected members and representatives from various sectors across the city. The minutes from the Partnership are brought before the Committee for approval on a monthly basis.</p>
3.2	<p>The key issues on the agenda at the meeting on 6<sup>h</sup> November were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the Schedule of Meetings for 2024</li> <li>a verbal update on SCP Membership</li> <li>Good Relations Scope of Work</li> <li>An update on Peace Plus</li> </ul>
3.3	

<p>3.4</p> <p>3.5</p>	<p>More details regarding the above issues and recommendations are included in the attached minutes.</p> <p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>All financial implications are covered through existing budgets.</p> <p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>The recommendations of the Partnership promote the work of the Council in promoting good relations and will enhance equality and good relations impacts.</p>
<p><b>4.0</b></p>	<p><b>Document Attached</b></p>
	<p>Minutes of the meeting of 6<sup>th</sup> November</p>

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## **SHARED CITY PARTNERSHIP**

**Monday 6th November, 2023**

### **MEETING OF SHARED CITY PARTNERSHIP HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

Members present: Councillor Duffy (Chairperson);  
Councillors Lyons and I. McLaughlin.

External Members: Mr. T. Burns, Faith Sector;  
Mr. J. Donnelly, Community and Voluntary Sector;  
Ms. J. Irwin, Community Relations Council;  
Mr. P. Mackel, Belfast and District Trades Union;  
Ms. T. Mimna, Good Relations, TEO;  
Mr. M. McBride, Education Authority;  
Ms. A. Roberts, Community and Voluntary Sector; and  
Mr. G. Walker, North Belfast Community Representative.

In attendance: Ms. D. McKinney, PEACE Programme Manager;  
Mr. G. McCartney, Good Relations Manager; and  
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

#### **Apologies**

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillor Smyth and Ms. B. Arthurs, Ms. C. McMenamin, Wasif Naeem and Ms. A.M. White.

#### **Minutes**

In considering the minutes of the meeting of 9th October, which had been ratified at the meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee held on 20th October, Mr. J. Donnelly advised that his attendance had not been recorded. He also clarified that under the heading 'Belfast Stories Presentation' he had stated that a mapping exercise of major tourism investment across the city should be undertaken and asked that this be reflected in the November minutes.

The minutes of the meeting of 9th October 2023 were taken as read and agreed as correct, subject to the foregoing variation.

#### **Declarations of Interest**

Ms. T. Mimna declared an interest in agenda item 4 'Peace Plus Belfast City Council Local Action Plan' as TEO was the accountable department for PEACE Plus Investment Area 1.1 and at this stage in the proceedings she left the meeting.

#### **Schedule of Meetings 2024**

The Partnership approved the following schedule of meetings for 2024 and agreed that all meetings would commence at 1.30 p.m.:

- Monday, 8th January
- Monday, 5th February
- Monday, 11th March
- Monday, 8th April
- Monday, 13th May
- Monday, 10th June
- Monday, 5th August
- Monday, 9th September
- Monday, 7th October
- Monday, 11th November
- Monday, 2nd December.

### **SCP Membership Update (Verbal)**

The Good Relations Manager commenced by welcoming Mr. Tim Burns to his first meeting of the Partnership, representing the Faith Sector. He also welcomed Ms. Tracey Mimna from TEO who was standing in for Ms. Anne Tohill whilst she was on a period of extended leave.

The Partnership was advised that there remained two vacant positions on the Partnership from the Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce. He stated that, should these posts not be filled by December, he would submit a report to the January 2024 meeting of the Partnership with a contingency plan seeking to fill the vacant positions from other areas of the local business sector.

The Members were reminded that Mr. Aengus Hannaway had recently retired from the NIHE. The Housing Executive was still to appoint a new representative and the officer advised that he was hopeful that he would have details of the new nominee for the December meeting of the Partnership.

The Partnership recommended to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it note the update provided.

### **Good Relations Scope of Work**

The Good Relations Manager provided the Members of the Partnership with a comprehensive update on the range of projects that the Good Relations Unit was currently engaged in and the role of the Good Relations Officers.

