

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



**Belfast
City Council**

6th January, 2023

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The Council will meet in hybrid format, both in the Council Chamber, City Hall, Belfast and remotely, via Microsoft Teams, on Monday, 9th January, 2023 at 6.00 pm, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

John Walsh

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

1. **Summons**
2. **Apologies**
3. **Declarations of Interest**
4. **Minutes of Council Meetings (Pages 1 - 16)**
5. **Official Announcements**
6. **Change of Membership on Committees/Outside Bodies**
7. **Minutes of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee (Pages 17 - 44)**
8. **Minutes of People and Communities Committee (Pages 45 - 78)**
9. **Minutes of City Growth and Regeneration Committee (Pages 79 - 112)**
10. **Minutes of Licensing Committee (Pages 113 - 122)**
11. **Minutes of Planning Committee (Pages 123 - 134)**

12. **Minutes of the Climate and City Resilience Committee (Pages 135 - 138)**
13. **Minutes of Standards and Business Committee (Pages 139 - 140)**

Council

MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held in the Council Chamber, City Hall and remotely, via Microsoft Teams, on Thursday, 1st December, 2022 at 6.00 p.m., pursuant to notice.

Members present: The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor; (Councillor Black) (Chairperson);
The Deputy Lord Mayor, (Councillor M. Kelly);
The High Sheriff, (Councillor Hussey);
Aldermen Copeland, Dorrian, Haire, McCoubrey, Rodgers and Sandford; and
Councillors Beattie, Bradley, Bower, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, de Faoite, M. Donnelly, R.M. Donnelly, Duffy, Ferguson, Flynn, Garrett, Gormley, Groogan, Hanvey, Heading, Howard, Hutchinson, T. Kelly, Kyle, Long, Lyons, Magee, Maghie, Maskey, McAteer, McCabe, McCann, McCullough, McDonough-Brown, McKeown, McLaughlin, McMullan, Murphy, Murray, Nelson, Newton, O'Hara, Pankhurst, Smyth, Spratt, Thompson, Verner, Walsh and Whyte.

Summons

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor Douglas.

Declarations of Interest

Councillors Gormley, Groogan, Hutchinson and Thompson declared an interest in relation to the minute of the meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 18th November, under the heading "Fuel Poverty Hardship Fund", in that they worked for or were associated with organisations referred to within the report. The Members left the meeting when the item was being discussed.

Councillors Hutchinson, McCullough and Newton declared an interest in relation to the minute of the meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 18th November, under the heading "Update on Special Meetings of the Area Working Group – Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund Stage 1 Applications", in that they worked for or were associated with organisations that had applied for funding. They left the room whilst the item was being considered.

Councillor Newton declared an interest in the Motion - Translink - Night-time Provision of Services, as the Company for which he was employed worked with Translink. He left the room whilst the item was being considered.

**Meeting of Council,
Thursday, 1st December, 2022**

Minutes of the Council

Moved by the Lord Mayor (Councillor Black),
Seconded by Councillor Beattie and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the monthly meeting of the Council of 1st November, be taken as read and signed as correct.

Official Announcements

Resignations

The Lord Mayor advised that Councillor Corr had resigned from the Council and she, along with several other Members from across the Chamber, paid tribute to the excellent work that he had undertaken during his time as a Councillor.

The Lord Mayor also advised that Councillor Pankhurst would be stepping down as a Councillor during December, therefore this would be his last meeting. Several Members from across the Chamber thanked Councillor Pankhurst for his contribution and dedication and wished him well for the future.

Welcome

The Lord Mayor welcomed Councillor Róis-Máire Donnelly to her first meeting of Council and wished her well in her new position as Councillor.

Condolences

The Lord Mayor, on behalf of the Council, offered condolences to the family of Ronan Kelly, Continuous Improvement Manager, particularly to his partner Paula Carville, on his recent passing.

The Lord Mayor also paid tribute to Paul Surgenor, HMO Technical Officer, who had recently passed away, and extended condolences to his family.

Councillor McCabe offered condolences to the family of Vicky Phelan, who had recently passed away following a long battle with Cervical Cancer, after receiving a misdiagnosis in 2001. She commended the work that Vicky had undertaken since her diagnosis, having tirelessly campaigned to raise awareness of cervical cancer and for better healthcare. She advised that she had written to the Lord Mayor's office seeking the Council to host an event on 23rd January to mark Cervical Cancer Prevention Week, 23rd January – 29th January 2023.

Several Members referred with sadness to the recent passing of Dr Eamon Phoenix and paid tribute to his excellent work as a historian and broadcaster, noting his contribution to the Council during its Decade of Centenaries Programme.

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Councillor de Faoite extended condolences to the family of Robert Morrow, Director of International Leadership Centre at Boston College, he advised that he had been a great friend of Belfast and had been deeply interested in the future success of the city and asked that the Lord Mayor, on behalf of the Council, write to extend condolences to his wife and family.

General/Congratulations

Councillor McCabe, as Chair of the Women's Steering Group, commended the work of the Council and its staff regarding a number of recent Council initiatives and awards that had been achieved which recognised the Council's commitment around the issue of violence against woman.

Councillor O'Hara highlighted that today was World Aids Day, a day dedicated to raising awareness about HIV and how it was spread and to commemorate those who had died. He thanked the Lord Mayor and the Members for wearing a red ribbon which he had circulated earlier to help raise awareness. Councillors Murray and Long commended the work of Positive Life and the Rainbow project in supporting people with HIV.

Councillors Smyth and de Faoite congratulated East Belfast GAA in its recent victory achieving Co. Down Junior Camogie Champions.

Councillor McKeown congratulated St Brigid's on winning the County Antrim u20 men's football championship.

Councillor de Faoite commended the Council on Belfast having been listed as one of the world's leading climate action cities by the Carbon Disclosure Project and welcomed the recognition that the Council had been given for its work in relation to the One Million Trees initiative.

Councillor Gormley congratulated South Belfast man Mark Shanks on his recent inclusion on the Republic of Ireland Soccer Squad, he noted his successful debut against Malta, and wished him well in his future career.

Change of Membership on Committees/Outside Bodies

The Chief Executive reported that notification had been received from both the Alliance and Sinn Fein Parties, of the following changes in membership:

Alliance Party

- Councillor Murray to replace Councillor McMullan as Chairperson of the People and Communities Committee; and
- Councillor Murray to replace The Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor M. Kelly, on the Northern Ireland Housing Council.

**Meeting of Council,
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Sinn Fein

- Councillor Róis-Máire Donnelly to replace former Councillor Corr on the West Belfast Partnership Board;
- Councillor Carson to replace former Councillor Corr on the Northern Ireland Local Government Association;
- Councillor McCann to replace former Councillor Corr on the City Centre Management Board; and
- Councillor Magee to fill the vacancy on Groundwork NI

The Council noted the changes.

Request to Address the Council

The Council noted that this request had been withdrawn from the agenda.

Minutes of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Moved by Councillor McDonough-Brown,
Seconded by Councillor Murphy,

That the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 18th November, 2022, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Revenue Estimates and District Rate 2023-24

At the request of Councillor McLaughlin, the Council agreed that a report would be submitted to a future meeting which would consider the structure of the Corporate Management Team.

Amendment

Fuel Poverty Hardship Fund

Moved by Councillor Flynn,
Seconded by Councillor Smyth,

That the Council agrees that the threshold for household income to apply for the fuel poverty fund be reduced to £43,400, as per the Joseph Rowntree guidance as the minimum household income to achieve a decent standard of living and that Option 4 be applied as the Hybrid Working Model, that is, referral through Strategic Partners and verification through a Citywide Partner.

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On a recorded vote, twenty-four Members voted for the amendment and thirty against and it was declared lost.

<u>For 24</u>	<u>Against 30</u>
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor M. Kelly); Aldermen Copeland and Rodgers; and Councillors Bower, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, de Faoite, Ferguson, Flynn, Hanvey, Heading, Howard, Kyle, Long, Lyons, Maghie, McDonough-Brown, McKeown, McMullan, Murray, Nelson, O'Hara, Smyth and Whyte.	The Lord Mayor (Councillor Black); The High Sheriff (Councillor Hussey); Aldermen Dorrian, Haire, McCoubrey and Sandford. Councillors Beattie, Bradley, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, M. Donnelly, R.M. Donnelly, Duffy, Garrett, T. Kelly, Magee, Maskey, McAteer, McCabe, McCann, McCullough, McLaughlin, Murphy, Newton, Pankhurst, Spratt, Verner and Walsh.

Amendment 2

Moved by Councillor Murphy
Seconded by Councillor McLaughlin,

That the Council agrees, in terms of the delivery model, to adopt Option 2 within the report, to use the Local Strategic Partners, and agrees also that the Ashton Centre replace Intercomm as a Strategic Partner in North Belfast. That it agrees that it would be paid before Christmas, if the groups had the capacity to do so, and that the threshold for household income to apply for the fuel poverty fund be set at 60K. It also agrees that there should be sufficient flexibility in the scheme to include those using direct debits as a payment method.

For clarity, the Council agreed to call a recess to enable officers to circulate the amendment to all Members.

Upon the resumption of the meeting, the Council voted on the amendment.

On a recorded vote, thirty Members voted for the amendment and twenty-four against and it was declared carried.

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Thursday, 1st December, 2022**

<u>For 30</u>	<u>Against 24</u>
<p>The Lord Mayor (Councillor Black); The High Sheriff (Councillor Hussey); Aldermen Dorrian, Haire, McCoubrey and Sandford. Councillors Beattie, Bradley, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, M. Donnelly, R.M. Donnelly, Duffy, Garrett, T. Kelly, Magee, Maskey, McAteer, McCabe, McCann, McCullough, McLaughlin, Murphy, Newton, Pankhurst, Spratt, Verner and Walsh.</p>	<p>The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor M. Kelly); Aldermen Copeland and Rodgers; and Councillors Bower, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, de Faoite, Ferguson, Flynn, Harvey, Heading, Howard, Kyle, Long, Lyons, Maghie, McDonough-Brown, McKeown, McMullan, Murray, Nelson, O’Hara, Smyth and White.</p>

The amendment was then put to the Council as the substantive motion and accordingly agreed as follows:

“In terms of the delivery model, to adopt Option 2 within the report, to use the Local Strategic Partners, and agrees also that the Ashton Centre replace Intercomm as a Strategic Partner in North Belfast and that the Greater Shankill Community Council replace the Greater Shankill Partnership as a Strategic Partner in West Belfast.

- i. to increase the Hardship fund to £1m, with this allocation to be met, in the first instance, from Departmental underspends and from the realignment of specified reserves, if required;
- ii. it would be paid before Christmas if the groups have the capacity to do so;
- iii. to endorse the Design Principles set out within paragraph 3.7 of the report;
- iv. to endorse the recommendation to establish a Cost-of-Living Task Group, with membership to be confirmed but to include, as a minimum, representatives from the Council, the Department for Communities, the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and the Belfast Area Partnerships, to ensure that effective referral pathways are created to support the most vulnerable within the City;
- v. to endorse the eligibility criteria set out within paragraph 3.11 of the report, subject to an increase in the gross annual household income eligibility to £60k, to ensure that those most in need, including the working poor, were targeted;

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- vi. that there be sufficient flexibility in the scheme to ensure that householders using forms of heating other than oil and payment methods other than vouchers are included to include those using direct debits as a payment method and that this be referred to the Cost-of-Living Task Group to work out the detail;
- vii. to note that correspondence had been forwarded to the Department of Communities requesting that consideration be given to potential match funding for the Fuel Hardship Scheme, as requested within the motion;
- viii. to note that the design and delivery of the scheme would have implications internally, particularly for those staff leading on community planning and on community capacity/neighbourhood integration and that assistance would also be required from the Finance and Audit Sections, in terms of ensuring that all necessary requirements and regulations were met;
- ix. to note that, in anticipation of any additional funding becoming available, including through Government departments, Council officers were currently developing a funding framework, details of which would be provided at the Committee meeting in December; and
- x. agreed that a report be submitted to the Committee within the next two months providing an update on the work being undertaken to review the strategic and thematic partners.”

Amendment

**Update on Special Meetings of the Area Working Groups –
Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund Stage 1 Applications Fund**

Moved by Councillor Murray,
Seconded by Councillor O’Hara,

That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 18th November, under the heading “Update on Special Meetings of the Area Working Groups – Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund Stage 1 Applications” be rejected and accordingly, the Council agrees that the amendment to the South Belfast Area Working Group be reversed and the Council reverts to the original proposal and not include the additional group.

On a recorded vote, fifteen Members voted for the amendment, thirty-three against and with five no votes it was declared lost.

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Thursday, 1st December, 2022**

<u>For 15</u>	<u>Against 33</u>	<u>No Vote 5</u>
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor M. Kelly); Alderman Rodgers; Councillors Bower, Flynn, Hanvey, Howard, Kyle, Long, Maghie, McDonough-Brown, McMullan, Murray, Nelson, O'Hara and Smyth.	The Lord Mayor (Councillor Black); The High Sheriff Councillor Hussey; Aldermen Dorrian, Haire, McCoubrey and Sandford; Councillors Beattie, Bradley, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, M. Donnelly, R.M. Donnelly, Duffy, Ferguson, Garrett, Gormley, T. Kelly, Magee, Maskey, McAteer, McCabe, McCann, McLaughlin, Murphy, Pankhurst, Spratt, Thompson, Verner and Walsh.	Councillor de Faoite, Heading, Lyons, McKeown and Whyte.

Update on Research into the Lived Experiences of Minority Ethnic Communities in Belfast

At the request of Councillor Ferguson, the Chief Executive undertook to submit an update report in regard to the position and role of Diversity Champion within the Council.

Asset Management

At the request of Councillor McKeown, the Chief Executive undertook to investigate if the licence fee of £7,575 for the use of the contractor's compound at Ormeau Park for a further nine months could be increased.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing addition and amendment, the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 18th November, were approved and adopted.

Minutes of People and Communities Committee

Moved by Councillor Murray,
Seconded by Councillor McLaughlin,

That the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 8th and 22nd November be approved and adopted.

**Meeting of Council,
Thursday, 1st December, 2022**

Tree Strategy

At the request of Councillor de Faoite, the Council agreed to engage with DFI seeking it to include the installation of tree pits as road chicanes in residential areas to increase overall tree coverage, slow the speed of traffic, promote road safety, and support the development of active travel.

Enforcement Action within Smoke Control Areas

At the request of Councillor Garrett, the Council agreed that the minute be amended to reflect that it had been agreed that a report would be submitted to a future meeting which would contain detail regarding the data within smokeless zones and include enforcement action detail that had been taken around bonfires, including information regarding the regulation and management of bonfires.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendments and additions, the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 8th and 22nd November, were approved and adopted.

Minutes of City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Moved by Councillor Murphy,
Seconded by Councillor McLaughlin,

That the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 26th October and 9th November be approved and adopted.

Cultural Mapping for Culture, Arts and Heritage

At the request of Alderman Dorrian, it was agreed that the minute be referred back to Committee for further consideration as he had been liaising with the Director of Economic Development regarding the listing of an additional ten venues which he wished to ensure had been included prior to the minute being ratified.

Christmas Update

The Council agreed that a report would be submitted to a future meeting which would detail the health and safety advice that had been given and also give consideration to the running of a Tree Lighting event in future years.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendments and additions, the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 26th October and 9th November, were approved and adopted.

**Meeting of Council,
Thursday, 1st December, 2022**

Minutes of Licensing Committee

Moved by Councillor Matt Collins,
Seconded by Councillor Beattie,

That the minutes of the proceedings of the Licensing Committee of 16th November, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Review of Pavement Café Licence

At the request of Councillor Nelson, in the advance of any decision having been made in respect of the pavement café licences, the Council agreed to write to the Department for Infrastructure asking it to consider a partial road closure for Fountain Street.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing addition, the minutes of the proceedings of the Licensing Committee of 16th November, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, were approved and adopted.

Minutes of Planning Committee

Moved by Councillor Whyte,
Seconded by Councillor Groogan,

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee of 15th and 17th November, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

**Minutes of Belfast Waterfront and Ulster
Hall Ltd Shareholders' Committee**

Moved by Councillor Maghie,
Seconded by Councillor Smyth,

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Shareholders' Committee of 14th November, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Minutes of the Climate and City Resilience Committee

Moved by Councillor Walsh,
Seconded by Councillor McCabe,

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Climate and City Resilience Committee of 10th November, 2022 be approved and adopted.

**Meeting of Council,
Thursday, 1st December, 2022**

Amendment

Committee Schedule 2023

Moved by Councillor Thompson,
Seconded by Councillor Spratt,

That the Climate and Resilience Committee meet bi-monthly and that the Committee Members avail of the Climate Literacy Training when it becomes available.

On a recorded vote, eighteen Members voted for the amendment, thirty-nine against and with one no vote it was declared lost.

<u>For 18</u>	<u>Against 39</u>	<u>No Vote 1</u>
The High Sheriff Councillor Hussey; Aldermen Copeland, Dorrian, Haire, McCoubrey, Rodgers and Sandford; Councillors Bunting, Cobain, Howard, T. Kelly, Kyle, McCullough, Newton, Pankhurst, Spratt, Thompson and Verner.	The Lord Mayor (Councillor Black); The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor M. Kelly); Councillors Beattie, Bradley, Bower, Canavan, Carson, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, de Faoite, M. Donnelly, R.M. Donnelly, Duffy, Ferguson, Flynn, Garrett, Gormley, Groogan, Harvey, Heading, Long, Lyons, Magee, Maghie, Maskey, McAteer, McCabe, McCann, McDonough-Brown, McKeown, McLaughlin, McMullan, Murphy, Murray, Nelson, O'Hara, Smyth, Walsh and Whyte.	Councillor Hutchinson

Resolved - That the Minutes of the proceedings of the Climate and City Resilience Committee of 10th November, 2022 be approved and adopted.

Minutes of Standards and Business Committee

Moved by Councillor Harvey
Seconded by Councillor Duffy,

Resolved - That the Minutes of the proceedings of the Standards and Business Committee of 24th November, 2022, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

**Meeting of Council,
Thursday, 1st December, 2022**

Motions

Translink - Night-time Provision of Services

In accordance with notice on the agenda, Councillor Lyons proposed:

“This Council calls on Translink to extend the night-time provision of its Metro and Glider bus services.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor de Faoite.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Long,
Seconded by Councillor de Faoite,

That the motion standing in the name of Councillor Lyons and seconded by Councillor de Faoite be amended to also include:

“This Council will further engage with Translink about setting up a free public transport initiative on certain days and evenings in the run up to Christmas 2023.”

The proposer agreed to accept the amendment.

The motion was put to the meeting and passed.

Parental Alienation

The Council noted that the Motion had been withdrawn from the agenda.

Lord Mayor
Chairperson

Council

SPECIAL MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held in the Council Chamber, City Hall and remotely, via Microsoft Teams, on Wednesday, 7th December, 2022 at 12.00 p.m., pursuant to notice.

Members present: The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor; (Councillor Black) (Chairperson);
Aldermen Copeland, Dorrian, Haire, McCoubrey, Rodgers and Sandford; and
Councillors Beattie, Bradley, Bower, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, de Faoite, Micheal Donnelly, Rois-Maire Donnelly, Douglas, Duffy, Flynn, Garrett, Gormley, Hanvey, Heading, Howard, T. Kelly, Kyle, Lyons, Magee, Maskey, McAteer, McCabe, McCann, McCullough, McKeown, McLoughlin, Murphy, Murray, O'Hara, Pankhurst, Spratt, Thompson, Verner, Walsh and Whyte.

Summons

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported on behalf of The Deputy Lord Mayor, (Councillor M. Kelly and Councillors Ferguson, Groogan, Maghie, McMullan, Nelson and Smyth.

Motion

Energy Support Payment

Moved by Councillor Murphy,
Seconded by Councillor Micheal Donnelly,

“This Council is deeply concerned that the £600 energy support payment due to people across the North of Ireland who are enduring severe cost-of-living pressures has not yet been made, despite DUP assurances that it would be paid in November.

Notes that as a result of the DUP boycott of power-sharing, responsibility for delivering this payment rests with the British Government.

Is further concerned that as temperatures drop and winter deepens many families struggling to pay soaring energy bills will have budgeted for this payment being made before Christmas as promised.

And therefore, call on the British government to urgently provide clarity on the delivery of the payments, it is well past time that these were delivered with no more broken promises.”

**Special Meeting of Council,
Wednesday, 7th December, 2022**

Amendment 1

Moved by Alderman Dorrian,
Seconded by Councillor Spratt

“In this time of increased cost of living this council calls for the EU and British Government to quickly find workable solutions to replace the NI protocol that respect the principle of consent embedded in the Belfast Agreement and all preceding and subsequent agreements to enable all parties to return to Stormont and serve the needs of all people and communities in Northern Ireland”

On a vote, fourteen Members voted for the amendment and thirty-one against and it was declared lost.

Amendment 2

Moved by Councillor Hanvey,
Seconded by Councillor Murray,

That the motion standing in the name of Councillor Murphy and seconded by Councillor Micheal Donnelly be amended to include:

“Furthermore, this Council will write to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to implore him to ensure that the energy support payment is made payable as swiftly as possible.”

Therefore, the motion, as amended, would read:

“This Council is deeply concerned that the £600 energy support payment due to people across the North of Ireland who are enduring severe cost-of-living pressures has not yet been made, despite DUP assurances that it would be paid in November.

Notes that as a result of the DUP boycott of power-sharing, responsibility for delivering this payment rests with the British Government.

Is further concerned that as temperatures drop and winter deepens many families struggling to pay soaring energy bills will have budgeted for this payment being made before Christmas as promised.

And therefore, call on the British government to urgently provide clarity on the delivery of the payments, it is well past time that these were delivered with no more broken promises.

Furthermore, this Council will write to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to implore him to ensure that the energy support payment is made payable as swiftly as possible.”

**Special Meeting of Council,
Wednesday, 7th December, 2022**

The proposer agreed to accept the amendment. The Council voted on the motion as amended by Councillor Harvey, which was now the substantive motion. On a vote, thirty-one Members voted for it, twelve against and with two no votes, it was declared carried.

Lord Mayor
Chairperson

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Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 16th December, 2022

MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE LAVERY ROOM AND REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

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

In attendance: Mr. J. Walsh, Chief Executive;
Ms. N. Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and
Civic Services;
Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes;
Ms. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and
Development;
Mr. D. Sales, Director of Neighbourhood Services;
Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy;
Mr. T. Wallace, Director of Finance;
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer; and
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 18th November were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council, at its meeting on 1st December, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

Declarations of Interest

Councillors Garrett, Groogan and Spratt declared an interest in respect of agenda item 2c – Update on North Foreshore, on the basis that they were on the Planning Committee and left the meeting whilst it was under consideration.

Councillor Groogan declared an interest in relation to agenda item 2d – Fuel Poverty Hardship Fund, in that she was employed by one of the Strategic Partners named in the appendix to the report and left the meeting whilst it was under consideration.

B4355

Restricted Items

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

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

Revenue Estimates and District Rate 2023/24

The Director of Finance submitted for the Committee's consideration a report providing an update on the development of the revenue estimates for 2023/24 and outlining the next steps in the rate setting process.

After discussion, the Committee:

- i. noted the update on the development of the revenue estimates and the setting of the District Rate;
- ii. agreed that further Party briefings be held to enable the issues which had been raised by Members to be addressed in greater detail;
- iii. approved the following next steps in the process:
 - a. that a special meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee be convened on 13th January, to receive an update report on how an indicative rate could be achieved;
 - b. that further consideration be given to the increase in fees and charges being proposed within the report;
 - c. that a Finance Strategy be developed to ensure the affordability and financial sustainability of Council finances over the medium term;
 - d. that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 13th January, agree the cash limits for Committees and the level of the District Rate to be set for 2023/24;
 - e. that special meetings of the City Growth and Regeneration, People and Communities and Planning Committees be arranged for week commencing 16th January to approve their respective cash limits; and

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 16th December, 2022**

- f. that the district rate increase for 2023/24 be agreed at the meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 20th January, after final consideration of the Chief Finance Officer's statements on the adequacy of the Council's reserve position and the robustness of the revenue estimates, as required by the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.
- iv. noted that the setting of the District Rate was a decision which must be made at a meeting of the Council and that, legally, this must occur by 15th February, 2023;
- v. noted that information on external consultancy costs incurred over the course of the current Council term, which had been requested at the Committee meeting on 21st October, would be circulated in advance of the Party briefings, with a more detailed report to be submitted to the monthly meeting in January;
- vi. granted approval for officers to write to Central Government Departments to call for the transfer of certain powers to the Council, to enable it to review those charges which were currently set by statute; and
- vii. noted the information which had been provided by the Chief Executive in relation to the Pay and Grading Review and:
 - a. authorised him to continue with the negotiations, on the basis of that information; and
 - b. noted that the implications of the Review would be considered as part of the revenue estimates/rate setting process, with further discussion to take place at the Party briefings and the special meeting of the Committee on 13th January.

