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BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

SUMMONS TO ATTEND THE MONTHLY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

TO: THE LORD MAYOR, ALDERMEN AND THE COUNCILLORS OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Notice is hereby given that the monthly meeting of the Council will be held in the **Council Chamber and remotely via Microsoft Teams** on Monday, 3rd April, 2023 at 6.00 pm, for the transaction of the following business:

1. Summons
2. Apologies
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Minutes of the Council (Pages 1 - 10)
5. Request to Film Proceedings

To consider a request from France 24 Television to film the full Council meeting in relation to a short film package giving an overview of politics in Northern Ireland.

6. Official Announcements
7. Minutes of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee (Pages 11 - 54)
8. Minutes of People and Communities Committee (Pages 55 - 98)
9. Minutes of City Growth and Regeneration Committee (Pages 99 - 146)
10. Minutes of Licensing Committee (Pages 147 - 148)
11. Minutes of Planning Committee (Pages 149 - 170)
12. Minutes of Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee (Pages 171 - 176)
13. Minutes of Climate and City Resilience Committee (Pages 177 - 190)
14. Minutes of Standards and Business Committee (Pages 191 - 194)
15. Motions
 - a) 50th Anniversary of Greenfinches in Northern Ireland (Pages 195 - 196)
 - b) Police Service of Northern Ireland (Pages 197 - 198)
 - c) Vaping (Pages 199 - 200)
 - d) Rosetta Way – “Quietway” (Pages 201 - 202)

The Members of Belfast City Council are hereby summoned to attend.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke at the bottom.

Chief Executive

Council

MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held in the Council Chamber, City Hall and remotely, via Microsoft Teams, on Wednesday, 1st March, 2023 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 Kyle);
Aldermen Copeland, Dorrian, Haire, McCoubrey and Rodgers; and Councillors Beattie, Bower; Bradley, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, de Faoite, M. Donnelly, R. M. Donnelly, Doran, Douglas, Duffy, Ferguson, Flynn, Garrett, Groogan, Hanvey, Heading, Howard, Hutchinson, T. Kelly, Long, Lyons, Magee, Maghie, Maskey, McAteer, McCabe, McCann, McCullough, McDonough-Brown, McKeown, McLaughlin, McMullan, Murphy, Murray, Nelson, Newton, O'Hara, Smyth, Spratt, Verner, Walsh and Whyte.

Summons

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Alderman Sandford and Councillors Gormley, Hussey and Thompson.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Groogan declared an interest in relation to the following minutes as she was employed by the Forward South Partnership, which was involved with all four items. As none of the items became the subject of discussion, the Member was not required to leave the Chamber.

- minute of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 17th February, under the heading, "Fuel Poverty Fund" and under the heading "Minutes of the Meeting of the Shared City Partnership";
- minute of the People and Community Committee of 7th February, under the heading, "Capacity Building and Revenue Grants"; and
- minute of City Growth and Regeneration Committee, under the heading "Business Cluster and Community Grant Programme".

Councillor McKeown declared an interest in Agenda Item 13 "Motion – Overdose Prevention Facility", in that he was an employee of the National Health Service and he left the meeting whilst the matter was being considered.

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Councillor McCabe declared an interest in relation to the minute of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 17th February, under the heading “Summer Community Diversionary Festival Programme” as she was employed by Feile an Phobail. As the item did not become the subject of discussion, the Member was not required to leave the Chamber.

Councillors Beatie, Canavan and Verner declared an interest in relation to the minute of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 17th February, under the heading “Fuel Poverty Hardship Funding”, in that they were either employed or associated with organisations that operated a social supermarket. As the item did not become the subject of discussion, the Members were not required to leave the Chamber.

Councillors Duffy and Murphy declared an interest in relation to the minute of the City Growth Committee of 8th February, under the heading “Business Cluster and Community Grant Programme” in that they had both assisted organisations that had submitted an application for funding. Councillor Bradley also declared an interest in the same agenda item in that she worked for an organisation associated with the grant programme. As the item did not become the subject of discussion, the Members were not required to leave the Chamber

The following Councillors declared an interest in relation to the minute of the Special City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 22nd February, under the heading “Rent Controls”, all the Members left the meeting whilst the item was being discussed:

- Alderman Dorrian, Councillors Kyle, Magee, McCabe, McDonough-Brown and McKeown, either as a landlord or a close family member was a landlord;
- Councillors Bunting, R. M. Donnelly and Murphy as private tenants; and
- Councillors Canavan and Hanvey who either owned or were associated with an Airbnb property.

Minutes of the Council

Moved by the Lord Mayor (Councillor Black),
Seconded by the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor M. Kelly) and

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

Official Announcements

The Lord Mayor thanked and congratulated the Mac Gabhann family for their tireless efforts in ensuring that Dáithí’s Law had been implemented.

The Lord Mayor welcomed the fact that Belfast City Council had become the first Council in Northern Ireland to become an accredited Living Wage Employer and both she and Councillor O’Hara acknowledged the commitment and work of the Council in achieving this status.

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The Lord Mayor also congratulated Holy Family Primary School on its achievement of being awarded a 'Green Flag Award' for its environmental efforts.

Alderman Copeland and representatives from Political Parties across the Chamber referred to the attempted murder of DCI John Caldwell in Omagh with all standing united in condemnation of the attack. The Chief Executive agreed to write to the Chief Constable and also the family of John Caldwell to condemn the attack and express its best wishes to the officer for a speedy recovery.

Councillor Flynn referred to the recent murder of Brianna Ghey, a young transgender girl, and expressed sympathy and solidarity to her family, friends and to the transgender community.

Councillor Bunting congratulated Mrs Jones, Principal of Belvoir Park Primary School, on her recent success on being awarded Principal of the Year in the recent Blackboard Awards and commended her work since taking up the role of Principal. The Lord Mayor agreed to send a letter of congratulations to mark the achievement.

Councillor Heading referred with sadness to the recent passing of Mr. Henry McDonald following a battle with cancer and paid tribute to his excellent work as a journalist and author, most recently, as political editor of the News Letter. The Lord Mayor, on behalf of the Council, agreed to send a letter of sympathy.

Request to Address the Council

The Council approved a request for Mr. Ian Cameron and Ms. Sharon Hearty (Extern) to address the Council in relation to the Motion later in the meeting – “Overdose Prevention facility in Belfast” and they were welcomed by the Lord Mayor.

Ms. Hearty commenced by thanking the Council for the opportunity address the meeting. She advised that an Overdose Prevention Facility (OPF) would offer a change in how street homeless people with problematic drug use were treated. She referred to the number of valuable services that already existed in Belfast but added that these services were stretched due to the complex needs of those needing help. She went on to state that the missing service was that of an OPF, stating that she felt that such a facility would help to reduce the amount of drug related deaths amongst the street homeless in Belfast.

Mr. Cameron then addressed the Members and detailed the bleak statistics which clearly demonstrated why an OPF in Belfast was necessary. Deaths due to drugs registered in Northern Ireland (NI) in 2021 were 212, over double that of 2011, NI had the second highest drug rate in the United Kingdom (UK), 9.4 deaths per 100,000 population (Scotland had 25.0), those dying from drug related deaths were highest amongst the 25-34 age group and HIV figures in Belfast were starting to increase.

He advised that a trial OPF would be a sanctioned hygienic place which offered:

- A controlled, monitored, and hygienic environment operated by an approved provider to ensure safe injecting to prevent drugs overdose

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of individuals who are homeless and highly dependent on intravenous drugs;

- An earlier intervention for life threatening health issues for those most at risk of early death;
- Regular contact with the most at risk of overdose death;
- Support with treatments to begin to step down from injecting and begin the journey of harm reduction; and
- Monitoring to reduce the risk of blood-borne virus transmission.

Ms. Hearty concluded by advising that an OPF was one of the ways of helping the most extremely vulnerable street drug users caught in the life-threatening trap of intravenous drug use which would support them to the point of reducing harm by drugs and she, once again, thanked the Council for the opportunity to present.

The Lord Mayor thanked the representatives for their presentation and for the work that Extern did on the streets of Belfast and they left the meeting.

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 17th February, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Amendment

Update on Dual-Language Street Signs

Moved by Councillor Beattie,
Seconded by Councillor Walsh,

That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 17th February, under the heading “update on Dual-Language Street Signs”, be amended to provide that the Council agrees, in principle, to progress with dual language signage in the Gaeltacht Quarter on block as a cost saving measure, subject to equality screening and when finance becomes available, with a report to be submitted to Committee in due course.

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

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For 29	Against 26
The Lord Mayor (Councillor Black); Councillors Beattie, Bradley, Canavan, Carson, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, de Faoite, M. Donnelly, R.M. Donnelly, Duffy, Ferguson, Flynn, Garrett, Groogan, Heading, Lyons, Magee, Maskey, McAteer, McCabe, McCann, McKeown, McLaughlin, Murphy, O'Hara, Smyth Walsh and Whyte.	The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor M. Kelly); The High Sheriff (Councillor Kyle); Aldermen Copeland, Dorrian, Haire, McCoubrey and Rodgers; and Councillors Bower, Bunting, Cobain, Doran, Douglas, Hanvey, Howard, Hutchinson, T. Kelly, Long, Maghie, McCullough, McDonough-Brown, McMullan, Murray, Nelson, Newton, Spratt and Verner.

Following a proposal by Councillor Long, seconded by Councillor Murray, the Council further agreed to approve the erection for up to 100 Irish Street signs through the existing process by December 2023.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendments, the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 17th February, were approved and adopted.

Minutes of People and Communities Committee

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

That the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 7th and 13th February be approved and adopted.

Amendment

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

Moved by Councillor Flynn,
Seconded by Councillor Groogan,

That the decision of the People and Communities Committee of 7th February, under the heading ""#InTheLoop recycling on the go campaign to improve the city's on street recycling provision", be rejected and, accordingly, the Council agrees to place a trial recycling bin in a

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park/open space in North, South, East and West Belfast, with the rest in the city centre.

On a recorded vote, thirteen Members voted for the amendment and forty-two against and it was declared lost.

For 13	Against 42
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor M. Kelly); Councillors Bower, Flynn, Groogan, Harvey, Long, Maghie, McDonough-Brown, McMullan, Murray, Nelson, O'Hara and Smyth.	The Lord Mayor (Councillor Black); The High Sheriff (Councillor Kyle); Aldermen Copeland, Dorrian, Haire, McCoubrey and Rodgers; and Councillors Beattie, Bradley, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, de Faoite, M. Donnelly, R. M. Donnelly, Doran, Douglas, Duffy, Ferguson, Garrett, Heading, Howard, Hutchinson, T. Kelly, Lyons, Magee, Maskey, McAteer, McCabe, McCann, McCullough, McKeown, McLaughlin, Murphy, Newton, Spratt, Verner, Walsh and Whyte.

Adoption of Minutes

The minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 7th and 13th February were approved and adopted.

Minutes of City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Moved by Councillor Murphy,
Seconded by Councillor Maskey,

That the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 8th and 22nd February be approved and adopted.

Amendment

Rent Controls

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

That the decision of the Special City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 22nd February, under the heading "Rent Controls", be amended to provide that the Council agrees to add the following additional request to the letters to the Department for Communities Permanent

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Secretary and the Head of the Civil Service, requesting that control rents locally be vested to the Council. Furthermore, the Council agrees to write to Bristol City Council to express interest in their Living Rent Commission, requesting access to its findings and seeking to develop a working relationship, where possible, relating to the issue.

On a vote, eighteen Members voted for the amendment and twenty-six against and it was declared lost.

**Strategic Planning and Performance
Group – GP Services**

At the request of Councillor Heading it was agreed that the following questions be added to the letter the Permanent Secretary to request an update on the work being undertaken to resolve GP indemnity in Northern Ireland:

- what mitigation measures were being taken to try and address the number of GPs leaving the Health Services; and
- what measures were being taken to try and increase the number of medical students year on year.

Amendment

**York Street Interchange (YSI) Placemaking
and Active Travel Review (PATR)**

Moved by Councillor Maskey,
Seconded by Councillor Murphy

That the decision of the Special City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 22nd February, under the heading “York Street Interchange (YSI) Placemaking and Active Travel Review (PATR)”, be amended to provide that the Council will only reconsider corporately supporting the York Street Interchange project when confirmation is given by the Department for Infrastructure that they will proceed with the option that ensures safety of current residents, delivers the best place making and regeneration outcomes including plans for the bridges across the Lagan and a commitment from the Department that they will co-ordinate efforts to work collaboratively with all relevant stake holders including Belfast City Council, Department for Communities, Housing Executive, Belfast Harbour, The Ashton Centre and Sailortown Regeneration as part of the overall scheme.

At the request of several of the Members, the proposer agreed that the amendment should also include Community Stakeholders, the Stella Maris Hostel and Ulster University as relevant stakeholders and state that the project needed to address both the air quality needs and housing objectives in the city.

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Subject to the aforementioned additions, the Council unanimously adopted the amendment.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing addition and amendment, the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 8th and 22nd February, were approved and adopted.

Licensing Committee

Moved by Councillor Matt Collins,
Seconded by Councillor McLaughlin and

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

Minutes of Planning Committee

Moved by Councillor Whyte,
Seconded by Councillor Carson and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Pre - Determination Hearing and Planning Committee of 14th February, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Minutes of Climate and City Resilience Committee

Moved by Councillor Walsh,
Seconded by Alderman Copeland and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the minutes of Climate and City Resilience Committee of 9th February, be approved and adopted, subject to Councillor Copeland being added to the list of attendees.

Minutes of Standards and Business Committee

Moved by Councillor Hanvey,
Seconded by Councillor Kyle and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Standards and Business Committee of 21st February, 2023, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted, subject to Councillor Kyle being added to the list of attendees.

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Motions

Overdose Prevention Facility in Belfast

In accordance with notice on the agenda, Councillor O'Hara proposed:

“This Council supports the establishment of an Overdose Prevention Facility in Belfast. This Council will work with key partners in the community, voluntary and statutory sector to bring together a partnership to advocate for the establishment of an Overdose Prevention Facility (OPC) for the city. With almost 350 drug related deaths in the city from 2017-2021 and over 1,000 needles recovered each month, a facility like this will save lives and reduce the amount of discarded drug debris. There are over 200 Overdose Prevention Facilities in 14 countries across the world.