The Members were advised that, since 2003, the Council had delivered an annual Good Relations Action Plan of programmes and projects, both internally within the Council and externally within the community. The Executive Office supported the Council's Action Plans under the T:BUC programme called the District Council's Good

Relations Programme (DGGRP). In addition to the delivery of the DCGRP, the Good Relations Unit also supported the Council in carrying out its functions under Section 75 (2) of the Northern Ireland Act; namely that all public bodies in carrying out their functions are *“required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group”*.

He reported that, in previous years, the Good Relations Action Plan had been approximately £1M, whilst this year it had been reduced to approximately £0.6M. The Members were reminded that the role of the Good Relations Unit was much more than the delivery of the annual Action Plan, with officers involved in a range of activity.

He detailed that the current financial climate was challenging, however, the volume of Good Relations work remained unchanged. The officers felt that it would be a useful exercise to inform Members of the breadth and scope of the work of the Unit and that of officers, in order to demonstrate the wider role and ensure that the Members of the Partnership were kept apprised of the work of Good Relations and how it supported the work of the Shared City Partnership.

He advised that the Good Relations Unit in Belfast City Council not only provided the District Council’s Good Relations Action Plan but also Advice, Support, and Advocacy in a number of ways, as follows:

#### **Internal support to Council Units**

He explained that, internally, the role was to provide advice and guidance to those seeking it to ensure that Good Relations was at the heart of all work. This was critical as one of the underpinning themes within the Belfast Agenda stating, *“BCC will work with the Shared City Partnership to deliver an integrated plan to improve good relations, develop a sustainable, transferable and scalable approach to management and promotion of shared spaces, while creating leadership and networking opportunities”*.

The officer detailed that the Good Relations Unit was supporting the following internal activities:

- the provision of Good Relations Awareness Training material, along with Human Resources, to all staff, including refresher training every 3 years;
- advice and guidance with the implementation of key Corporate Initiatives such as the new Dual Language Street Sign policy, expert advice to the recent One Young World Conference content group, Belfast Stories, Youth Advisory Group and regular advice to projects within Physical Programmes, Facilities or activities within Parks and Open Spaces;
- the main Council point of contact for staff who were seeking to engage with migrant and minority ethnic groups and advising senior management on policy and action planning in these areas;

- provision of advice and guidance for colleagues dealing with Good Relations challenges, such as flags, emblems, memorials and other cultural issues;
- support for the Lord Mayor's Unit in engagement with groups from a variety of community backgrounds, meeting with groups, drafting briefings, speeches and follow up on any actions from such engagements;
- provision of advice and guidance for Peace III, Peace IV and PeacePlus, including the drafting of projects for inclusion in these various Council plans; and
- working with senior management on a meaningful 'mainstreaming' of Good Relations.

### **External Support to Community and Statutory Organisations in Belfast City**

The Good Relations Manager advised that externally the Unit had a significant footprint within the city, through years of building relationships with key stakeholders and representing the Council at a range of forums. The Unit also supported a range of groups, universities and those seeking to explore the Council's role in Good Relations and Peacebuilding.

He provided some examples of this work, as follows:

- managing external funding for initiatives such as the Home Office Dispersal Funding, Heritage Lottery funding for Centenaries projects in 2021, Stena Line funding for work in schools as well as the annual TEO Action Plan;
- providing support for local forums, advisory groups and advice projects at a neighbourhood level on a variety of Good Relations issues such as Interfaces, Minority Ethnic issues, shared housing schemes and cultural expression;
- providing support to communities at a neighbourhood level where there was localised Good Relations issues that required advice, support and intervention;
- providing support to local groups in seeking funding from other agencies;
- regular and ongoing relationship building with local groups and organisations seeking to build Good Relations at a local level;
- undertaking interviews with students studying peacebuilding and conflict resolution;



- providing talks and presentations to visiting international groups in partnership with universities and organisations such as Intercomm; and
- connecting local groups with other statutory, community and governmental bodies in order to maximise their projects and ideas.