Update on Contracts

The Committee:

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

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Table 1: Competitive Tenders

Title of Tender	Proposed Contract Duration	Estimated Total Contract Value	SRO	Short description of goods / services
Daisy Telephone service provision, Calls / Lines / Broadband	Up to 12 months	£83,810	P. Gribben	The corporate telephony solution requires that all devices and users have ongoing service provision.
Professional contractor to engagement, management and physical delivery of the international residency project in partnership with British Council *Previously approval Aug 2022 for 18 months but now reviewed duration is 24 months	Up to 24 months	£160,000	J. Greer	The project requires a local delivery organisation to work with BCC producer to identify the 4-5 local locations, partner with local organisation in the area, and oversee and administer the 5 residencies of the artists visiting NI.
Supply, delivery and fitting of hydraulic hoses on vehicles and mobile plant	Up to 3 years	£80,000	C. Matthews	This is a specialist service which cannot be carried out in-house.
To supply Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil bulk fuel (HVO) which has up to 85/90% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions for daily fleet usage from the Duncrue Complex	Up to 4 years	£6,000,000	C. Matthews	To ensure that the Council's vehicles based at Duncrue Complex use the lowest carbon fuel available on its transition journey to achieving a zero net carbon output by 2030/2040/2050 through low carbon fuels, new technologies and new vehicles.
Supply of summer and winter bedding plants	Up to 3 years	£240,000	D. Sales	Annual floral displays across the City.
Supply and delivery of litter pickers tools for Stores	Up to 3 years	£75,000	S. Grimes	Litter pickers tools required to support in house teams/ operatives.
Regeneration Framework	Up to 2 years	£200,000	C. Reynolds	Commission of services to produce Regeneration Framework inc. housing led and place-based regeneration, funding advocacy proposition and

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				programme level business cases for the Council.
Installation of wireless digital connectivity network infrastructure in three rooms in City Hall	Up to 18 months	£175,000	J. Tully	A wireless digital connectivity network is required to support the Council's Augment the City programme and related digital projects.
Provision of Parking Enforcement for 8 Local Authorities in Northern Ireland	Up to 9 years	£13.5m (BCC spend - £2,25m over 9 years)	S. Toland	Off Street Car Parking enforcement contract and associated services for the efficient management for 8 local authorities across Northern Ireland. BCC is conducting joint procurement exercise on behalf of 8 local authorities.
Retail catering and small/medium sized event catering at Belfast Castle and Malone House	Up to 5 years	£6m (Estimated potential revenue for the Contractor)	J. Greer	To provide retail catering (i.e. café/restaurant) and small/ medium sized event catering at Belfast Castle and Malone House.

Table 2: Single Tender Actions

Title	Duration	Total Value	SRO	Description	Supplier
Retail catering and small/medium sized event catering at Belfast Castle and Malone House	Up to 1 year	£1.2m (Estimated potential revenue for the Contractor)	J. Greer	This STA will ensure that the venues are re-opened for business as soon as possible whilst an open procurement exercise is conducted.	USEL

Table 3: Modification to Contract

Title of Contract	Duration	Modification	SRO	Description	Supplier
T1980a Enterprise Pathway Programme	Up to 3 years	Additional 8 weeks	J. Greer	An extension would allow participants to get full benefit of mentoring hours	North City Business Centre

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				allocated. This would also provide additional time to complete all necessary monitoring and vouching required in good time prior to financial year end.	
ITT 34620 - MTC for repair and planned maintenance of small engineering and metalwork	Up to 3 years	Additional 3 months	S. Grimes	To allow the unit to update the tender documentation as part of a new procurement exercise. This will ensure the incumbent contractor can continue to carry out essential services until the new contract is in place.	WJM Building Services Ltd.
T1990(b) Cinematography for PEACE IV Programme Services	Up to 37 months	Additional 2 months	D. Sales	This extension will allow for all filming to be captured fully to allow the final programme clips to include footage from all aspects of the programme. The Contract was uplifted in October 2020 by £2,920 for voiceover and still images. The Contract was extended/modified to cover 1st January 2022 to 31st October 2022 and included an uplift of £5,720.00 with approval by the Committee in December 2021.	Morrow Communications
T2203 PEACE IV Youth Engagement & Civic Education Project	Up to 13 months	Additional 2 months and £16,000	D. Sales	There has been significant delay with the project progressing due to	Youth Link NI

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				recent interruptions due to staff testing positive for COVID. These additional two months would further help with project delivery and the achievement of the agreed targets.	
T1846 Collection and Treatment of Mixed Waste Materials – Timber and Hard Plastics T2006 Collection and reuse/recycling of Plasterboard T1896 Collection and Treatment of Paints and Varnishes	Up to 50 months	Additional 3 months and £125,000	C Matthews	A new tender process (T2310) which, is an amalgamation of three separate contracts listed, is currently under evaluation process. There is a delayed due to the necessary clarification of responses provided by the seven bidders, including social value responses. An extension is requested to ensure a thorough evaluation process is carried out.	T1846 MacNabb Bros and R. Heatrick Ltd T2006 MacNabb Bros T1896 Irish Waste Services

Update on North Foreshore

This minute has been restricted on the basis of Commercial Sensitivity. The restriction will be removed in due course.

Fuel Poverty Hardship Fund

The Director of Neighbourhood Services submitted for the Committee's consideration a report providing an update on the work being undertaken around the implementation of the Fuel Poverty Hardship Scheme.

After a lengthy discussion, the Committee agreed that the restriction which had been placed on the report be removed to enable it to be included in the minute of the meeting.

Accordingly, the Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the ongoing work to implement the Fuel Hardship scheme, as discussed previously at Committee and as agreed by the Council on 1st December, 2022.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 In line with the Council decision of 1st December, the Committee is asked to:

- i.** note the proposed phased commencement of the scheme pre and post-Christmas implementation dependent upon partners’ capacity (as agreed by Full Council);
- ii.** note the proposed flexibility to support those who pay utilities via direct debit;
- iii.** note that the initial proposal to establish a Cost-of-Living Task Force has now been superseded by the decision taken by the Council on 1st December 2022, in relation to confirming eligibility criteria and design principles; and
- iv.** provide direction on the potential for the Council to support full cost recovery for strategic partners in relation to essential costs/expenses incurred in delivering the Fuel Hardship Scheme. NB. it is anticipated that, in total, this would amount to no more than £100,000 and would be awarded outside of the £1m allocated to the Fuel Hardship Fund.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Members will recall the discussion at last month’s Committee meeting and subsequent decisions taken by the Council on 1st December, in relation to the design and delivery of the £1million Fuel Hardship Voucher Scheme. As instructed by Members, officers have continued to work up the practicalities on how the scheme would be implemented.

Key Considerations

3.2 Taking into account the decision register for the Council meeting, officers have continued to work on the design and

delivery framework for the scheme, incorporating the following planning assumptions:

- an increase in the value of the Fuel Hardship Fund to £1m;
- 100% of the £1m funding would be for the issue of one-off vouchers to eligible households;
- no allowance has been made in relation to 'full cost recovery' for delivery partners;
- strategic partners will receive 100% of their funding allocation upfront in order to get the vouchers on the ground as quickly as possible;
- the scheme would commence before Christmas where the delivery partners have capacity;
- the one-off vouchers would be for fuel (e.g. oil/gas/electricity or mixture of these); and
- there would be sufficient flexibility in the scheme to support those who pay for their utilities via direct debit.

3.3 Detailed work continues by officers and Strategic Partners to bring this scheme into effect. Based on discussions with delivery partners, a number of areas are set out below for the Committee's consideration.

- i Commencement - confirmed with strategic partners the ability to commence the scheme before Christmas where the capacity exists to do so;
- ii Eligibility Criteria – in terms of ensuring flexibility in the scheme to support those who may pay for their utilities via direct debit, it has been confirmed that local arrangements can be put in place to enable the direct transfer of payment(s) to the recipient's direct debit utility account via BACs. Delivery partners have indicated that, whilst this is possible, it is more complex and time consuming to implement;
- iii Implementation Costs - Members are asked to note a strong consensus across strategic partners that the £1m funding made available by the Council should be allocated in full through the voucher scheme to those households in need. However, a number of partners also highlighted that there would be additional essential expenses and costs incurred in delivering

the scheme (e.g. printing and distribution costs, extended work patterns including evening and weekend and associated staffing, volunteering, utility and fuel/transport costs);

- iv Partners have stated that they do not wish to delay progress in getting the full £1m voucher scheme on the ground and recognised that any position taken on covering additional costs incurred will be subject to further political consideration and decision. Partners have therefore indicated that they are willing to proceed at risk, subject to Committee and Council decision on this issue. Members are therefore asked to consider whether an additional allocation of up to 10%/£100,000 could be made to support essential core costs attached to the delivery of the scheme. Partners have asked to provide officers with a figure in relation to covering the additional associated costs (on the understanding that this should be no more than 10% of their original funding allocation) and to included it in their project proposal documentation albeit with the caveat, as noted previously, that this will need member consideration and agreement; and
- v Cost-of-Living Task Group – The decision taken by the Council on 1st December 2022 in relation to confirming the eligibility criteria and design principles for the Fuel Hardship Fund supersedes the need to take forward the proposal to set up a Cost-of-Living Task Group at this stage.

4.0 Financial and Resource Implications

- 4.1 Any discussion and/or decision in principle taken by the Committee in relation to meeting the cost implications of implementing the scheme over and above the £1,000,000 would have to be added to the 2022/23 forecast deficit of £2.7m and found through further in-year savings or out of specified reserves.

5.0 Equality and Good Relations

- 5.1 Whilst the scheme will be open to all eligible households on a first come first served basis and within budget limitations, targeted information will be shared with specific Section 75 groups including Age Friendly Groups, via the Migrant Forum, Disability Action and Locality Partnerships.”

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After further discussion, the Committee adopted recommendations i., ii. and iii., as set out within the report. In terms of recommendation iv., it was agreed that the Council would support full cost recovery for strategic partners in relation to essential costs/expenses incurred in delivering the Fuel Hardship Scheme, up to a maximum of £100,000, which would be in addition to the £1m which had been allocated to the overall Fund.

The Committee noted, in response to a reference which had been made by a Member to a recent Spotlight broadcast around food bank users in Northern Ireland being targeted by paramilitary loan sharks, that the report on the use of strategic partners, which was due to be presented to the Committee early in the new year, would also include information on the oversight measures in place for the Fuel Poverty Hardship Scheme.

Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues

**Response to SONI Consultation
on Energising Belfast Project**

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 To update the Committee on SONI’s consultation on Energising Belfast Project and present an officer submission for approval.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is requested to review the following officer submission to the SONI Energising Belfast Project, which has been forwarded to SONI on the understanding that Committee approval and Council ratification is required:

2.2 *‘Belfast City Council broadly welcomes the approach being taken by SONI within the Energising Belfast Project. The Council appreciates the efforts to minimise disruption to residents and businesses in Belfast.*

2.3 *In relation to the benefits of the project, as set out in SONI plans, these align with both the Council’s and the city ambitions to enhance resilience, to become net zero, while supporting economic development, as set out in the Belfast Agenda, the Belfast Resilience Strategy, the Belfast Net Zero Carbon Roadmap, Belfast Region City Deal and the Draft Belfast Economic Strategy.*

2.4 *The Council will develop a Belfast Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) by the end of 2023. It would welcome SONI involvement in the LAEP process and alignment between SONI plans and those of the Council and city partners. The Council would welcome regular updates and meetings with SONI in relation to*

the Energising Belfast project so that officers and Elected Members can support local engagement and enhanced communication around this initiative and others.'

3.0 Main Report

- 3.1** SONI is the electricity transmission system operator for Northern Ireland. SONI plans for the future of the electricity grid and operate it. This includes interconnecting to neighbouring grids and running the wholesale electricity market. The grid brings power from generators and sends it to NIE Networks. NIE then supplies electricity to every home, farm, community and business in Northern Ireland via its distribution network.
- 3.2** The Energising Belfast Project documentation describes the ambition to ensure that Belfast City Centre, its people and its businesses have the clean energy needed to grow. SONI states that 'a thriving City centre is vital to the prosperity of the entire city and region and this project will deliver a grid ready to power the clean energy transition. This scheme will support the aspirations of the Council's 'Belfast Agenda' to increase the employment and residential population in the city.'
- 3.3** The project aims to future proof the transmission system in Belfast to ensure businesses have capacity and the power they need to expand in the near-term and into the future, supporting the economic and societal vision of the Belfast Region City Deal and all partner councils in the Greater Belfast area. SONI is responsible for the design and securing planning consent and NIE Networks will lead on the construction phase of the project.
- 3.4** The project will deliver a new high-capacity underground cable in Belfast City Centre, as well as a new transformer at Castlereagh Main substation. SONI is also assessing the potential to build new substations at or next to existing sites in the city, or at new sites close by. This would mean that SONI can remove older overhead lines in the future and prepare the transmission system in the Greater Belfast area for future population and economic growth, as well as the electrification of heating and transport.
- 3.5** SONI has recently held consultation sessions in Belfast, more information on which can be found by clicking [here](#). This included a meeting on 14th September with the Council's Party Leaders to update them on the project. Feedback from that session has informed the Council's response.

Financial and Resource Implications

3.6 None

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

3.7 None.”

The Committee approved the response to SONI’s consultation on Energising Belfast Project, as set out within the report.

Complex Lives - Creation of Reserve

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an outline in relation to funding received in-year across partners to support the scaling up of the Complex Lives (CL) approach, to highlight the limited timeframe in relation to being able to fully allocate/spend and, therefore, to seek Committee approval to create a reserve to assist with the recruitment and retention of required posts and maximise spend in-year and on in 2023/24 whilst partners are confirming budgets for next year.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- i. approve the creation of a dedicated Complex Lives reserve, to be held and administered within City and Neighbourhood Services Department; and
- ii. note that work is ongoing with statutory and community and voluntary partners via the relevant structures (i.e. Strategic Leadership Group – meets quarterly, and the CL Steering Group – meets monthly) to identify and agree in-year spend priorities, progress with recruitment in-year, and to seek budget allocation for 2023/24.

3.0 Main Report

Background

3.1 The Committee will be aware that the Council is leading, alongside a range of partners, in developing the Complex Lives whole system approach to better support individuals impacted

by chronic homelessness in the City. The design of the model has been informed by proven approaches developed in Doncaster and aims to help a core group of vulnerable people who are locked in a cycle of rough sleeping with repeated accommodation breakdowns, who have poor physical and mental health, drug misuse issues, offending behaviour, often impacted by past and ongoing trauma.

- 3.2 The Belfast Complex Lives model commenced its prototyping phase in October 2021, following a period of collective agreement and joint development work. The agreed timeline was for the prototyping to run for six months, to the end of March 2022, and then to roll out/mainstream the model from April 2022 onwards, making any necessary tweaks or adaptations based on learning from the trial and test period.
- 3.3 Whilst much has been achieved in relation to improved relationships and processes across partners and in relation to outcomes for individuals, the ability to scale up the model from early 2022 as planned has been impacted upon the ability of partners to leverage in additional funding.
- 3.4 Negotiations and follow up across partners took place between April and September, 2022 to secure the £350k annual budget required to scale up the approach (this includes recruitment of up to 6 Intensive Support Workers, a Coordinator and a Project Support post alongside case management and outcomes monitoring systems and ongoing strategic advisory support via Marsh Public Service Solutions who were instrumental in developing the Doncaster model and who have been assisting throughout).
- 3.5 In-year funding was confirmed at the October 2022 meeting of the Strategic Leadership Group (SLG), with a total of £277k committed from a number of core/key partners including DfC PCSP, PBNI, PHA, PSNI, NIHE, PHA – as well as the Council.
- 3.6 The fact that funding awards were confirmed so late in the financial year presents challenges in being able to ensure full in-year allocation and spend – particularly given that a substantial amount of this funding was to recruit posts (as noted in paragraph 3.4). Therefore, a key ask at the SLG meeting was for partner organisations to be as flexible as possible in terms of taking forward in-year actions/priorities and to request if there would be any ability to carry over committed funding into next year as a specified reserve (with all necessary caveats built in) to enable the appointment of key support posts on a 1-year basis rather than on a 3-4 month

basis, as the latter would obviously impact on the attractiveness and likelihood of filling these core posts.

- 3.7 Partners with a responsibility for commissioning, are now currently engaging internally to check whether their in-year funding allocations could be utilised in this manner, and in the interim, it was agreed that officers would seek permission to create a dedicated reserve to facilitate this – hence the report to this Committee. Delivery organisations are progressing with recruitment on a temporary basis with a possibility of extension – and commission organisations, including BCC, are also working through internal budgeting processes for 2023/24 – it is therefore hoped that having a reserve will enable us to continue to fund posts and actions into early 2023/24 ensuring continuity and that momentum is maintained. The SLG is due to meet again on 17th January, 2023 and will review the current and future financial position, and the Complex Lives Steering Group continues to meet monthly to progress and review actions.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.8 All funding – BCC (58k) and Partners (218k) has been confirmed for 2022/23. Each organisation is progressing with recruitment and other related actions. The proposal is that any remaining funding, where partners attain necessary approvals, be held in a dedicated reserve for Complex Lives.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.9 There is set criteria for being nominated for consideration for support via the Complex Lives model and agreed processes for case management and provision of wraparound support. Many of the individuals who benefit are from S75 groups, and as part of the process, are directly involved in making decisions about their care and support needs.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Physical Programme and Asset Management

Asset Management

Kent Street Car Park

The Committee approved the renewal of a three-year licence agreement with the Department for Communities for the Council operated off-street car park at Kent Street, until 30th June, 2025. The Council would continue to retain all revenue generated from the

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operation of the car park and would, in line with a Land and Property Services valuation, pay the Department a fee of £23,474 for the initial year. The fee for the subsequent two years would be agreed on an annual basis.

Areema Play Park

The Committee approved the transfer of 370m² of land from Apex Housing Association to the Council, to facilitate the extension of Areema Play Park, and of 13.5m² of land from the Council to Apex Housing Association, to form part of a new public path and road network. The transaction would, subject to the relevant approvals, incur no disposal costs by either party for the land transactions.

The Committee granted also retrospective approval to put a 6-metre-wide wayleave in place between the Council and Apex Housing Association to regularise a storm drain serving Areeva Grove, the Association's new housing development.

Update on Area Working Groups

West Belfast Area Working Group

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the West Belfast Area Working Group of 24th November, including the recommendations:

- i. to move the Greater Shankill Community Council project (BIF29) to Stage 3 – Committed;
- ii. to allocate £507k and £80k from the Social Outcomes Fund to the Greater Shankill Community Council and the Woodvale Park project respectively; and
- iii. to note that the final locations for the next phase of the Belfast Bike scheme had been deferred for further consideration and consultation.

South Belfast Area Working Group

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the South Belfast Area Working Group of 28th November, including the recommendations:

- i. to move the Coffee Culture (BIF46) and Arts and Digital Hub (BIF48) projects to Stage 2- Uncommitted; and
- ii. that Drumglass Park and the Elms Village be selected for the next phase of the Belfast Bikes Scheme in South Belfast.

North Belfast Area Working Group

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the North Belfast Area Working Group of 29th November, including the recommendations:

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- i. to move the Midland Boxing Club project (BIF45) to Stage 3 – Committed; and
- ii. that the following locations be selected for the next phase of the Belfast Bikes scheme in North Belfast:
 - the Grove Wellbeing Centre; and
 - a permanent station, close to the new station entrance, to be initially located at the Council car park adjacent to Yorkgate Station, with the final location to be confirmed by Translink, following the refurbishment of the station.

**Update on Physical Programme - Forth Meadow
Community Greenway Public Art Sculpture Plaque**

The Director of Physical Programmes submitted for the Committee's consideration the following report:

1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 **The Council's Physical Programme currently includes 170 capital projects with investment of £150m+ via a range of internal and external funding streams, together with projects which the Council delivers on behalf of external agencies. The Council's Capital Programme forms part of the Physical Programme and is a rolling programme of investment which either improves existing Council facilities or provides new facilities. One of the projects currently underway is Forth Meadow Community Greenway, a Peace IV funded project. In addition to the 12km of greenway, there are a number of pieces of public art, one main art piece and five smaller floor art pieces. The Committee is asked to give consideration to the installation of a plaque to accompany the main art piece 'Carry Each Other' which will be located at the roundabout at the entrance to the Innovation Factory.**

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 **The Committee is asked to:**
 - **Installation of Plaque 'Carry Each Other' Sculpture – note the update on the wording for the plaque to accompany the 'Carry Each Other' sculpture, as part of the Forth Meadow Community Greenway and note that the proposal is for the wording on the plaque to be in both English and Irish.**

3.0 Main Report

- 3.1 The Committee will be aware that Forth Meadow Community Greenway is an ambitious and transformational Peace IV funded scheme. It will see the development of a new 12km urban greenway in West Belfast with work underway.**

Section 1 – Glencairn, works complete with the exception of the signage package

Section 2 – Springvale Park works underway due for completion May 2023

Section 3 – Falls Parks, works complete with the exception of the signage package

Section 4 – Bog Meadows, works complete with the exception of the signage package

Section 5 – Westlink to Transport Hub, planning application submitted for the erection of signage and directional markers along the route.

- 3.2 In addition to the greenway, the scheme also includes a number of pieces of public art. These include five pieces of floor art, located in each section of the greenway. The Chair of the Shared City Partnership and some local school children recently unveiled the floor art piece in Glencairn Park. The main art piece entitled ‘Carry Each Other’ will be located to the left of the roundabout at the entrance to the Innovation Factory. The artist Sara Cunningham-Bell’s piece is a 7-metre-high figure carrying a child. As part of the commission, there were numerous public engagement events which included draw, walk, share sessions with local Councillors, the volunteer walking and cycling groups involved in the greenway and many local schools. The drawings prepared by these groups have been incorporated into the floor art pieces and to the child’s jacket. The main sculpture will be installed early 2023, therefore, the plaque must be designed, ordered, manufactured and installed to accompany the piece and give some context to the piece.**

- 3.3 The Committee is asked to note that a request has been received from Conradh na Gaelige for full provision of bilingual signage, including direction signage, health and safety signage, panels and information boards, and all other markers, signs along the route of the greenway. Officers are currently reviewing this request in line with conditions contained within the Letter of Offer and the brand identity guidelines – Forth Meadow Community Greenway – on common ground. An**

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update on this will be brought to a future meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. In the interim and to ensure that the sculpture can be installed early in 2023, the Committee is asked to note that the wording on the plaque to accompany the sculpture is proposed to be in English and Irish.

Financial and Resources Implications

- 3.4 ***Financial*** – Funding has been received from SEUPB Peace IV Programme for construction of Forth Meadow Community Greenway and the associated art pieces.

Resources – Officer time to deliver as required.

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

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

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Equality and Good Relations

Minutes of the Meeting of the Shared City Partnership

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Shared City Partnership of 5th December, including the recommendations:

PEACE IV

Secretariat

- to note the update on the Secretariat activity associated with the implementation of the PEACE IV Local Action Plan.

CYP3: On the Right Track

- to note that this contract remained at risk and that all measures were being pursued to address the under-delivery and current status of project.

CYP5 NIHE

- to note the revised budgets indicating delivery to February, 2023 and to extend the Finance Officer and Programme Manager roles and the salary increase to March, 2023.

BPR THEME

- to note the update on the Building Positive Relations theme of the PEACE IV Local Action Plan and agree:

BPR 1 – NIHE

- in principle, to extend the Finance Officer and Programme Manager roles to early March 2023 to ensure that all documentation could be submitted and verified to allow achievement of a successful closure process within the timeframe of the Council's Letter of Offer; and
- to note the decision of the delivery partner not to continue with the East Belfast Network for the reasons set out in the report.

BPR 3 - Local Action Plan Projects

- to note that all projects had been completed in November; and
- to note the two remaining study visits which the Council was tasked to deliver would not be achieved.

BPR 5 - LINCS

- to note that this project would complete at the end of November, with a small, localised event planned to capture completion of the leadership programme and overall completion of the project.

BPR 5 - Traveller

- to note that the final event had been cancelled due to low commitment to attend and that the collective exhibition artworks would be showcased in the new year at a central location.

BPR 6 St. Comgall's

- to agree that the extension approved in November to 31st January 2023, to allow for changes to materials to be implemented, be instead processed through to 28th February 2023 for prudence (this was within the original contract terms (a contract renewal));

BPR Cinematography Project

- to approve an extension to 28th February to allow all filming to be captured for projects which had been extended (SSS, NIHE projects).