While we are conscious that the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 is an inhibitor to the establishment of this service and that it would require some form of special legal dispensation from the Act for the facility to be lawful, it is clear that current policy is not saving lives. In the absence of a local Assembly to deliver reform and innovation that can save vulnerable lives, this Council will act as a civic leader by requesting our City Solicitor and Chief Executive to engage with partners and to lobby Belfast Trust, PSNI, the Departments of Health and Justice and the Attorney General to make the case for special dispensation.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Smyth.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Murray,
Seconded by Councillor Bower,

That the motion standing in the name of Councillor O'Hara and seconded by Councillor Smyth be amended to also include:

“That this Council facilitates an open call to organisations who wish to be involved in the setting up of such a facility to work together to draft a proposal on what this service would include, centred on providing overdose prevention facilities and wrap around support services for those in need, and to write to the relevant agencies to urge them to provide multi-year funding for the Complex Lives strategy.”

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The proposer agreed to accept the amendment.

The motion was put to the meeting and passed.

Lord Mayor
Chairperson

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 24th March, 2023

MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE LAVERY ROOM AND
REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Heading (Deputy Chairperson in the Chair);
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor M. Kelly);
Aldermen Dorrian and Haire; and
Councillors Beattie, Bradley, Bunting, Ferguson,
Garrett, Long, Lyons, McLaughlin,
McMullan, Murphy, Spratt, Thompson and Verner.

In attendance: Mr. J. Walsh, Chief Executive;
Ms. N. Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and
Civic Services;
Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control
Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes;
Ms. C. Matthews, Director of Resources and Fleet;
Ms. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and
Development;
Mr. D. Sales, Director of Neighbourhood Services;
Ms. C. Sheridan, Director of Human Resources;
Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy;
Mr. T. Wallace, Director of Finance; and
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported for the Chairperson, Councillor McDonough-Brown and Councillor Groogan.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 17th February 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, March subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Beattie declared an interest in respect of item 2g in that he was a Council representative on the Board of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners.

B4482

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Councillor Thompson declared an interest in item 6c Area Working Update in that she was on the Board of the Greater Shankill Community Council and the Glencairn Community Project.

Restricted Items

The information contained in the reports associated with the following eleven 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 eleven 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.

**Belfast Local Development Plan –
Plan Strategy (PS) Adoption**

The Committee was reminded that in March last year it had endorsed a draft of the proposed new Policy (SP1A) and supporting justification for public consultation in response to the Planning Appeals Commissions (PAC recommendations and Direction from the Department for Infrastructure (DfI). This was hoped to be the final stage of the dPS development in advance of it being finalised for potential adoption.

The Director of Planning and Building Control reported that, in the period since the Public Consultation had closed in July 2022, the engagement with the DfI, required under the terms of their February 2022 Direction, has proved challenging. However, the most recent engagements, at the end of January and beginning of February, had engendered a more positive response and progress to the extent that preparations had commenced towards the formal submission to the DfI. The proposed changes that would result in a final Plan Strategy for potential adoption had been considered by the Planning Committee on the 16th March 2023 and it had agreed to endorse it for submission to this Committee as the basis for the consideration of the formal adoption for the Plan Strategy.

The Committee:

1. noted the Technical Documents to be published alongside the adopted Local Development Plan - Plan Strategy as set out in Appendix 1;
2. noted the Timetable of required actions to support the potential formal adoption and publication of the Plan Strategy by May 2023 as detailed in Appendix 2;
3. noted the Post Independent Examination consultation report outlining the response to the public consultation and engagement with the DfI Appendix 3;
4. noted the formal Direction and covering letter issues by the DfI on the 9th March 2023 set out at Appendix 6;
5. endorsed the proposed modifications set out in Parts 1-4 of Appendix 4; and
6. endorsed the final Plan Strategy set out in Appendix 5 for adoption in accordance with provisions of the timetable set out in Appendix 2.

Outstanding Accounts

The Director of Finance advised the Committee that, inevitably, a number of debtors who received services from the Council failed to pay. This was despite the Central Transactions Unit having implemented the Council's procedures for the recovery of outstanding debt. The amounts being recommended to Committee for write off totalled £2,334.53. Those amounts related to contract rebates and were a result of the company having been dissolved. The advice from the Central Transactions Unit and from Legal Services was that it is very unlikely that the Council would receive any payments in respect of these debts.

The Committee granted authorisation for the outstanding accounts, as listed within the appendix to the report, to be written off, in accordance with Section M12 of the Council's Financial Regulations

Medium Term Financial Plan

The Committee considered a report which provided members with an update on the corporate approach to medium term financial planning, outlining the work to be undertaken to identify and deliver opportunities for cost savings, income generation and service delivery review across departments.

The Committee:

- noted the ongoing work outlined below to address the 2023/24 budgetary gap in advance of the 2024/25 rate setting process;
- noted the ongoing work on the development of a Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) as part of the 2024/25 rate setting process; and
- agreed to quarterly update reports on reducing the budgetary gap and the development of the MTFP.

Refresh of Belfast Agenda Update

The Committee considered a report which provided an update regarding the progress which had been made following phase 2 of the Continuing the Conversation engagement programme and the next steps in preparing the refreshed Belfast Agenda before it was issued for formal consultation.

The Committee:

- (i) noted the development of the draft Belfast Agenda strategy document and action plans, based on the Continuing the Conversation engagement programme and subsequent partnership engagement;
- (ii) noted the engagement activity over the next number of months with partners before completing the draft refreshed Belfast Agenda;
- (iii) agreed to the continued political engagement over the next three months with a view to finalising the draft refreshed Belfast Agenda;

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- (iv) to support the co-ordination of the draft refreshed Belfast Agenda, agreed that the Council renews its membership and contribution to the work of the Ulster University Economic Policy Centre for a 2-year period; and
- (v) noted the intent to issue for formal consultation in early July 2023.

Advertising Spend

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 17th February, it had deferred the awarding Of Single Tender Actions related to advertising at bus stops and for bus internal and external advertising to enable information to be provided on the previous expenditure for those contracts.

Accordingly, the Director of External Affairs, Communications and Marketing submitted a report in this regard.

After discussion, the Committee approved the following:

Title	Duration	Total Value	SRO	Description	Supplier
Advertising at bus stops	18 months	£140,000	L Caldwell	Advertising council initiatives to the citizens of Belfast and areas of Northern Ireland as required. Clear Chanel is the only company that provides advertising at bus stops in Northern Ireland	Clear Channel
Bus internal and external advertising	18 months	£140,000	L Caldwell	Advertise council initiatives to the citizens of Belfast and in areas of Northern Ireland as required. Global Outdoor is the only company to provide advertising on Metro and Ulsterbus buses in Northern Ireland	Global Outdoor

Signage at Olympia Leisure Centre EQIA

The Interim City Solicitor submitted a report which provided the Committee with the proposed next steps to be taken following the Committee's decision on 21st January 2022 to proceed with an Equality Impact Assessment on the erection of bilingual external naming and internal directional signage at Olympia Leisure Centre.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and the proposed next steps.

Asset Management

The Committee:

North Foreshore – Proposed variation to disposal terms

- approved a variation to the terms of the disposal agreed with Belfast Harbour Commissioners to bring forward a portion of the lands within Phase 2B to facilitate their current film studio extension works.
- i) Belfast Stories Site, North St – Proposed meanwhile use of vacant land by BRINK**
- Approved, in principle, the use of part of the vacant land on the Belfast Stories site by BRINK for meanwhile use, subject to a further report on the BRINK proposals being brought to Committee and a short-term licence/tenancy at will being agreed.
- ii) City of Belfast Playing Fields – Lease of land for a play park to Antrim and Newtownabbey BC**
- approved the lease of c2,400 sq m (0.59 acres) of land situated at City of Belfast Playing Fields to Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council to enable the construction of a play park.

Bid to Host the European Football Championships 2028

The Director of Economic Development provided the Committee with an update regarding a UK and Ireland bid to host the European Football Championships in 2028 and sought approval to sign a number of legal binding documents relating to Belfast potentially being a host city for five groups matches during the European Football Championships in 2028

The final bid was to be submitted by the Central Bid Team to UEFA by the 12th April 2023. The Central Bid Team required all regional final bid documents and associated guarantees and contracts with them no later than the 24th March to allow for final collation and review prior to submission.

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The Committee:

- noted the details of this report and provide approval for the Belfast City Council to sign the legally binding host city guarantees associated with the bid;
- granted approval for BCC to act as the lead on all matters (as far as is Council responsibility lies) associated with the host city requirements, including governance, budget, marketing, volunteering, mobility, transport including associated risk and sign the host city guarantees that manifest these responsibilities;
- given the timescale required to enter the contractual obligations associated within bid, agreed to suspend call in in line with standing order 48;
- approved the future allocation of £4m toward the costs of hosting the UEFA European Football Championships in 2028 and that this will be factored into council's medium term financial planning; and
- noted that a report will be brought to members regarding the outcome of the full bid when it is known, estimated to be in October 2023, and that future reports will be brought to committee if the bid is successful.

**Gaelic Games Pitch at Henry Jones
Playing Fields**

The Director of Neighbour hood Services submitted a report which outlined the preferred option for providing a gaelic games pitch within the parks estate at Henry Jones Playing Fields and seeking a decision on an associated implementation approach. The report outlined also the background, the current position, the displacement effects, the timing considerations and the engagement options.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Beattie,
Seconded by Councillor Lyons.

That the Committee:

- agrees that the East Belfast GAA Gaelic games club be granted the use of the pitches at the Henry Jones Playing Fields with effect from mid-April and that the soccer bookings be rescinded, with clubs displaced to alternative facilities and work commenced immediately to reconfigure the site: and
- officers and elected members (from the Lisnasharragh DEA/East Belfast area) arrange a meeting with secretaries of the main clubs affected, provide the list of suggested options for the clubs and agree their preferred location moving forward.

On a vote eleven Members voted for the proposal and six against and it was declared carried.

Physical Programme Update

The Committee considered a report which was seeking stage approvals under the Capital Programme, procurement approvals for non recurrent and externally funded projects in 2023/24, overviews of recent funding secured and contracts awarded and a request for dual language signage at the Forth Meadow Community Greenaway.

A member referred to the proposals in relation to the signage along sections of the Greenway which were within the Gaeltic Quarter and expressed the view that these should be dual language signs, that is , English and Irish.

Accordingly, it was

Moved by Councillor Beattie,
Seconded by Councillor Walsh,

That the Committee agrees the proposals in respect of signage for the Forth Meadow Community Greenway as outlined in paragraph 3 of the report, subject to the Beacons, Information Panels and the Directional Finger Post Signs located in the Gaeltacht Quarter area (that is Section 3 – Fall Park, Section 4 – Bog Meadows, Section 5- Westlink to City Centre and Springfield Park/Dam) all being in dual-language, that is, English and Irish.

On a vote, eight Members voted for the proposal and eight against.

As there was an equality of votes, the Deputy Chairperson exercised his second and casting vote in favour of the proposal and it was declared carried.

A Member also raised the issue of the spectator fencing at the Cherryvale Playing Fields and requested that the spectator fencing around the pitch and a path along the eastern boundary be progressed under permitted development.

Accordingly, the Committee:

- **Capital Programme:** Agreed the following movement under the Capital Programme:
 - **City Hall Statues - Winifred Carney and Mary Ann McCracken** project (*Stage 3 – Committed*) proceeds to contract award with a maximum £300,000 budget allocated.
 - **Fire Service Belfast Blitz** project – add as a *Stage 1 – Emerging* project under the Capital Programme.
- **Forth Meadow Community Greenway** – agreed the proposals in respect of signage for the Forth Meadow Community Greenway as outlined in paragraph 3 of the report, subject to the Beacons, Information Panels and the Directional Finger Post Signs located in the Gaeltacht Quarter area (that is Section 3 – Fall Park, Section 4 – Bog Meadows, Section 5- Westlink to City Centre and Springfield Park/Dam) all being in dual-language, that is, English and Irish. Also noted that it had previously been agreed that the information plaque on the ‘Carry Each Other’ sculpture would be in

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English/Irish but it was now proposed that this in now in English/Irish and Ulster Scots. The Committee agreed accordingly,

- **Cherryvale Playing Fields** – noted the project update and agreed that the spectator fencing around the pitch and a path along the eastern boundary be progressed under permitted development.
- **Non-Recurrent Programme:** Agreed that the necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate ‘framework’ arrangements) be initiated for any non-recurrent projects for 2023/24, with contracts to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.
- **Externally Funded Projects:** Agreed that necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate ‘framework’ arrangements) be initiated for any Physical Programme projects, including externally funded projects for 2023/24, as required, with contracts to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.

Freedom of the City Request

The Committee agreed to delegate authority to the Interim City Solicitor to progress a Freedom of the City request which had been agreed at the meeting of the Party Group Leaders’ Consultative Forum on 16th March, 2023.

Matters referred back from Council/Motions

Motion – Maternity Leave Provision for Mothers of Babies defined as Premature

The Committee was advised that the Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 21st February, had referred the following motion which had been proposed by Councillor Spratt and Seconded by Councillor Bunting to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration;

“This Council will amend maternity leave provision for mothers of babies defined as premature so that maternity leave will not commence until the certified due date of the child. All/any leave required from delivery date of a premature baby by parents will be considered compassionate leave and not reduce an employee’s right to standard parental leave.”

The Committee adopted the motion and agreed that a further report outlining the financial and other implications be submitted to a future meeting.

Governance

Revisions to Scheme of Allowances

The Committee considered a report in relation to amendments to the Council’s Scheme of Allowances to increase the rates of Basic Allowance, Special Responsibility Allowances and Dependents’ Carers’ Allowance.