### **Supporting Central Government**

The Good Relations Manager detailed that the role of the Unit also involved a significant partnership with TEO, in the support of its wider T:BUC Headline Actions. This included a range of tasks such as:

- assessing grant applications for the Central Good Relations Fund and the Planned Intervention Programme;
- participation in regular ‘shared learning’ events with other practitioners within the Good Relations field on a regional basis;
- providing information to TEO for Assembly Questions or for queries from MLA’s;
- participating in the DoJ led Interfaces Working Group; and
- support for TEO staff delivering initiatives such as Urban Villages, Minority Ethnic Development Fund and Tackling Paramilitarism. This support included linking staff with local communities, facilitating engagement and signposting.

The Good Relations Manager advised that the aforementioned areas of work necessitated undergoing a significant degree of vouching, monitoring and evaluation, this was also undertaken within the Unit. He explained that this work was crucial, not only for the stewardship of external funding, but also to maintain the good reputation of the Council.

The Partnership recommended to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it note the update provided and also that an updated Action Plan would be submitted to the December meeting of the Partnership which would aim to further build sustainable good relations within communities.

### **Peace Plus Belfast City Council Local Action Plan**

The Partnership considered the undernoted report:

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

**The purpose of this report is to provide Shared City Partnership Members with an information update on the submission timetable for PEACE PLUS 1.1. Co-designed**

Local Community Peace Action Plan for Belfast, and the scheduled Public Information Sessions.

## **2.0 Recommendations**

That Members note the contents of the report and recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that they too, note the contents of the report.

## **3.0 Main report**

SCP members are aware that the development of the £15.1 million Local PEACE Action Plan is being delivered in three stages:

Stage 1 Co-design needs & opportunities  
Stage 2 Co-design long list of priority projects  
Stage 3 Action Plan submission

The plan will be delivered under the following 3 Thematic Areas

1. Community Regeneration & Transformation (Capital Projects)
2. Thriving & Peaceful Communities
3. Building Respect for All Cultural Identities

## **3.2 Current Status – Stage 3 Submission**

There are a number of moving parts which have been timetabled out for submission in November 2023.

- Executive Summary
- The proposed Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan
- Strategic and Policy Context
- The Co- Design Process
- Project Options Considered and Preferred Option
- Budget and Financial Projections
- Risk Analysis (Risks, Uncertainty and Constraints)
- Horizontal Themes - Sustainable Development and Equality
- Management Arrangements
- Communication & Marketing Plan
- Monitoring & Evaluation Plan
- Exit Strategy And VFM - Economy, effectiveness and efficiency
- Summary Action Plan
- JEMS Application Support

Further Detail of the above is detailed in Appendix 1.

### **3.3 Information Sessions**

Two public information sessions will be held to report back on all initiatives included in the overall plan for submission to SEUPB, as a member of the Shared City Partnership Officers would welcome your attendance and support at one of these sessions.

- Tuesday 7th November 11.00 am – 12.30pm, Girdwood Community Hub, 10 Girdwood Avenue, BT14 6EG
- Monday 13th November 7.00 pm – 8.30 pm, Riddel Hall, 185 Stranmillis Road, BT9 5EE

To book a place, can you please email [peacepluslap@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:peacepluslap@belfastcity.gov.uk) and confirm which session you will attend.

**3.4 Further to this Belfast City Council hope to offer practical training with regards to preparing for the tendering opportunities that will be available as part of PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan.**

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

Within existing budget to be claimed retrospectively from SEUPB.

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

The Plan, once produced, will need to be screened for equality and good relations implications along with completion of a rural needs assessment.”

With the aid of PowerPoint, the Peace Programme Manager presented the Members with a detailed update on the submission timetable for PEACE PLUS 1.1. Co-designed Local Community Peace Action Plan for Belfast, advising of the specific dates of competition for the various areas of the plan.

The Members noted the particularly tight deadlines and the Chairperson, on behalf of the Partnership, thanked the officers for their dedication and commitment at this time in ensuring that the deadlines were achieved.