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- to note that the Peace IV Programme Officer would liaise with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive in respect of a specific Building Positive Relations programme date.

SSS THEME

- to note the update on the Shared Spaces and Services theme of the PEACE IV Local Action Plan, including:

Narratives/Interpretative Panel – Mediation NI

- to note that the contact hours achievement level was to be discussed and agreed with the Special EU Programmes Body;

Youth Civic Education – Youth Link NI

- to note an extension of the Youth Civic Education project to 28th February 2023;
- to note the additional/alternative activity for schools (Crumlin Road Gaol) and day trips;
- to agree a possible contract uplift of no more than 10% (£16,000) subject to the submission of a budget breakdown and availability of support within the SSS programme budget; and
- to note that delegated authority had been given to the CYP Chair and the BPR Chair to agree the finalised contract uplift, subject to the above confirmation.

GOOD RELATIONS

Good Relations Audit

- to note that any comments on the draft Good Relations Audit were to be submitted to Mr. Peter Osborne by 14th December, 2022; and
- to note that a finalised Audit and draft 2023/24 Good Relations Action Plan would be submitted to the Partnership meeting in January, prior to submission to The Executive Office.

BCC 7 Interfaces Programme

- to award funding under the BCC7 Interfaces Programme within the Council's Good Relations Action Plan, as follows:
 - Lower Oldpark Community Association - £4,927 towards its NOW (Neighbours Over the Wall) programme; and

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- Limestone United Football Club - £1,000 towards a youth engagement programme.

PEACEPLUS

- to note the update on recent activity around the development of the PEACE PLUS 1.1. Co-designed Local Community Peace Action Plan for Belfast
- to agreed that Stage 1 facilitated engagement process be closed, as outlined in the report;
- to note the feedback on the process for finalising the Stage 1 report; and
- to approve the general process for commencing Stage 2 for developing the local action plan.

Operational Issues

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

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Party Group Leaders' Consultative Forum of 8th December.

**Minutes of the Meeting of
the Audit and Risk Panel**

The Committee noted the key issues which had been discussed at the meeting of the Audit and Risk Panel on 6th December and approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting, including the updated Raising Concerns Policy [here](#)

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

The Committee adopted the recommendations in respect of those applications received up to 2nd December, as set out below:

NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED	CIVIC HQ RECOMMEND
2023 EVENTS						
European Youth Parliament	21 February 2023	NI Regional Session of Youth Parliament - teams of secondary students debate and	B & D	No (Charity)	No (they provide their own lunches for attendees)	Approve No charge No hospitality

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		present their ideas and solutions on current topics. Numbers attending – 100				
Donegal Pass Community Forum	2 March 2023	Launch of 'Language Matters' Research – project linked to language provision delivered by community groups. Numbers attending – 60	D	No charge as community group	Yes, tea and coffee reception as community group	Approve No Charge Tea and Coffee Reception <i>£500 given to their chosen caterer for tea and coffee</i>
John Hewitt Society	2 March 2023	40th Anniversary Celebration of John Hewitt Freedom of City of Belfast - reception and celebration evening. Numbers attending – 60 – 100 tbc	C	No charge as not for profit group	Yes, Wine Reception as significant anniversary	Approve No Charge Wine Reception <i>£500 given to their chosen caterer for wine on arrival</i>
Belfast Knights	3 March 2023	Belfast Knights 30th Anniversary Celebration - Drinks Reception, Awards, Dinner and entertainment. Numbers attending – 250 - 300	C & D	No Charge as voluntary group	Yes, Wine Reception as significant anniversary	Approve No Charge Wine Reception <i>£500 given to their chosen caterer for wine on arrival</i>
Irish FA Foundation/ GAA and Ulster Rugby	21 March 2023	Sports Inspire Awards Gala Dinner to celebrate and reward volunteers in the Inspire Programme	C and D	No charge as charity	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality

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		run by Irish FA, Ulster GAA and Ulster Rugby. Numbers attending – 200				
Belfast Health and Social Care Trust	16 May 2023	Involvement Recognition event to acknowledge how service users and advisers have helped develop Trust Services. Numbers attending – 80	C	Charge £115	No hospitality	Approve Charge £115 No hospitality
Public Health Agency	17 May 2023	Cross-Border Healthcare Intervention Trials In Ireland Network (CHITIN) Closure Event – celebrating a cross-border partnership between the Public Health Agency (PHA) and the Health Research Board (HRB) in the Republic of Ireland, delivering 11 Healthcare Intervention Trials. PHA is community partner of Belfast Agenda. Numbers attending – 250	A & C	Charge £300	No Hospitality	Approve Charge £300 No hospitality
Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce and Industry	23 June 2023	Annual President's Lunch – annual lunch	B	Charge £300	No Hospitality	Approve Charge £300 No hospitality

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		for the NI Chamber of Commerce and Industry to mark economic benefits to the City. Numbers attending – 400				
Irish Football Association Foundation	2 November 2023	IFA McDonalds Community Football Awards – Celebrating the volunteers who help deliver their programs – reception, dinner, entertainment and awards. Numbers attending - 190	C & D	No (Charity)	No Hospitality	Approve No Charge No Hospitality
EAPRIL (European Association for Practitioner Research on Improving Learning)	23 November 2023	APRIL Conference 2023 Dinner for guests attending their 3-day conference taking place in QUB. Numbers attending – 150 – 250	A & B	No (Waived as linked to Visit Belfast)	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality
St Brigid's GAC	25 November 2023	St Brigid's GAC 25th Anniversary Celebration - Drinks Reception, Awards, Dinner and entertainment.	C & D	No Charge as voluntary group	Yes, Wine Reception as significant anniversary	Approve No Charge Wine Reception <i>£500 given to their chosen caterer for wine on arrival</i>

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		Numbers attending - 350 – 400				
2026 EVENTS						
NAHT – National Association of Head Teachers	2 May 2026	NAHT Conference 2026 Gala Dinner for guests attending their 2-day conference taking place in ICC Belfast. Numbers attending – 320	A &B	No (Waivered as linked to Visit Belfast)	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality

Minutes of the Meeting of the Disability Working Group

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Disability Working Group of 22nd November.

Minutes of the Meeting of the City Hall/City Hall Grounds Installations Working Group

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the City Hall/City Hall Grounds Installations Working Group of 14th December.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Social Policy Working Group

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Social Policy Working Group of 13th December.

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

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the All-Party Working Group on the City Centre of 2nd December.

Recruitment of the Post of Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services

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The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 23rd September, it had approved a revised structure and implementation plan for the Corporate Management Tier and had noted that it would receive further reports for agreement at key stages in the process.

Accordingly, the Committee:

- i. approved the recruitment of a post of Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services on a permanent basis; and
- ii. agreed that the shortlisting and selection panel comprise the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the Committee (or their nominees), an Elected Member from the Sinn Féin Party, the Chief Executive (or his nominee) and a Director.

**Northern Ireland Local Government Association
Local Government Conference**

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy informed the Committee that the Northern Ireland Local Government Association would, on 23rd February, be holding its Local Government Conference in Omagh. The theme for the event would be “Responding to Future Challenges”, with a focus on how local government should innovate and collaborate across all sectors to achieve its ambitions.

He pointed out that it was normal practice for the Committee to grant authority for any of the ten Members appointed by the Council to the Northern Ireland Local Government Association to attend the conference. The fee per delegate would be £99, which would be met from existing budgets.

The Committee granted approval for any of the ten Members appointed by the Council to the Northern Ireland Local Government Association and one officer to attend the conference.

Additional Item

Update on Legal Proceedings

The Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services reminded the Committee that the Council had been one of three parties which had, earlier in the year, taken legal action against Mr. Edwin Poots MLA, in respect of his decision, as Minister for the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, to instruct his officials to halt checks on goods entering Northern Ireland from Great Britain. The Council had issued proceedings separately from the other two parties, as that had been considered to be more appropriate.

She reported that the Judgement had been issued the previous day and that the Court found that the then Minister had acted unlawfully in ordering the removal of the

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checks. She added that the draft Judgement would, upon being received by the Council, be presented to the Committee for consideration.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Chairperson

People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 6th December, 2022

HYBRID MEETING OF THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Murray (Chairperson);
Alderman McCoubrey;
Councillors Bunting, Bower, Canavan,
Cobain, Michael Collins, M. Donnelly, R. M. Donnelly,
de Faoite, Flynn, Garrett, Magee, Maghie, McAteer,
McCusker, McMullan, Newton, O'Hara and Verner.

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

Apologies

No apologies were recorded.

Welcome

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Róis-Máire Donnelly to her first meeting of the Committee.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 8th and 22nd November were taken as read and signed as correct.

It was reported that the minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st November, subject to the following amendments:

Tree Strategy

The Council agreed to engage with DFI seeking it to include the installation of tree pits as road chicanes in residential areas to increase overall tree coverage, slow the speed of traffic, promote road safety, and support the development of active travel.

Enforcement Action within Smoke Control Areas

The Council agreed that the minute be amended to reflect that it had been agreed that a report would be submitted to a future meeting which would contain detail regarding the data

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within smokeless zones and include enforcement action detail that had been taken around bonfires, including information regarding the regulation and management of bonfires.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Verner declared an interest in agenda item 4 (a) – Social Supermarket Funding – Update as she was employed the Greater Shankill Partnership who was a Strategic Partner, she left the meeting whilst the item was being discussed.

Restricted

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

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the Members of the Press and public from the Committee meeting during discussion on the following 7 items as, due to their nature, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Section 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

**Pitch Partner Agreement –
Alderman Tommy Patton Memorial Park**

The Director of Neighbourhood Services reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 9th August, concern had been expressed regarding the Council's governance arrangements at the Alderman Tommy Patton Memorial Park with East Belfast Football Club (EBFC).

The Director advised that the current governance arrangements stated that the Council was required to obtain a list of trustees, office-bearers and individuals requiring safeguarding checks, this process was consistent with all clubs. The Director confirmed that the necessary checks had been undertaken on two separate occasions and he could report that the EBFC had been compliant with the Council's requirements.

The Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services responded to a number of queries from a Member and also confirmed that the Club was compliant with the Council's requirements.

The Member expressed concern in relation to the Council's current policies around governance and he asked that his concerns be recorded in terms of the current Partnership arrangement with EBFC and the Council.

The Committee noted that EBFC was compliant with the Council's monitoring requirements in respect of the Partner Agreement.

**Proposed structural review for the Crematorium
and a proposal to increase the fees and charges**

The Committee considered a report which detailed proposed structural changes to the staffing at the City of Belfast Crematorium, along two options seeking to increase Bereavement fees and charges to offset the costs.

The Director of City Services advised that, since the last structural review in 2011, there had been a 40% increase in the number of burials, she added that the City of Belfast Crematorium was the third busiest out of a total of 314 crematoria in the UK and was also the cheapest for cremations. She detailed that the proposed charge increases were necessary to fund the required structural changes to ensure that this critical regional service continued.

A number of Members spoke in support of the need for a staffing review and reiterated the critical nature of the service and also commended the valuable and often difficult role of the staff at the crematorium.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed to defer the matter to enable the Director of City Services to liaise with the Director of Finance to re-examine the figures, including the non residents' allowance and that a report would, if possible, be submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to enable any uplift to be considered as part of the overall rate setting process.

Financial Reporting - Quarter 2 2022/23

The Committee noted the contents of a report which summarised the Quarter 2 financial position for the People and Communities Committee, including a forecast of the year end outturn. It noted that the Quarter 2 position showed an under spend of £3.01m (6.8%), with the forecast year end position being an underspend of £1.3m (1.6%), which was well within the acceptable variance limit of 3%.

The Members were advised that the main reasons for the quarter 2 Committee under-spend related to vacant posts across a number of services, the receipt of additional income and the timing of grants and programmes.

The Members were reminded that, as discussed at the November meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, these were indicative figures and the recent unbudgeted pressures had not been factored into the departmental forecast which was likely to significantly impact this position.

The Members noted that any further underspends that arose throughout the year would firstly be used to offset the forecasted deficit.

The Committee noted the financial update.

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**GLL Annual Schedule of Charges
proposal for 2023/24**

The Director of Neighbourhood Services provided the Committee with an update on the proposed GLL pricing structure for the period 2023-24.

Following a query, both the Director and Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services advised that the proposed CPI/RPI price increases were a contractual entitlement and, as such, the Committee could articulate a view on the proposed price increases but did not have the authority to challenge the pricing review proposal.

During discussion a Member sought clarity in respect of the delivery of the social value element of the contract and whether it was equitable across the city.

The Director advised that an officer would liaise with the Member directly to provide more information on how social value element was delivered throughout the city.

Following discussion, the Committee:

- noted the proposed schedule of charges for 2023/24;
- noted the rationale presented in support of the proposed price revisions but noted its disappointment and the increase; and
- agreed that a report would be submitted to a future meeting which would give consideration as to when the contract with GLL could be reviewed, if the contract could be broken and consider whether any management fees could be introduced which would help to offset the price increases.

**Late night hot food premises
opening hours on Ormeau Road**

The Director of Neighbourhood Services advised the Members of ongoing complaints from residents attached to late night opening of hot food premises on the lower Ormeau Road and detailed that a request had been received from the Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group (LORAG) seeking permission for a delegation of residents to attend the January meeting of People and Communities Committee to highlight the impact of late-night opening on the local neighbourhood.

The Director detailed that Local residents had been liaising with officers in relation to this issue and had asked the Council to consider using its powers under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (NI) Order 1985 to make a closure order to prevent residents in the neighbourhood of the premises being unreasonably disturbed either by persons resorting to the premises or by the use of the premises for the supply of meals or refreshments. It was noted that a closure order could only be made between the hours of midnight and 5am.

The Director confirmed that officers had written to the businesses concerned but the complaints had persisted.

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The Committee:

- agreed to the attendance of a deputation of residents from Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group to attend the January meeting of Committee to highlight the impact of late-night opening on the local neighbourhood; and
- agreed that a report would be submitted to the January meeting in relation to making a closure order in respect of any premises which was causing unreasonable disturbance to residents.

Installation of Gates at Crescent Park

The Committee agreed to defer the report to enable deputations from both objectors and supporters to be heard at the January meeting of Committee.

Capacity and Revenue Funding 2023/26

The Committee agreed to defer the report for consideration at Party Group Briefings and agreed that, in the interim, officers would liaise with DfC to establish if any additional funding was available.

Matters referred back from the Council/Motions

Notice of Motion - Belfast Cycle Network

The Committee was advised that the Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 24th November, had referred the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Harvey and seconded by Councillor Nelson, to the People and Communities Committee for consideration:

“That this Council, along with the PSNI and Department for Infrastructure, should develop a long-term, comprehensive strategy to ensure that the Belfast cycle network is kept clean and free from obstructions, such as parked cars and commercial bins.”

Councillor Maghie, on behalf of the proposer and seconder who were both unable to attend the meeting, addressed the Committee and provided an overview of the motion.

The Committee adopted the motion and agreed that a report on how this would be facilitated, resourced and managed would be submitted to a future meeting.

Notice of Motion - Corey Jack Aughey Memorial Park

The Committee was advised that the Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 24th November, had referred the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Pankhurst and seconded by Councillor McCullough, to the People and Communities Committee for consideration:

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“This Council notes with deep sadness the passing of Corey Aughey on holiday in June 2022. We also note that Corey was a well-known and loving character within the Glenbryn area of North Belfast. As such, this Council will move to rename “Glenbryn Playpark” as the “Corey Jack Aughey Memorial Park” as a fitting tribute in his memory. The Council will also agree to install a memory bench in his name within the park.”

Councillor Verner, on behalf of the proposer and seconder who were both unable to attend the meeting, addressed the Committee and provided an overview of the motion.

The Committee adopted the motion and agreed that a report on how this would be facilitated, resourced and managed would be submitted to a future meeting and noted that the motion would take due consideration of the Council’s Park Naming Policy.

Notice of Motion - Inclusive Leisure Services

The Committee was advised that the Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 24th November, had referred the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Michael Collins and seconded by Councillor Ferguson, to the People and Communities Committee for consideration:

“This Council recognises the shortage of services available for people with disabilities. The Council will seek to engage with BETTER to expand and promote inclusive services within our leisure centres to ensure an accessible and welcoming environment for everyone.

The Council will seek the input of service users, engage with autism support networks, BETTER and Disability Sport NI to bring inclusion and community to our leisure centres by improving accessibility for people with autism and other disabilities in a number of key areas including:

- Belfast’s 12 leisure centre to promote inclusive sessions for people with disabilities as is the case with Lagan Valley Complex and Dundonald Ice Bowl in Lisburn
- These sessions should include but not be limited to swimming pools, and should be at an accessible hour for children and parents to make best use of them
- The Council will work with BETTER to ascertain which other services: such as trampolining, Inflatable Park facilities and any other leisure facilities which may be included in these inclusive sessions
- The Council will strive to ensure all amenities inside leisure centres are fully inclusive for people with disabilities. This includes improving advertising and continuing to promote the use of WAP cards, as well as ensuring staff are adequately trained to support children, families and carers to provide fully inclusive services to people with autism and other abilities

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- The Council will continue its pioneering work with Swimming Buddies in Brooke Leisure Centre and explore ways to expand this across all 12 leisure centres in Belfast, to ensure the life skill of swimming lessons are readily accessible for children at a local level offering a supportive space for families and provided in an inclusive manner
- The Council will engage with BETTER to explore the permanent installation of a Sensory Room in one or more of our leisure centres in Belfast
- The Council will strive to better promote and advertise inclusive services in our leisure centres across all of our social media platforms and publications with the overall aim of being leaders in the area of inclusive leisure services.”

The proposer of the motion, Councillor Michael Collins, addressed the Committee and provided an overview of the motion, during which he requested that a deputation from Swimming Buddies be invited to a future meeting to hear more about its inventive work at the Brooke Leisure Centre.

A number of Members spoke in support of the Motion and reiterated the need to ensure that the Council's leisure and park facilities were accessible and inclusive to all.

During discussion a Member stated that she felt that the a Children's Champion role within the Council should be considered, this would be a role that would specifically advocate and champion the needs of all young people throughout the city.

The Chairperson of the recently established Council's Disability Working Group, Councillor McMullan, advised that attendance at the inaugural meeting had been poor and he encouraged those nominated Members to attend to enable engagement to commence around the inclusivity of Council services to all.

The Committee:

- adopted the motion and agreed that a report on how this would be facilitated, resourced and managed would be submitted to a future meeting; and
- agreed that a deputation from Swimming Buddies be invited to present to the February meeting of the Committee in respect of its work in the Brooke Leisure Centre.

Notice of Motion - Imagination Library

The Committee was advised that the Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 24th November, had referred the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor de Faoite and seconded by Councillor Howard, to the People and Communities Committee for consideration:

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“Belfast City Council:

- Acknowledges that the majority of physical brain development occurs in the first three years of life, when children form over 1 million new neural connections per second;
- Recognises the benefits of reading, and reading aloud, to young children which can promote the development of basic literacy and vocabulary skills, establish strong inter-personal relationships between children and parents/guardians, as well as improving longer term educational, health, social and economic outcomes;
- Is concerned about the rising cost of living which will limit the ability of families to pay for essential educational resources like books for young children;
- Agrees to investigate and establish a pilot of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library in the City to provide a new book each month for children aged 0-5, working with any interested partners to secure the success and sustainable funding of the scheme.”

The proposer of the motion, Councillor de Faoite, addressed the Committee and provided an overview of the motion.

The Committee adopted the motion and agreed that a report on how this would be facilitated, resourced and managed would be submitted to a future meeting.

Committee/Strategic Issues

Social Supermarket Funding – Update

(Ms. K. Gilliland, Neighbourhood Services Manager, and Mrs. M. Higgins, Lead Officer – Community Provision, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 Following P&C and Council approval in August/September 2022 to take forward the design and delivery of the Social Supermarket Fund (DfC allocation) in-year, officers have spent the intervening months liaising with area-based Strategic and Thematic partners to identify and then liaise with potential delivery partners, assessing capacity to deliver and to what level of resource and to seek their views on how the additional funding could best be used within their service delivery models whilst ensuring that the high level social supermarket principles set by DfC are met.**

The paper outlines officer recommendations following these meetings/ discussions and seeks member agreement for the proposed approach outlined for 22/23 allocation and delivery.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to

- Note the outcomes of engagement and co-design processes undertaken with strategic and thematic partners in support of implementing the Social Supermarket Fund (SSF) 2022-23.
- Note and agree the allocations to nominated area-based delivery partners (as detailed in Appendix 1, available on mod.gov) following discussions with Strategic Partners.
- Note and agree the allocations to nominated city centre and thematic-based delivery partners (as detailed in Appendix 1, available on mod.gov) following discussions with Thematic Partners.
- Grant delegated authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to enhance awards to delivery partners in-year (dependent on budget and capacity) in order to ensure in-year spend.

3.0 Main report

Background

Social Supermarket Fund

- 3.1 In September Council approved acceptance of £228,342.42 for delivery of a social supermarket fund (SSF) for 22/23 in the Belfast area. The social supermarket model aims to offer a sustainable response to food insecurity by seeking to help address the root causes of poverty rather than simply provide food. This is achieved through the provision of a referral network for wraparound support.
- 3.2 The objective of administering this fund is to support the co-design of a social supermarket model in Belfast council area and in-year implementation of same. The Department for Communities have stated that they will also consider requests to support projects that meet the high-level social supermarket principles to enable actions to address food insecurity to be delivered in 2022/23.
- 3.3 Members gave approval for officers to engage with existing Strategic and Thematic Partners to agree participating partners ensuring coverage for all areas. It was agreed that 60% of the

overall allocation (£137,005) was to be made to area partners based on population and deprivation figures. A summary of the area allocations (as detailed at Appendix 1, available on mod.gov).

- 3.4 The overall aim of the co-design process has been to support delivery by organisations who have the capacity to deliver a social supermarket model through enhancement of their existing service provision. In a small number of cases, for example where the area/partner financial allocation is relatively low, partners have stated that they wish to provide food vouchers to those in extreme need that they identify through other wrap around services they are already providing (as noted in 3.1 second paragraph DfC have confirmed they would be content with this).

£91,336.97 was then allocated to support organisations who work with key communities across the city, on a thematic basis. However, follow up engagement with thematic partners has identified that most individuals who are members of communities of interest/Section 75 groups should be able to access provision on an area basis as part of the community in which they live.

- 3.5 Nonetheless, there was recognition that some people experience barriers in accessing services at an area level and that, for these individuals, ability to access a form of city centre-based provision might be beneficial. It was also noted that there are currently particular pressures meeting the needs of refugees and asylum seekers, and those with complex needs, in accessing food alongside wrap around service provision.

- 3.6 Two organisations have been identified as having a model that could be adapted to meet the Social Supermarket approach on a city centre basis to meet the needs of those identified above, namely:

- Storehouse – City centre based – long established foodbank (15 years) with a wide range of relevant partners who refer into their services including for example the Welcome Organisation, Extern, Womens Aid.
- Homeplus – University area – already provide support to refugees and asylum seekers and are seeking to extend their operations to enable weekend provision.

- 3.7 Making an equal allocation to each of these organisations would equate to an award of £45,668.48 which may prove challenging to spend within the financial year 22/23 (3 months remaining). It is therefore recommended that a maximum allocation of £21,000 is made to each of these two organisations.

- 3.8 Whilst other thematic partners have indicated they are not in a position to establish a social supermarket type model some have expressed an interest in using a smaller allocation to provide food vouchers to those in extreme need that they identify through other wrap around services. As noted previously, as long as this food is provided within the high-level social supermarket principles, then this would be considered eligible spend. As detailed at Appendix 1, available on mod.gov, this outlines recommended allocations to thematic partners made on this basis.
- 3.9 Some of the area-based partners have also indicated that they could accept a higher level of funding to deliver activity in support of the SSM fund; members therefore may wish to consider making additional allocations available to area partners, based on identified slippage and their capacity to spend in year. However, members should note that many of these area-based organisations have since been recommended by committee as delivery partners for the recently approved Council Fuel Hardship Fund. The additional work associated with administration of this fund may have an impact on their capacity to deliver enhanced activity supported by the Social Supermarket Fund.
- 3.10 Members are asked to grant delegated authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to consider and approve any allocation of identified slippage so that timely allocations can be made, and external funding can be maximised. NB Delegated authority for the Director was approved in 21/22 to ensure that external funding was maximised.
- 3.11 All organisations identified in this report will be required to submit a project proposal, which will be assessed by officers through an agreed process, to ensure that activity meets the aims of the funding programme, is eligible, presents value for money, and can be delivered within timescales. The same process will be used for the allocation of any identified slippage.