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The Committee:

1. agreed not to increase the Basic Allowance paid to each Councillor from £15,486 per annum to £16,394 with effect from 1st April, 2022;
2. agreed not to increase the total maximum Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) from the current £117,774 per annum to £124,676 as set out in Appendix 2 with effect from 1st April, 2022; and
3. approved the increase to rate of Dependents' Carers' Allowance in line with the National Living Wage for 2023-2024

Local Government Elections May 2023 – Update

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 **The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update on the Local Government Elections in May, 2023.**

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 **The Committee is asked to:**

- **Note the contents of the report.**

3.0 Main report

Background

- 3.1 **The Committee will be aware that the Returning Officer (EONI) appoints the Chief Executive to be the Deputy Returning Officer (DRO) for the Local Government Elections. It is therefore his responsibility to organise the Election Count, amongst other things, from the Notice of Election through to the Counting of the ballot papers to determine the 60 Councillors who are elected to serve the Belfast District for the next Council term: May, 2023 till May, 2027.**
- 3.2 **To assist him in this process, the DRO has appointed Jim Hanna and Stephen McCrory as Assistant Deputy Returning Officers who are authorised to take all decisions in relation to the election in his place. The Chief Executive will be present throughout the count.**

Date of Election

- 3.3 **This year's Local Government Election poll was scheduled to take place on Thursday, 4th May, with the Counts to each of**

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the 10 District Electoral Areas to take place on Friday, 5th and Saturday 6th.

- 3.4 However, due to the Coronation of King Charles III on Saturday 6th May and the possible impact on the count, the Northern Ireland Minister has determined that the date of the Election will be moved as follows:

Polling Day	Thursday, 18th May
Overnight verification of unused ballot papers	Thursday, 18th – Friday 19th May
Count - Day 1 (5 DEAs)	Friday, 19th May
Count - Day 2 (5 DEAs)	Saturday, 20th May

- 3.5 The election timetable is attached at Appendix 1 for information.

Count Venue

- 3.6 The venue for all of the counts will be the City Hall. This would require 3 counts to take place in the Great Hall and 1 each in the Banqueting Hall and the Reception Room.

Order of Counts

- 3.7 It is recognised that most Members would prefer the count for the DEA in which they are standing to take place on the Friday rather than the Saturday. In deciding which 5 DEAs should be counted in which room, there are some logistical matters which need to be taken into account:

3.8

- The Reception Room is being used as a count venue and it is significantly smaller than the other count venues in the City Hall. The Banqueting Hall is the largest of the venues being used.

3.9

- The 10 DEAs do not all elect the same number of councillors. Black Mountain and Ormiston DEAs elect 7 members each; Balmoral and Botanic DEAs elect 5 members each; and Castle, Oldpark, Court, Collin, Lisnasharragh and Titanic DEAs each elect 6 members.

- 3.10 It is accepted that the number of members to be elected to a DEA does not necessarily mean that the count will take less time to complete but that is the only variable which can reasonably be used to assess which counts should be held in which venue. Accordingly it is suggested that the following breakdown is agreed:

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Reception Room – Balmoral and Botanic DEAs (5 members each)

Banqueting Hall – Black Mountain and Ormiston DEAs (7 members each)

Great Hall (1) – Castle and Oldpark DEAs (6 members each)

Great Hall (2) – Court and Colin DEAs (6 members each)

Great Hall (3) – Lisnasharragh and Titanic DEAs (6 members each)

- 3.11 In 2014 the Committee agreed which counts would be held on which day. It was agreed also that the counts held on the Saturday in 2014 would be held on the Friday in 2019 and this was subsequently confirmed at that time. Again, it is recommended that the counts should alternate and be held as follows:

Friday 18th May, 2023

Reception Room – Balmoral DEA

Banqueting Hall – Black Mountain DEA

Great Hall 1 – Castle DEA

Great Hall 2 – Court DEA

Great Hall 3 – Lisnasharragh DEA

Saturday 20th May, 2023

Reception Room – Botanic DEA

Banqueting Hall – Ormiston DEA

Great Hall 1 – Oldpark DEA

Great Hall 2 – Colin DEA

Great Hall 3 – Titanic DEA

Pre-Election Period of Heightened Political Sensitivity

- 3.12 The Pre-Election Period of Heightened Political Sensitivity (previously known as Purdah) will commence with effect from 6th April. Whilst there is currently no legislation in Northern Ireland which governs the publicity and council activity during the pre-election period for local government, the Council has previously approved an Election Protocol which provides guidance in dealing with issues which might impact on the election process and a copy is appended to this report.

Motions and Issues raised in advance by Members

- 3.13 In previous years, Motions and issues raised in advance by Members have been perceived as publicity which could influence public opinion or to promote the public image of a

particular candidate or group of candidates. Therefore, it is extremely unlikely that these will be accepted for inclusion on the agendas for Committees during the month of April (please note that this will require the meeting of the Standards and Business Committee on 18th April to be cancelled).

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.14 The costs of the Local Elections in May 2023 will be met out of the existing elections budget.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

None associated with this report.”

The Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed the order of the Counts and the noted the proposals in relation to the Pre-Election Period of Heightened Political Sensitivity

Strategic Issues/Belfast Agenda

City Region Growth Deal – update

The Committee considered the following report:

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

- 1.1 This report is to provide an update to Committee on the progress of the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD).

2.0 **Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note:

- The progress being made on the Contracts for Funding which are required for each of the capital projects delivered through the Deal and the update on project development and delivery across the pillars of investment.
- The update in relation to the BRCD Annual Report.
- The update in respect of the BRCD Council Panel.

3.0 **Main report**

Contracts for Funding

- 3.1 As previously noted by the Committee, a number of contracts for funding have now been approved and signed which will

allow for funding to begin to flow to projects. Since the last update to Members in January the first funding drawdown requests for the City Deal to the Department for Economy and Department for Communities have now been submitted marking another significant milestone for deal delivery.

3.2 It was also noted by the Committee that Members would be advised of progress to agree the funding agreements for each project. Since the last update to the Committee progress has continued to prepare and agree a number of contracts as outlined below.

- The contract for The Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre (AMIC) has now been approved and signed.
- The Contract for Mourne Mountain Gateway is at a very advanced stage and it is anticipated this will be submitted this month to Newry, Mourne & Down District Council for their agreement.
- Contracts for the Institute for Research Excellence in Advanced Clinical Healthcare (iREACH), and the Global Innovation Institute have been finalised and are expected to be signed during this month.

Progress across BRCD Pillars

Innovation

3.3 AMIC has been advanced by Queen's University through to the detailed design stage and has now concluded the end of RIBA Stage 3, with the final report being considered by the Department of Finance and Invest NI. The invitation to tender for the prime contractor for the project has now been published since the last update to Members.

3.4 The Outline Business Case for the Centre for Digital Healthcare Technology is currently being revised to reflect proposed changes to the scope since Department of Finance approval in May 2022, including the consideration of early procurement of equipment for the Royal Victoria Hospital Living Lab. The updated Outline Business Case (OBC) is expected to be submitted in April.

3.5 As previously reported to Members construction work on Studio Ulster commenced on site in October 2022. Following the publication of the Prior Information Notice in November, and the successful completion of the Pre-Qualification phase, the Invitation to Participate in Dialogue is now under

development in advance of the commencement of the competitive dialogue process.

Digital

- 3.6 Since the last update to Members, OBC for the Investment Fund element of the Innovation Challenge Fund has progressed well, with a Strategic case review completed with key Government and partner stakeholders in December and a detailed workshop focusing on delivery held in early March. The first draft of the business case is expected to have been prepared by April after which a detailed review involving key stakeholders, including economists will take place. Members also previously approved the commencement of a separate business case for the Augment the City pilot project in October 2022. Since then and following consideration by the Digital Advisory Board a draft business case has been shared with the Department for the Economy and the Belfast City Innovation team are currently finalising the OBC following feedback from the Department. The OBC is expected to be submitted to the BRCD Digital Advisory Board on 29th March and a further update will be brought to committee in April.

Tourism and Regeneration

- 3.7 As previously reported a number of the Tourism and Regeneration projects now have a signed contract for funding or are progressing towards finalising contract for funding signing.

The development of procurement documentation is ongoing, with a number of key project procurements now live.

- 3.8 The prequalification stage for the procurement of Integrated Consultancy Teams (ICT) for Carrickfergus Regeneration and the Gobbins Phase 2 has now been commenced with documentation now published by Mid & East Antrim Borough Council.
- 3.9 Development of the prequalification stage for the procurement of ICT for Bangor Waterfront and the Mourne Mountain Gateway is ongoing with publication of documentation expected in the coming months.
- 3.10 Newry Regeneration are preparing their PQQ documentation for the Integrated Supply Team, with appointment of Contractor expected later this year.

- 3.11 **Belfast Stories**, the Council's flagship project continues to progress against the agreed programme. The procurement of professional services continues with tender reports for the pre-qualification stage completed and approved and Invitation to Tender documents expected to be published later this month.
- 3.12 The OBC for **Destination Royal Hillsborough** approved by the Department for the Economy Minister in late October has now received Department of Finance supply approval allowing the Contract for Funding to be actively progressed.

Employability and Skills (E&S)

- 3.13 Members were updated in January on the skills assessment process developed through the E&S pillar to understand the labour and skills implications of the city deal investment projects. The first assessment was focused upon the construction opportunities arising through the city deal investment and the assessment informed a series of recommendations which relate to BRCD partners, as well as to wider stakeholders. An early action as a result of this assessment is the delivery of two events taking place on the 21st March (jointly hosted with the Construction Employers Federation) and 23rd March. These events will help to ensure that local businesses are aware of:
- the construction pipeline arising from the Belfast Region City Deal capital investment programme with a specific focus on opportunities that will be brought to market in the coming 12 months
 - communicate the inclusive growth ambitions of the Deal, including expected social value commitments;
 - the employability and skills support available through the Belfast Region City Deal, council, college, and university partners to help the sector respond to labour and skills challenges, including those relating to social value commitments.
- 3.14 Both events were widely communicated to key stakeholders and on the BRCD website and both events were fully booked.
- 3.15 Following discussions with partners, the relevant Government Departments and key stakeholders plans to establish a **Cross Deal Skills Group** to oversee and manage skills assessments relating to City and Growth Deals at the Northern Ireland level are well advanced. These Assessments will consider the projects emerging across all 4 Deals and focus on the sectors where city deal investment is aligned. A preliminary meeting of this group took place in late January in order to consider the

draft Terms of Reference and to inform the schedule of skills assessments. The BRCD will play a key role in supporting this group – finalising terms of reference, agreeing the initial work programme and fulfilling the role of secretariat. The draft Terms of Reference for the Group was presented to the Executive Board for consideration at its March Meeting. Aligned to the establishment of this group two further skills assessments are currently underway for Advanced Manufacturing and Creative Industries (Virtual Production) and Members will be kept updated as both assessments progress

- 3.16 It is anticipated that the OBC for Digital Transformation Flexible Fund will progress to casework in early April through Invest NI. Concurrently Newry, Mourne and Down District Council who will lead the delivery of the project continue to progress with pre-development work to establish the application and funding process and developing marketing materials in preparation for the launch of the fund.

Infrastructure

- 3.17 Following the announcement by the then Minister on the preferred route for Belfast Rapid Transit Phase 2, feasibility studies are being completed and the OBC is being updated and reviewed by Department for Infrastructure (DfI). The procurement of the design and build contract for Lagan Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge will commence in the early summer with appointment expected early in 2024. DfI has now confirmed that its preferred option for the bridge on the Newry Southern Relief Road is a non-opening 50m fixed bridge, allowing work on the statutory orders, public consultation and Environmental Impact Assessment to progress.

Annual Report

- 3.18 The agreed reporting arrangements for all City and Growth Deals requires the production of an Annual Report and the requirement to meet with the Northern Ireland Delivery Board in order to discuss deal progress as part of an 'Annual Conversation' which is envisaged to take place in June. The Programme management team have been actively engaging with the Department of Finance in order to agree the timeframes and content of the annual reporting process and required documentation now that the BRCD is in delivery phase.
- 3.19 Members are asked to note that a high level, outward focused Annual Report will be produced following the end of the 2023 reporting year. The programme management office will lead

on the development of the report and will engage with individual partners on project specifics where required in advance of consideration of the Executive Board and by partners through their own governance structures.

BRCD Council Panel

- 3.20 A hybrid meeting of the BRCD Council Panel was held on 25 January hosted by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council. Panel Members considered a detailed programme update and received presentations on the BRCD investments in Newry, Mourne and Down and also on Communications & Engagement which included a live demonstration of the newly dedicated BRCD website. A link to the new website was circulated to all BCC Members following the January panel meeting. The minutes of the previous Panel meeting hosted by Mid and East Antrim Borough Council were also approved and are attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.21 The next Council panel meeting was due to be held in April and hosted by Ards and North Down Borough Council, however due to the upcoming Local Government Elections and the timeframes involved it has been agreed to postpone this meeting and reschedule for later in the year. Members will be kept informed when the date and host council has been confirmed.

Financial & Resource Implications

- 3.22 All costs associated with the BRCD are within existing budgets.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

The approach taken to develop the City Deal has been subject to independent equality screening and rural proofing and states that;

‘BRCD is inherently inclusive, affording an opportunity for the region to grow in a way that will benefit the economy of Northern Ireland as a whole, thereby enhancing the lives and well-being of its citizens. If during further development of the programme it becomes apparent that there may be an adverse impact on certain groups or communities then the partnership commits to carrying out further Section 75 work and including screening and EQIAs as and when appropriate.’

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Community Ownership Fund

The Director of Organisational and City Strategy provided the Committee with an update on a bidding window, Window 3 Round 2, to apply for the Community Ownership Fund recently opened by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

The Committee:

- noted the update in relation to Window 3 Round 2 funding under the Community Ownership Fund;
- agreed that Members share this information with relevant local organisations through their existing area networks if appropriate; and
- agreed that this information is shared with relevant partners through the Community Planning network.

Modern Slavery Act 2015 - updated Modern Slavery Statement and update on corporate action plan

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with the updated annual Modern Slavery Transparency in Supply Chains Statement to meet the obligations of the Modern Slavery Act, 2015 and an update on the related corporate action plan.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- Note the updated annual Modern Slavery Transparency in Supply Chains Statement (the ‘Transparency Statement’).
- Approve the addition of the Transparency Statement to the UK Government’s online registry.
- Note the progress made on the action plan.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Background

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 (the ‘Act’) aims to address slavery and trafficking by enhancing support and protection for victims, giving law enforcement the tools needed to target today’s slave drivers and ensuring perpetrators can be

severely punished. It also includes a provision in Section 54 to encourage organisations to ensure their supply chains are slavery-free, known as the Transparency in Supply Chains arrangements ('TISC').