The Good Relations Manager advised that the following Public Information Sessions were scheduled to be held to report back on all initiatives included in the overall plan for submission to the SEUPB:

- Tuesday, 7th November 11.00 am – 12.30 pm, Girdwood Community Hub, 10 Girdwood Avenue, BT14 6EG; and

- Monday, 13th November 7.00 pm – 8.30 pm, Riddel Hall, 185 Stranmillis Road, BT9 5EE

He advised that a place could be reserved by e-mailing [peacepluslap@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:peacepluslap@belfastcity.gov.uk) and he encouraged the Members to attend one of the sessions to show their support.

Following a query from a Member regarding the current high levels of inflation, the Peace Programme Manager concurred with the difficulties of estimating for this and advised that, where possible, realistic contingency sums were being built into the proposals. She added that it might be possible for funds to be diverted should there be a shortfall in other areas.

The Partnership recommended to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it note the update provided.

Chairperson



<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 – Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Annual Monitoring Return</b>
<b>Date:</b>	24th November, 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor and Director of Legal and Civic Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Sarah Williams, Governance and Compliance Manager

**Restricted Reports**

**Is this report restricted?** Yes  No

**Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.**

Insert number

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

**If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?**

<b>After Committee Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>After Council Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sometime in the future</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Never</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Call-in**

**Is the decision eligible for Call-in?** Yes  No

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	To present for the Committee's approval the Council's annual monitoring return (the "Annual Return"), which provides evidence of how the Council has met certain duties under the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 (the "Act").
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to approve the submission of the Council's Annual Return for 2022 – 2023 to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, subject to ratification by the Council on 1st December.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>As the Committee will be aware, the rural population of Belfast is comprised of the small settlements of Edenderry, Hannahstown and Loughview.</p>
3.2	<p>Section 1(1) of the Act requires public authorities to have due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans, and when designing and delivering public services.</p> <p>As part of that duty, Council officers complete Rural Needs Impact Assessments.</p>
3.3	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>Section 3(1) of the Act requires public authorities to: (i) compile information on the exercise of their functions, (ii) include that information in annual reports and (iii) send that information to DAERA.</p>
3.4	The Annual Return is designed to inform stakeholders and other interested parties of how the Council has had due regard to rural needs in the exercise of its functions. The attached Annual Return shows how the Council has met this duty for 2022-23.
3.5	<p><u>Next Steps</u></p> <p>The Annual Return was submitted to DAERA last month for inclusion in its Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report in order to meet DAERA's deadline for publication. DAERA will note in its Annual Monitoring Report that the Council Annual Return is subject to Council ratification.</p> <p>A copy of the Annual Return, together with a list of the Rural Needs Impact Assessments completed will be published on the Council's website as the Council does not have an annual report.</p>

3.6	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>Officers from across the organisation are involved in completing Rural Needs Impact Assessments and the Equality and Diversity Unit have corporate responsibility for collating this information.</p>
3.7	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>The Annual Return provides evidence as to how the Council has met its duty under the Act to have due regard to Rural Needs.</p>
4.0	<p><b>Document Attached</b></p>
	<p>Annual Monitoring Return to Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs</p>

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### Information to be compiled by Public Authorities under Section 3(1)(a) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.

(To be completed and included in public authorities' own annual reports and submitted to DAERA for inclusion in the Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report).

Name of Public Authority:

Belfast City Council

Reporting Period:

April 20 22 to March 20 23

The following information should be compiled in respect of each policy, strategy and plan which has been developed, adopted, implemented, or revised and each public service which has been designed or delivered by the public authority during the reporting period.

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<i>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016<sup>1</sup>.</i>	<i>The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to<sup>2</sup>.</i>	<i>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing, or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service<sup>3</sup>.</i>
Corporation Street & Exchange Street Placemaking Brief	N/A	This project has considered the impacts on a range of existing and potential stakeholders. We do not consider this policy to have relevance to the social and economic needs of persons in rural areas.
Heritage Trail Sign Policy – City Hall	Other – Good Relations	The Heritage Trail Policy – City Hall applies only to the installation of interpretive signs at City Hall in Belfast City