Financial & Resource Implications

- 3.12 All activity outlined in this report can be delivered within existing resources – via the allocation from DfC.

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

- 3.13 This will be considered throughout and any appropriate issues highlighted to Members.”

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During discussion several Members acknowledged the valuable work delivered through the DfC Pilot Social Supermarket programme and a Member sought clarity that this proposal would not interfere with that work.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services confirmed that this was an additional funding allocation from DfC to councils which was intended to compliment the Pilot scheme, with a view to developing new approaches to enhance social supermarket provision in each of the Council areas.

The Committee requested that future DfC funding arrangements would provide ongoing support for the existing DfC pilot initiatives as well as the new approaches.

The Members were also advised that an evaluation of the pilot social supermarket model had been completed by DfC which provided detail on all the models used. The Lead Officer undertook to circulate this to all Elected Members.

A number of the Members reiterated the value of the voluntary work undertaken via the Social Supermarket initiative in their respective District Electoral Areas and following discussion it was agreed that representative from a Social Supermarket provider would be invited to a future meeting to enable the Members to hear first-hand more about the valuable work with the local community.

During discussion a Member sought clarity around the detail in respect of the 9 organisations/groups previously allocated funding in 2020, including how much funding each group had been allocated and spent and any changes to strategic partners with each round of allocations.

The Director advised that a review report on the Strategic Partners had previously been agreed and it was anticipated that this would be submitted to Committee early in the New Year.

The Committee:

- noted the outcomes of engagement and co-design processes undertaken with strategic and thematic partners in support of implementing the Social Supermarket Fund (SSF) 2022-23;
- noted and agreed the allocations to nominated area-based delivery partners, following local engagement;
- note and agreed the allocations to nominated city centre and thematic-based delivery partners following discussions with Thematic Partners;
- granted delegated authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to enhance awards to delivery partners in-year (dependent on budget and capacity) in order to ensure in-year spend;
- agreed that that the review of Strategic Partners, which had already been committed to, would provide detail in respect of the 9 organisations/groups allocated funding in 2020, including how much funding each group had been allocated and spent and identify any changes to strategic partners with each round of allocations;
- agreed that a Social Supermarket provider would be invited to a future meeting to outline its work in the local community;

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- recognised the valuable work delivered through the DfC pilot Social Supermarket programme and that this additional funding from DfC to councils was intended to develop new approaches. The Committee requested that future DfC funding arrangements would provide ongoing support for the pilot initiatives as well as these new approaches; and
- noted that an evaluation of the pilot social supermarket model had been completed by DfC which provided detail on all the models used and that this would be circulated to all Elected Members following the meeting.

Stadia Community Benefits Initiative
2022-2023 Quarter 2 Update

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 To advise Committee of progress with the Stadia Community Benefits Initiative (SCBI) for 2022/2023 and update on the action plan.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

Note progress to date

3.0 Main report

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

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

3.3 In March 2016 the Council, DfC and IFA signed an agreement which sets out their respective commitments to the project. As other major stadia are developed in Belfast it is anticipated that other sports governing bodies shall become parties to the agreement. At its April 2018 meeting People and Communities committee agreed that Council would work with the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) within the Stadia Community Benefits Initiative

and recognised their significant planned investment in Gaelic Games in the city to support their Gaelfast strategy. GAA activities became fully incorporated into the action plan at the start of financial year 2019-2020, with Gaelfast staff imbedded into the governance structure at the Delivery Board and the Policy and Performance Group.

- 3.4 The agreement is for a period of ten years with financial commitment from Council and IFA in place to the end of March 2026. Delivery is managed through monthly meetings of the Delivery Board, which reports quarterly to the Policy and Performance Board. Financial and performance reports will be presented to Council and other partners' Boards as necessary.
- 3.5 The Policy & Performance Group is responsible for agreeing the Benefits Realisation Plan and associated annual targets. Work was undertaken to ensure the end benefits/outcomes are aligned to partners' strategies. To measure the progress of this the Council and the IFA have developed a range of indicators/intermediate benefits which are monitored through programme delivery:
- a. Number of coaching sessions provided
 - b. Number of coaches engaged in delivering coaching
 - c. Number of sessions improving club governance
 - d. Number of volunteering opportunities
 - e. Participation opportunities for under 16s
 - f. Female participation rates
 - g. Number of people completing skills development programme
 - h. Number of sessions for under-represented groups
 - i. Number of sessions for school and youth groups
 - j. Community group usage of stadia
 - k. Number of clubs attaining club-mark
 - l. Educational opportunities
 - m. Number of programmes targeting ASB
 - n. Improved collaborative working
 - o. Number of disabled participants
 - p. Number of older people participating
- 3.6 The policy and performance group held their meeting on Friday 4 November to review performance to date and to be updated in terms of the programme for Q3 and Q4
- 3.7 Following the completion of a baseline assessment in early 2017, annual workplans are developed each year. The Action Plan for 2022-2023 has been produced by the partners and includes a mixture of sports specific programmes including National Governing Body specific coach education courses and some joint collaborative initiatives delivered by both sporting codes such as

information webinars which continue to prove popular. A joint conference will take place in January 2023.

Performance

- 3.8 Delivery to date in Q1 and Q2 of year 6 (financial year 2022/2023) has started strongly and details of the IFA and GAA specific activities are included at appendix (i) and appendix (ii)

A number of joint initiatives are planned for Q3 and Q4

Financial and Resource Implications

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

In relation to 2022/23 Q2 spend partners have reported a normal level of spend in line with programmes delivered. Partners have projected full utilisation of the budget across both joint and individual work programmes by the end of March 2023.

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

- 3.10 There are no additional impacts related to this report.”

The Committee noted the update.

**Belfast Boxing Strategy 2022-2023
Quarter 2 Update**

The Director of Neighbourhood Services reminded the Committee that the Council had previously agreed to provide £200,000 in funding to the Irish Athletic Boxing Association Ulster Branch (IABA) in the current financial year for delivery of an agreed action plan which supported the Belfast Boxing Strategy and he then provided an update on the progress in relation to the agreement up to the end of September 2022.

He explained that, in line with the Council's objectives, the Belfast Boxing Strategy Steering Group had met quarterly. The Steering Group was chaired by the Director of Neighbourhood Services and attended by Council officers, IABA officers and officials and Co. Antrim officials.

The Committee was reminded that the Council had previously agreed a total of 37 Indicators with the IABA to monitor delivery of the programmes. The Director reported that the IABA had been compliant with all the reporting matters.

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The Members were reminded that the IABA had developed the action plan relating to 2022 – 2023. This plan had been approved by Committee at meeting on 8th March 2022

Following a query from a Member, the Director confirmed that the Boxing Strategy was being considered within the context of the development of the new Belfast Physical Activity and Sport Development Strategy for the city.

Noted.

Belfast City Youth Council Update

The Director of Neighbourhood Services reminded the Members that, at its September meeting, it had agreed to postpone the special committee meeting with Belfast City Youth Council (BCYC) from October until 20th December, 2022.

He updated that the current cohort of BCYC had not had the opportunity to meet consistently and identify their priorities for the incoming term. Furthermore, the new Children and Young People's Co-ordinator had not commenced his employment with the Council until the beginning of November. Since then, he had been engaging with the Youth Council membership, but they were currently not in a position to take part in the special Committee meeting in December.

As the next scheduled meeting between the BCYC was not until June, it was suggested that, if possible, officers would arrange a special committee meeting in late February/early March and also arrange a meeting with the Youth Champions of each party and the Youth Council in the interim. This would enable the new co-ordinator more time to rebuild relationships with the membership of the BCYC and support them to actively participate in the rearranged meeting.

The Committee approved the recommended approach to engagement with Elected Members and the BCYC in the coming months and agreed that the next scheduled special meeting of People and Communities committee with the Youth Council be postponed until late February/March 2023.

**Leisure Contract Compliance and
Performance Reporting Schedule**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 To present proposals for reporting on performance and contract compliance in relation to GLL and the leisure management contract.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to consider:

- The proposed contract compliance and performance report schedules presented below at 3.5, 3.6 and in Appendices 1 and 2.
- To consider the recommendation that GLL only attend committee meetings as required to present or be available to respond to queries in relation to specific reports or topics.

3.0 Main report

Background

- 3.1 In November 2020 SP&R agreed to review the tri-partite leisure model and the Active Belfast Limited (ABL) Board, including its membership and governance arrangements. Terms of reference were approved in June 2021 and First Point Management and Consultancy Limited were appointed to conduct the review.

The final review report was presented to the SP&R Committee on 25th March 2022. After consideration the committee approved Option 3 as the preferred way forward. Namely, to bring Contract Compliance and Performance Monitoring of GLL back into the Council and commence the winding up of ABL. The committee decision was subsequently ratified by Council on 4th April.

ABL has been dormant since 6th June and will remain so until formally dissolved.

Contract compliance, performance management and financial transactions have been managed through City and Neighbourhood Services (CNS) (previously as Parks & Leisure) since the contract with GLL commenced on 1st January 2015. Until June 2022 reports were present to ABL and into Council through SP&R. On 18th November SP&R agreed that future governance and reporting would be through the People and Communities Committee (P&C). The decision was ratified by Council on 1st December.

Proposals for committee consideration include general oversight arrangements, periodic reports, key performance indicators, budgets and financial transactions and audit/risk assurances.

3.2 Outcomes and proposals

This paper sets out proposed report schedules for governance and performance monitoring of the leisure management contract. The process will be delivered through CNS including the preparation of committee reports.

CNS will continue to gather and collate contract compliance evidence and performance data as previously required for reporting through ABL.

3.4 Committee reporting and governance overview

Following the decision to bring management of the GLL leisure contract back under direct Council control, all related reports will be presented through the P&C committee.

An extensive schedule of reports is defined within the conditions of contract. An established schedule has evolved since 2015 and is now well established. Contract governance and performance reporting mechanisms have always been subject to review by the Council's Audit, Governance & Risk unit.

3.5 Contract compliance

CNS takes the central role in collating information and works with Corporate H&S, Corporate finance, Audit, Governance and Risk Services and BCC Legal Services to review and present assurances.

Contract compliance requirements are set out within the legally binding contract between BCC and GLL. As these contractual requirements will remain unchanged, it is proposed that the same suite of check mechanisms and assurance reports be retained as part of direct Council governance procedures. For example, existing mechanisms include:

- a) Assurances on key BCC/GLL policy alignments
- b) Health and Safety (including Safeguarding) reporting
- c) Timelines for submission of key annual proposals around, pricing, programming, marketing and promotion, sports development, community engagement, etc.

3.6 Performance reporting

Periodic performance report measures and formats have evolved since contract commencement in January 2015. The current scorecard format has provided consistent and comparable management information for the last four years. Nine key performance indicators (KPI's) are presented under the following three themes:

- a) Business (financial)
 - Labour cost recovery
 - Expenditure recovery
 - Cost per visit

b) Membership

- Pre-Paid monthly membership net gain
- Pay & Play membership net gain
- Swim School membership net gain

c) Occupancy

- Main hall occupancy to capacity ratio
- Studio occupancy to capacity ratio
- Synthetic Pitch occupancy to capacity ratio

A sample scorecard (quarter 1 2022/23 example) is presented at Appendix 1, available on mod.gov. Quarterly scorecards present current quarter, last quarter, same quarter last year and current year to date data for comparative purposes.

The above KPI's present a solid overview of contract performance. All three themes are accepted within the wider leisure industry as key drivers of overall performance.

To provide the above, CNS would continue to collate more detailed data, beyond the nine listed KPI's, which would be retained on file should additional or more specific ad-hoc performance analysis be requested.

- 3.7** It is recommended that contract compliance and performance reports be presented at a strategic level to Committee on a six-monthly basis presented in November and May. This would allow for sufficient time to collate and verify management information data related to the preceding six-month periods of April to September and October to March.

Additional annual reports requiring approval by specific dates will be presented as detailed in Appendix 2, available on mod.gov.

Given the timeline around the transfer of contract governance from ABL to Council, the first report covering April to September 2022 will be presented to committee in January 2023. The routine biannual report cycle (November and May) will resume from May 2023.

CNS would continue to collate monthly management information data on a centre-by-centre level. Unless otherwise requested, six monthly committee reports would be presented at a strategic overall service level supported by centre specific performance examples where appropriate.

An annual report schedule is presented for consideration in Appendix 2, available on mod.gov. The schedule reflects the sequence of reports historically presented through ABL.

3.8 Summary

Members are requested to consider the contract compliance and performance report schedule proposals set out above and below in Appendices 1 and 2.

Key elements of the proposed schedule are:

- a) Six monthly reports on contract compliance and performance at a strategic level.
- b) Annual reports on specific issues requiring approval by defined dates as set out in the conditions of contract.
- c) CNS will continue to gather detailed data and will present all reports to P&C committee.
- d) At members discretion GLL will be available to attend meetings to respond to questions relating to relevant reports.

Members are requested to consider:

The proposed contract compliance and performance report schedules presented above at 3.5, 3.6 and below in Appendices 1 and 2.

The recommendation that GLL attend committee meetings as required to present or be available to respond to queries in relation to specific reports or topics.

3.9 Communications & Public Relations

None

3.10 Financial & Resource Implications

None

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

None.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations as outlined at 2.0 and 2.1 of the report.

**Belfast City Airport Request - Bird Strike Management
at Victoria Park: Implications to Air Safety**

The Committee considered a request from The George Best Belfast City Airport (GBBCA) regarding bird strike management at Victoria Park.

The Members were advised that the control of birds in the flight path to the airport was a requirement of the airport's Civil Aviation Authority licence. In line with GBBCA's national aerodrome license requirements and associated guidance material presented in CAP772: Wildlife Hazard Management at Aerodromes, and that the airport was required to identify sources of risk and to reduce and maintain any risk to an acceptable level in compliance with the Civil Aviation Authority licensing requirements.

The Members were reminded that the Committee had granted a similar request for rookery management at the December 2021 meeting of the Committee. Following the works, the GBBCA had reported that the post breeding rookery management had seen a further reduction in nesting rooks the following spring and a redistribution of nests to another location within Victoria Park. With progress made and still potential for the rookery to expand, the airport had identified the need to follow up with another session of winter nest removal and nest site discouragement.

He detailed that the proposed works would include:

- the removal of old rook nests to take place during the works period;
- any necessary thinning of sheltering pines, structural pruning of preferred nesting trees, and reducing shelter from ivy.

The Committee was advised that, if approved, the GBBCA would appoint a suitable contractor with previous experience to undertake the works. In addition, officers would review the submitted risk assessment and insurance certificates in line with procedure and work with Legal Services to issue the requested licence. The licence would include relevant conditions to ensure that the airport had confirmed that all works were permissible and that any required licences were in place to permit the works to take place within the required timescales. The licence would also place an onus on the airport to ensure that health and safety measures were implemented, essential signage was assembled and one-way systems were established where necessary.

A Member noted the need for the required works from a health and safety perspective but requested that the Council write to the NIEA seeking it to ensure that the works were undertaken as sensitively as possible to ensure that the habitats and consequently the populations of both Canadian geese and mute swans were not detrimentally affected.

The Committee:

- agreed the request from George Best Belfast City Airport (GBBCA) to permit access under licence to Victoria Park to facilitate rookery management and to undertake further winter nest removal and nest site discouragement during mid-January 2023;

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- noted that the licence would permit works to commence in early January and end on 31st January 2023 and permit GBBCA thereafter to carry out monitoring until 31st March 2023, subject to the terms and conditions;
- noted that any decision to grant permission was subject to a legal agreement that would be developed by the Council's Legal Services Department which would ensure that any works were permissible, and the required NIEA licence and consents were in place; and
- agreed to send a letter to the NIEA asking it to ensure that it monitored carefully the works being undertaken.

**Supporting Vulnerable People
Impacted by Cost of Living**

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

1.1 To provide P&C Committee with an update on plans to support vulnerable people and families impacted by the cost-of living crisis and who are at risk of negative health and social impacts of living in cold homes.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and

- i note the Council's expanding role in supporting vulnerable people/households impacted by the cost-of-living crisis**
- ii note the work underway to bring forward a programme of warm hubs (Warm Welcome / Warm Spaces) in Council assets and facilities during this winter period**
- iii consider the civic leadership and convening role of the Council in bringing together a citywide programme of similar support and in helping raise awareness and signposting to such facilities**
- iv note the support provided by the MarCom's team in helping to raise awareness and promote the support available including the development and rollout of the #BelfastTogether narrative.**

3.0 Main report

Background

3.1 Households and vulnerable individuals are experiencing the perfect storm, emerging from a Covid-19 pandemic, growing pressures on household incomes and unprecedented increases in gas and electricity bills. The impacts of fuel poverty are felt in

a wide range of ways, on physical and mental health, household finances, the economy and ultimately on people's quality of life. Despite the hard work of many agencies across the statutory, community, voluntary and private sectors, the impact of fuel poverty is intensifying within Belfast and the wider region.

- 3.2 It is important to highlight the growing pressures and demand on referrals to existing support schemes including the Affordable Warmth Scheme and the Belfast Warm and Well programme both of which are already exceeding capacity and we are still to enter the winter period. The Warm and Well programme has experienced a 300% growth in demand since it was first established.
- 3.3 Members will be aware of the recent decision taken by the SP&R Committee to allocate £1m towards a fuel hardship scheme across the city. Council officers are also engaging with the Department for Communities to explore what support can be brought forward for those most need during this winter period.

Key Issues

- 3.4 Members may be aware of the growing focus across the UK whereby public, voluntary and faith organisations are utilising local community assets and facilities as 'warm hubs' which are open for people to go to keep warm and often to refreshments and to take part in social activities. This initiative is being brought forward at pace in response to the inability of people and families to heat their home this winter.
- 3.5 Whilst recognising that 'warm hubs' should not be seen as an alternative to providing households with adequate resources to make heating their homes affordable, there is a growing number of councils across Northern Ireland who are already bringing forward similar plans for either setting up, supporting or highlighting/signposting the locations for 'warm hubs'. Whilst not a new concept, as we enter the forthcoming winter months, this is a practical step to support people in communities who need it the most.
- 3.6 Within Belfast, the concept of warm hubs (or Warm Welcome/Spaces) is building momentum with a number of key services including, from a Council perspective, our leisure and community centres, putting in place plans to have locations within their facilities as warm hubs which will be made available for people to avail of during the colder months.
- 3.7 Work is also underway to programme a series of activities and events within these facilities (e.g. tea clubs, homework clubs,

classes, wellness programmes etc) to encourage attendance and broaden the scope (to reduce stigma and encourage longer-term engagement). Discussions are also ongoing with other key statutory agencies and community service providers including NI Libraries, Museums, the Public Health Authority and Area Partnership Boards in relation to their plans/proposals. Officers have also utilised established community planning networks to gather information on relevant local initiatives which may be planned

- 3.8 Whilst the Council has a direct role in providing such facilities, it can also use its leadership and convening role to help coordinate a citywide programme and help identify, raise awareness and signpost to locations which may be available across the city through multiple platforms and channels. Members to note that officers are currently pulling together a short and easy-to-read information booklet which will outline the range of key support services available as well as advice, including energy savings tips, to help people mitigate the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis. Again, the intention would be that this information would be shared as widely as possible and using multiple channels.

Marketing and Communications

- 3.9 Our Marketing and Communications team is providing comms support around a number of initiatives that Council is rolling out in response to the cost-of-living crisis. Some of the initiatives have been referred to above and seek to support communities/households in need - for example our 'warm spaces, warm welcomes' programme in leisure/community centres; extra programming in community centres to encourage people, particularly seniors, into our community centres; community advice sessions including energy saving advice; fuel stamps; age-friendly events, and the Fuel Hardship Scheme. It is also important to note that ongoing communications activity and messaging around the circular economy, employment academies and support for businesses – all relate back to Council supporting the city/communities during this time of crisis.
- 3.10 Similar to our communications approach during Covid, our Marcomms team is providing signposting for our residents and ratepayers to relevant third-party services and resources available to help with the cost-of-living crisis, including the 'warm spaces, warm welcomes' scheme being delivered by our leisure partners, GLL. In the latest edition of City Matters, we included a dedicated section on where to go for support and advice in relation to the cost-of-living crisis. We have also developed a #BelfastTogether narrative so that relevant information can be 'badged' in a consistent, recognisable way. This is currently running across

Council's social media channels, and we will continue to regularly review and update our web content.

- 3.11** Earlier this month, we launched our own programme of 'warm spaces, warm welcomes' in community centres, involving the Lord Mayor in Marcomms activity including the Lord Mayor's video blog, and our Marcomms activity has also been highlighting the positive work going on to support older people in our communities including information sessions and age-friendly events. We are planning more PR and Marcomms activity to promote this work and encourage citizen engagement in the coming weeks. As detailed at Appendix 1, available on mod.gov, is some illustrative artwork developed for the upcoming drop-in sessions.
- 3.12** Members to note that a core group of internal officers from across council, including e.g. CNS, Climate and Community Planning will be brought together to ensure that the internal consideration and operational planning of future support is coordinated and synergies maximised. MarCom's will continue to provide advice, support and leadership on the associated comms and how this can fit with the #BelfastTogether narrative.

Financial & Resource Implications

- 3.13** The financial implications contained within this report will be funded through existing departmental budgets and/or through possible financial or in-kind contributions from partners towards programming activity.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Implications

- 3.14** None."

The Committee noted the update and recommendations and detailed at 2.0 of the report.

Physical Programme and Asset Management

Quarterly update on Pitch Partnership Agreements

The Director of Neighbourhood Services reminded the Members that the Council was currently developing a new policy in regard to the management of assets within the community, with pilots being delivered across a number of sites. He reported that one of the sites included in the initial pilot had been Ulidia Playing Fields and this site had now been assessed using the pilot approach.

He reported that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 21st October, had endorsed the Committee's recommendation to transfer the existing Partner

Agreement at Ulidia to a long-term lease. He continued that it was anticipated that, following review of the CAT pilot process, a number of the other sites might also be made available for consideration under new management arrangements. However, until that time, and to ensure continuity of service provision, it was intended that the remaining existing Partner Agreements would continue until new arrangements had been established.

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

Cherryvale Gate Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 The purpose of the report is to:

- Update members on the Cherryvale gate opening resident/member engagement meetings.
- Present mitigations for approval and completion.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the detail discussed at the resident/member engagement meetings.
- Consider the mitigations discussed and grant approval for officers to move ahead with the works.
- Note ongoing engagement with DFI in reference to the crossing.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Following a decision at Council on 3rd October 2022, officers and members from the Lisnasharragh DEA have completed a number of engagement meetings with residents interested in the opening of the gate at Cherryvale Playing Fields from Knockbreda Park and the proposed anti social behaviour mitigations.

3.2 Meetings were held on 21st October and 17th November to accommodate residents and members attendance. Residents from 8 surrounding properties who were opposed to the gate opening were invited and 11 residents attended the discussions. A combined note of the meetings is attached at Appendix 1 for information. An updated timeline of committee decisions and engagement with residents has been attached as Appendix 2.

3.3 Measures and key issues discussed are outlined below:

- **Fencing –Additional fencing and the replacement of the inner gate was discussed and officers agreed to a site meeting with residents before installation.**
- **It was communicated to residents that CCTV would not be installed but the Council is currently considering a CCTV policy which will inform any future decision in relation to this.**
- **Lighting – this is not seen by council as a necessary mitigation. It is too costly and the gate will be closed at dusk in line with our parks opening hours.**
- **Additional dog litter bins will be installed to facilitate increased dog walkers in the area.**
- **Tree pruning carried out around the sub-station.**
- **Increased park warden patrols following the opening of the gate and this would kept under review. Numbers would also be provided to residents to contact when they witnessed ASB.**

3.4 If such measures detailed above were implemented in order to manage anti-social behaviour concerns, the costs would be as follows –

- **Additional Litter bins - £800**
- **Erection of fencing around substation and rear of houses at Rosetta Park - £13,000**
- **Resurfacing of the triangle if land outside the current gate £4000.**

3.5 At September Committee it was agreed that a letter would be sent to DFI (Appendix 3) requesting an update on the installation of the pedestrian crossing. A reply was received and a copy is attached at Appendix 4. Since receiving this letter, council officers have further engaged with DFI on the timeline for installation of the crossing. Initial feedback from DFI officers confirms that a recent survey confirms that due to the busy nature of the road, this crossing will be installed regardless of the gate opening. Council have agreed that this work should be completed before the opening of the gate.

3.6 When this matter was considered by members at its September meeting, officers were requested to produce a report on ASB in parks across the city and this information is currently being collated. Members should also note that following the opening of the gate that it was agreed that the area would be kept under review for a period of 6 months.

- 3.7 The committee is asked to note the engagement with residents and consider the reduced antisocial behaviour mitigations recommended for installation.