3.2 Key Issues

The Council has voluntarily published an annual Transparency Statement on our website since 2015. This sets out what the Council has done to ensure there is no modern slavery in its supply chains or any part of its business.

This year, the annual Transparency Statement has been reviewed by Commercial and Procurement Services, the Council's Safeguarding Officer and the Equality and Diversity Officer and has been refreshed to reflect current guidance on its content. An updated version for 2021-22 is set out in Appendix 1.

3.3 Recent changes to the Transparency Statement requirements

The TISC provisions currently apply to commercial organisations, however, in recent years both the UK Government and the Northern Ireland Department of Justice have reviewed and consulted on these provisions and their potential application to the public sector:

- In July 2018, the Home Secretary undertook an independent review of the Act and made recommendations, one of which was to strengthen Section 54 by extending the requirement to publish Modern Slavery Statements to government and the public sector.
- In July 2019 the UK Government launched a consultation on measures to strengthen the TISC arrangements and published its proposals on how it planned to take this work forward. Many of the proposed changes will require legislative change which has not happened to date. The proposed changes would see a strengthening of the TISC arrangements for commercial businesses, and would, for the first time, extend them so they apply to the public sector.
- In January 2022, the Northern Ireland Department of Justice ('DOJ') published its report, summary of responses and next steps in response to its consultation on TISC. It found that overall, there is widespread support for the strengthening of TISC arrangements.

3.4 Approach to Modern Slavery in Northern Ireland

In October 2022, in accordance with Section 12 of the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Criminal Justice and Support for Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2015, (as amended by the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022), the DOJ launched a public consultation on a new three-year draft Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Strategy. This is a multiagency collaboration, with actions to be delivered by members of Northern Ireland's Organised Crime Task Force, NGO Engagement Group and other agencies working to address modern slavery and human trafficking.

The DOJ noted in its consultation that the UK Government plan to make additional changes to the TISC provisions in the Act when parliamentary time allows. The additional changes that the UK Government plan to legislate for include:

1. Reporting on specific topics;
2. Publishing the MS statement on a public registry;
3. Setting a deadline for submitting a statement annually;
4. Extending the requirement to publish a statement to public sector organisations with a turnover of over £36million; and
5. The introduction of financial penalties for those that do not publish a slavery statement.

3.5 It should be noted that the Legislative Consent of the Northern Ireland Assembly will be required to extend any UK Government changes to Northern Ireland.

Alongside the consultation, the DOJ published a progress report on the commitments laid out in the 2021-22 Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Strategy for Northern Ireland. The Progress Report states in part that the DOJ 'will engage further with public sector procurement leads once the additional measures to strengthen TISC are progressed in legislation and will become mandatory for all businesses with an annual turnover of over £36million.'

3.6 In March 2021, the UK Government launched an online modern slavery statement registry. Since its launch, over 7,000 statements have been submitted covering over 23,350 organisations on a voluntary basis.

Members asked to approve the addition of the Belfast City Council Transparency Statement to this registry.

3.7 Action Plan

In October 2021, Council approved an action plan to tackle modern slavery to be taken forward by various departments. This was based on guidance from NILGA. An update on the proposed actions is set forth in Appendix 2.

Members should note that an initial awareness session for relevant Belfast City Council managers on recognising Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking was held on 17 November by the Department of Justice.

3.8 Reporting

The Governance & Compliance Manager co-ordinates an annual report on progress to be brought to CMT and the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee.

3.9 Financial & Resource Implications

The implementation of the action plan will involve staff from City and Neighbourhood Services, Legal Services, Governance & Compliance Services, Commercial and Procurement Services, Corporate HR and Marketing and Corporate Communications.

3.10 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

Any equality, good relations or rural needs implications will be identified using the council's usual screening process."

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Physical Programme and Asset Management

Area Working Update

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the Area Working (*West – 23 February, South – 27 February North – 28 February*); and

West AWG

In relation to the West Working Group, adopted the following recommendation to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee:

Expansion of Belfast Bikes Scheme 2022/23 –

- I. To note that **Coláiste Feirste** was content with the Belfast Bikes docking station to be placed on its land, with the agreement that the Council tidy up the entrance and maintain in the area before the docking station is installed. C&NS has agreed this approach.
- II. **Shankill Road** –agreed that further consideration be given to a docking site located closer to Glencairn with the potential for a location at the entrance to Glencairn Park at Forthriver Road as part of the Forth Meadow Community Greenway

Finance, Procurement and Performance

CIPFA Prudential Code Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Indicators 2023-24

The Director of Finance submitted for the Committee’s consideration the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011 and the supporting Prudential and Treasury Codes produced by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), require the Council to consider the affordability and sustainability of capital expenditure decisions through the reporting of prudential and treasury management indicators.
- 1.2 The Prudential Code requires the Council to produce a Capital Strategy for 2023/24. This report provides information for Members on the Capital Strategy, incorporating the prudential indicators for Belfast City Council for the period 2023/24 to 2025/26, and the Council’s Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/24.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- note the contents of this report and the prudential and treasury management indicators included within the appendices to the report.

And agree:

- The Authorised Borrowing Limit for the Council of £140m for 2023/24.

- The Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/24, which has been included as Appendix B to this report.

3.0 Main report

- 3.1** The Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011 requires the Council to adopt the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities. In doing so, the Council is required to agree a minimum revenue provision policy annually and to set and monitor a series of Prudential Indicators, the key objectives of which are to ensure that, within a clear framework, the capital investment plans of the council are affordable, prudent and sustainable.
- 3.2** At the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on the 9 December 2011, Members approved the Council's Treasury Management Policy which is based on the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice. The Treasury Management Policy requires that a Treasury Management Strategy be presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on an annual basis and that it is supported by a mid-year and year end treasury management reports. Recent changes in the CIPFA Prudential Code recommends best practice that treasury management reports are submitted on a quarterly basis and this will be effective from 1 April 2023
- 3.3** The Capital Strategy, incorporating the prudential indicators, is included as Appendix A, while the Treasury Management Strategy and treasury management indicators have been included as Appendix B.
- 3.4** The comparison of 'Gross Debt' to 'Capital Financing Requirement' (CFR) is the main indicator of prudence when considering the proposed capital investment plans of the Council. Estimated gross debt should not exceed the CFR for the current year plus two years. The Council's estimated gross debt position, illustrated in Table 6, Appendix A, is comfortably within the CFR in the medium term. The Director of Finance therefore considers the estimated levels of gross debt as being prudent.
- 3.5** Table 10 (Appendix A) shows the estimated financing costs for capital expenditure as a percentage of the estimated net revenue stream for the Council, based on the medium financial plan. These illustrate that in the medium term, capital financing costs will represent an average of 6.35% of the Council's net running costs. On this basis the Director of Finance is satisfied that the level of capital expenditure is affordable.

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- 3.6 The Finance Act requires the Council to set an affordable borrowing limit, relating to gross debt. The Prudential Code defines the affordable limit as the ‘Authorised Borrowing Limit’ and gross borrowing must not exceed this limit. Table 8 (Appendix A) sets out the recommended ‘Authorised Borrowing Limit’ for the Council as being £140m for 2023/24.**

Financial & Resource Implications

- 3.7 As detailed in the report**

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

None.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Business Cluster and Community
Grant Scheme Re-allocation**

The Director of Finance advised the Committee that the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, at its meeting on 11th January 2023, had agreed that the Business Cluster and Community Grant scheme would not be reopened to new applications, and that any realised underspend be referred to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committees for reallocation.

A further report was submitted to City Growth and Regeneration Committee on 8th February 2023 approving the final tranche of grants. As a result, the reserve that was set up would no longer be fully utilised and an amount of £220,254 was no longer required for this purpose.

The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 17th February 2023, had agreed that reallocations of forecast departmental underspends would be considered as part of year end reporting taking into consideration the 2023/24 budgetary gap. However, in this instance, as the underspend was from a specified reserve and not a departmental underspend then members could agree to reallocate this for other purposes or to include as a reserve to partly offset the 2023/24 budgetary gap.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Garrett,
Seconded by Councillor Beattie,

That the Committee agrees:

- to reallocate the sum of £220,254 to deliver a pilot project replicating the model used in Dunville Park to reduce levels of ASB in parks. The pilot will create

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permanent park warden teams dedicated to already identified parks experiencing high levels of anti-social behaviour (asb); and

- that the resource should be directed to those parks in the city already identified through the People and Communities Committee as having high levels of reported asb. From a west Belfast perspective that would include Dunville Park and Páirc Nua Chollan, with additional areas in the north, east and south of the city to be included.

Amendment

Moved By Councillor Long,
Seconded by Councillor McMullan,

That monies be reallocated and used towards the expansion of the kerbside glass recycling project.

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

The original proposal standing in the name of Councillor Garrett was put to the meeting and passed.

**Audit and Risk Panel Report and Minutes
of meeting of 7th March 2023**

The Committee:

- Noted the key issues arising at the meeting and approved and adopted the minutes of the March meeting of the Audit & Risk Panel at appendix A; and
- Approved the updated Terms of Reference for the Audit & Risk Panel at appendix B.

**Social Value Procurement Policy
Delivery Report**

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 To update the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee following consideration by the Social Policy Working Group at their meeting in February on the delivery of social value outcomes via open tender competitions awarded in accordance with the Council’s Social Value Procurement Policy ‘SVPP’

1.2 The report also provides an update on tenders awarded by Physical Programmes where, due to project funding rules,

social value has been considered and included in accordance with the CPD Buy Social Model.

1.3 It is intended that this report will be provided every 2 months in line with Social Value Working Group meetings. This report covers the reporting period 1st December 2022 to 31st January 2023.

2.0 **Recommendations**

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the update provided in the report

3.0 **Main Report/Background**

Background

3.1 The SVPP was approved by Committee in April 23 with a 'Go Live' date of 1st June 2022.

3.2 SVPP applied to any new applicable open tender exercises with approval dated from 1st June 22.

3.3 To help Officers understanding the SVPP and how to apply this to applicable tender competitions, the Commercial and Procurement Services 'CPS' team has developed a step-by-step guidance document which takes Officers through key considerations in line with the SVPP. This guidance was developed and communicated to Officers ahead of the 'Go Live' date in June 22.

3.4 As outlined in the guidance to Officers application of the SVPP is considered in 2 key parts:

3.5 **Part 1** – For all tender competitions valued over £30k, consideration by Officers about whether to:

1. Reserve the tender competition to a social enterprise/ VCSE sector taking into consideration levels of market competition in this sector
2. Include organisational behaviours (i.e., ethical procurement, environmental and HR policies and procedures) taking into consideration relevance of these policies and procedures to the goods, services or works being purchased and relevance to the market. When selected for inclusion in the tender these social value organisational behaviours are mandatory

pass/fail questions for suppliers to demonstrate rather than scored questions.

- 3.6 **Part 2** – the inclusion of a social value weighting (10% or 15%) and scoring for tenders valued over £250k.
- 3.7 The social value offer made by suppliers using the list of social value initiatives and points is then evaluated and scored with a minimum scoring threshold required to be met.
- 3.8 Note from April 23 for all tender competitions valued over £30k the following be included (in addition to the above in Part 1):
1. Payment of the Real Living Wage by suppliers to their employees
 2. The prohibited use of zero hours contracts by suppliers
 3. The inclusion of a social value weighting (10% or 15%) and scoring

CPD Buy Social Model

- 3.9 The CPD Buy Social Model is applied where external central government funding of 50% or greater is provided for a capital/works project managed by Physical Programmes.

Main Report

- 3.10 Appendix 1 of this report set out details of tenders valued over £30k which have been awarded during the Reporting Period and associated SVPP data/information
- 3.11 Appendix 1 includes:

Table 1 - Tenders awarded during Reporting Period

- 3.12 This sets out details of tenders awarded during Reporting Period and whether SVPP was applied or not.
- 3.13 For ease of reporting this shows tenders awarded by Commercial and Procurement Services 'CPS' team and the Physical Programmes department.

Table 2 – Summary of key data and findings associated with application of SVPP

- 3.14 This shows a summary of key findings from the tenders set out in Table 1; in particular a summary of the Part 1 SVPP considerations i.e. reserved contracts and social value organisational behaviours.

Table 3 - Summary of Supplier's Social Value Offers (Scored submissions)

- 3.15 This shows a summary of the tenders that included a social value weighting (10/ 15%) and the social value offers put forward by suppliers for evaluation as explained under Part 2.
- 3.16 A summary of each applicable tender has been set out in a table.

Lessons Learned and Continuous Improvement

- 3.17 A Social Value Review Team has been established to review how the SVPP is being implemented and any lessons learned that need to be applied following conclusion of tender competitions. Areas the team are currently reviewing include, but not limited to:
1. Trends in the use of Reserved Contracts and any further guidance required for Officers on when these should be used
 2. Trends in the selection of Social Value Organisational Behaviours by Officers when using the Social Value Toolkit and any further guidance required for Officers on when these should be applied
 3. The quality of social value offers by suppliers (the scored submissions) and if further guidance is required in terms of how these are evaluated by Officers. In addition any further guidance required for suppliers to improve their understanding BCC expectations in line with Belfast Agenda aims and associated strategies.
 4. Updated changes to templates and guidance ahead of the upcoming changes in April 23 i.e. Social value weighting for all tenders and Real Living Wage and Zero Hours Contracts provisions.
- 3.18 The Social Value Review Team will meet every 2 months in line with scheduled SPWG meetings and the production of this report.
- 3.19 The content/ format of this report will be reviewed with further information included as more social value data becomes available i.e. social value delivery by suppliers using SIB reporting database.