		Centre and is not likely to impact people in rural areas. Therefore, the council has not taken steps to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.
Development of a Commercial Plan	N/A	The draft Commercial Plan aims to contribute to the Council's investment plans, its efficiency programme and to 'recovering' and 'rebuilding' from the COVID-19 pandemic. This will assist to safeguard services that are delivered in all our local communities (both urban and rural). That being the case, it is anticipated there will be no adverse impact on people in rural areas.  The draft Commercial Plan was not adopted by Council and therefore the Council is not implementing it at this time.
Naming a new public park in Colin as Páirc Nua Chollann	Other – Good Relations	The name of the new park has no implications for the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.
Onboarding of Council Services and return to the office for office-based staff	Internal	Some Council staff live in and travel from rural areas. However the current proposals to recover all Council service provision and return to the workplace, office based staff, who have been working remotely during the pandemic, will revert staff to their contracted pre Covid working patterns/ working locations.
Introducing a Car User Policy	Internal	The policy is for use by internal staff of Belfast City Council and has no impact on people in rural areas.
Reopening of Knockbreda Road entrance to Cherryfield Playing Fields	Other – Good Relations	No rural needs were identified in planning the Knockbreda Road entrance gate into Cherryvale Playingfields and park having given due regard to likely users coming from a localised vicinity to the proposed reopening of the access point.
Hub of Innovation and Entrepreneurship (HUB IN) Belfast Roadmap	N/A	The roadmap will have no direct impact on people in rural areas as it is focused on digital innovation and creative industries on the Maritime Mile.
Age Friendly Belfast Plan 2022-26	Transport services or infrastructure/ businesses/ housing/ training & community	The plan does not make specific proposals for rural areas at this stage, however more detailed planning in relation to the specific actions will consider any potential differential

	safety in rural areas	impacts on rural areas as they are progressed.
Fuel Poverty Hardship Fund	Poverty/ Deprivation	We will ensure the support available through the Fuel Poverty Hardship Fund will reach those most in need in both rural and urban areas on an equitable and inclusive basis through the application of pre-set eligibility criteria and effective monitoring and verification processes built into the project management system.
Additional leave provisions for bereavement, miscarriage and fertility treatment	Internal	The policy is for use by internal staff of Belfast City Council and has no impact on people in rural areas.
Smart Belfast Urban Innovation Framework 2022-2026	Rural businesses/ tourism	The framework will have no direct impact on people in rural areas as it is focused on urban innovation. A public consultation carried out on the framework did not identify any specific issues for people in rural areas or any likely adverse rural impact.
Security Unit Shift Rota	Internal	The policy is for use by internal staff of Belfast City Council and has no impact on people in rural areas.

## NOTES

1. This information should normally be contained in section 1B of the RNIA Template completed in respect of the activity.
2. This information should normally be contained in section 2D of the RNIA Template completed in respect of the activity.
3. The information contained in sections 3D, 4A & 5B of the RNIA Template should be considered when completing this section.

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## Minutes of Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2023

### Attendance

Members:

Councillor Michael Long  
Councillor Ciaran Beattie  
Councillor Brian Smyth  
Alderman Sonia Copeland  
Councillor Christina Black  
Councillor Tracy Kelly (*for Councillor Sarah Bunting*)  
Councillor Séamas de Faoite,

**Apologies:** Councillor Sarah Bunting

### Officers:

John Walsh, Chief Executive  
Sharon McNicholl Director of Corporate Services and Deputy Chief Executive  
Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services  
Trevor Wallace, Director of Finance (for Item1)  
David Sales, Strategic Director of City Operations (for Items 2 & 4)  
Sinead Grimes, Director of Property & Projects (for Item 3 & 6)  
Kate Bentley, Director of Planning & Building Control (for Items 5 & 6)  
Christine Sheridan, Director of Human Resources(for Item 6)  
Joanne Delaney, Portfolio and Programme Coordinator (secretariat)

### 1. Finance Update

The Director of Finance provided an update on the setting of the district rate for 2024/25 following the completion of the Departmental estimates process. He advised that potential efficiencies had been proposed by Departments as part of this process and that these would need to be considered by Members as part of the upcoming Party Group Briefings. He outlined that work has also been progressing in order to quantify the financial risks of the uncontrollable costs and their impact on the revenue estimates for 2024/25 and the medium term. Some issues were raised by Members in relation to how the council could support the Community & Voluntary sector to make external funding bids in these challenging times, it was agreed that officers would further consider. Members also noted an overview of the quarter two 2023/24 forecast position and that a report on both the setting of the district rate 2024/25 and the quarter two forecast position would be submitted to November SP&R for Members consideration.