Finance and Resource Implications

- 3.8 Operational arrangements can be accommodated within existing budgets.

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

- 3.9 An Equality & Rural Needs impact assessment of the proposal has been completed and no implications have been identified.
Legal Services

- 3.10 A triangle of land exists between the gate and the footpath which officers had not yet been able to identify ownership of. The issue had been referred to Legal Services and is subject to further investigation in relation to title.”

A Member thanked the officers for their efforts in facilitating the engagement meetings with the residents and welcomed the progress that had been made to ensure the reopening of the gate.

A further Member asked officers to liaise with NIE to establish responsibility for the erection of the additional fencing around the substation and with DfI regarding the cost for the resurfacing of the triangle of land outside of the current gate.

The Committee:

- granted approval to progress the works;
- agreed that officers would liaise with NIE to establish responsibility for the erection of the additional fencing around the substation and with DfI in regard to the resurfacing of the triangle of land outside of the current gate; and
- noted the ongoing engagement with DfI regarding the crossing.

**Requests for containerised storage at
Falls Park and Sally Gardens**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 To advise and seek member support in dealing with two requests from soccer clubs for installation of containers on council land.

2.0 Recommendations

- That members support the application for installation of a storage container by Belfast Celtic at Falls Park for their own use. This recommendation is based on the recent incidents of vandalism resulting in damage to the Club's equipment.
- That members do not support the request from Celtic Boys for installation of a container for their exclusive use at Sally Gardens on the basis that the requirements for storage at the wider site and the expectations of the broad range of users are not fully understood at this time.
- That members make recommendations as appropriate to Strategic Policy and Resources committee regarding the agreements required to govern the installations approved.
- That officers will recommence work on development of a policy to govern the use of containerised storage at CNS sites and whilst this is in development no further requests will be considered.

3.0 Main report

Background

- 3.1 Members may recall that in April of 2017 the committee received and approved a report from the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services establishing a management position in respect of the provision of containers and other storage accommodation on land owned and managed by Belfast City Council. The management position was adopted in the absence of any formal policy.
- 3.2 The Committee agreed that where it can be established that containers are required by a sports club for storage of essential equipment the Council will consider granting permission. Factors influencing decision making include consideration of proposed use, regularity of the use; appearance, size and access; in addition the sports club would be responsible for maintenance; obtaining appropriate public liability and building/content insurance and for installation and subsequent removal as well as the cost of any reinstatement required at the site.
- 3.3 A key factor in support of any approval is a pre-existing formal relationship between the club and the council at the site. Where existing relationships, governed by a legal agreement such as an FMA a lease or a partner agreement, are in place they provide a surety and leverage should the Terms and Conditions of use of any

containerised facility be broken. It was agreed that where permission is to be granted it would be limited to the period of the existing agreement or would be for a period deemed reasonable by the Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood services but not initially to exceed 2 years.

Key Issues

- 3.4 In the absence of a formal policy, City and Neighbourhood services departmental asset board have been managing containerised storage requests on this basis. Two requests have now come forward simultaneously which warrant consideration by members as they sit outside the normal circumstances, ie. there is no existing agreement with the club at the site.
- 3.5 The first is a request from Belfast Celtic FC who are seeking permission to install at their expense, a storage container near the 3G pitch in Falls Park. The request comes because goalposts owned by the club but stored at the pitch, have been repeatedly broken and vandalised. There have been at least seven recorded incidents of antisocial behaviour leading to damage of the club's property and costing the club several hundreds of pounds in repair and replacement costs. Despite the efforts of council officers to curb the anti-social behaviours at the site the risk to the club's equipment remains. The council is not currently in a position to provide storage for the club's equipment and the club therefore are requesting permission to purchase and to house a storage container on council land to be able to safely store this equipment.
- 3.6 The club have no formal facility management or partner agreement for use of this site but, in common with other users, book the site through the normal council booking process. Belfast Celtic are the most frequent user of these pitches, their recent bookings amount to 43% of the total with the other 57% split across nine other users.
- 3.7 The second request has been made by Celtic Boys FC who have asked for permission to install a container at their own expense to house equipment on land in the car park adjacent to the pitch at Sally Gardens Community Centre. This club has no formal agreement with the council for use of the site other than through the standard booking process.
- 3.8 The pitch at Sally Gardens is subject to an agreement governed by the GAA joint management board. The board submit block booking requirements twice yearly and only once they have been put on the system can other sports including soccer make bookings on the site. Celtic Boys FC are one of 10 regular customers and their bookings represent 28% of the total with Oliver Plunkett FC being the most frequent user with bookings representing 32%.

- 3.9** In considering both of these requests the requirements and expectations of the broad range of site users need to be given consideration particularly in relation to any perceived opportunity for other users to request additional containers for their exclusive use.

The CNS assets board is recommending that members support the application for installation of a storage container by Belfast Celtic at Falls Park for their own use. This recommendation is based on the recent incidents of vandalism resulting in damage to the Club's equipment. If supported the agreement would run for a maximum period of 2 years and align to the management position established by the 2017 committee decision as outlined in paragraph 3.2 of this report.

- 3.10** In considering the request by Celtic Boys FC at Sally Gardens the CNS asset board could find no immediately evident reason to warrant the installation of storage at the site for the exclusive use of this one club. On the basis that supporting the request may not best serve the requirements and expectations of the broad range of site users the board is recommending members do not grant the club's request at this time. However, given the significant physical changes ongoing at Sally Gardens in developing The Colin Healthy Living Centre officers propose a comprehensive review of storage requirements at the site to highlight any gaps in supply and identify solutions to best serve the needs of users across sports and community programming.
- 3.11** In considering these requests for containers and the nature of the equipment the clubs are seeking to store at council sites, officers have identified what may be a gap in provision. Some further work is required to fully understand the extent to which large non portable equipment, over and above that provided by council as a standard part of the booking, is required to support pitch use. Officers propose to review equipment provision and, if a gap exists, how such equipment might best be supplied and stored.
- 3.12** The current and other recent requests have also highlighted the weaknesses of operating under a management position and reinforce the need for development of a formal policy on provision of containers at council sites. Work on development of this policy, begun pre pandemic by the CNS policy and business development unit, had identified at least thirty five CNS sites utilising containers for storage, most sites with more than one container and the majority owned by site users rather than by council. Officers propose that this work, having been paused to allow CNS to focus on other priorities, is recommenced. Whilst this work is

ongoing no further requests for installation of containerised storage by site users will be considered.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.13 In line with the position agreed in 2017 those clubs being authorised to place containerised storage on council land will be responsible for all costs associated with supply of the container, obtaining any necessary planning permission, obtaining appropriate public liability and contents insurance and for installation, maintenance and subsequent removal as well as the cost of any reinstatement required.

Whilst both requests indicate that the clubs would meet all installation and operational costs and would be governed by a suitable agreement drafted with support of officers from the estates and legal team, it should be noted that compliance failures in the past have resulted in council being forced to remove facilities of this nature from sites and as a result council has incurred significant cost.

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

None.”

It was proposed by Councillor D. Donnelly, seconded by Councillor R. M. Donnelly and subsequently agreed that both the requests received would be approved and that Belfast Celtic at Falls Park and Celtic Boys at Sally Gardens be granted permission to install containers at the respective locations for their own use.

The Committee therefore:

- approved the application for the installation of a storage container by Belfast Celtic Football Club at Falls Park for their own use, based on recent incidents of vandalism which had resulted in damage to the Club’s equipment;
- approved the request from Celtic Boys Football Club for the installation of a container at Sally Gardens for their own use, with a review of the overall storage requirements at the site to be undertaken out to highlight any gaps in supply and to identify solutions to best serve the needs of the other users;
- agreed to make the appropriate recommendations to the Strategic Policy and Resources committee regarding the agreements required to govern the installations of the two containers; and
- agreed that officers would recommence work on the development of a policy to govern the use of containerised storage at CNS sites and whilst this was being developed agreed that no further requests would be considered.

Public Right of Way at Floral Park

The Committee considered a report seeking to assert a Public Right of Way from Floral Park to Antrim Road, using that the Access to the Countryside (Northern Ireland) Order 1983.

The Director reported that in 2021 an application had been received by the Council to develop land on a route that a public right of way crossed. He explained that this had previously been investigated in 2005, however, despite a grant of planning permission having been given, the development of the land had not proceeded and consequently the assertion had not been undertaken by the Council.

The Members were advised that the current proposal included a diversion of the existing route. The land in question had previously been granted planning permission and it was likely to be granted again. He explained that Article 16 of the Access to the Countryside (Northern Ireland) Order 1983 gave the Department power to divert any public right of way where it was needed to enable compliance with a planning permission. The Council had written to DAERA and had been advised that the route could only be diverted after it had been asserted.

The Director confirmed that Legal Services were satisfied that previous evidence supported the case for the route being a public right of way and that its status could not have changed since that time.

He explained that for a Public Right of Way to exist at Common Law there were two essential elements:

- dedication by the owner of the soil; and
- acceptance of the Right of Way by the public.

In this instance the Director reported that the following evidence demonstrated presumed dedication by the landowner;

- the path was constructed through the amenity space by the developer providing a pedestrian link between Floral Park and Antrim Road;
- the route in question had been used 'as of right' by the general public;
- the use continued for a sufficient period to imply the owner intended to dedicate a Public Right of Way; and
- the route connected two public places or places to which the public regularly resort that use has followed a more or less consistent line.

Given the above assessment, the Committee granted approval to assert the Public Right of Way from Floral Park to Antrim Road.

Operational Issues

Proposal for Dual Language street signs

The Committee was advised that the application for a dual language street signage had been received prior to the implementation of the new dual language street signs policy, therefore, it had been considered under the old policy.

Following consultation with the applicant and given that at least two thirds of the total numbers of persons surveyed in the streets were in favour of the proposal to erect a second street nameplate in Irish Between Divis Street and Institution Place, BT12, the Committee approved the application.

Chairperson

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 7th December, 2022

HYBRID MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Murphy (Chairperson);
Alderman Dorrian;
Councillors Beattie, Bunting, Duffy, Hanvey,
Heading, T. Kelly, Lyons, Maskey, McCabe,
McDonough-Brown, McLaughlin, Murray,
Nelson, O'Hara, Spratt and Whyte.

In attendance: Mrs. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration
and Development;
Mr. J. Greer, Director of Economic Development;
Mr. S. O' Regan, Employability and Skills Manager;
Mr. A. Cairns, Zoo Manager;
Mr. C. Campbell, Divisional Solicitor; and
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology for the inability to attend was reported on behalf of the High Sherriff, Councillor Hussey.

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of the Committee of 26th October and 9th November were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st December, subject to the following amendments (9th November):

- Under the heading Cultural Mapping for Culture, Arts and Heritage, the Council had agreed that the minute be referred back to Committee for further consideration as a Member had been liaising with the Director of Economic Development regarding the listing of an additional ten venues which he wished to ensure had been included prior to the minute being ratified; and
- Under the heading Christmas Update, the Council had agreed that a report would be submitted to a future meeting which would detail the health and safety advice that had been given and also give consideration to the running of a Tree Lighting event in future years.

Declarations of Interest

In relation to item 2.a) Presentations - Ulster University and Queen's University Belfast, Councillor Whyte declared an interest in that he was employed by Queen's University, and Councillor Spratt declared an interest in that his wife worked for Ulster University.

Correspondence Received - Queen's University Belfast

The Committee noted the correspondence which had been received from Queen's University Belfast in response to the Council's letter in relation to its Widening Participation Programme, cost-of-living assistance, student intake and the impact potential funding cuts might have on future admissions.

Presentations

Ulster University and Queen's University

The Chairperson introduced Ms. C. Young, Director of Student Plus, and Mr. E. Deeny, Public Affairs Manager, representing Queen's University Belfast (QUB), and Ms. A. Castry, Director of Campus Life, and Mr. D. Morrow, Director of Community Engagement, representing Ulster University (UU), to the Committee and they were admitted to the meeting.

The Director of City Development and Regeneration highlighted that Belfast currently had a student population of 45,000 full time students, with the majority of students studying at Queens and Ulster University and the remainder at Stranmillis, St Mary's and Belfast Metropolitan College.

She advised that the relocation of Ulster University from the Jordanstown Campus to the new Belfast City Centre Campus represented a major regeneration opportunity for the city centre, particularly in the northern side, with and the £364m campus provided 75,000m² of high-quality learning space for over 15,000 students per annum with a GVA impact of £160m and an overall benefit to the NI economy of £1.4billion (OCED). She reported that Council officers had continued to work with the Ulster University along with various stakeholders to support the successful opening and integration of the new Belfast City Centre Ulster University Campus, and to maximise the longer-term inclusive regeneration impacts and opportunities of this major capital investment programme, with much of this work being co-ordinated through the Community Campus Regeneration Forum (CCRF)

Mr Morrow provided an overview of the importance of students and student accommodation in Belfast and highlighted that students and graduates were an integral part in promoting City Centre Living. He outlined how students would help achieve Belfast's ambition:

- Housing led regeneration was an underpinning principle of "Belfast -A Signature City";

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- The city had a strong base to build on with 45,000 students and over 7,000 PBSA already;
- Belfast was a young and vibrant city -students currently made up 14% of the population;
- Everyone would benefit from a thriving and prosperous economy. Students want to live in the city centre and bring spend and benefit across multiple areas;
- Students brought diversity to Belfast that was aligned to a welcoming, fair and inclusive society;
- The number of 18-year-olds would grow by 20% in the next five years and the universities were highlighting the need to increase places (by 4,250) just to maintain current opportunities for school leavers;
- As a city, we need to encourage investment to build appropriate housing for both students and graduates and ensure we could encourage our young residents to stay in the city longer; and
- There was already evidence of increased footfall on Royal Avenue by 47%-some of which might be attributed to UU's new Belfast campus.

Ms. Castry provided context of the current student housing market and pointed out that there was an increase in competition for HMO's particularly from NIHE, Immigration Services and statutory agencies and there were increasing accommodation issues across the housing sector which required a holistic view and should include the consideration of international student families and graduates looking for professional accommodation.

Ms. Young provided an overview of the student accommodation in Belfast:

- Belfast currently had a student population of circa 45,000 full time students, the majority from QUB and UU, with the remainder from Stranmillis, St. Mary's and Belfast Metropolitan College;
- There were 7,000 PBSA rooms in the city—the majority built since 2018 and approximately 5,000 in the city centre;
- Student Accommodation in both Purpose built (PBSA) and private rental sector was currently at capacity and a view of future demand had highlighted the city needed a further 6,000 rooms for students by 2028-30;
- There was a growing demand for PBSA over Private rental sector accommodation and insufficient rooms in planning or being built to address this shortfall; and
- PBSA opened since 2018 had successfully integrated with local communities and brought business and economic opportunities in the area.

Ms. Young described the benefits of Purpose-Built Student Accommodation, in that more and more students were applying to live in PBSA in their first, second and third years as it offered fixed price, high quality accommodation where students could balance study and lifestyle. She advised that PBSA accommodation typically included all bills;

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utilities, internet, insurance, communal cleaning, 24-hour security, gym membership and reception. Both universities also provided a comprehensive pastoral support and residential programme. She reported that there was a range of accommodation at various price points and contract lengths to suit all student budgets and requests. She highlighted that prices offered by QUB and UU were, on average, 22% lower than other UK university accommodation for an ensuite room.

Ms. Young outlined QUB's plans to increase its student accommodation by 40% from 3,400 to approx. 6,000 rooms. She highlighted that Ulster University's independent review on accommodation demand indicated a need for a minimum of 1,700 beds in Belfast to meet demand for first-year guarantee, with additional beds required to meet increasing demand from returning and international students studying in our new Belfast campus. It was reported that UU currently had 700 beds under nominations agreements with PBSA adjacent to the Belfast campus, which would increase in 2023-24. UU also provided accommodation for 600 students at Jordanstown Student Village and were currently considering long-term options in the city that increases student accommodation provision adjacent to Belfast campus.

During discussion, the representatives answered a range of questions in relation to the accommodation fees and financial assistance available, data on the number of students using PBSA's, management of the reduction in students in the Holylands, regulation of PBSA's, future proofing of accommodation units, planning issues, investment and maintenance of units and potential rent increases. Members also sought clarity on the treatment of rates for PBSA and the representatives provided an outline on current rating policy.

A number of Members stressed the importance of place making and city centre living and the need for mixed tenure accommodation across the city. The representatives highlighted the need to integrate students in the city centre and the continued engagement with stakeholders and colleges to resolve issues, so that students could be part of the broader mix of residents.

The representatives confirmed that they were experiencing increased demand for student managed accommodation and that they felt there were cost savings overall for students. They advised that, if required, further data could be shared with the Committee on demand, and the transition from private rentals in the Holylands to PBSA's. Ms. Young noted there would always be some students who preferred private rentals and those students who wish to commute. Ms. Castry stated that they wished PBSA's to be part of a housing solution in North Belfast and they were not intended to displace locals from private rental properties.

In further discussion, the representatives highlighted the planning restrictions on Student Managed Accommodation to student only usage, however, explained that they would be keen to explore a flexible approach to maximise usage in the holiday periods for sporting events and conferences.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and that, where relevant, the representatives would provide further information on the issues raised.

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After discussion, the Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance and they retired from the meeting.

National Lottery Heritage Fund

The Chairperson welcomes Ms. S. Byrne, Head of Investment, and Ms. M. Henry, Head of Engagement representing the National Lottery Heritage Fund to the meeting.

Ms. Byrne stated that the Heritage Fund was one of the 12 National Lottery Good Causes and received 5p in funding, out of every £1 spent on the national lottery. She advised that they funded projects with clear start and end timelines that were clearly related to UK Heritage and the projects must encompass a mix of capital and activities or activity only, such as:

- Museums and collections;
- Community heritage;
- Landscapes and nature;
- Historic buildings and monuments;
- Industrial, maritime and transport; and
- Cultures and memories.

Ms. Byrne advised that they funded public and not-for-profit organisations, as well as private owners of heritage assets in cases of clear public benefit under £100k.

She provided an overview of the refreshed strategy by conserving, preserving and restoring heritage, including: Heritage at Risk; Inclusion of under-represented groups; Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability; Resilience; Place and Partnerships. She highlighted the various funding programmes and investment which had been made since 1994 across Northern Ireland.

Ms. Byrne described case studies of the Heritage Fund's work across Belfast, which included: Belfast City Cemetery, Tropical Ravine, Templemore Baths, Ulster Museum National Museums NI, Collecting the Troubles and Beyond - National Museums NI, Belfast Hills Landscape Partnership, HMS Caroline - National Museum Royal Navy, Titanic Hotel, Belfast, Principles for Remembering - Reimagining Belfast City Council and Belfast Stories.

Ms. Henry highlighted the importance of joined up thinking and working strategically to enhance the city and informed the Committee of the framework for partnership working. She pointed out that heritage delivered:

- Regeneration of City Centre;
- Climate benefits of adaptive reuse of heritage assets;
- Community wealth building;
- Tourism at City and Neighbourhood levels;
- Civic Pride;
- Bringing communities together;
- Sense of Place and identity;
- Jobs and skills creation; and

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- Business growth.

During discussion, the representatives answered a range of questions on city centre hidden heritage and the lack of interest from the private sector to restore heritage.

After discussion, the Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance and they retired from the meeting.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Restricted Items

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

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

Council's Powers on Vesting

The Divisional Solicitor outlined the powers of vesting available to the Council and summarised the vesting process.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor O'Hara,
Seconded by Councillor Whyte,

Resolved - That the Council draft a Vesting Policy.

After discussion, the Committee:

- Noted the contents of the report;
- Noted that Legal Services was currently engaging with various Departments to ascertain the appropriate 'Ministry' to make a Vesting Order on behalf of the Council when seeking to utilise its powers in relation to economic development; and
- Agreed that Council officers draft a Vesting Policy for consideration.

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Belfast Zoo - Quarter 2 Performance Update

The Committee was provided with an update on the performance of the Zoo during Quarter 2 (July to September) of the 2022-23 financial year which included information on the following areas:

- Visitor Services
- Education Services
- Animal Collection
- Marketing and Events, and
- Financial performance.

The Committee noted the Zoo performance update report for the period July to September 2022.

Future City Centre Programme: Vacant to Vibrant

The Director of City Regeneration and Development provided an update on the progress on the pilot capital grant scheme, 'Vacant to Vibrant' which included the outcome of recent application submissions.

The Committee:

- Noted the update in relation to the city centre Vacant to Vibrant pilot capital grant scheme; and
- Agreed to the recommended grant awards as outlined within Section 3.19 and 3.20 of the report.

Quarter 2 Finance Update

The Committee noted the report and the associated financial reporting pack which outlined the Quarter 2 financial position for the Committee including a forecast of the year end outturn.

Matters referred back from Council/Motions

The Committee considered further the minute of the meeting of 9th November which had been referred back to the Committee by the Council at its meeting on 1st December. An extract of the minute is set out hereunder:

HYBRID MEETING OF THE CITY
GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 9th November, 2022

Cultural Mapping for Culture, Arts and Heritage

The Committee was reminded that, as a key action of Belfast's ten-year cultural strategy, A City Imagining, the Culture Unit, in partnership and the Department for Communities, had jointly commissioned a report on Belfast's cultural infrastructure. The aim of this report was to analyse what physical space was available for residents to experience culture, and to examine current physical resource allocation for the cultural sector across the city.

The Director of Economic Development advised that the overall cultural mapping project was key to the delivery of the city's cultural strategy and the city's community plan (the Belfast Agenda). He described the significance of the research, and the requirement for a whole city approach in terms of a critical analysis of physical resources for cultural activity, identifying gaps and models of good practice – starting with a study of the physical resources for culture. He pointed out that the Culture Team were committed to delivering a cultural mapping of the city within A City Imagining implementation plan 2020-2023.

He explained that the Cultural Mapping project addressed the existing and future needs of Belfast's cultural and creative industries sector by ensuring that policy was informed by up to date and accurate data whilst also providing a valuable resource for the public to increase engagement and participation. Furthermore, this data had the potential to be utilised by residents, visitors, artists, cultural and creative organisations, funders and planners. This Cultural Mapping Report was Phase One of a major cultural mapping project which included the following phases:

- *Phase One - A review and analysis of Belfast's hard cultural infrastructure;*
- *Phase Two – Study and Scoping of the soft infrastructure, identifying cultural resources, networks links and patterns of cultural practice. Research with partners and community networks, wide-reaching public engagement and cluster engagement, crowdsourcing ideas; and*
- *Phase Three – An interactive digital cultural map product that would allow residents to browse the city's cultural offerings. This would be similar in concept to Dublin's 'culture near you' project.*

The Cultural Mapping report (copy available [here](#)) provided strategic recommendations for improving Belfast's creative provisions in the short and long term and could be seen as a tool that could inform broader plans for the city alongside other areas, including, but not limited to, regeneration, heritage, and economic development.

He outlined the recommendations within the Cultural Mapping Report as follows:

- ***A key recommendation in this phase one report focused on addressing the shortage of affordable artist studio space in Belfast. Members would be aware that, at a meeting of City Growth and Regeneration Committee in February 2022, it had been agreed to open a new funding scheme for artist led organisations to provide financial and development support for this sector. As part of this support, members also agreed a strategic review of artist studios and maker-spaces in Belfast which would identify examples of best practice and potential solutions to this issue. This research would be conducted over the coming months, with a number of long-term recommendations presented to Committee in March 2023;***
- ***The report identified 2 Royal Avenue as a space which could accommodate artists. On 15th April, 2022, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee had approved the proposal around Meanwhile Use until the end of 2023 at our recently acquired 2 Royal Avenue building, with a focus on cultural, animation and creative activities. The proposal was to create a non-commercial space in the heart of the city and provide citizens and visitors with a free and accessible place to relax and enjoy arts programming and a cultural offering, whilst developing long term strategy use. In July 2022, the Council had submitted an application to the Levelling Up Fund, proposing a ‘Creative Hub’, for the building at 2 Royal Avenue. The concept was based on a mixture of complimentary commercial, creative and cultural activities across the building to create one holistic offer;***
- ***Recommendations in this Cultural Mapping report also focused on Cultural Entrepreneurship as it related to physical space. As members would be aware, The Vacant to Vibrant, 2 year pilot, Capital Grant Scheme had allocated £1m to seek to support local independent businesses and SME’s, social economy businesses and creative and cultural organisations that would provide a unique or distinct offer for the city centre and transform vacant spaces to become vibrant. This scheme had garnered interest from the cultural sector. At the Expression of Interest stage, approximately 33% of the submissions by businesses/organisations were from cultural sector. Many from the cultural sector Eols have indicated that they were seeking maker space and their property requirements also might not align with the parameters of this grant, which would primarily seek to occupy and activate vacant ground floor space in prominent areas of the city centre; and***

- *Long term recommendations in the report included a hotel levy. As members would be aware, this was considered in the tourism plan for Belfast, "Make Yourself at Home", presented to the Committee on 6th April 2022. Within this plan, it was acknowledged that, while areas like passenger duty and visitor levies were not within the remit of the Council, we would adopt policy positions based on up-to-date research, consultation and evidence.*

The Director of Economic Development informed the Committee of the next steps in the Cultural Mapping Process. Phase Two of the Cultural Mapping work would delve deeper into research and scoping of the infrastructure identified in this initial phase. The phase would create a holistic view of the cultural sector and identify networks and artistic and cultural practice patterns. This would also include looking into public participation, cluster interaction, research with partners and community networks, and the people and groups that use these spaces as their workplace. He advised that his work was due to be commissioned in November 2022, with a report presented to the Committee in May 2023. The overarching objective of this work was twofold, firstly, to increase and understanding of cultural infrastructure, drive use and participation and, secondly, to seek to agree long term remedies with partners in areas where gaps in provision were demonstrated. He pointed out that the Team would also continue to work with organisations across the city to locate and source suitable properties where there was an immediate or emergency need.