Financial & Resource Implications

3.20 The financial resources for these contracts are within approved corporate or departmental budgets

Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment

3.21 None.”

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Contracts Update

The Committee:

- Approved the public advertisement of tenders as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 (**Table 1**);
- Approved the award of STAs in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions as detailed in Appendix 1 (**Table 2**) and agreed the STA in relation to ballots and associated documentation would not be subject to call-in due to statutory obligations;
- Approved the modification of the contract as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 (**Table 3**);
- Noted the award of retrospective STAs in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions as detailed in Appendix 1 (**Table 4**); and
- Noted the award of contracts by Arc 21 on behalf the council (**Table 5**):

Table 1: Competitive Tenders

Title of Tender	Proposed Contract Duration	Estimated Total Contract Value	SRO	Short description of goods / services
Window Cleaning across BCC sites	Up to 4 years	Up to £60,000	S Grimes	To clean and maintain the window at various locations across BCC
Mobile Catering Contracts across BCC park sites	Up to 3 years	Up to £53,000 (income)	D Sales	There is a need & expectation from park users to provide mobile catering services within parks to complement the park facilities
The supply and delivery of grounds maintenance plant and equipment	Up to 4 years	Up to £400,000	D Sales	Supply and delivery of grounds maintenance plant and equipment to enable the replacement of end of lift machinery servicing the

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				Open Spaces and Streetscene operation
The distribution of City Matters (Belfast City Council's resident's magazine)	Up to 2 years	Up to £140,000	L Caldwell	Secure and effective delivery of City Matters is required for over 160k homes in Belfast and boundary areas within Belfast City Council district area

Table 2: Single Tender Actions

Title	Duration	Total Value	SRO	Description	Supplier
Advertising at bus stops	Up to 18 months	Up to £140,000	L Caldwell	Advertising council initiatives to the citizens of Belfast and areas of Northern Ireland as required. Clear Chanel is the only company that provides advertising at bus stops in Northern Ireland. Value indicated is a budget ceiling figure to cover any unplanned advertising requirements.	Clear Channel
Bus internal and external advertising	Up to 18 months	Up to £140,000	L Caldwell	Advertise council initiatives to the citizens of Belfast and in areas of Northern Ireland as required. Global Outdoor is the only company to provide advertising on Metro and Ulsterbus buses in Northern Ireland. Value indicated is a budget ceiling figure to cover any unplanned advertising requirements.	Global Outdoor
	Up to 3 years	Up to £165,000	S Grimes	LPS are the only suitable provider of	Land and Property

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Annual asset valuations				this service due to conflicts of interests that exist with other local agencies.	Services (LPS) NI
Legal Case Management System	Up to 3 years	Up to £64,271	P Gribben	Continued use of the Tricostar case management system to support Legal Services including facilities for document management, communications and reporting. Continued use of proprietary system required whilst a strategy is developed to procure and implement replacement system	Tricostar
NI agreement for proprietary mapping requirements & planning	Up to 2 years	Up to £154,000	T Wallace	LPS are the only provider of this service	Land & Property Services (LPS) NI
Electronic Document and Records Management 'EDRM' for NI Housing Executive – hosting, maintenance and support (Fully Funded)	Up to 1 year	Up to £62,000	P Gribben	EDRM system used by NI Housing Executive to link to Housing Benefits System. Licences are perpetual. This is fully funded by NIHE. NEC Systems are the only suitable provider.	NEC Systems
T2414 - Printing and delivery of Ballot Papers and associated documentation	One off Purchase	Up to £33,300	N Largey	Due to a change in election date, associated delay in ballot paper print specifications being issued and higher than anticipated costs there is insufficient time now to procure via an open tender competition.	The Foundation

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Table 3: Modification to Contract

Title of Contract	Duration	Modification	SRO	Description	Supplier
T2213 - Bobbin Catering City Hall Reported verbally to Feb 2023 SP&R - approved for 3 months.	Up to 18 months	Up to a total of 12 months and up to £25,000 income (includes 3 months verbally approved)	N Largey	In line with legislation the Bobbin had to close numerous times because of the Covid pandemic which presented significant financial and operational challenges and changes to the hospitality industry. The re-tender exercise of this service will be delivered within the next 12 months.	Now Group
T2291a Development and submission of the Belfast PEACEPLUS Local Community PEACE Action Plan (STA) Fully Funded	Up to 1 year	Additional 4 months and £7,125	D Sales	A 4-months extension of Contract Period to facilitate ongoing work to develop the PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan	Locus Management
T2201 Provision of an Activities Co-ordinator for Forth Meadow Community Greenway PEACE IV Programme Services	Up to 4 years	Additional 1 month	D Sales	An extension is required to allow delivery partners to continue to deliver activity in order to fulfil the deliverables. Request is retrospective	ArtsEkta Ltd
T2084(b) A Key Deliverable of the PEACE IV Shared Space & Services theme (Intergenerational project)	Up to 22 months	Additional 6 months	D Sales	An extension is required to allow delivery partners to continue to deliver activity in order to fulfil the deliverables. Request is retrospective	Mediation NI

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T1925 Peace IV On the Right Track; Good Relations through Sports	Up to 43 months	Additional 6 months	D Sales	An extension is required to allow delivery partners to continue to deliver activity in order to fulfil the deliverables. Request is retrospective	Active Communities Network
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Table 4: Retrospective Single Tender Actions

Title of Contract	Duration	Value	SRO	Description	Supplier
Requirement for temporary Assistant Manager (Houses of Multiple Occupation)	Up to 12 months	Up to £64,500	S Toland	The existing contracted provider for T1792 Provision of Temporary Agency Resources: Matrix SCM have confirmed they are unable to fulfil the required role of HMO assistant manager within the contractually agreed time period.	Honeycomb Recruitment

Table 5: Contracts awarded by Arc 21 on behalf of the Council

Title of Contract	Duration	Value	SRO	Description	Supplier
The supply of services relating to the treatment and energy recovery/disposal of residual waste arisings	Up to 7 years. Initial 3 years with option to extend up to a further 4 years (2 + 2 year periods)	Up to £107m	C Matthews	Contract for the bulking, loading, transfer and processing of residual waste from the council's waste transfer station.	Contract managed by Arc 21

Equality and Good Relations

Minutes of Shared City Partnership Meeting on 6th March 2023

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Shared City Partnership of 6th March, including the following:

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PEACEPLUS

- To note the high-level feedback from the public meeting on 27th February at 2pm in City Hall; and the updated process Stage 2 development of the Local Action Plan, including forthcoming Thematic Working Group meetings.

PEACE IV

Secretariat

To note the contents of the report and agree contract extensions for:

- i. ArtsEkta for the provision of activities for Forth Meadow Community Greenway to 31/10/2022;
- ii. Mediation NI contract for the Intergenerational Shared Spaces project to 31 March 2023 and
- iii. the Good Relations through Sports contract with Active Communities Network to 31 March 2023

CYP Theme

- To note the contents of the report and note that *discussions with SEUPB have progressed and the further details presented as outlined in Appendix II Update NIHE position.*

SSS Theme

To agree:

- That a request for a 3-month extension to 30 September 2023 is explored with SEUPB to enable the installation of signage;
- The target audience for the SSS narratives publication as the local community and visitors to the Forth Meadow Community Greenway; and
- The name of the bridge at Springfield Dam as the 'Foundry Bridge'.

BPR Theme

- BPR 1 - NIHE- Cross Community Area Networks

To note that discussions have progressed with SEUPB relating to proposed mitigations and next steps

- BPR 2 - Culture Unit - Creative Communities

To note the quotation for an artist for the Short Strand/Walkway received nil submissions and therefore delivery of this project element is no longer viable.

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- BPR6 St Comgall's

To agree the updated Educational Resources and Exhibition Materials as agreed by the Programme Board on 9 February 2023 via delegated authority. The exhibition materials (website) are to be approved, subject to SEUPB approval.

GOOD RELATIONS

Good Relations Action Plan Q1 Expenditure:

- To agree to proceed with the delivery of the Good Relations Action Plan 23/24 under delegated authority of the Director of Neighbourhood Services, allocating up to 25% of the total Plan until a formal Letter of Offer had been received by TEO.
- Approve the increase in the allocation of Grant Aid under BCC1, to incorporate an additional £23,000 from the BCC9 Strategic Intervention Programme in order to include projects that met the objectives of the programme.

Cultural Inclusion Programme:

- To note the contents of the report and the activities that were being delivered during March 2023 as part of this project, to which the Members were welcome to attend.

Update on the Belfast Agenda:

- To agree that the feedback analysis template relating to the Good Relations priority would be circulated to Members with a deadline of receipt for feedback and comments by 15th March 2023, to allow for papers to be prepared in advance of the findings being brought to the Community Planning Partnership in March 2023;
- To note that community planning partners would be asked to make a nomination to sit on a group which would oversee the delivery of the action to develop an inclusive Belfast intervention plan to address inequalities and support the inclusion of Minority Ethnic communities and to progress the delivery of the findings from the Report, launched in December 2022, 'Inequalities Experienced by Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Traveller people residing in Belfast.' The Shared City Partnership would receive regular updates on progress; and
- To agree that Ms. A. M. White and Ms. B. Arthurs be nominated from the Shared City Partnership to sit on the above group.

Storage Costs for donations to refugees and asylum seekers:

- To agree to allocate support costs to assist with storage for donations relating to the Northern Ireland Refugee Resettlement Scheme, of £300 for this financial year.

**Equality and Diversity- Equality Screening
and Rural Needs Outcome Report Q3 22-23**

The Committee was reminded that the Council had a duty to have, under section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998:

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- Due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity in relation to the nine equality categories; and
- Regard to the desirability of promotion good relations

In addition, under section 1 of the Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016:

- Due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans, and when designing and delivering public services

To this end, the Council had a process to carry out equality screening and rural needs assessment of new and revised policies. This allowed any impacts related to equality of opportunity, good relations or rural needs to be identified and addressed.

An equality screening and rural needs impact assessment template was completed by the relevant officer, in collaboration with the Equality and Diversity Unit. On a regular basis, the Unit collates all completed templates into a screening outcome report and publishes it onto the Council’s website, along with the relevant completed templates.

The Committee noted the Quarterly Screening Outcome Report which would be published on the Council’s website

Operational

**Minutes of Party Group Leaders
Consultative Forum**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Party Group Leaders’ Consultative Forum of 16th March, 2023.

**Requests for the use of the City Hall and
the provision of hospitality**

The Committee adopted the recommendations in respect of those applications received up to 10th March, 2023:

NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED	CIVIC HQ RECOMMEND
2023 EVENTS						
Telugu Cultural Society of Northern Ireland	23 April 2023	Ugadi 2023– New Year Celebration event for the people of Deccan, India people living in Belfast including a cultural program.	D	No charge as community group	No (There is no catering planned for this event)	Approve, No charge No hospitality

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NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED	CIVIC HQ RECOMMEND
		Numbers attending 300				
BTC - Belfast Tamil Community	29 April 2023	BTC 10-year anniversary and Tamil New Year Celebration - – an evening of food and entertainment to celebrate Tamil New Year Numbers attending 300	C & D	No charge as community group	Yes, Soft drinks reception.	Approve No Charge Soft Drink Reception <i>£500 given to their chosen caterer.</i>
Belfast Health and Social Care Trust	7 June 2023	Belfast Trust Staff Remembrance Service 2023 for staff and volunteers who have died. Numbers attending – 300 – 400	C	Charge £825 <i>waivered due to nature of the event</i>	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality
Disasters Emergency Committee	20 June 2023	Launch of Ukraine Exhibition of photography depicting humanitarian assistance in Ukraine, the Pakistan Floods and the Turkey-Syria earthquakes. Launch will thank corporate and political	D	No charge as charity	Yes, Soft drinks reception.	Approve No Charge Soft Drink Reception <i>£500 given to their chosen caterer.</i>

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NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED	CIVIC HQ RECOMMEND
		supports of DEC's appeals. Numbers attending 300				
OMNI (Organisation of Malayalees in Northern Ireland)	29 August 2023	PONNONAM 2023 - A Cultural dinner and entertainment programme to celebrate Onam. Numbers attending 400	D	No charge as community group	Yes, Soft drinks reception.	Approve No Charge Soft Drink Reception <i>£500 given to their chosen caterer.</i>
British Society of Immunology	5 December 2023	BSI Congress Speakers Dinner for guests attending their 3-day congress taking place in ICC Numbers attending - 150	A & B	No (Waiver as linked to Visit Belfast)	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality
2024 EVENTS						
Ulster University	17 June 2024	SPEA12 12th European Conference Dinner for guests attending their 4 day conference taking place in Ulster university on Solar Chemistry and Photocatalysis: Environmental	A & B	No (Waiver as linked to Visit Belfast and Charity)	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality

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NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED	CIVIC HQ RECOMMEND
		Applications (SPEA). Numbers attending - 250				

Minutes of the meeting of the Installations Working Group 22nd February

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Installations Working Group of 22nd February, 2023.

Minutes of the Castle, Cavehill, Zoo and North Foreshore 27th February

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Castle, Cavehill, Zoo and North Foreshore Working Group of 27th February, 2023.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Language Strategy Working Group

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Language Strategy Working Group of 2nd March, 2023.

Attendance at Horizon 2020 UPSURGE

The Committee:

- I. Noted that, as the project lead for the Horizon 2020 UPSURGE project, Alan Wardle would be attending the Project Group meeting in 28th – 29th March in Maribor, Slovenia.
- II. Noted that all costs associated with the attendance at the event were covered within the EU Horizon 2020 UPSURGE grant funding.

Minutes of the Meeting of the City Centre Working Group

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the City Centre Working Group of 3rd March, 2023.

Update on dual language street signs

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 **This report is a further update to members on the dual language street signs applications.**

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the contents of the report.

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

Applicants and current status

3.1 The total number of live requests for dual language street signs received as of 22nd March 2023 is 458.

3.2 The first dual language street sign under the new policy was agreed by P&C Committee on the 7th February and ratified by Council on 1st March 2023, with a further 3 street signs agreed at P&C Committee on 7th March.

3.3 There are currently 4 applications due to go to P&C Committee in April, subject to the results of the surveys. Officers expect that number to increase at future meetings once there is a full complement of staff in place.

3.4 The third member notification for the next 10 streets was issued on 24th February and a further list will be issued at the end of March. Officers will review the frequency and number of applications on these lists once there is a full complement of staff.