The Director also provided an update on the review undertaken in relation to the criteria for the management of discretionary payment requests. Further to the update provided to Members at the October meeting the Director outlined some proposed changes to the criteria and the rationale for these changes. A report will be brought to November SP&R Committee for Member to consider the criteria changes discussed.

## **2. Review of Summer Community Diversionary Festival Fund**

The Strategic Director of City Operations provided a briefing on the review of the Summer Community Diversionary Festival Fund. The Director highlighted some of the suggested changes to the current approach, assessment process and budget. It was noted that a report outlining the proposed Terms of Reference for the independent review will be considered by Members at November SP&R Committee. The report will also outline the proposed timeframes for programme development, and it is anticipated that a call for applications would then commence in April 2024. A number of issues and concerns were raised by Members, specifically in relation to how smaller organisations could access the summer community diversionary funding and the challenging timeframe. The Director to consider the feedback provided in advance of a report being brought to November SP&R Committee. It was also agreed that other available funding streams particularly for capacity building be identified by Officers that could be shared with some of those groups highlighted. The Director also noted some additions to the proposed stakeholder engagement.

## **3. Peace IV**

The Director of Property and Projects firstly provided an overview of the Peace IV programme to date including key decision timelines. She then provided a detailed briefing on both current and emerging challenges and risks in relation to funding for Peace IV projects. The Chief Executive advised that discussions were ongoing with the Special EU Programme Body (SEUPB) in relation to the challenges and risks outlined. Work is progressing in order to minimise any adverse impacts where possible in advance of the closure of the programme in December 2023. Correspondence has also been drafted in relation to a specific issue which has arisen, and Members noted this will be issued imminently to SEUPB. The Chief Executive advised a special meeting of Party Group Leaders would be convened if required as this work progresses.

#### **4. Alleygates Update**

The Director of City Operations provided a briefing on Phase 5 of the Alleygates programme as requested by the November P&C Committee. The Committee asked that the full location details be shared with Party Group Leaders following the low response rate to the public consultation exercise and he advised that this information had been circulated in advance of the meeting. There was detailed discussion on the challenges involved to date, proposed alternative thresholds and way forward for installations. Following discussion the Director to incorporate the feedback from Members in the report to be submitted to November SP&R Committee. It was agreed that a review of the programme should be considered after this phase is complete given some of the issues raised which the Director noted.

#### **5. Planning Update**

The Director of Planning & Building Control updated the Forum on the live planning applications and informed the Forum of applications that were being presented to the Planning Committee in the coming months. She also advised that the Local Development Plan would be included on the agenda for upcoming Party Briefings.

#### **6. AOB**

##### **City Innovation update**

The Director of Corporate Services and Deputy Chief Executive advised that the Belfast Region, led by Belfast City Council, had secured £3.8 million wireless innovation funding from the UK Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT). Members had previously agreed that the bid should be made and had been updated on the content of the bid at the October SP&R Committee. A detailed update on the wider innovation programme of work including the detail of the DSIT funding award and contract would be brought to November SP&R Committee. A number of points were made welcoming the funding whilst stressing the importance of the innovation agenda having a positive impact on local communities. In relation to issues raised, the Deputy Chief Executive to follow up, she also advised Members that a further briefing on the City Innovation programme of work was available for Parties if required.

## **Freedom of the City**

A Member outlined a request for Freedom of the City which Party Group Leaders had considered previously. It was noted that the Forum had previously discussed the process for considering Freedom of the City requests and had requested that alternative options on how citizens could be recognised by the council be carried out. The City Solicitor advised that this work was progressing, and a report will be brought back to a future meeting of the Forum outlining proposed alternatives for recognition. Current requests will be considered in the context of the process once this work is completed. Consideration of timeframe for some of the requests was noted.