During discussion, the Director of Economic Development explained further the methodology of the report and the engagement with the Arts Council and other cultural bodies. Members raised the issue of some research gaps in the Cultural Mapping report, in that not all Musical Venues and Theatres had been included from across the City and some venues needed to be defined further. The Director advised that the report was not a complete list of cultural venues, however, Members could submit any additional prominent cultural venues to be included in the audit for consideration.

One Member also pointed out that the Balmoral DEA needed to be included in the illustrative maps of the city.

The Committee noted the contents of the Phase One report on Cultural Mapping and that Members would submit any additional prominent cultural venues to be included in the audit to the Director of Economic Development for consideration.

The Committee noted that a report would be submitted to a future meeting to include the additional venues which Members had submitted to the Director of Economic Development, together with an update on Political Tourism issues.

Request to Present

**Department for Infrastructure -
York Street Interchange Review Update**

It was reported that a request had been received from the Department for Infrastructure to present the findings of the York Street Interchange Place-Making Review at a future meeting.

The Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed to receive an in-person presentation from the Department for Infrastructure on the findings of the York Street Interchange Place-Making Review at a future meeting. The Committee requested that the presentation document be received in advance of the meeting and noted that questions or issues Members wished to raise would be compiled and sent to DfI in advance of its deputation.

The Committee also noted that a reminder would be sent to DfI Roads regarding the outstanding information which had been requested at its meeting in November.

Growing Business and the Economy

Employability and Skills Update

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on a range of activity undertaken so far in 2022/23 to support skills development, economic engagement and job outcomes for key target groups.

1.2 The work programme supports the inclusive growth ambitions of the Council by targeting interventions on key cohorts, including:

- Residents out of work and experiencing barriers to employment/self-employment, including those who are long-term unemployed and economically inactive
- Residents with low skills levels
- Young people who do not have a baseline Level 2 equivalent qualification and/or at risk of dropping out of (or not in) education, employment or training
- In work, low earning residents
- Those living in areas of highest multiple deprivation.

2.0 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- Note the work undertaken in the financial year to date and the positive employability and jobs outcomes associated with the work
- Approve the allocation of £40,000 from the existing E&S Revenue budget to continue to work in partnership with RSA Cities of Learning to progress Digital Badging in the city.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Employment Academies

Members will be aware that Employment Academies are one of the key instruments that the Council's Employability and Skills team utilises to help people into work. While the content of Employment Academies varies from programme to programme, there are a number of consistent components, namely:

- Employer-led skills training related to the specific job role
- In-situ work sampling/work placements
- Employability support particularly focused on the final employment interview (all candidates are guaranteed a job interview).

3.2 Given the volatility in the labour market – and the limited financial resources available to undertake the work – our decisions around the priority work plan have been driven by a number of factors including:

- Opportunity presented by a number of growth sectors (particularly tech and fibre) to support participants into roles with higher earning potential. In recognition of the additional skills support work required, these interventions tend to have a higher per capita cost for participants but offer a positive return on investment in terms of salary levels for those successful in finding work following engagement in the programme
- Ongoing need to work with employers to convince them of the value of alternative approaches to finding talent other than pre-existing qualifications and/or experience. This is particularly the case for our work in new sectors – specifically those that have tended to think 'degree first' and have not considered alternative routes

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- **Employers with entry level jobs – particularly in sectors such as hospitality – continue to experience significant challenges in finding workers and officers are working with them to consider issues such as terms and conditions and payment of the real living wage in order to attract and retain talent**
- **Opportunities to support existing employees through upskilling interventions – supporting individuals to improve salary levels by progressing to a better job and thereby embedding a skills-escalator by creating additional entry-level roles.**

3.3 In this year, we have allocated over 700 places to our Employment Academy interventions. A breakdown of the sectoral engagement is detailed below:

Employment Academy	Participant Numbers
HSC, Childcare & Playwork Upskilling Academy	119
Transport Academy	110
Construction Sector Academy	99
Retrofit Academy*	97
Classroom Assistant Employment & Upskilling Academies	55
Tech Academy	55
Business Services/Administration Academy	50
Customer Service Sectors Academies	40
Fibre Academy	40
Childcare and Health and Social Care Academy	35
BCC General Operative & Business Support Academy	23
TOTAL	723
*The purpose of this Academy is to create the skills infrastructure needed when job demand occurs and as such this will not be measured in terms of job/better job outcomes.	

3.4 Given seasonal variations, most Belfast Employment Academies go live in September and then January of each year. However, we delivered a number of Academies over the summer months as outlined below with some significant job outcomes. Of the places allocated above across the 2022/23 financial year, from April 2022, 409 people have started an

Employment Academy with 191 completing to date and 138 job outcomes, representing an into-work rate of 72% of those completing.

- 3.5 The September roadshows this year were held in Girdwood, St Comgall's, Crescent Arts Centre and Banana Block. In addition to this, officers promoted Employment Academies at jobs fairs in Duncairn Arts Centre, Kennedy Centre, Park Centre and St George's Market. As a result, over 400 people have applied for the Autumn suite of Belfast Employment Academies and are currently going through pre-academy screening and selection. An insight into current activity in the variety of sectors is detailed below.

3.6 Tech Employment Academy

Members will be aware that the tech sector is one of the largest employers in the city at present. It also remains a key focus for Invest NI in terms of future investment and support for existing businesses and is identified in the draft 10x vision as a priority area for future government support. To date, it has been challenging to secure employer support for exploring alternative engagement mechanisms, particularly those that set aside the requirement for a degree qualification – even for entry-level roles.

- 3.7 Following extensive research and engagement with employers, the first Tech Employment Academy was launched in June 2022. The programme had over 100 applicants for this ground-breaking 16-week programme supported by Allstate and Citi. Screening and selection included aptitude assessments and interview with 17 starting for jobs the programme, focused on Software Development and Product Management. The programme ran for 16 weeks and concluded in October 2022. To date, 12 participants (71%) have progressed into immediate employment with starting salaries for the above roles range £23k-£28k. Further employability support is being provided to remaining participants including job applications, CV support, interview preparation etc. All participants were deemed employable by the participating employers, who were restricted only by the number of roles on offer.

- 3.8 As we move forward, the intention is to continue to offer Employment Academies in this area. Strategic employer engagement has been ongoing throughout the Autumn to build awareness of the offer and seek involvement. We have allocated an additional 38 places for people to commence in early 2023 once employer demand is secured. It is interesting

to note that, of those who did not secure a place on this first Tech Employment Academy, a large number of the (unsuccessful) applicants to the pilot cohort remain engaged and interested in participating as we move forward.

3.9 Retrofit Academy

The Reset for Growth report completed by the Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission (IIGC) in June 2021 identified the need for a retrofit programme of scale in Belfast to create employment opportunities in this new sector, while supporting the city's zero carbon commitments. Following our initial scoping work, it became apparent that a significant stumbling block was the lack of a curriculum in this space. Officers were successful in securing funding through the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' (DLUHC) Community Renewal Fund to develop a pilot intervention that would help build a curriculum for the vocational skills in this sector while also providing skills support for a number of individuals – thereby providing the 'building blocks' for a larger-scale intervention in partnership with key organisations including NIHE.

3.10 To date, almost 100 participants have taken part in the training as follows:

- Level 2 – Understanding Domestic Retrofit – 57 Participants
- Level 3 – Retrofit Adviser – 20 Participants
- Level 4 - Retrofit Assessor – 5 Participants
- Level 5 – Retrofit Coordinator – 15 Participants

3.11 Moving forward from this pilot, the intention is to expand the level of uptake in order to build the supply chain so that government commitments in this space can be met. In parallel, the Climate Commissioner has led on the establishment of a local Retrofit Hub. This brings together a range of work strands related to retrofitting including skills development; building regulations; academic research and government incentives in order to take a more strategic view of the opportunities and challenges within this sector and to develop more coherent responses that can support the drive to zero carbon while also creating employment; improving housing stock and supporting new business development opportunities.

3.12 Fibre Employment Academy

Research undertaken by Ulster University's Economic Policy Centre (EPC) identified the utilities sector as having significant potential for future growth and one that could help improve both median salary levels and business competitiveness and productivity. Based on these insights, officers last year brought forward a Fibre Academy. Working with the delivery partners, we developed an intervention covering a number of roles including fibre installers, splicers and groundwork teams. Based on 2021/22 delivery, employment outcomes were very positive (90% into-employment) and starting salaries for successful applicants averaged at £29k. Some of those who completed the programme last year have already moved into management positions, including an individual who was out of work due to Covid, and who has moved into a project management role with a local fibre company earning a salary of £50k pa.

- 3.13 Based on the early success of the initial cohorts, we have just commenced delivery of a new programme in November this year and will engage 40 people before the end of the year. Demand from employers remains high and we expect that this will continue.

3.14 **Business Services**

In addition to tech and digital roles, the wider professional and business services sectors have witnessed significant employment growth over the last decade. Our research indicates the potential for further growth. As a result, we developed a number of interventions this year – including a Business Services Academy that focused specifically on Business Support and Administration roles within Belfast City Council as well as other employers. A particular success of this Academy has the engagement with the disability sector, which has led to a high number of people with disabilities participating in the training and securing employment.

3.15 **Care Sectors**

Since April 2022 we have supported 35 people through an Employment Academy with 19 people having already moved into paid employment within a care sector job. In addition to this we have also enabled 119 Belfast residents to develop their existing knowledge by offering them the opportunity to upskill for a better job in a care sector role, from Health and Social Care to Childcare and Playwork.

- 3.16 Our upskilling programmes support participants to achieve their Level 3 and/or Level 5 qualifications within their chosen

profession. This then qualifies them to progress into more senior roles within their organisation. It also improves their earning potential and creates further entry-level positions for new entrants into the sector thereby enabling a skills-escalator model in the city. Finally, these upskilling academies also help to fill the skills gaps within these industries and ensure the provision of health and social care services across the city – particularly important for those who are more vulnerable.

3.17 In September 2022, officers also developed an upskilling programme for Classroom Assistants. This will support residents to achieve Level 3 in Supporting Teaching and Learning in School, enabling employees to move from precarious temporary employment to permanent roles within the education sector. We are also working on a pilot academy for new entrants to the Classroom Assistant role which is due to begin in early 2023.

3.18 Construction

The Employability and Skills teams has been working in the construction sector for a number of years. More recently, our work has focused on supporting the development of major construction schemes, including Weaver's Court. Since April 2022, 99 participants have engaged with our support programmes and 78 having moved into paid employment to date. In addition to this, officers have delivered a General Operative Employment Academy for BCC posts ringfenced for long-term unemployed and all seven who completed secured employment with BCC. Another new intervention in the construction sector has been to focus on key roles that have specialist technical skills. Some examples of additional training that we have provided includes digger/dumper driving and telescopic forklift operation. Staff that have these specialist licences and training can potentially move from minimum wage to earning between a £16ph-£24ph.

3.19 Social Value

The Employability and Skills team continues to support colleagues in Corporate Procurement Service (CPS) in the implementation of the social value toolkit. Our contribution focuses on the employability and skills elements of the toolkit. We have recently produced explanatory materials for employers to outline the types of support that we can provide them with in meeting their social value obligations.

3.20 We also provide advice and guidance to colleagues across the council on social value and supported delivery on several projects such as City Cemetery, redevelopment of St Comgall's, redevelopment of Millennium Park, Templemore Baths Restoration and Shankill Shared Women's Centre project. The work done as part of the creation of visitor's centre at City Cemetery recently won the Social Value Project of the Year award at the Construction Employer's Federation's Construction Excellence Awards 2022.

3.21 Digital Badging

Digital Badging is a relatively new area of work for the Council over the last year. We explored this area of work given the disproportionately high numbers of individuals in the city that have no or low skills. Working with the RSA through a pilot phase in which they provided match funding to the council, we have issued 435 Digital Badges to people completing an Employment Academy. Moving beyond the Council, we have signed up 19 of our partners and they are now working on creating their own digital badges.

3.22 Building on the success of the first year in operation, it is proposed that we extend our partnership with RSA Cities of Learning, Badge Nation and Navigatr by way of a community membership licence. This will enable the Council to continue to write, issue and support providers and employers with access to Digital Badging memberships. It will also offer participants access to a live jobs feed on the Navigatr platform, linking them to local job opportunities connected to the skills they have developed through their badges. The partnership with RSA going forward will also provide the Council with scoping, intelligence and research in line with our priorities. Year 2 of the project will cost the Council £40,000. This allocation has been set aside within the existing budget for this financial year.

3.23 Stakeholder Engagement

The Employment Academy work relies heavily of a range of employability organisations to engage and support participants and to communicate and share information on planned activities. At present, we have a network of almost 200 employability practitioners that we engage with on a regular basis and is open to all employability organisations in the city. Over the last year, the communication has largely been through monthly online meetings. However the plan from next year is to move towards more in-person events and engagements.

3.24 Members will be aware of the significant funding challenges for this sector in the coming year, particularly relating to the end of European Social Fund (ESF) support and the lack of clarity around Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) implementation. While the Council has limited authority in this regard, we recognise the importance of having a strong employability sector that can engage and support individuals that are furthest from the labour market.

3.25 One mechanism that we have identified to provide support to the sector is that we have recently become a corporate affiliate partner of the Institute for Employability Professionals (IEP). Through this partnership, we have been able to offer membership places to 100 employability practitioners in the city. The IEP will provide participants with development and upskilling support for their staff. This should be beneficial for those organisations seeking to secure funding or win new business in the future and will also provide access to the most recent thinking in this area of work. The IEP will also provide us with access to a range of expertise and we will use the network to organise events that can benefit the wider sector across the city. The first event is planned for January 2023 and will focus on mental health training and working with those who are neurodivergent. Attendance will be open to all those who are IEP members in the city.

3.26 Financial and resource implications

The activities outlined in this report will be resourced from the 2022/23 budget for the Employability & Skills section of the Place and Economy departmental budget that was included as part of the estimates that were approved by this Committee on 12 January 2022.

The allocation of £40,000 to RSA Cities of Learning to progress Digital Badging in the city will be taken from this existing budget.

3.27 Equality implications/rural needs assessment

The team has created a CRM system that allows them to track participant data across all engagement activity. This information is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that all equality implications are considered. Officers also use this information to address under-performance in specific areas and then put in place targeted actions to redress the balance in future engagements.”

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During discussion, the Director of Economic Development provided further information on the data and completion rates of the Employment Academy interventions and explained the breakdown of the various provisions across the city. The Employability and Skills Manager advised that drop-out rates were low and that further data could be provided on progression and completion rates of the various academies. The Director highlighted that work was continuing to ensure opportunities were being accessed across the city and a further update would be submitted to the Committee in due course

He also advised that a request had been received from the European Social Fund Peer Group to present to a future meeting of the Committee,

The Committee:

- Noted the work undertaken in the financial year to date and the positive employability and jobs outcomes associated with the work;
- Approved the allocation of £40,000 from the existing Employability and Skills Revenue budget to continue to work in partnership with RSA Cities of Learning to progress Digital Badging in the city;
- Agreed that the European Social Fund Peer Group be invited to present at a future meeting of the Committee; and
- Noted that a report would be submitted to a future meeting to provide further data on Employability and Skills provision across the city.

Positioning Belfast to Compete

Belfast Bikes Quarter 2 Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 To update Members on the performance of the Just Eat Belfast Bikes scheme in the second quarter (1 July to 30 September 2022) of year 7 of operation.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is requested to:

- **note the update of the Just Eat Belfast Bikes performance for Year 7 Q2 (June to September 2022);**
- **note the update to the notice of motion regarding free access for young people;**
- **note the progress with regard to phase one and phase two expansion.**

3.0 Main report

3.1 Background

The Belfast Bikes scheme was launched in 2015 as part of Belfast City Council's physical investment programme. The Department for Regional Development provided initial capital funding for the scheme as part of their Active Travel Demonstration Projects budget. The scheme launched with a network of 30 docking stations and 300 bikes. The scheme has been operated by NSL continually since inception using bikes and supporting infrastructure from 'Nextbike by TIER'. The scheme currently operates with 573 bikes (including those in reserve for new stands) and 50 docking stations.

Expansion of the Scheme

3.2 At CG&R on 12 May 2021 it was agreed that an additional four Belfast Bikes docking stations would be deployed using DFI Active Travel funding. Installation began in Q1 and current status is as follows:

- Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre was installed on 7 July 2022 and is operational;
- Olympia Leisure Centre was installed on 25 October 2022 and is operational;
- Kennedy Centre installation has been delayed due to supply chain issues, and is expected to be operational by mid-December;
- Waterworks installation has been delayed due to supply chain issues, and is expected to be operational by mid-December.

Council officers are currently liaising with the operator and supplier to improve the supply chain issues for future installations.

3.3 At CG&R on 9 June 2021 it was agreed to proceed with an additional 15 docking stations. An investment of approximately £525,000 is required, based on cost estimates from previous network expansions. At SP&R on 18 June 2021 members agreed for £500,000 to be invested in the expansion proposal.

3.3 A procurement exercise is ongoing for the design and installation of eight stations in Phase 1 (to be installed 2022/23):

- North: Yorkgate and Shore Road
- West: St Mary's College and Shankill Road
- South: Lisburn Road and Malone Road
- East: Castlereagh Road, Upper Newtownards Road.

Seven stations will follow in Phase 2 in the following year (2023/24).

- 3.5 As previously agreed by the committee, discussion and agreement through Area Working Groups is required to determine exact locations and consider those against the Site Expansion Matrix. These site options and discussions with Area Working Groups commenced in November.

Operational Performance

Availability

- 3.6 Following challenges sourcing replacement bike parts earlier in the year, supplies and bike availability significantly improved during Q2. Average daily bikes on the street during Q2 was 340.
- 3.7 An additional 180 bikes have been purchased to facilitate the ongoing docking station expansion, so availability levels are expected to further increase in coming months.

Membership

- 3.8 There were 75,129 registered Belfast Bike users at the end of Q2.
- In Q2 'Pay as you go' (PAYG) memberships was the most popular form of membership, accounting for 95% of users.
 - Annual memberships accounted for 5% of users. There is an ongoing trend of users switching from annual membership to PAYG.
 - Casual memberships have greatly reduced, accounting for less than 1% of memberships, due to the introduction of PAYG.

Journeys

- 3.9 There have been 1,292,583 journeys since the scheme was launched including 56,175 journeys during Q2 Year 7.

Although this is a decrease of 23% from the same period in Year 6 (which was an exceptionally busy year for the scheme),

journeys during this period increased by 12% against Q2 average since the scheme commenced.

Vandalism

- 3.10 Members will be aware that vandalism is an ongoing problem. Upgrades to the forks to help prevent the unauthorised removal of bikes has been successful however, damage is now being caused to the rear wheels while bikes are being forced from docking stations. There have also been instances of bikes being set on fire and damaged beyond repair.
- 3.11 There were 130 instances of vandalism in Q2. Vandalism costs payable by the Council for this period is £17,201. This figure is significantly higher than the quarterly average (£5,314).
- 3.12 Members should note that generally the number of vandalism incidents has decreased in recent years, however vandalism costs have increased due to the higher cost of parts associated with a higher quality of bike. Bikes were upgraded to 'SMART' bikes in 2021. For comparison, in the same period in 2017, there were 243 instances of vandalism at a cost of £6,032 i.e. higher incidents but at a lower cost. See [Appendix 1](#) - tables 2 and 3 for annual comparison.
- 3.13 Members should also note that following the upgrade to 'SMART' bikes, the amount of theft has decreased due to GPS tracking in the bike allowing for recovery. The operator is very proactive at retrieving missing bikes.
- 3.14 The bikes operator continues to deliver operational improvements and community engagement initiatives with PSNI to help decrease vandalism incidents.

Subscriptions and Usage Revenue

- 3.15 Income from fees and charges in Q2 was £71,608.
- Year to date income from fees and charges is £123,699. This is 29% higher than average for this period.

MARCOMMS

- 3.16 Marketing activity during Q2 included:
- Advertising campaign including radio, digital and outdoor;
 - Full page advert in City Matters magazine (circulation of 160k homes);

- Council-led press release on new station at Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre with additional stations to follow. Media coverage included Belfast Live, North Belfast News (front page), Andersonstown News, South Belfast News and South Side Advertiser;
- Additional media and social media coverage included NIfamilybloglife, NI Travel News Online, Insider Media, 4ni.co.uk;
- Social media updates across all Belfast Bikes channels on new station at Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre with additional stations to follow.

3.17 Belfast Bikes currently has 5.1k followers on Twitter; 1.7k on Facebook; and 1.1k on Instagram.

Operator contract

3.18 NSL continues to operate the Belfast Bikes scheme, with a contract renewal available until 2024. Council staff are reviewing the scheme and will make future recommendations for the management, operation and potential expansion of the scheme as part of a new procurement package.

Sponsorship

3.19 Council officers are currently assessing procurement options for a new sponsor of the scheme.

Response to Notice of Motion

3.20 Following a Notice of Motion from Councillor O'Hara the Committee agreed on 4th March 2020 to investigate *'as part of the current strategic review of the Belfast Bikes Scheme, consideration be given to granting free access to young people 25 years of age and under to the scheme'*.

3.21 Belfast Bikes operator, NSL, added date of birth (D.O.B.) as an essential criteria for users from 13 October 2022. It would be prudent to wait approximately six months to allow the majority of users to upgrade their information before accurate age demographics can be determined.

3.22 However, initial reports indicate the 49% of users fall within the '25 and under' age group. Providing free usage to under 25's is likely to have a significant detrimental impact on revenue generated from the bike scheme, which directly contributes to operating costs.

- 3.23 Alternative proposals for discounted rates for certain users (e.g. young people, students, corporate discounts) are being explored. The current operator has advised that while discounted offers are complicated to be added to the system, they can be done. The application of these is being finalised and it is hoped trials will commence in the coming months.

Update on Covered Cycle Stands city-wide

- 3.24 Whilst Covered Cycle Stands are not part of the Belfast Bikes scheme, both initiatives are aligned to the Bolder Vision with a focus on improvements in the active travel provision and infrastructure across the city. Covered Cycle Stands are part of the Active Travel Enablers project.

Phase 1

- 3.25 Under the DfI Sustainable and Active Travel elements of the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme, 10 covered cycle stands were funded city-wide. Locations were agreed in previous CGR Committee and the status is as follows:

Gasworks	Installed July 2022
St. George's Market	Stand delivered but still awaiting DfI approval
Grosvenor Community Centre	Installed September 2022
Shankill Leisure Centre	Installed July 2022
Belmont Park	Installed August 2022
Inverary Community Centre	Installed August 2022
Belfast Zoo	Installed August 2022
Waterworks	Installed August 2022
Belvoir Activity Centre	Installed August 2022
Mary Peter's Track	Installed September 2022

Phase 2

- 3.26 Members received an update on the DfI funding for the Active Travel Enabling Projects in March 2022 that outlined the projects, budget and timeframe for delivery. In terms of the covered cycle stands, officers drew upon the priority areas identified by Sustrans, and these locations were also assessed in terms of the deliverability within the timeframe as well as the key criteria aligned to cycle infrastructure provision.

3.27 Following a procurement process, a supplier has been appointed for the next 10 covered cycle stands being delivered in-year.

3.28 Financial & Resource Implications

Finance

There are no specific financial or resource implications contained within this report.

3.29 Equality or Good Relations Implications

None.”

During discussion, the Director of Economic Development highlighted that usage for the financial year was expected to increase in the Spring, however, the reasons for the decline in usage to date would be investigated further.