3.5 Initial assessments to check for any potential adverse impacts on the grounds of equality or good relations were carried out on a further 20 streets on 28th February 2023 and a further session for 20 streets is scheduled for the first week in April 2023. These assessments involve officers from across the council including Good Relations, Equality and Diversity Unit, Place and Economy and Building Control and include significant preparatory work and for decisions made to be fully documented.

Workloads

3.6 Survey work is the most labour-intensive part of the process. Analysis of the surveys carried out before the adoption of the new policy identified an average of 43 surveys per street. This was due to the fact that requests tended to be for smaller streets due to the requirement to get a third of residents to sign

the initial request. As there is no longer a requirement to provide the initial petition, applications for larger streets have increased significantly. Currently the average surveys per street is 116, which is significant additional workload per street.

Timeframe for the process

- 3.7 Measures are in place to ensure that each stage of the process is progressing in a consistent manner, and bottlenecks are avoided. As many of the tasks as possible are being done in parallel to shorten the overall timeframe from application submitted to consideration by committee. However, given the multiple stages of the process and set timeframes, it does take at least 4 months to get through the process, from when we start to process an application through to reaching decisions and have the signs erected. Timeframes for each application also vary due to the specific circumstances for each application. For example, the number of occupiers and therefore the numbers of surveys to be carried out. This makes it difficult to confirm a set number of surveys that will be processed in any month, but numbers will increase as resourcing is fully completed.
- 3.8 Officers also intend to reduce the time period for responding to the survey from the current 30 days to 14 days. While this would reduce the overall processing time for each application, it may not impact on the number of applications processed as the staffing resources to administer the process remain the same. However officers are keen to explore all possible options for reducing application processing times.

Translations

- 3.9 Officers met with Queens University (QUB) in February regarding the translation of street names. QUB confirmed that additional staffing resource will be in place in March and May and will have a focus on carrying out the necessary research to provide the translations that we require.
- 3.10 The full list of 458 streets applied for has been provided to QUB, and we have agreed operational arrangements to ensure that we can progress applications in the order received and processed.
- 3.11 Some translations are more complex and where there is a delay in receiving these, surveys and Committee reports will be progressed without the translations seeking delegation to the Director to agree the translated street name once it is available.

Electoral Office

- 3.12 The electoral register available at the Electoral Office is used to confirm that the applicant is a resident of the street, and also to identify the number of people who will be surveyed.
- 3.13 The current procedure is to arrange appointments with the Electoral Office and inform them of which streets are required for viewing. These are then provided to staff to view during the appointment.
- 3.14 Discussions have previously taken place with the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) to look at easier ways of getting access to the register and reducing the time taken and the need for appointments to be made. This was done in conjunction with other local councils, through the Chair of Building Control Northern Ireland. In June 2021 the CEO confirmed that having liaised with her legal representatives, they were not aware of any other way to inspect the register except under supervision, in the current practice. Therefore, a data sharing agreement cannot be used. It was also confirmed that while the legislation permits the sale of the register to government departments, this does not apply to councils.
- 3.15 Building Control also sought the advice of the Council's legal services when having these discussions, who agreed with the legal advice provided to the CEO.

Financial & Resource Implications

- 3.16 In December, three additional staff members were recruited on a temporary basis to deal with the volume of applications received. However, as two of these posts were from within the existing team, the process for backfilling and covering their duties is still ongoing. While they are being trained and are processing dual language street sign applications, there are also other duties in their substantive posts to be undertaken. This includes processing property certificate applications, a key part of the conveyancing process, and the provision of street naming and numbering, which are important in terms of house sales progressing and allowing new homeowners to set up their utilities and amend address critical documentation. When these staff members are fully released to their new roles and training completed, this will allow for an increase in the number of applications being processed.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.17 The process for carrying out initial assessments on the ground of equality and good relations is in place. Where adverse impacts are identified, a further screening will take place and findings presented to Members. This work has been developed working with colleagues in our Equality & Diversity Unit together with an external consultant.”

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

Issues raised in advance by Members

**Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service –
Councillor Ferguson to raise**

In accordance with notice on the agenda, Councillor Ferguson raised the issue of the funding of the Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service. She referred to a report which had been presented at the meeting of the People and Communities Committee on 7th March which had indicated that the Service would only receive funding in the sum of £70,400 from the Department of Communities in 2023/24. She stated that this would leave the Service of a shortfall of up to £279,315 for that period. She requested that the Committee consider funding the shortfall the year-end underspends and/or the Council’s reserves.

The Committee was advised that the Committee had, the previous month, agreed that reallocations of forecast departmental underspends would be considered as part of the year end reporting, taking into consideration the 2023/24 budgetary gap and the Committee would be required to rescind that decision. In addition, the Chief Executive stated that, as Chief Financial Officer, he would not be prepared to use the Council’s reserves for that purpose.

After further discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Ferguson,
Seconded by Councillor Lyons,

That the Committee agrees to rescind its decision of 17th February in relation to the reallocation of departmental underspends and agreed further to use any in-year underspend to commit to covering the shortfall of up to £279,315 to fund the Citywide Tribunal Service in 2023/24.

On a vote, twelve Members vote the proposal and none against, with six no votes and it was declared carried.

Chairperson

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People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 7th March, 2023

HYBRID MEETING OF THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

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

In attendance: Mrs. C. Matthews, Director of Resources and Fleet;
Mr. D. Sales, Director of Neighbourhood Services;
Mrs. S. Toland, Director of City Services;
Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;
and
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 7th and 13th February, 2023 were taken as read and signed as correct.

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

Declarations of Interest

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

Update on Committee Schedule

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

Restricted

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

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

Financial Reporting - Quarter 3 2022/23

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

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

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

**Belfast Citywide Tribunal
Service – in year update**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Tuesday, 7th March, 2023**

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

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

**Community Support Programme
Additional Funding 2022/23**

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

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

The awards were as follows:

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

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

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

Matters referred back from the Council/Motions

Imagination Library Motion

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

Committee/Strategic Issues

**Timeframe for Reviews (Strategic
Partners and Fuel Hardship)**

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

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

2.0 Recommendations

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

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

3.0 Main report

3.0 Background

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

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

Strategic and thematic partners

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

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

East	EBCDA	£550,792.00
North	Crusaders FC	£52,468.00
	Intercomm	£181,064.00
	Loughview Community Action Project	£127,076.00
	North Belfast Advice Partnership	£179,544.00
	North Belfast Alternatives	£10,000.00
	Total	£550,152.00
South	Forward South	£129,370.20
	LORAG	£129,370.20
	Southcity Resource and Development Centre	£129,370.20
	Total	£388,110.60
West	Greater Shankill Partnership	£147,868.00
	Upper Andersonstown Community Forum	£582,522.00
	Greater Shankill Community Council	£10,000.00
	Total	£740,390.00

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Total		£2,229,444.60
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Table 1B - 2020/21 – Thematic Partners (including allocations made)

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

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Community Food Providers (£2k x 45 groups)	£90,000.00
North Locality Group (via Ashton Community Trust)	£24,000.00
South Locality Group (via LORAG)	£24,000.00
East Locality Group (via Eastside Partnership)	£24,000.00
West Locality Group (via Upper Springfield Dev Trust)	£24,000.00
Colin Locality Group (via Colin N'hood P'ship)	£24,000.00
TOTAL	£724,764.00

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

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

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

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West	Upper A'Town Community Forum	£174,120
	Greater Shankill Partnership	£46,470
		£220,590
	TOTAL	£603,516.68

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

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

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

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

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2021/22 allocations		2022/23 allocations	
North		North	
		North Belfast Advice Partnership	£11,323.33
		Loughview Community Action Project	£11,323.33
		Ashton Community Trust	£11,323.33
South		South	
Southcity	£20,000.00	LORAG	£7,896.67
		Southcity	£7,896.67
		Forward South	£7,896.67
East		East	
EBCDA	£20,000.00	In this Together	£16,432.50
		Larder	£16,432.50
West		West	
Upper Andersonstown Community Forum	£30,000.00	Blackie River Centre	£36,700.00
Greater Shankill Partnership	£20,000.00	Greater Shankill Partnership	£9,780.00
TOTAL	£90,000	TOTAL	£137,005

Approach to review

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

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

Timescales

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

Fuel Hardship Fund

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

capture sheet, monitoring s/sheet template and monitoring return template.

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

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

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.17 Costs of securing the services of Cavanagh Kelly to undertake the financial audit of Covid-19 funding allocations to strategic and thematic partners during 20/21 and 21/22 have been met from within existing budgets within CNS. It is envisaged that any

vouching and verification and review requirements needed in relation to the Fuel Hardship Fund will also be met by utilising existing CNS budgets in 23/24 (staffing and/or financial).

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

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

The Committee noted the update.

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

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

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

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:

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

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

- 3.1 Members may recall from last month’s meeting (7th February 2023) that the Department for the Economy (DfE) has recently launched a public consultation on the draft Circular Economy (CE) Strategy for Northern Ireland. This draft strategy sets out the Department’s vision to create an innovative, inclusive and competitive economy, with responsible production and consumption at its core.
- 3.2 The main goal of the CE Strategy is to adopt a circular model and reduce our material footprint to live responsibly, build resilience, exploit new opportunities and to secure future prosperity for businesses, people and the planet.

- 3.3 DfE has worked together with all government departments to develop the draft strategy, in collaboration with external stakeholders from local government, the private sector, academia, the voluntary and community sectors and others.**
- 3.4 The overarching target is to halve Northern Ireland’s annual material footprint per person to 8 tonnes by 2050. Our material footprint is the total volume of material embodied within the whole supply chain to meet our demands. It measures the global (domestic and foreign) extraction of raw materials required for goods and services used by the residents of Northern Ireland.**
- 3.5 The draft CE Strategy sets out how this can be achieved through; switching to materials that can be reused, increasing use of fuels that can be replenished, designing things to be kept in use for longer and reducing waste.**
- 3.6 The draft Strategy is set out in two parts: the Executive Summary and first four chapters provides an outline of the Circular Economy and the second part covers proposals for initiating change and how this can be monitored and measured.**
- 3.7 The draft CE Strategy focuses on four business sectors:**
- Construction and the built environment**
 - Bioeconomy**
 - Advanced manufacturing**
 - Tourism and Hospitality**
- 3.8 It focuses on four types of materials:**
- Textiles**
 - Food**
 - Packaging**
 - Electricals**
- 3.9 To help create more sustainable production and levels of consumption, the CE Strategy presents twelve proposals for change:**
- 1. Develop and implement a programme to support and promote behaviour change.**
 - 2. Create clusters and networks to raise awareness and assist collaboration.**
 - 3. Develop an outcome-focused Circular Economy monitoring framework.**

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

Operations Update

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

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.17 None in relation to responding to the consultations.

Equality or Rural Needs Implications

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

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

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

More Circularity Less Carbon

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

- “1.0 **Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**
- 1.1 To present the 'More Circularity Less Carbon' report for Belfast City Council's waste management activities.
- 2.0 **Recommendations**
- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:
- Note the contents of the report and it is envisaged that the key findings and recommendations will be integrated into

the next Council waste plan and contribute to the Council's climate change actions.

3.0 Main report

Background

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

Key findings

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

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

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

Scenarios

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

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

² EPRS (2017) UN (2018)

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

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

Conclusions

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

may be more challenging for the Council when the Deposit Return Scheme is launched in 2025.

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

Financial and Resource Implications

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Committee:

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

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

**Stadia Community Benefits Initiative
2022-2023 Quarter 3 Update**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

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

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note progress to date.

3.0 Main report

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

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

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

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

Performance

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

A number of joint initiatives are also planned for Q4.

Financial Implications

- 3.9 In accordance with the Council's obligations under its DfC Funding Agreement for the Olympia Regeneration Project, the Council has committed a sum of £100,000 per annum for a minimum of ten years, so that a minimum of £1,000,000 is contributed in total to the Project.
- 3.10 In relation to 2022/23 Q3 spend, partners have reported a normal level of spend in line with programmes delivered. Partners have projected full utilisation of the budget across both joint and individual work programmes by the end of March 2023.

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

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

The Committee noted the update.

Community Infrastructure Pilot Update

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on work undertaken by officers in the last few months to identify issues and needs within the Community Infrastructure Pilot areas previously approved by Committee on 9th November 2021.

2.0 Recommendations

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

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

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

3.0 Main report

Background

3.1 Committee (alongside Area Working Groups) previously considered reports in May and November 2021 which agreed the approach proposed within them (namely the development of Community Infrastructure Pilots) to help address weak community infrastructure in targeted localities, with members subsequently deciding that there should be 8 pilot projects developed (2 per area – N, S, E & W, rather than the 4 – one per area of the city initially proposed). With each pilot area being supported with a £15k per annum budget for a 2-year period.

3.2 It was further agreed that Neighbourhood Integration Managers (NIMs), supported by the Neighbourhood Services Manager aligned with community planning and the community provision review within Neighbourhood Services/CNS, would lead on developing and delivering the approach, working alongside identified internal and external stakeholders, and key communities/community groups within the 8 areas selected. The table below, outlines the NIM for each area, as well as the areas chosen by members for targeting.

3.3 Table 1 – Neighbourhood Integration Managers by area/Areas identified for targeting

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

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

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

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

Financial and Resource Implications

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

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

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

Partnership Agreements 2023/24

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

The Members were reminded that an extensive review of the first six Partnership Agreements listed below had been undertaken in 2021/22. In line with the review findings, the Council had agreed that these partnership funding arrangements would continue at the same level to deliver services in 2022/23.

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

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

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

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

The Committee:

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

Physical Programme and Asset Management

Pitch Partner Agreements Update

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

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

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

The Committee:

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

Operational Issues

Proposal for Dual Language Street Signs

As at least fifteen percent of the total numbers of persons surveyed in the street were in favour of the proposal to erect a second street nameplate in Irish at La Salle Drive, Hopefield Avenue and Suffolk Parade the Committee approved the applications.

Dog Warden Service Update

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

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

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

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

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

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

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

3.0 Main Report

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

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

3.3 To encourage a change in behaviour, a wider programme supporting responsible dog ownership is an essential element of the Council's approach to reducing levels of dog fouling

throughout the city. Part 1 of this report summarises the activities undertaken to address the issue of dog fouling and encourage Responsible Dog Ownership.