## **Dual Language Street Signs**

The Director of Planning & Building Control outlined the process for the erection of Dual language Street signs in the Gaeltacht Quarter as approved by October SP&R Committee. Members noted the suggested timeline and the operational issues involved for this programme of works.

The Director also provided an update on some current requests for the erection of Dual Language street signs to be considered by P&C Committee for which some adverse impacts had been identified which will be brought to the Committee in December. It was agreed that the long list of requests for Dual Language street signs outside of the Gaeltacht Quarter would be circulated to Party Group Leaders. Members also noted an update in relation to the process for requests for the City Centre, long streets, and developers applications. A number of specific queries were raised by Members and the Director to seek clarity and follow up after the meeting.

## **Elected Members Development Programme**

The Director of Human Resources provided an overview on the approach to the Elected Member Development framework and the process for re-accreditation of Charter Plus which is due early 2024. She outlined the proposed programme of work, and it was noted that this will be progressed via this Forum as a standing item.



## **Neighbourhood Regeneration**

The Director of Property and Projects provided a briefing for Members on the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund. She advised that the November Area Working Group meetings will consider the business cases recommended to move to Stage 3. Members noted that site visits can be arranged for those Members who were unable to attend in September should they be required.

## **Coronation Gift**

The Chief Executive provided an update on the offer of a coronation gift (*an Irish Oak Tree*) to His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant for Belfast, which she wished to gift to the City. A report will be brought to November SP&R for Members consideration.

## **City Hall - Media Protocol**

The Chief Executive outlined the current guidelines for media interviews for party political purposes in City Hall following an issue raised. He asked that Members were mindful of these guidelines in the future. Members discussed in detail and some issues were raised also in relation to the use of Committee Rooms and the need for consistency. It was agreed that further consideration is given to this, and a report is brought back to Party Group Leaders for consideration and review.

## **Human Rights Day**

A Member raised a query in relation to a request made to Party Group Leaders to mark Human Rights day 2023. The City Solicitor advised that she was following up and would provide an update imminently.

## **Redevelopment in the Cathedral Quarter**

The Chief Executive provided an update in relation to a vesting issue within the Tribeca Site. In relation to a query raised by a Member regarding meetings with Party Group Leaders in relation to this issue the Chief Executive to provide clarity on how the meetings will be arranged.

### **Special Council Meeting**

The City Solicitor advised that a Notice of Motion for a special Council meeting had been submitted and was deemed competent, it was proposed that this would be held on Wednesday 29 November. The wording of the motion and the proposed time of the meeting to be circulated to Party Group Leaders.



<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Update to Health and Safety Policy Statement</b>
<b>Date:</b>	24th November, 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor and Director of Legal and Civic Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Sarah Williams, Governance & Compliance Manager; Emma Eaton, Corporate Health and Safety Manager

**Restricted Reports**

**Is this report restricted?** Yes  No

**Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.**

Insert number

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

**If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?**

<b>After Committee Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>After Council Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sometime in the future</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Never</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Call-in**

**Is the decision eligible for Call-in?** Yes  No

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
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1.1	The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on the update to the Health and Safety Policy Statement.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	The Committee is requested to approve the update to the Health and Safety Policy Statement which will be signed by the Chair of the Committee, the Chief Executive and the Interim City Solicitor and Director of Legal and Civic Services.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
	<u>Background</u>
3.1	There is a statutory requirement for the Council to have a Health and Safety Policy in place and to revise this as often as may be appropriate.
3.2	The Health and Safety Policy sets out who we are as an organisation, our commitment to health and safety and what we are doing to achieve our commitments. It is signed annually by the Chief Executive, Chair of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and the Nominated Director for health and safety matters.
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.3	The Council's Health and Safety Policy had last been reviewed and signed in April 2019 before the Coronavirus pandemic.
3.4	It has now been reviewed and a minor amendment to the commitments on setting objectives and targets has been proposed to bring it up to date.
	<u>Next Steps</u>
3.5	The Committee is asked to approve the minor change proposed (as tracked in the attached appendix) and the statement will then be signed by the Committee Chair, the Chief Executive and the Interim City Solicitor and Director of Legal and Civic Services.
3.6	It is proposed that, once the Policy is approved, it will be communicated to employees through Interlink, health and safety committees and corporate health and safety training. It is available to other interested parties on request.
	<b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b>
3.7	There are no financial or resource implications arising from the updating of the policy statement.