During further discussion, one Member raised concerns in relation to the lack of cycle infrastructure in Belfast and suggested that the Committee request confirmation from the Department for Infrastructure of the budget allocation for 2022/2023.

After discussion, the Committee:

- Noted the update of the Just Eat Belfast Bikes performance for Year 7 Q2 (June to September 2022);
- Noted the update to the notice of motion regarding free access for young people;
- Noted the progress with regard to phase one and phase two expansion; and
- Agreed to write to the Department for Infrastructure to request confirmation of the budget allocation for the delivery of the Belfast Cycle Network in the financial year 2022/23.

Strategic and Operational Issues

Committee Plan - 6- Month Update

The Committee was reminded that the 2022-23 Committee Plan had been developed in the context of the Council’s Corporate Plan and the emerging, refreshed Belfast Agenda and contained the commitments within the Corporate Delivery Plan, which were under the remit of the Committee, plus additional deliverables that had been agreed by the Committee. It outlined the main priorities and programmes of work that the Committee was overseeing to maximise the Council’s contribution to the Belfast Agenda and deliver a sustainable and inclusive economic recovery.

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It was reported that Appendix 1 (copy available [here](#)) outlined progress with the main commitments in the Committee Plan for the six month period, April-September 2022 and that many of the commitments would continue to be delivered over the course of the year and the Committee would be kept informed of its progress.

The Committee noted the contents of the mid-year report and progress against the agreed actions within the 2022-23 City Growth and Regeneration Committee Plan.

**NI Housing Executive - Consultation on draft
Corporate Plan 22/23 - 24/25**

The Committee considered the undernoted report and associated appendices:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the draft consultation response to NIHE’s Corporate Plan 2022/23 – 2024/25 which is due to be submitted to NIHE by 14th December 2022. A draft response will be submitted on behalf of Belfast City Council subject to approval by this committee and further subject to Council ratification in January 2023.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- **Consider and approve the Council’s draft consultation response submission to the NIHE’s consultation on their draft Corporate Plan 2022/23 – 2024/25 enclosed with this report at Appendix 2.**
- **Consider and agree that the response, subject to any amendments by Committee, will be submitted by the closing date of 14th December 2022 on the basis that it remains subject to ratification by Full Council in January 2023.**
- **Note the draft response has been formed on the basis of previously agreed Council positions on housing which were submitted in response to the Department for Communities consultation on the Housing Supply Strategy 2022-2027 and consultation on Intermediate Rent.**

3.0 Main report

3.1 Background

Members will know that the NIHE is the Strategic Housing Authority for NI and a public landlord at scale. With an annual budget of more than £1.2bn, NIHE provides a range of public services across NI, with a footprint extending to more than 220,000 homes and services impacting on one in every three people. NIHE is also a Community Planning partner, chairing the Housing-Led Regeneration sub-group (which is aligned to the 'Our Place' theme currently being developed as part of the on-going refresh of the Belfast Agenda) which sits under the City Development Board, reporting to the Community Planning Partnership. Through this group, as part of the process of refreshing the Belfast Agenda, NIHE are leading on the collaborative development of an action plan for housing-led regeneration which will help us deliver the agreed Belfast Agenda target to grow the city's population by 66,000 by 2035, with the Local Development Plan (LDP) providing the planning framework to allow us to build the 31,600 homes which are required to meet that target.

Although housing has been identified as a priority in its own right in the Belfast Agenda, the wider impact of good quality housing on the health and wellbeing of residents of Belfast and other priority outcomes of the community plan should not be underestimated. It is within this broad, cross-cutting context that Council's draft consultation response has been prepared.

Council had previously provided a response to both the Department for Communities Housing Supply Strategy 2022-2027 consultation regarding Proposals for Intermediate Rent.

Emerging draft NIHE Corporate Plan

During the summer and autumn of 2021, NIHE engaged with customers and stakeholders to commence the process of developing their new three year Corporate Plan. These engagement exercises enabled them to identify a number of strategic themes and key priorities for the next three years (2022/23 – 2024/25).

Emerging Priorities and Objectives

NIHE's draft Corporate Plan sets out six high level priorities / objectives for comment:

- i We will work with our partners, taking the lead role as the Strategic Housing Authority, to increase social housing supply to help meet identified need.
- ii We will help NI meet its emissions targets, address the impact of climate change and help sustain and protect our environment for future generations.
- iii We will invest around £1,973m* (over the next 3 years) into our local economy, through our housing services, construction activity, employment opportunities and through our support for the health, voluntary and community sectors. In the same period we will process circa £1,148m in Housing Benefit payments across public and private housing tenures.
- iv We will work with our partners to deliver innovative housing solutions for our customers and to help reduce poverty and improve Health & Wellbeing
- v We will engage with our customers to ensure that they are at the heart of service improvements and our business delivery model.
- vi We will be an employer of choice and deliver high quality services for all in N.I.'s increasingly diverse community.

The consultation also includes in its Appendices the NIHE's Annual Business Plan 2022/2023 and associated performance indicators and targets.

Members should note that the NIHE has highlighted a number of overarching caveats in setting the context for the development of the Corporate Plan. These include:

- The strong focus on preparing for a 'revitalised organisation.' NIHE notes that much work has been done during the last year to develop an Outline Business Case to consider and assess the potential options for a new financial model for the organisation to enable it to borrow to invest. Assuming progress will be made on this, the NIHE hopes to be in a position to borrow by 2025.
- The plan notes that Cost of Living impact and considerations is an evolving situation and will be reflected in the Plan at the time of publication.
- The actions allocated to priorities are all 'subject to funding allocation' in terms of delivery.

Key Considerations

Below is a summary of the key points raised by officers in the draft consultation response. As noted above, many of these issues were previously highlighted as part of Council's consultation response to the Housing Supply Strategy and the consultation on Intermediate Rent. Details of the full response to the draft NIHE Corporate Plan can be found at Appendix 3 for Members consideration.

- Council notes that where the overall vision statement for the NIHE's Corporate Plan states that 'Everyone is able to live in an affordable, sustainable and decent home', that the first stated objective makes reference to 'social housing supply' only. Whilst Council recognises the need to and is supportive of the objective to increase social housing supply to meet identified need, we would suggest that as the strategic Housing Authority, NIHE should focus on work to address housing affordability challenges in a broader sense as there are also affordability pressures in the private housing markets which require intervention
- NIHE should take a lead role in providing research, evidence and advice across a number of areas, including within its capacity as a statutory consultee in planning applications, in relation to for example: the delivery of mixed-tenure developments, implementing an industry standard for retrofitting or standards for energy efficiency, and ensuring that all interventions are the most appropriate and cost effective in the long term.
- As the first Local Development Plans (LDPs) are nearing adoption including Belfast's, the NIHE has a significant role in supporting the refining and implementing key housing policies through further work on providing data and developing new ways of working
- Cross-cutting collaboration and policy coordination is required across all relevant public and statutory sector bodies as well as exploring opportunities to work with third party and private sector partners
- NIHE should ensure that shared priority areas for action identified in Community Plans are embedded within the Corporate Plan and resourced appropriately (e.g. Supporting vulnerable people through Complex Lives model and its alignment with Housing First ; co-designing and delivering housing led regeneration schemes etc).

- NIHE should take the lead in working with relevant bodies to develop industry standards for retrofit and to seek to maximise the potential benefits and opportunities presented through 'green skills' and address the current mismatch between the skills demand and the current and future supply of such skills into the construction labour market. Consideration should be given to opportunities to invest in training staff in green skills including retrofitting.
- Encourage NIHE to establish standards which ensures that all new homes should be built to carbon-zero standards rather than continuing to build homes which will require retrofitting in the future.
- Welcome the opportunity to continue to work collaboratively with the NIHE in terms of the Council's employability programmes and ambitions to secure well paid and sustained employment opportunities for unemployed and economically inactive residents of Belfast ensuring that we have inclusive growth
- Encourage the development and implementation package of new affordable housing products as part of new developments would greatly help improve choice to a range of more affordable housing options

In addition to the specific comments on the high level objectives, the Council's response also sets out a range of key considerations which we believe are critical in terms of developing and delivering quality housing supply within the city. Some specific issues are highlighted in our response to question 3 and previously form part of Council's response to the Housing Supply Strategy consultation e.g:

- There are currently a number of policy, financial and structural challenges which are impacting upon the ability to successfully deliver placemaking housing regeneration schemes including the delivery via public /private partnerships
- Need to address the current and future pressures surrounding wastewater infrastructure
- Signposting to key key points highlighted in the Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission: 'Reset for Growth' Report
- The need for housing investment funds to support new housing construction at scale in a similar manner to other UK cities and consideration as to how existing funding can be best utilised or refocused to support housing led regeneration priorities and unlock development

- Need to support, enable and encourage greater collaboration between the public and private sector to design innovative approaches to unlocking key challenges with identified major city housing led regeneration schemes,
- Collaborative approach across government and with private sector in terms of identification and development of viable land.
- A Bolder Vision – which has ‘*Promote City Centre Living*’ as one of its 4 key moves
- Need to recognise the significant and importance of city centre living to the future reimagining and sustainability of the Belfast (and other city and towns) high street / city centre. Highlight that the ‘A Bolder Vision’ has a core focus on ‘Promoting City Centre Living’, which it is recommended be central to any emerging recommendations from the High Street Task Force and embedded within Executive funding priorities

The consultation concludes by reiterating Council’s commitment to continuing to work collaboratively with the NIHE and other stakeholders on maximising housing development and regeneration opportunities across Belfast as well as working together to address many of the associated social changes impacted upon through good quality housing.

4.0 Financial and Resource Implications

None

Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment

None.”

The Committee:

- Approved the Council’s draft consultation response submission ([Appendix 3](#)) to the NIHE’s consultation on their draft Corporate Plan 2022/23 – 2024/25 ([Appendix 2](#));
- Agreed that the response, subject to any amendments by the Committee, would be submitted by the closing date of 14th December 2022 on the basis that it remained subject to ratification by the Council in January 2023; and
- Noted the draft response had been formed on the basis of previously agreed Council positions on housing which were submitted in response to the Department for Communities

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consultation on the Housing Supply Strategy 2022-2027 and
consultation on Intermediate Rent.

Issues Raised in Advance by Members

GP services in Belfast (Councillor Heading to Raise)

Councillor Heading outlined his request to invite the Strategic Planning and Performance Group to attend a future meeting of the Committee to present on how they plan to maintain GP services in Belfast, in particular details of future provision based on the Belfast Agenda population growth ambitions, especially in the City Centre where there are limited GP services.

The Committee agreed to the request and noted that the organisation would be invited to attend the Special Meeting in February.

Chairperson

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Licensing Committee

Wednesday, 14th December, 2022

MEETING OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER AND REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Matt Collins (Chairperson); and
Councillors Bradley, Gormley, Howard, Hutchinson,
M. Kelly, Magee, McAteer, McCann, McKeown, Murray,
Smyth and Thompson.

In attendance: Ms. N. Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and
Civic Services;
Mr. S. Hewitt, Building Control Manager;
Ms. V. Donnelly, City Protection Manager;
Mr. K. Bloomfield, HMO Unit Manager;
Mr. D. McCamphill, Lead Building Control Surveyor;
Ms. L. Hillis, Principal Building Control Surveyor;
Mr. J. Cunningham, Senior Licensing Officer;
Mr. C. McCullough, Marketing and Communications
Coordinator;
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer; and
Ms. V. Smyth, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillors Canavan, T. Kelly and McCusker.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 16th November were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st December, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor McKeown declared an interest in the review of Pavement Café Licence for City Picnic, Fountain Street (item 2d) in that he had advocated on their behalf to find a resolution in correspondence to the Department for Infrastructure (DfI). He excluded himself from any vote but advised that he would remain in attendance as a representative for the area.

Delegated Matters

**THE COMMITTEE DEALT WITH THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IN PURSUANCE
OF THE POWERS DELEGATED TO IT UNDER STANDING ORDER 37(d)**

**Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)
Licences Issued Under Delegated Authority**

The Committee noted a list of licences for Houses in Multiple Occupation which had, since its last meeting, been issued under the Council's Scheme of Delegation.

Applications approved under Delegated Authority

The Committee noted a list of applications for licences which had, since its last meeting, been approved under the Council's Scheme of Delegation.

**Application for the Grant of a Seven-Day Annual
Indoor Entertainments Licence with Extended Hours –
The Rusty Saddle and Shake or Stir, 21 Howard Street**

The Building Control Manager submitted for the Committee's consideration the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

To consider an application for the grant of a Seven-Day Annual Indoor Entertainments Licence with extended hours for The Rusty Saddle and Shake or Stir.

<u>Area and Location</u>	<u>Ref. No.</u>	<u>Applicant</u>
The Rusty Saddle and Shake or Stir 21 Howard Street Belfast BT1 6NB	WK/2020/02106	Mr. Eamonn Diamond 21 Howard Street Belfast BT1 6NB

1.2 A location map is attached at Appendix 1.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Taking into account the information presented and any representations received Members are required to consider the application and to:

- a) Approve the application for the provision of entertainment to 2.00am on Friday and Saturday, or
- b) Approve the application with special conditions, or
- c) Refuse the application for the provision of entertainment to 2.00am on Friday and Saturday.

- 2.2 If an application is refused, or special conditions are attached to the licence to which the applicant does not consent, then the applicant may appeal the Council's decision within 21 days of notification of that decision to the County Court. In the case that the applicant subsequently decides to appeal, entertainment may not be provided until any such appeal is determined.
- 3.0 **Main Report**
- Key Issues**
- Grant of a licence**
- 3.1 In relation to the Entertainments Licence, all statutory consultations have been completed satisfactorily and the certificates pre-requisite to the grant of licence have been received.
- 3.2 The Committee is reminded that the normal process for dealing with Entertainments Licence applications which are not the subject of objections is that the Director of Planning and Building Control will grant the Licence as provided for in the Council's Scheme of Delegation.
- 3.3 Under the Scheme of Delegation, the Director of Place and Economy has authority to issue any application for the grant of a licence where there are no representations in respect of it and the hours of operation applied for do not exceed 1.00am.
- 3.4 However, applications to provide indoor entertainment beyond 1.00 a.m. are subject to consideration by the Committee and the premises has applied for the following days and hours of use:
- Sunday: 12.30 am to 1.00 am the following morning
 - Monday to Thursday: 11.30 am to 1.00 am the following morning
 - Friday and Saturday: 11:30 am to 2:00 am the following morning
- 3.5 To assist the premises in the circumstances where the building is ready to provide entertainment in advance of consideration of this application for an extension in hours to 2.00 am, the Entertainment Licence has been issued permitting the premises to operate to 1.00 am.

- 3.6** The Committee is, therefore, only being asked to consider whether the provision of entertainment to 2.00 am may be permitted.

Details of the Premises and Proposals

- 3.7** The areas proposed to be licensed to provide indoor entertainment and their maximum occupancies are:

- The Rusty Saddle (Ground floor) - 200
- Shake or Stir (First floor) - 220

- 3.8** The days and hours during which entertainment is proposed to be provided, are:

- Sunday: 12.30am to 1.00 am the following morning
- Monday to Thursday: 11.30 am to 1.00 am the following morning
- Friday and Saturday: 11:30 am to 2:00 am the following morning

- 3.9** The applicant has stated that the extension of hours to 2.00 am on Friday and Saturday is because the 1st floor is a nightclub.

- 3.10** Members are advised that the previous Entertainment Licence for this premises permitted entertainment to be provided to 3.00am the following morning from Monday to Sunday.

Representations

- 3.11** Public notice of the application has been placed and no written representation has been received as a result of this advertisement.

PSNI

- 3.12** The Police Service of Northern Ireland has been consulted and has confirmed that it has no objection to the application. Its response is attached at Appendix 2.

NIFRS

- 3.13** The Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service has been consulted and has confirmed that it has no objection to the application.

Health, Safety and Welfare

- 3.14 The premises has been inspected by the Building Control Service and it is now complete for the purposes of the Building Regulations.

Noise

- 3.15 No noise complaints have been received in relation to the premises in the last 12-month period.
- 3.16 The Committee is reminded that the Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act 2011 gives the Council additional powers in relation to the control of entertainment noise after 11.00 pm.

Applicant

- 3.17 The applicant, and/or their representatives, will be available at your meeting to answer any queries you may have in relation to the application.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.18 None.

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

- 3.19 There are no issues associated with this report.”

It was reported that Mr. B. Davison, Company Accountant, was in attendance to represent The Rusty Saddle and Shake or Stir.

The Committee approved the application for the provision of entertainment to 2.00 a.m. on Friday and Saturday.

**Review of Pavement Café Licence –
City Picnic, Fountain Street**

The Chairperson informed the Committee that the Review of Pavement Café Licence – City Picnic, Fountain Street (Item 2d) and Review of Pavement Café Licence – Voodoo, Fountain Street (2e) would be heard together. It was reported that Mr. D. McFarlane, Divisional Roads Manager, and Mr. G. Lawther, Development Control Manager, were in attendance on behalf of DfI-Roads, as were Mr. A. McAnerney, the Licensee, and his business partner Mr G. Gregg.

The Building Control Manager reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 16th November, it had considered the review of 2 Temporary Pavement Café Licences in Fountain Street.

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DfI-Roads had notified the Council that, in its view, the Temporary Pavement Cafés needed to be removed or relocated to facilitate the safe movement of traffic in Fountain Street, following its reopening to vehicular traffic. The Committee, after hearing from DfI-Roads and representatives from City Picnic and Voodoo (the licensees), had deferred making any decision to enable further information to be obtained.

At the meeting in November, the Committee had asked for more information from DfI-Roads, which would provide an analysis of road safety in the area, to enable it to properly consider the request to revoke the pavement café licences. The Committee had also asked for confirmation from DfI-Roads on whether Castle Street (portion between Fountain Street and Castle Junction) would remain pedestrianised.

In response to these queries DfI Roads had commented as follows:

“The Department’s view on the café licences for both Voodoo and City Picnic is that they present a danger to vulnerable road users especially pedestrians. This is because they are both placed across a section of Fountain Street that would, ordinarily, be open to two-way traffic. This section of road leads into another section, behind the bollards on Fountain Street, that is pedestrianised save for 6 pm to 11 am. The Cafés obstruct this part of the road. This has led to a number of loading vehicles being forced to reverse to exit both Fountain Street and Castle Street, whereas previously they could have driven through this section. Vehicles, which cannot perform a ‘u-turn’ on Castle Street can only leave the street by reversing through the traffic light-controlled junction at Queens Street. The Department is concerned that the reversing that the structures require vehicles to undertake could cause a danger to vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians and cyclists, as well as other mechanically propelled road traffic. Additionally, the cafes’ structures block access to a car park that is incorporated into the Norwich Union Building, do not facilitate cyclists and may not address specific issues encountered by disabled drivers.

Due to the foregoing, the Department would urge the Council to not renew the licences on Fountain Street.

If the Council does not agree with the Department on this question, the Department would then request the structure and associated café furniture would not be in place between the hours of 6 pm and 11 am to mirror the times when Fountain Street pedestrianised zone is open to loading traffic. This will allow the free flow of traffic for loading vehicles, important to other businesses in the area, and reduce the risk for vulnerable road users.

The Department would ask that, in making its decision, the Council fully considers the impacts on disabled people and cyclists and is informed by a public safety risk assessment that fully considers all the safety issues associated with the pavement café license applications.

In relation to your query about traffic volumes, I can confirm that the Department does not have either vehicle or pedestrian counts for the periods before or after the closure.

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In relation to the pedestrianisation of Castle Street, in front of City Picnic, I can confirm that the Department has currently restricted all vehicles from using Castle Street between Royal Avenue to Fountain Street with the exception of cyclists under the powers conferred on it by Article 7 of the Road Traffic Regulations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997. This restriction will last until 1 April 2024 however this can be superseded or changed if it becomes necessary.

As a final point the Department notes from the legislation that the structures should be capable of being taken away within 20 minutes and urge the Council to ensure that any licence that it grants ensures that the permitted structures can be taken down within that timeframe”.

The Building Control Manager advised that officers had engaged with DfI-Roads in relation to its comments and requested that a public safety risk assessment be provided in support of its representation, however, this had not been carried out by the Department. He further advised that City Picnic had submitted an application for a new location in Castle Street with which DfI-Roads was generally content. The public notice period for objections had expired and officers were awaiting comments from the PSNI in relation to the new location which would determine the outcome of the temporary licence application in Castle Street.

From a political perspective, a Member relayed frustration in relation to how the matter had been dealt with by DfI and asked what the Committee could do to support the businesses over the Christmas period.

A Member, acting as a representative for the area, referred to the unreasonable and unfair pressure which had initially been put on the businesses to remove the street furniture before the Council had considered the issue. The Member criticised DfI's vehicle-first approach to the city centre despite the Council having made it clear it wanted to see transformation. In the absence of the Stormont Assembly, the Member stated that DfI were ignoring the biggest democratic, elected body in the region and the mandate the Members had been given. He agreed that peoples' safety should be paramount but did not accept that this could only be achieved by reopening the street to traffic. The Member asked the Committee to continue to enable the businesses to continue operating outdoors; and invited senior DfI officials to address the Committee on what steps they were taking to enable more pavement licences to be granted in the city centre, and what plans it had for more pedestrianised zones which would provide for cafes, street markets and entertainment in line with the expressed will of the Council.

The Chairperson referred to the public safety risk assessment and asked why DfI-Roads had not carried out the assessment given it was the expert in road safety. The Chairperson invited DfI-Roads to respond.

In response, Mr. D. McFarlane, Divisional Roads Manager reported that DfI-Roads had been working closely with the Council on a range of measures throughout the city centre including on the issue around active travel and public transport. He continued that there was a lot happening and there was still a lot to happen under the remit of the Climate Change Act. In terms of these 2 pavement café licences, he advised that DfI-

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Roads had been acting as consultees to provide a roads input in relation to roads safety which was effectively what had been done. He stated that the pavement café opportunity had been a temporary measure as a result of the Primark fire which had closed the road, however, the road had been reopened creating road safety issues. Mr. McFarlane reiterated DfI-Road's concerns and assessment of public risk referred to in its response. In relation to the public safety risk assessment, he stated that the Council might wish to get an independent view of the risks given that some of the Members had not accepted DfI's analysis.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. A. McAnerney and Mr. G. Gregg from City Picnic and invited them to make their representation.

Mr. Gregg advised that he and Mr. McAnerney were extremely fearful as he expected that in 6 months the business would be asked to move to allow for the area to be opened up to buses. He stressed that times were tough for the business and that it was a sad indictment of what was going on in Belfast. He stated that businesses needed this help. He continued that the reversing of cars and deliveries had been going on in the area for 8 years.

Mr. D. McFarlane, Divisional Roads Manager was invited to respond to the points raised by Mr. G. Gregg. He referred to the climate crisis and the model shift from the private car to public transport and active travel. He stated that there were no plans for buses in the area, however, he couldn't provide certainty but there was a need to be cognisant of the climate challenge. He disagreed with Mr. Gregg's statement about the 8-years and reiterated DfI-Road's concerns around road safety.

The Committee agreed to defer the review of the Pavement Café Licence until the application for the new location in Castle Street was complete. In addition, Members requested representatives from DfI Roads be invited to attend the Committee to outline their plans for the development of the city centre and for officers to ascertain what plans Translink had for the area.

**Review of Pavement Café Licence –
Voodoo, Fountain Street**

The Chairman welcomed Mr. Feargal Smyth, Manager of Santeria, who joined the meeting to represent Voodoo on behalf of Mr. Ciaran Smyth. Due to his inability to attend the Committee, Mr. C. Smyth had sent a written submission which had been circulated to the Members in advance of the meeting. The Chairperson invited Mr. F. Smyth to deliver his representation.

Mr. F. Smyth highlighted the importance of the outside area as an extension to Voodoo which was essentially a music venue as well as a bar and that it would not be good for the business if it was taken away. He stated that the business would move the outside area to the new proposed area, however, the business would need 21 days over the Christmas period as it would be difficult to move it in such a busy period. He further stressed the importance of the outside area.

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The Building Control Manager informed the Committee that the application for Voodoo was at the preliminary stage and until an application was received the Council could not formally consult with DfI-Roads. He clarified the legislative process around the 21 days notice period that the Council were required to give a licensee if it was minded to revoke their licence.

The Committee agreed to defer the review of the Pavement Café Licence until a formal application was submitted by Voodoo for a new location adjacent to Norwich Union House and that agreement was reached with DfI on the suitability of this location. In addition, Members requested representatives from DfI Roads be invited to attend the Committee to outline their plans for the development of the city centre and for officers to ascertain what plans Translink had for the area.