3.4 PART 1 – RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERSHIP

Enforcement

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

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

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

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

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

Environmental Education and Outreach Team (EEOT)

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

Stencilling

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

Dog Fouling Campaign

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

High Visibility Patrols

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

3.15 **Evaluation of October 2022 Dog Fouling Advertising Campaign**

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

Wardens routinely make colleagues in OSS aware of hotspots as street cleaning schedules may need to be adjusted.

Dog Fouling Signage

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

Parks and Open Spaces

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

Local Hotspots

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

3.22 **PART 2 - INTERNAL REVIEW OF DOG WARDEN SERVICE**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Current Situation

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

3.30 **Options**

Option 1 – no change

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

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

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

3.32 This is a sensitive time to consider increasing the cost of anything. We recognise a balance has to be struck – on the one hand the

public, staff and Members are clearly frustrated with the level of dog fouling across the City but on the other, an increase in the fixed penalty fine should act as a deterrent to the minority of dog owners who are irresponsible.

- 3.33 **Option 4** – Consider applying any changes made to the fixed penalty limits for dog fouling offences to littering offences. The Council previously agreed to set the level of fixed penalty fine for littering at £80, reduced to £60 if paid within 10 days. There would be no additional signage costs as most signs include information about dog fouling and littering.

Finance and Resource Implications

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

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

Asset and Other Implications

- 3.35 None

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

- 3.36 None.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Attendance at Welcoming
Interactive Conference**

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

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

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

Port Health Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

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

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

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

3.0 Main report

3.1 Port Health operations

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

3.2 Funding: The service is currently funded on an annual basis via the Central Competent Authorities for the respective food policy areas (Food Standards Agency for fish, high risk food and plastics/kitchenware from China/Hong Kong and DAERA for organic products and Illegal Unreported and Unregulated Fishing). Bids have been submitted by FSA and DAERA to Department of Finance for 2023/24 and FSA and DAERA have indicated they

anticipate that these will be successful. It is also anticipated that a longer term financing model for the service will need to be considered and agreed following the final and agreed outcome of the recent UK/EU discussions.

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

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

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

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

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		District Councils and has been approved by Environmental Health NI (EHNI) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executive and Senior Managers NI (SOLACE).
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- 3.7** The draft MOUs above have been considered in detail to ensure that the contents support the Council in delivering its statutory functions, while ensuring all operational requirements are addressed to facilitate the Councils staff in carrying out their roles.

Finance and Resource Implications

- 3.8** None

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

None.”

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

Chairperson

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People and Communities Committee

Wednesday, 22nd March, 2023

SPECIAL HYBRID MEETING OF THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

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

Also In attendance: Councillor Long.

In attendance: Mrs. C. Matthews, Director of Resources and Fleet;
Mr. J. McConnell, City Services Manager, Resources and
Fleet; and
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were recorded.

Introduction and Welcome

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Sergeant Bannerman, representing the PSNI, and thanked her for taking the time to attend. He advised that unfortunately representatives from the Department for Infrastructure (DfI), who had also been invited to participate in the meeting, had declined the invitation.

The Members discussed the lack of representation from the DfI and expressed their disappointment and frustration at the decision not to send a representative. A Member stated that, in order to try and address many of the issues a joined-up approach with the Council, PSNI and DfI was required.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed to forward a letter to the DfI Permanent Secretary expressing its disappointment at her decision not to nominate a representative to attend the Committee meeting.

Bin Collection Statistics

With the aid of PowerPoint, the Director of Resources and Fleet provided a comprehensive breakdown of the high-level statistics in terms of the percentage of the bins that were collected on a first collection basis, along with an analysis of the reasons for non-collection of missed bins. This highlighted that 76.1% of missed bins could be attributed to streets being blocked by parked vehicles.

The Director also drew the Members' attention to pictures of badly parked vehicles on numerous streets throughout the city that had been submitted via the Report It App.

A Member referred to the usefulness of the Report It App, stating that on occasions blocked streets that he was aware had been reported did not appear on the daily list circulated to the Members.

The City Services Manager stated that the introduction of the App had in general been successful but highlighted that it relied totally on the user's technical ability to upload the pictures and document the issues. He further advised that the App was an interim measure as it was planned that procurement of new mapping software would be being progressed towards the end of the year, given that it would take time to programme and educate the users it was hoped that this would 'go live' at some stage during 2024. This would enable live time data and would do away with the element of human error, it would also have dynamic routing that would pinpoint problem areas to enable re-routing and collection at a different time.

The Chairperson referred to the cost to the Council of missed bins collections. The Director undertook to look at the statistics for this further and to discuss this directly with him.

Noted.

Council Activity and External Partners

The Director highlighted of the following initiatives that the Council currently undertook to try and address missed bin collections:

- Site specific work with bin crews, Elected Members and Dfl to try and resolve access issues. Over the last year there had been 35 site visits involving Dfl;
- Building up a data driven approach to restricted access using the Report It App to identify key areas of focus;
- one 18 tonne vehicle dedicated to collections in streets with restricted access. Noted that this approach had a 96.5% first time success rate and that a detailed study had been commissioned to identify the opportunity for additional restricted access vehicles. This would review street and households by waste stream, the likely success rate and the costs and benefits of proposals. The report on this data was due in May and would be presented to the Committee; and

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- Benchmarking what other cities did and if there were any innovative ideas for collecting from restricted access streets that could compliment narrow vehicles or provide other alternative solutions including common collection points.

At this stage in the proceedings Sergeant Bannerman addressed the Committee and provided an overview on the enforcement powers under the 2016 Traffic Management Order from the perspective of both the PSNI and DfI. She advised that figures for the period September to November 2022 showed the following fixed fine penalties had been issued per geographical area - 76 tickets in South, 25 in East, 11 in West and 4 in North.

Members discussed the variances across the areas, the PSNI representative explained that, whilst enforcement and fixed penalty notices did have a role to play in some circumstances, a blanket approach to enforcement was not appropriate for all areas across the city. She stated that certain areas, due to the dangers, of bad parking required a more targeted approach than others to try and address the problems.

The PSNI representative continued that enforcement was not the preferred option, she advised that the PSNI and the DfI were keen to try and educate road users and with this in mind had carried out several joint initiatives with the DfI. She detailed that these initiatives had included increased social media posts across the various platforms and leaflets being placed on vehicles explaining the result of badly parking their vehicles on other users. She showed examples of the leaflets and undertook to forward copies of the leaflets for circulation to the Members.

Detailed discussion ensued during which the following issues were discussed/highlighted:

- the possibility of using an App, texts or e-mails to alert people of missed collections and changes to collection times;
- noted that clarity was being sought from Legal Services in respect of people leaving bins in an obstructive manner and who was liable in the event of an accident;
- the distribution of green bags;
- the need for potentially additional 18 tonne vehicles to be added to the fleet;
- the need for people to return bins to their properties following collection as the bins were causing obstructions at collection points. Consideration of whether a fourth crew member was required in more areas to pull the bins out and return them. Officers agreed to consider this as part of the ongoing consultancy work;
- noted that unfortunately car ownership was increasing rather than decreasing and that proper infrastructure was required to try and encourage people to use other modes of transport;

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- noted that the Neighbourhood Teams would know the specific problems in their own geographical areas and should be involved when considering potential approaches;
- noted the need for a more digital based reporting culture and the need to share information across the various stakeholders in Real Time;
- discussed the problems with unadopted roads, laneways and alleyways; and
- discussed the desire to see a glass recycling scheme similar to that of North Down and Ards Council.

The Chairperson suggested that a pilot could be undertaken which would take five of the most routinely missed streets for each area and that a focused campaign could be undertaken in each of these areas to try and target the ongoing issues. The outworking of the pilot could then be adapted for other areas as it was noted that a blanket approach did not fit all areas.

Officers agreed that this would be a useful exercise and agreed to bring a report back identifying the proposed areas for the target. The Director highlighted that to progress this pilot would require the participation of both the PSNI and DfI.

It was also agreed that officers would seek clarification from DfI on its enforcement data over the previous twelve-month period.

The Chairperson thanked the Sergeant Bannerman and the Members for their input and the meeting ended.

Chairperson

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 8th March, 2023

HYBRID MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Murphy (Chairperson);
Alderman Dorrian;
Councillors Beattie, Bunting, Duffy,
Hanvey, Heading, Hussey, T. Kelly,
Lyons, Maskey, McCabe, 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. Dolan, Senior Development Manager;
Ms. S. O'Regan, Employability and Skills Manager; and
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor Ferguson.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the 8th and 22nd February 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 March, subject to the following amendments (22nd February minutes):

- Under the heading "Strategic Planning and Performance Group – GP Services", the Council agreed that the following questions be added to the letter the Permanent Secretary to request an update on the work being undertaken to resolve GP indemnity in Northern Ireland:
 - What mitigation measures were being taken to try and address the number of GPs leaving the Health Services; and
 - What measures were being taken to try and increase the number of medical students year on year.
- Under the heading "York Street Interchange (YSI) Placemaking and Active Travel Review (PATR)", the Council agreed that the decision be amended to provide that the Council will only reconsider corporately supporting the York Street Interchange project when confirmation is given by the Department for Infrastructure that they will proceed with the option that ensures safety of current residents, delivers the best place making and

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regeneration outcomes including plans for the bridges across the Lagan and a commitment from the Department that they will co-ordinate efforts to work collaboratively with all relevant stakeholders including Belfast City Council, Department for Communities, Housing Executive, Belfast Harbour, The Ashton Centre and Sailortown Regeneration as part of the overall scheme. To include Community Stakeholders, the Stella Maris Hostel and Ulster University as relevant stakeholders and state that the project needed to address both the air quality needs and housing objectives in the city.

Declarations of Interest

In relation to item 5.b) Work Plan - 23-24 Employability and Skills, Councillor Duffy declared an interest in that he was employed by the organisation which managed the GCSE programme and fibre academy and left the room whilst the item was being considered.

Schedule of Meetings Update

The Committee was reminded that it had previously agreed that the June monthly meeting of the Committee would be held on Wednesday, 7th June, and the Special meeting would be held on Wednesday, 21st June. However, due to a change in the date of the Local Government Elections it had been necessary to move the meetings to later in the month.

The Committee approved the following changes to the dates of the Committee Meetings:

- Monthly meeting from Wednesday, 7th June to Wednesday, 14th June: and
- Special meeting from Wednesday, 21st June to Wednesday, 28th June.

Presentation

Visit Belfast Business Plan 23-24

The Chairperson welcomed Ms. K. Thomson, Chair of Visit Belfast and Chief Executive, National Museums NI, Mr. G. Lennon, CEO Visit Belfast, and Mr. R. Rana, Board member and Director, Andras House Ltd, to the Committee and they were admitted to the meeting.

Ms. Thomson explained the importance of the Visit Belfast Business Plan to rebuild the city's tourism. She advised that it included a new direction of travel for marketing and destination management and for the first-time placed sustainability and community at the heart of Belfast City tourism recovery. As a result, Visit Belfast had a renewed purpose and core values. She highlighted that the need to work together and collaborate and coordinate the city's tourism effort had never been greater.

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Mr. Lennon provided an overview of the Visit Belfast Business Plan 23-24 which had been submitted in advance of the Committee for consideration. He advised that Belfast Tourism had delivered £417m tourism spend in 2019 and 22k jobs, together with community regeneration and strategic investment across the city. He informed the Committee that Visit Belfast had had to rethink tourism as a result of Covid, with more of a holistic view on making the city a better place to live. He explained the overall economic impact of tourism and the expected outturns to be achieved for 2022/23, together with the targets up to 2024/2025.

He highlighted the progress to date and the cultural change to input sustainability at its core to deliver on the wider city objective's. He pointed out that an example of this was the 'Changing the menu. For good' launch which was a pioneering project by Visit Belfast and the industry to raise funds and supplies for those experiencing food poverty in Belfast.

Mr. Lennon described the green tourism initiative where 69% of city hotels were Green Certified and Belfast was ranked 8th in the most sustainable destination in the world. He provided an overview of the 2023 outlook, which included the booking of 57 conferences and 170 cruise calls, and the growth of the staycation market. He summarised the policy framework and its links to the Belfast Agenda and the 10x Economy Strategy. He described the challenges that tourism was facing and the impact of reduced disposable incomes. He stated that opportunities included the new Frankfurt Service, Belfast being a value for money proposition for city breaks and the pending Air Passenger Duty reduction.

He advised the Committee of the Visit Belfast Strategy for 2023/24; Visitor serving targets and outputs; Travel trade targets and approach; Sustainability impact and interventions; Marketing and communication targets and outputs. He concluded that Visit Belfast would continue its transition to a Destination Marketing Management Organisation by selling and managing the destination for the benefit of its citizens.

During discussion, the representatives answered a range of questions in relation to the Christmas events, the impact of the lack of cycle infrastructure on tourism, Sunday trading hours, city centre waste management and hygiene, the need to become a family friendly city and the spread of the economic impact across the city.

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A number of Members stressed the importance of neighbourhood tourism and Mr. Lennon advised that 25% of Visit Belfast Partners would be classified as neighbourhood tourism partners and they intended to significantly prioritise and promote neighbourhood initiatives to ensure benefits across the city.

In response to a Member's question regarding the Council's Social Value Procurement Policy and the need to address exploitative labour, Mr. Lennon advised that their procurement policies were reviewed annually and he would liaise with Council officers on the review. Ms. Thompson highlighted that this work could also be advocated amongst the tourism sector and their partners.

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

The Committee then considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 The purpose of the report is to present the request for funding from Visit Belfast for the 2023/24 financial year and to set out the organisation's strategic development and operational delivery, focused on supporting tourism recovery. Members should note that Visit Belfast will be in attendance at the Committee to present the detail of its 2023/24 plan.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the draft Visit Belfast business plan 2023/24. The overall funding requirement for Visit Belfast in the coming financial year has been taken account of in the revenue estimates that have already been approved by the Council.**
- Approve funding agreement for 2023-24 and agree a funding allocation of £2,035,710 for 2023/24, subject to the development of a funding agreement confirming priority areas of activity as outlined in the presentation and agreed targets.**

3.0 Main report

3.1 Members will be aware that Visit Belfast is the principal Destination Management and Marketing Organisation for the city of Belfast. Visit Belfast leads on the tourism marketing activities in Belfast and targets both the leisure and business tourism markets. It is a membership organisation with more than 500 member businesses across the wider hospitality

industry. Visit Belfast works, on behalf of its members, with a range of public and private partners including Tourism NI, Belfast Chamber and the Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) to promote Belfast as a tourism destination.