3.8	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>An equality screening is in place for this policy and no impacts were identified. There have been no significant changes to the Policy since it was last screened.</p>
4.0	<b>Document Attached</b>
	Draft Updated Health and Safety Policy

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Belfast  
City Council

## BELFAST CITY COUNCIL POLICY

### DRAFT HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

**DATED 2023**

#### 1. HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY STATEMENT

Belfast City Council is the largest of the local authorities in Northern Ireland. It is responsible for delivering an extensive range of services which play a key role in improving the quality of life of its citizens.

To meet these responsibilities the Council employs over 2,600 people at over 200 premises across the city. Through the provision of these services, the Council recognises that it is responsible for a large variety of potential health and safety hazards and will continue to strive to control these hazards by a process of hazard identification, risk assessment and risk control.

The Council is committed overall to ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all its employees and of any others who may be affected by the Council's undertakings. In order to enable the Council to achieve the highest possible standards in health and safety and continual improvement, it has committed to the following principles of action:

- ensuring that compliance with the Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978 and all related regulations, standards and codes of practice is the minimum standard which will be attained by all Council officers and departments
- demonstrating senior management commitment through the effective operation of a Health and Safety Assurance Board which reports to the Council's Assurance Board / Audit and Risk Panel and to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
- the provision of a competent and adequately resourced Corporate Health and Safety Unit
- the management of a corporate health and safety risk register to ensure that the Council's significant risks are identified and effectively controlled
- the implementation and monitoring of an effective health and safety management system
- the [setting of development of arrangements for all departments and services to annually set challenging health and safety targets, objectives and improvement plans by all departments and services within the annual business planning process](#)
- the prevention of accidents and ill health through effective reporting, investigation, performance monitoring and feedback arrangements
- the allocation of adequate resources by senior management to support effective policy delivery and any associated targets, objectives and plans

- the communication of this policy to all employees on induction, through regular health and safety training and on the Council's Intranet service
- ensuring the competence of staff to undertake their responsibilities safely through the annual PDP process, corporate health and safety training programme and risk assessments
- the encouragement of employees to take responsibility for their own individual health and safety performance and to recognise their contribution to the Council's attainment of the highest possible health and safety standards
- to make this policy freely available to all interested parties
- the regular review of the operation and implementation of this policy by senior management.

## **2. HEALTH AND SAFETY ORGANISATION**

Whilst overall responsibility for health and safety rests with the Chief Executive, the Nominated Health and Safety Director has overall responsibility for formulating and revising the Health and Safety Policy. The Policy is approved by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and reviewed annually by the Health and Safety Assurance Board. The Chief Executive and the Nominated Health and Safety Director will be supported in achieving their responsibilities by the Health and Safety Assurance Board and the Corporate Health and Safety Unit.

The health and safety organisation structure for the Council and the associated roles and responsibilities to ensure delivery of the Health and Safety Policy are contained within the Council's Health and Safety Responsibilities Code of Practice.

## **3. HEALTH AND SAFETY ARRANGEMENTS**

This health and safety policy statement is supplemented by specific responsibilities, policies, codes of practice, guidance notes and training courses as are required to address the practical implementation of these policy commitments in the various workplaces and work activities.

All relevant documentary material will be held in the Corporate Health and Safety Unit's webpage which is available to all staff through Interlink. These arrangements are living documents that will be revised as and when required, with any such revisions being brought to the attention of affected staff.

Signed:

Chair of Strategic Policy and  
Resources Committee

Chief Executive

City Solicitor (Nominated  
Health & Safety Director)

Date tbc