Non-Delegated Matters

Fees for Entertainments Licences

The Building Control Manager informed the Committee of the decision of the Department for Communities that fees for the renewal of Entertainments Licences would, on 6th April 2023, revert to pre-April 2021 levels.

He advised that in February 2021, the Department for Communities determined that a reduced fee of £1 would apply to applications for the renewal of all categories of Entertainments Licence, both indoor and outdoor, received on or after 6th April, 2021.

This reduction was introduced to alleviate the hardship being experienced by the hospitality industry because of COVID-19 restrictions. In March 2022, the Department informed the Council that the nominal fee of £1 for renewal applications would remain for the 2022/23 financial year, subject to a further review later this year. Additional funding of some £17m provided by the Executive for council losses incurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic included provision to cover any loss of income resulting from the reduction in fees for the renewal of Entertainment Licences for 2022/23.

In a letter to the Council, dated 15th November 2022, the Department for Communities, having carried out a further review, had advised of its determination of the fees for Entertainment Licences. In that letter, the Department had acknowledged that reduced licence fees had, undoubtedly, helped ease some of the financial burden for businesses in the hospitality industry, however, with the removal of all remaining COVID-19 restrictions earlier this year, licence holders would by April 2023 have had a year to return to a normal trading footing.

The Building Control Manager informed the Licensing Committee that the Department was of the view that there was no need to continue with this easement beyond the end of the 2022/23 financial year and, therefore, fees for renewal entertainment licences would, with effect from 6th April, 2023, revert to pre-April 2021 levels. Details of the revised fees, effective from 6th April, 2023, were set out in the Department for Communities formal determination.

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The Committee noted the decision of the Department for Communities that fees for the renewal of entertainment licences would, with effect from 6th April, 2023, revert to pre-April 2021 levels.

Chairperson

Planning Committee

Monday, 19th December, 2022

HYBRID MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Whyte (Chairperson);
The High Sheriff, Councillor Hussey;
Alderman Rodgers;
Councillors Bower, Carson, Matt Collins,
Douglas, Groogan, Hanvey,
Hutchinson, Maskey, Murphy and Spratt.

In attendance: Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;
Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor;
Mr. E. Baker, Planning Manager (Development Management);
Mr. P. Fitzsimons, Principal Planning Officer;
Mr. D. O'Kane, Principal Planning Officer;
Mr. K. Sutherland, Planning Manager (Plans and Policy); and
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology for inability to attend was reported for Councillor Groogan.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 15th and 17th November were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council, at its meeting on 1st December, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Spratt declared an interest in relation to item 7a on the agenda, LA04/2021/1188/F: Provision for a 24-space car park, access road with lay-by and turning head. 2.4m Perimeter Fence. 425 Springfield Road, Belfast, in that he was related to one of the agents but stated that he would not leave the meeting while the item was being considered.

Committee Site Visit

The Committee noted that a site visit had taken place in respect of the following planning application on 2nd December, 2022:

- LA04/2022/1284/F - Lands bounded by Library Street (to south); Stephen Street (to west); Little Donegall Street (to north); and Union Street (to east),

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Belfast BT1 2JE. Erection of Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation (PBMSA) development comprising 862 units with additional use of accommodation by further or higher education institutions outside term time, communal facilities, internal amenity courtyard, cycle stores, active ground floor uses including cafe and retail, and associated bin stores and plant and public realm improvements to surrounding footpaths

Extinguishments

Public Right of Way Foyle Court

The Committee noted the Extinguishment of Public Right of Way for Foyle Court.

Public Right of Way Manor Court

The Committee noted the Extinguishment of Public Right of Way for Manor Court.

Public Right of Way Southport Court

The Committee noted the Extinguishment of Public Right of Way for Southport Court.

Request for additional Meeting of the Planning Committee

The Committee agreed to convene an additional meeting of the Committee for reconsideration of the following application, if required:

- LA04/2019/2653/F - Demolition of existing property and erection of a 9 storey building (overall height 37m) comprising a ground floor retail unit together with cycle parking and plant areas: and 8 floors of grade A office accommodation. (amended plans and updated technical information), Chancery House 88 Victoria Street Belfast.

Planning Decisions Issued

The Committee noted the Planning decisions issued between 7th November and 11th November, 2022.

Appeals

The Committee noted the Appeals Decisions.

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Planning Applications

**THE COMMITTEE DEALT WITH THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IN PURSUANCE OF THE
POWERS DELEGATED TO IT BY THE COUNCIL UNDER STANDING ORDER 37(e)**

**LA04/2020/1858/F: (deferred from August 2021
Planning Committee) Residential development
of 18 no. social housing units, comprising two
terraces. Development includes associated car
parking, gardens, landscaping, site access and all
other site works. Hillview Retail Park,
Crumlin Road, Belfast.**

The Planning Manager pointed out that the application had been considered by the Committee on 17th August, 2021 and that the Committee had recommended that the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to approve the application on the basis that the principle of housing was acceptable at that location, subject to the outstanding assessments on roads, drainage, contamination, air quality and noise having been submitted to, and considered acceptable, by the Committee at a future meeting. He informed the Committee that the Chief Executive's decision had corresponded with the Committee's recommendation and that the applicant had, since, submitted a series of reports and that neither DfI Rivers nor BCC Environmental Health had offered any objection to the proposal.

He reported that DfI Roads had continued to object to the application and that NI Water had also submitted an objection to the proposal. He added that DAERA NIEA and Shared Environmental Services had been consulted following NI Water's objection and both agencies had advised that there had been no clear evidence that the proposal would have a harmful environmental impact, and that Shared Environmental Services had recommended a condition that would prevent commencement of works until agreement had been reached with NI Water.

He provided the Committee with an update in relation to the following areas:

- Drainage and flood risk;
- Infrastructure capacity;
- Ecological impacts;
- Impact on human health;
- Access, parking and transport;
- Design and layout; and
- Belfast LDP Draft Plan Strategy.

The Planning Manager pointed out that the applicant had indicated that Newington Housing Association had been identified as the preferred Housing Association partner and discussions with the association were ongoing.

He informed the Committee that, although the additional information which had been provided by the applicant had addressed the objections which had been raised by Environmental Health with regard to noise conflict and DfI Rivers with regard to drainage,

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significant concerns remained with respect to the appropriateness of the proposal in relation to the principle of residential development on a retail park, design and highway safety.

He stated that the application had been recommended for refusal, and outlined the following reasons for refusal:

- Loss of land on a zoned retail park;
- Highway safety;
- Detriment to the character and appearance of the area;
- Unacceptable living environment for residents; and
- Failure to promote safety and surveillance.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. B. Kingston MLA to the meeting. Mr. Kingston stated that he objected to the planning application on the basis that the proposal was sited in the corner of a car park of a retail park beside a busy access road and an interface wall which would create a very poor living environment.

He pointed out that the application had been recommended for refusal in 2021 and again in 2022 and that it would compromise the retail function of Hillview Retail Park and be served by an unsafe vehicular access which supported access to the retail park and would endanger occupants. He stated that the proposed development would provide an unsuitable and undesirable living environment for occupants.

He added that there had been significant progress within the retail park since 2021 with the addition of numerous retail outlets and it was well used by all sides of the community and could make a significant and growing contribution to the area as a shared centre for retail and employment.

The Committee agreed to hear from the applicants in respect of the application, having regard to their previous representation when the application had been considered by the Committee at its meeting on 17th August, 2021. The Chairperson welcomed Mr. H. McConnell, RPP Architects, to the meeting and stated that Mr. G. Lawther and Mr K. Murray, DfI Roads, were present and available to answer questions from Members.

Mr. McConnell stated that he was speaking on behalf of the applicant in support of the application. He stated that, in 2021, the Committee had recognised the chronic shortage of housing in the area of the city and following the Committee's decision the applicant had commissioned a series of reports and made a number of submissions to the Council to address the outstanding assessments which had been identified. He stated that the DfI Rivers, DAERA Waste Management Unit and Environment Health have withdrawn their previous objections and acknowledged that, while NI Water had offered no objection in 2021, it had since raised an objection with regard to sewer capacity but had not provided any supporting information.

He informed the Committee that Planning had restated its objection based on the Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan siting that the site would conflict with retail uses on the site and the proposal would reduce the land available within the retail park. He stated that the applicant had discussed the issue with existing and potential tenants and that none had identified any issue with part of the site being utilised for residential accommodation.

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He outlined the applicant's response to concerns which had been raised by DfI Roads in relation to the retail park's existing entrance junction and the access road and highlighted that the existing junction was used daily by staff, customers and delivery vehicles and that no issues with speeding or complaints from pedestrians crossing at the junction had been raised.

With regard to rat running, he stated that no evidence had been put forward to support that there was an issue in the area.

He concluded by stating that there was still a need for social housing in the area, in particular family homes and urged Members to acknowledge the efforts which had been made by the applicant and Newington Housing Association to address the outstanding issues and to take a balanced decision to support the much-needed housing development

In response to a question from a Member with regard to the access to the site, Mr. Murray stated that DfI Roads could not determine, for adoption, any area outside the applicant's control and that the location plan had not been amended so the applicant did not have authority to deliver the access road and until a revised drawing had been submitted, DfI Roads could not provide an access road to the proposed development. He emphasised that the current access had been provided for commercial purposes and not for a residential scheme.

A Member asked Mr McConnell to clarify the position on the red line of the location plan and he responded by stating that the applicant would be more than happy to provide an amended site plan, if required. The Planning Manager advised that it would be procedurally possible for the Council to receive an amended site location plan where the revision was to incorporate additional land for access purposes.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Murphy,
Seconded by Councillor Maskey,

That consideration of the application would be deferred to allow time for the applicant to submit an amended site location plan and further revised proposals seeking to address DfI Road's objection to alleviate the safety concerns that DfI Roads had raised.

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

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LA04/2019/0081/F (Reconsidered item) 12 affordable housing apartments on former site of Maple Leaf at Park Avenue;

and

LA04/2020/2325/F (Reconsidered item) 21 dwellings (affordable housing) on former site of Maple Leaf at Park Avenue

The Committee agreed to consider the above two applications together.

The Planning Manager provided the Committee with an overview of the applications and explained that both applications had been approved at its meeting in March, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement, and that while negotiations were advanced the applicant had been unable to agree to giving public access to the pocket park due to insurance liability reasons.

He reported that the Council's Landscape and Development Unit had advised that the pocket park was unsuitable for public use due to its small size and lack of surveillance which would likely contribute to antisocial behaviour and would be better suited as a private amenity space for the proposed dwellings.

He referred the Committee to the amended plan which showed the relocation of the entrance with a locked gate for use by residents only and stated that, on balance, when considering the importance of delivery of affordable housing, which had been considered sufficient to offset the loss of original open space and the open space needs of the new development, the use of the pocket park as private amenity space rather than public open space was acceptable.

He informed the Committee that the applications had been recommended for approval, with conditions and subject to a Section 76 planning agreement.

The Committee agreed to grant planning permission in relation to application LA04/2019/0081/F with conditions and subject to a section 76 planning agreement that would secure the following:

- A developer contribution of £52k (plus inflationary uplift from December 2019 to when the planning agreement is signed) plus an additional £5k for enhancement works at the King George V playing fields;
- 12 apartments as affordable housing in perpetuity; and
- The delivery and ongoing maintenance of the proposed pocket park to be provided prior to occupation of any of the approved 12 apartments.

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The Committee agreed to grant planning permission in relation to application LA04/2020/2325/F with conditions and subject to a section 76 planning agreement that would secure the following:

- Provision of the 21 units as social housing;
- The pocket park proposed under LA04/2019/0081/F would be delivered no later than two years from the date of first occupation of the 21 units;
- The future management of the pocket park;
- Temporary treatment of the site for 12 apartments if those were delayed or not built out; and
- £52,000 (plus inflationary uplift from December 2019 to when the planning agreement is signed) plus £5k towards improvements to George V playing field (if it had already been paid in relation to application LA04/2019/0081 then it would not have to be paid twice).

The Committee further agreed to grant delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions and the Section 76 planning agreements.

LA04/2020/0235/F: (deferred from November 2022 Planning Committee) Retrospective erection of new tyre depot with associated parking, site works and new entrance onto Duncrue Road, 2 Dargan Crescent, Duncrue Road Belfast.

The Planning Manager highlighted to the Members that the application had been considered by the Committee at its meeting in November and the decision had been deferred due to concerns regarding the proposal's potential conflict with an existing cycle lane.

He reported that DfI Roads had provided additional comments which indicated that it did not believe that there would be an issue with regard to the interaction between the existing shared cycle lane and footway and the proposed access to the development and that the existing shared cycle lane and footway along the east side of Duncrue Road and into Duncrue Street had a number of accesses to businesses similar to that contained within the proposal.

He advised the Committee that, given DfI roads response and having given consideration to the fallback of the previous permission which remained extant until August, 2023, that there were no reasonable grounds to refuse permission on the issue of potential conflict with the existing cycle lane.

The Chairperson informed the Committee that Mr. G. Lawther was in attendance and available to answer questions from the Members.

In response to a question from a Member with regard to the existing accesses to businesses along the cycle lane, Mr. Lawther explained that DfI had based its advice on the

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indication that there would be give way signs and road markings on the carriage way and, therefore, the proposal was acceptable.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Hanvey,
Seconded by Councillor Bower,

That the Committee agrees to refuse the application on the basis of PPS3, in terms of access and cycleways and PPS8, with regard to the protection of open spaces, in that, the access along the cycle lane was unnecessary and that neither the Planners nor DfI had taken the cycle lane into account in the decision making process.

The Planning Manager advised the Committee that, given the technical advice from DfI Roads, in that the relationship of the proposed access with the cycle path was safe, and in view of the fall-back position of the existing extant permission for a tyre depot with a very similar, if not identical, access arrangement, that it would be unreasonable to refuse permission on highway safety grounds.

On a vote, three Members voted for the proposal, nine against with one no vote and it was declared lost.

The Officers recommendation was then put to the Committee as the substantive motion and the Committee approved the application and granted delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions including an additional condition to require implementation of the markings/signage

LA04/2021/2016/F: Demolition of existing multi-storey car park and the erection of 298no. build for rent apartments (19 storey) including ground floor commercial unit (A1/A2), car/cycle parking provision along with associated development. 21-29 Corporation Street & 18-24 Tomb Street Belfast

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the item in order to undertake a site visit.

LA04/2021/2815/F: Erection of Discount supermarket, drive through cafe, landscaping, car parking, and associated site works. Vacant lands at access road to Olympia Leisure Centre directly opposite and approx. 70m East of nos. 9-15 Boucher Road Belfast

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the item in order to undertake site visits and to allow further opportunity for the IFA to meet with officers to discuss the lease agreement in the context of the IFA's objection to the application.

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LA04/ 2021/1188/F: Provision for a 24 no. space car park, access road with lay-by and turning head. 2.4m Perimeter Fence. 425 Springfield Road, Belfast

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the item in order to undertake a site visit.

LA04/2022/1856/F: Section 54 application to vary condition no. 12 of planning permission LA04/2021/2242/F relating to landscaping and planting works. Lands bounded by Little Victoria Street Bruce Street and Holmes Street Belfast

The Committee, having considered the report, agreed to grant planning permission subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement, and granted delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and the Section 76 agreement.

LA04/2022/1768/LBC: Restoration of Ormeau Park Main Entrance Gates and Screens and connecting Railings and Walls. Ormeau Main Gates, Ormeau Rd

The Committee, having considered the report, approved the application and granted delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions.

LA04/2022/1784/LBC: Repair of existing stone entrance pier and gate to Woodvale Park. Entrance piers to Woodvale Park 25m west of No. 41 Woodvale Road Belfast

The Committee, having considered the report, approved the application and granted delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions.

LA04/2022/0876/F: Proposed upgrade of existing footways. Footpaths along Donegall Road; Broadway; A12 Westlink and Grosvenor Road.

The Committee, having considered the report, approved the application and granted delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions.

Miscellaneous Items

DfI Consultation on Improving the Quality of Planning Applications

The Planning Manager explained to the Committee that the Department for Infrastructure was undertaking a public consultation on its proposed introduction for a Planning Application Validation Checklists which would enable Planning Authorities to stipulate the minimum level of information required with applications upon submission.

He outlined to the Committee the impact of incomplete planning applications and stated that the inability for Planning Authorities to mandate the information necessary to properly access and process applications at the beginning of the process had been the cause of many of the problems experienced by the Northern Ireland planning system.

The Committee agreed to fully support the introduction of Planning Application Validation Checklists and granted delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the consultation response

Item referred from the People and Communities Committee - consideration to extending Tree Protection Orders (TPOs) across the City

The Director of Planning and Building Control informed the Committee that, at its meeting in November, the People and Communities Committee had recommended that the Planning Committee give consideration to extending Tree Protection Orders across the City.

The Committee agreed that a report would be brought back that would consider the Council's current position on Tree Protection Orders (TPOs) and explore how TPOs could be extended across the city.

Restricted Items

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

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the Press and public from the meeting during discussion of the following 2 items as, due to the nature of the item, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Section 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

**Meeting of Planning Committee,
Monday, 19th December, 2022**

Quarter 2 Finance Report 2022/23

The Director of Planning and Building Control provided the Committee with an update on the Quarter 2 financial position, that included a reporting pack which contained a summary of the financial indicators and an executive summary.

The Committee noted the content of the report.

Update on the replacement Planning Portal

The Planning Manager provided the Committee with an update on the project to replace the Planning Portal which went live on 5th December and outlined a number of issues which had arisen and the next steps that would be taken to address them.

The Committee noted the content of the report.

Chairperson

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Climate and City Resilience Committee

Thursday, 8th December, 2022

MEETING OF THE CLIMATE AND CITY RESILIENCE COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER AND REMOТЕLY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Walsh (Chairperson);
Councillors Bower, de Faoite, Donnelly, Ferguson,
Gormley, Maghie, McCabe, McCann, McKeown,
McLaughlin, Murray, Sandford, Smyth, Spratt
and Thompson.

In attendance: Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy;
Ms. D. Caldwell, Commissioner for Climate and City Resilience;
Mr. K. Heaney, Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti Poverty;
Ms. A. Diver, Climate Programme Manager;
Mr. J. McKearney, Project Support Assistant;
Mr. R. McLernon, Climate Programme Manager;
Ms. C. Young, Marketing and Communications Co-ordinator;
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer; and
Mrs. G. Boyd, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for an inability to attend were received from Councillors Hutchinson and Newton.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 10th November were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st December.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Update on Belfast achieving an A listing from the Carbon Disclosure Project

The Climate Programme Manager referred Members of the Committee to the report that had been circulated in advance of the meeting, that outlined the 2022 CDP award of A status to Belfast, which followed the 2021 CDP award of B status to Belfast. He reminded Members of the Committee that in July 2021, the Council had made the first annual submission to the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) – ICLEI reporting platform, and that an update was provided to the Council in October 2021. The submission was undertaken to support

**Climate and City Resilience Committee,
Thursday, 8th December, 2022**

baselining of activity and emissions in Belfast, and to enable full participation by Belfast in global climate action campaigns such as the Race to Zero, which linked to COP climate negotiations, the Cities Race to Resilience campaign, Cities Race to Zero campaign, the Global Covenant of Mayors, and the WWF One Planet City competition. All of these campaigns required members to have made a submission through a recognised reporting mechanism, of which CDP – ICLEI was the most well-known.

He explained that a city submission to CDP illustrated the level of ambition, activity and transparency each city adopted. Belfast had made its submission public in both submission years ensuring maximum openness and transparency around its plans. The Belfast submission in 2021 was the first time Belfast had participated in CDP, and were congratulated on having achieved a B ranking at such an early stage. In 2022, the second submission had achieved an A ranking and CDP officials had made a point of appearing on local media to mark the rapid advancement of the city in their framework.

In 2022 Belfast had updated on the adoption of city targets for achieving net zero which had been recommended in the Belfast Net Zero Carbon Roadmap (2020). These committed the city to a 66% reduction of emissions on 2000 levels by 2025, an 80% reduction by 2030 and a 100% reduction by 2050. In addition, Belfast was able to point to adaptation targets, including the planting of one million trees by 2035 and for the Living with Water Programme the delivery target of 2033, along with monitoring arrangements for both projects.

Belfast had made a strong link between the climate risks such as flooding and heat as set out in the Belfast Climate Risk Assessment and project delivery through initiatives including Belfast One Million Trees Project which addressed a range of targets, including carbon capture, avoided water runoff, reduced levels of heat, improved biodiversity and improved health and wellbeing for residents of Belfast having planted 65,000 trees in 2 years of delivery, funding the first Belfast I-TREE ECO report which provided an analysis of the benefits of the existing Belfast trees of Belfast, part funding the new Belfast Tree Strategy, funding new infrastructure including the development of a tree nursery at Grovelands, and funding The Conservation Volunteers and Belfast Hills Partnership.

A Member raised concerns in relation to the planting of trees through the One Million Trees Project and proposed that officers come back in February with a report on the management procedures and policies of the One Million Trees project. In particular, seeking focus on what, if any, ecological assessments were being made of sites on which trees had already been planted or going forward in the future that included site selection, bio security measures, monitoring work and what consultation was sought for specialist and technical advice on these matters. Officers agreed to bring a report to the February meeting of the Committee detailing the management processes and assessment criteria used for the 1000 trees project.

The Committee note the information which had been provided and agreed to support the annual submission by Belfast through this internationally recognised carbon and climate reporting framework.

Update on the Local Area Energy Plan for Belfast

The Climate and City Resilience Commissioner referred the Committee to the report that had been circulated in advance of the meeting and advised the Members that the purpose of the report was to update them on the current status of activities to develop a Local Area Energy Plan for Belfast.

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

Proposed District Heating Network for Belfast

The Climate and City Resilience Commissioner referred the Committee to the report that was circulated in advance of the meeting and advised that the purpose of the report was to update Members on the current status of activities to develop a district heating network in Belfast. She advised that a further update would be brought to a future meeting of the Committee. Members raised the matter of the role of planning in promoting District Heat Networks and asked for an update from planning to be added as a regular item on the agenda. Members of the Committee asked officers to bring back a report outlining the options for community heating and what Belfast City Council can do in relation to this matter.

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

**Innovate UK funding opportunity –
UK Net zero living: Pioneer places fund**

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy referred members of the Committee to the report he had circulated in advance of the meeting and advised the Members of the Committee that the purpose of the report was to inform them of an application to the UK Net Zero Living: Pioneer Places Fund.

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

**Update on proposed climate literacy
Training for elected members**

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy referred the Committee to the report that had been circulated in advance of the meeting. He advised the purpose of the report was to provide Members with information on the proposed Carbon Literacy Training.

He stated that the course was appropriate for all Councillors, whatever their political world view. By the end, elected members would understand the climate science that underpinned the action the Council had taken to speak confidently and knowledgeably on the subject. Most importantly, they would understand how to talk about the climate crisis in a way that resonates with their voter base, and in a way that is authentic to their own political position.

**Climate and City Resilience Committee,
Thursday, 8th December, 2022**

The training would cover climate change, carbon footprints, how every person could do their bit, and how this topic related to Elected Members and ratepayers. An Elected Members' Toolkit provided during and after the training had been designed to equip Councillors with the information they would need to mobilise change within their constituency and to communicate climate change effectively to hard-to-reach groups.

A full day was required to complete the training. This would be condensed slightly if completed remotely. It was proposed the training would be delivered via MS Teams on Thursday 12th January from 5.30 pm to 8.30 pm, and on Saturday 14th January from 9.00 am to 12.30 pm. The training would be interactive throughout and would be followed by a short exercise to complete. Following successful completion of the training and exercise, a Carbon Literate Certificate would be provided in a digital format. The training provider, Climate NI, were delivering the training as part of the Carbon Literacy Project.

The Committee agreed attendance on the proposed training dates.

Visit Belfast

The Committee agreed to invite Visit Belfast to a future meeting of the Committee to present on sustainable tourism.

Chairperson

Standards and Business Committee

Thursday, 5th January, 2023

MEETING OF THE STANDARDS AND BUSINESS COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE LAVERY ROOM AND
REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Hanvey (Chairperson);
Councillors Canavan, de Faoite, R-M Donnelly,
Douglas, Duffy, Flynn, Gormley, T. Kelly, Kyle,
Lyons, McAteer, McCabe, McCullough and Verner.

In attendance: Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer; and
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor Hutchinson.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 24th November were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council, at its meeting on 1st December.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Motions

The Senior Democratic Services Officer informed the Committee that two motions had been received in advance of the Council on 9th January.

The Committee considered each motion in turn and agreed the following:

Comber Greenway

That the motion be referred, in the first instance, to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

**Standards and Business Committee,
Thursday, 5th January, 2023**

School Street Schemes

That the motion be referred, in the first instance, to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Chairperson