- 3.2 Visit Belfast is a public/private partnership. Its current Chairperson is Kathryn Thomson, Chief Executive of the National Museums of Northern Ireland. Belfast City Council has four Councillor representatives on the Board: Councillor Fred Cobain, Councillor Eric Hanvey, Councillor Paul McCusker and Councillor Séanna Walsh. Also represented on the board are members from the private, public and community sectors.**
- 3.3 The tourism and hospitality industry in Belfast had been going from strength to strength as Belfast continued to drive the regional tourism economy; in 2019 (last published Local Government District tourism statistics by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency NISRA), Belfast hosted 1.9m trips accounting for one third of all tourism trips to Northern Ireland and tourism spend amounted to £417m, 40% of Northern Ireland tourism spend.**
- 3.4 In advance of COVID-19 the trajectory had been positive with forecasts suggesting that the sector would account for around 15% of new jobs in the decade. This was further reinforced by the inclusion of tourism as a key growth sector in the City Deal. This acknowledged the fact that the sector was already a significant economic generator but recognised the need for significant additional investment in order to sustain growth. The council's Cultural Strategy 'A City Imagining' also identified the importance of growing the city's sustainable cultural tourism offer through a creative approach that respects the city's heritage and communities.**
- 3.5 Belfast City Council has also developed a 10-year vision and plan for tourism in the city; 'Make Yourself at Home'. This committee approved the tourism plan which sets out a vision for the future of tourism in the city that is centred on a people-based and sustainable model of development with a focus on: increasing the coherency of the Belfast experience; supporting quality authentic products; developing skills; and strengthening the city's position through marketing and communications.**
- 3.6 It is in this context that Visit Belfast has set out their business plan to support the rebuilding of city tourism. Further details of activities that will be undertaken as part of this plan with**

associated targets will be set out in the presentation to the Committee and are included at Appendix A.

3.7 Rebuilding City Tourism

The new tourism plan for Belfast, *Make Yourself at Home*, recognises both the challenges to tourism recovery as well as the opportunities to rebuild tourism in such a way as to maximise the positive impact that it can have on the city. As the Destination Management (and marketing) Organisation (DMO) for Belfast, Visit Belfast has an important role to play in realising a new vision for tourism. They have responded to this by setting out a new approach:

‘To create and service visitors for Belfast and Northern Ireland in order to generate economic benefit and inclusive growth, creating jobs and prosperity for the city region, enabling Belfast to become a more sustainable place to visit, meet and live in.’

3.8 This will require the ongoing adaptation and updating of their strategic planning and delivery recognising that the DMO must respond to the changing environment with a sensitivity to both economic and social context within which they work. This is evident in an increased focus on supporting local tourism and on sustainability.

3.9 Generating £417m tourism spend and supporting 10% of city jobs in 2019, Belfast’s tourism growth and development have seen the city’s tourism industry crucially emerge both as a key pillar of the city economy, and also of strategic importance to the wider visitor economy of Northern Ireland. As the regional driver for the Northern Ireland visitor economy, the Belfast City Region is playing a significant and important part in regional recovery plans.

3.10 Tourism Outlook and indications of Recovery

Despite the outlook being far from certain, tourism can contribute to the economic and social wellbeing of the city with high potential to create jobs quickly and provide the economic impetus for a wider economic recovery.

3.11 According to the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), international tourism saw stronger than expected results in 2022, backed principally by pent-up demand and the lifting or relaxation of travel restrictions in a large number of countries. More than 900 million tourists travelled internationally in 2022, double the number recorded in 2021.

Every global region recorded notable increases in international tourist numbers, with Europe reaching nearly 80% of pre-pandemic levels as it welcomed 585 million arrivals.

- 3.12 Inbound visitors to United Kingdom and Ireland is recovering strongly - pent up demand and the desire to travel saw inbound visitor recovery rates to both the UK and Ireland exceed the global level of 63% of pre pandemic levels. Visit Britain expects year end figure for visitors and spend in 2022 to reach 73% and 91% of record 2019 levels respectively, whilst Tourism Ireland estimated 2022 tourism spend to the island of Ireland to be at 75% of pre-pandemic levels
- 3.13 The reporting of tourism statistics and meaningful visitor analysis at a local level continues to be impacted by the effects of the pandemic. While tourism related surveys including passenger and household travel surveys have resumed, it remains unclear when we will see a full return of annual government tourism statistics particularly at a local level. Full year statistics for 2022 – 23 are not yet confirmed, however, a range of data analytics from a number of sources have provided valuable metrics illustrating recovery has been stronger than expected including for example - 1.3m hotel rooms sold: 93% of 2019 levels and hotel revenue 19% above 2019 levels; 141 cruise ships welcoming 250,000 cruise visitors came to Belfast: 91% of 2019 levels; 95 conferences attracting 30,711 delegates generating over 103,000 bed nights; 2.3m web visits: 26% above 2019 levels; 551,059 visitor enquiries: 61% of 2019 levels.
- 3.14 Visit Belfast's business plan mirrors the Council's long term tourism plan to develop a regenerative model and to place tourism at the heart of recovery working with the tourism sector, businesses, organisations and policy makers. In tandem with city tourism development plans, Visit Belfast is proposing to implement new and innovative approaches to its destination sales, marketing and communications and visitor servicing. This will be achieved by utilising the City's core values and place branding to reposition itself, promoting authentic Belfast experiences to enhance competitiveness in order to deliver growth that will benefit residents, businesses and visitors equally.
- 3.15 Visit Belfast has considered their own strategic and operation plans in the context of the Council's tourism priorities as set out in the 10 year tourism plan: *Make Yourself at Home*:

- **Grow Belfast:** The role of tourism is critical to city recovery. For Belfast this will mean the stabilisation of the tourism industry and the requirement for further growth.
- **Positioning Belfast:** strengthening Belfast’s positioning in domestic and international tourism markets - business and leisure - and as a gateway to the region.
- **Experience Belfast:** increasing connectivity between existing and planned for tourism assets will improve the overall Belfast Experience, inspiring the visitor to stay longer, return and to recommend the city to others.
- **Sustain Belfast:** The sustainable development of cities is not just a local imperative it is also a key motivation for the visitor.

3.16 Priorities for Visit Belfast’s business plan include:

- Directly deliver on the ambitions and priorities set out in *Make Yourself at Home* tourism plan for Belfast
- Utilise the strength of the city brand and its equity to position Belfast to compete on a national and international platform through the promotion of unique Belfast experiences
- Support tourism businesses, protect jobs and contribute to economic recovery
- Achieve tourism growth from high value markets in a sustainable and inclusive way
- Promote and stimulate stronger, fairer and more sustainable eco practices
- Engage with local communities and amplify local experiences & stories
- Utilise and invest in digital technology and communications to increase competitiveness
- Commit to longer term initiatives including signature events, 2024 International Year of Culture and UNESCO City of Music

3.17 Operational Targets for 2023-24

Based on projected levels of recovery in 2023/24, Visit Belfast is proposing the following targets for 2023/24 as agreed by their board:

<u>Total Output</u>	<u>Target</u>
Leisure Tourism Bed nights	200,000 bed nights
Leisure Tourism Day trips	150,000 day trips

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Business Tourism Bed nights	86,000 bed nights
Cruise Visitors	375,000 pax & crew
Visitor Enquiries	735,000 enquiries

<u>Economic Impact</u>	<u>2023-24 Target</u>
Leisure Tourism	£45m
Business Tourism	£42m
Leisure Trade	£2m
Cruise Tourism	£22m
Visitor Servicing	£16m

<u>Visit Belfast Economic Impact</u>	<u>£125m</u>
Budget	£4.5m
<u>ROI</u>	<u>£1:28</u>

- 3.18 A detailed business plan has been submitted and reviewed by officers. The targets outlined will form the basis of key performance indicators for Council's 2023/24 funding agreement with Visit Belfast. Regular monitoring against targets will be included and these key performance indicators will relate to the trajectory for recovery and align with the implementation phases for Council's new tourism plan. This provides a basis for more effective monitoring of performance and will be subject to annual review and renewal with necessary break clauses included.

Financial & Resource Implications

- 3.19 In the current financial year, Belfast City Council's funding arrangement with Visit Belfast is £1,997,465. An allocation of £2,035,710 has been set aside within the Departmental estimates for the financial year 2023/24.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.20 No specific equality or good relations implications. Visit Belfast also works with councils outside of Belfast, as part of the Regional Tourism Partnership."

The Committee adopted the recommendations as set out in the report.

Restricted Items

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

Financial Reporting - Quarter 3 2022/23

The Committee considered the Quarter 3 financial position for the Committee which included a forecast of the year end outturn, a summary of the financial indicators and an executive summary.

The Committee noted the report and the associated financial reporting pack.

Future City Centre - Vacant to Vibrant

The Senior Development Manager provided an update on the Vacant to Vibrant Grant Programme and the recommendations from the Vacant to Vibrant assessment panel.

After discussion, the Committee:

- i Noted the update in relation to the city centre Vacant to Vibrant pilot capital grant scheme;
- ii Approved the recommendations of the Assessment Panel as outlined within Section 3.11 of the report; and
- iii Noted the update on the award value to V2V105 Skull and Bones as included within Section 3.12 of the report.

Belfast Zoo - Fees and Charges

The Director of Economic Development provided an update on the Zoo scale of charges increase for financial year 2023-24.

The Committee noted the price increases for the existing categories.

Regenerating Places and Improving Infrastructure

Responses from the Department for Infrastructure (DfI)

Response from DfI Roads – Autumn Report

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting in November, it had received a presentation for the Department for Infrastructure Roads in relation to its Autumn Report 2022. During the meeting, Members had requested information on a number of additional matters, which DfI advised would be investigated. A response had been received for consideration (Copy available [here](#)).

During discussion, the Committee expressed its disappointment in the lack of detail and up to date information in the response and highlighted that they had found it difficult to contact DfI to obtain updates on their individual issues and agreed that the Council write to DfI Roads to request a further update on the issues raised.

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Response from the Permanent Secretary – Belfast Cycle Network

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting in December, the Committee 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. A response had been received for consideration (Copy available [here](#)).

During discussion, one Member requested further detail in relation to the budget allocation and an update on the delivery of the Cavehill/Limestone Road Cycle Lane.

Accordingly, the Committee:

- Noted the correspondence as set out in the report;
- Agreed to write to the Department for Infrastructure Roads, in response to its reply, to request a further update and more in-depth detail regarding the issues which had been raised by the Committee; and
- Agreed to write to the Permanent Secretary to request information on what the estimated £490K expenditure for the delivery of the Belfast Cycle Network had been spent on, to include details of what schemes, infrastructure, consultants. The Committee also agreed to request a timescale for the delivery of the Cavehill/Limestone Road Cycle Lane.

Belfast City Centre Regeneration Tracker

The Committee was provided with an update on the Belfast City Regeneration Tracker which captured regeneration and development activity which had taken place in the City during 2022, as aligned to the Belfast Agenda and the eight core policies of the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (BCCRIS).

The Senior Development Manager provided a presentation of the Regeneration Tracker with an overview of major regeneration and development activity which has taken place across Belfast during 2022 (1st January – 31st December).

It was reported that the Belfast Agenda sets out the growth aspirations for the city, including increasing the city population, supporting inclusive economic growth, improving health and well-being for all our citizens and addressing the Climate Emergency. This was further reflected in the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (BCCRIS) which sets out our collective ambition for the continued growth and regeneration of the city core and its surrounding areas to 2030. It contained a road map of policies to guide city centre decision-making and key projects that translated those policies into action, aligned to the overarching ambitions outlined within the Belfast Agenda. BCCRIS sought to address the universal elements of a thriving city centre as well as challenges and conditions that were unique to Belfast.

The Senior Development Manager presented examples of regeneration underway across the city under the following eight core principles, identifying the progress that continues to be seen through the city in relation to delivering the Belfast Agenda, as well

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as key areas that further work is required and the measures that Council are implementing with delivery partners to address these:

1. **Increase the Employment Population** - such as The Ewart, Olympic House, the Shipmaker's House, CreateLab and Kainos;
2. **Increase the Residential Population** – *City Centre based* – such as Belfast Waterside, Weavers Cross, Pilot Street, McClure Street and College Square North; *Housing Led Regeneration* – such as the Inner North West and Dunbar Street; *Student Accommodation* – such as Aster House and Alma Place; *Outside City Centre* – such as Brookfield Mill, Glenmona and Beersbridge Road;
3. **Manage the Retail Offer** – *City Centre* – such as Primark, the Keep, the Avenue, Titanic Distillers; *Outside City Centre* – such as Giant's Park, Portview Trade Centre and Cityside Retail;
4. **Maximise the Tourism Opportunity**; *City Centre* – such as Belfast Stories, the Dean, War Memorial Building; *Outside City Centre* – such as Mountainview Hotel Eastside Hotel, St. Comgall's and Belfast City Airport;
5. **Create Regional Learning and Innovation Centres**; such as Ulster University, Global Innovation Institute, Loop Studios, iReach and W5 LIFE;
6. **Create a Green, Walkable, Cyclable Centre** - such as Adelaide Street, Little Patrick Street, Cathedral Gardens and City Quay Gardens;
7. **Connect to the City Around** - such as Belfast Grand Central, Glider Phase 2 and Belfast Bikes; and
8. **Shared space and social impact** - such as Loft lines, the Ewart and 2 Royal Avenue.

To facilitate the implementation of the eight policies for the city centre, BCCRIS had identified a series of projects aimed at creating a liveable and economically thriving city, alongside, identifying the following five Special Action Areas:

- Inner North;
- Inner West;
- North East Quarter;
- Transport Hub and South Centre; and
- Oxford Street and the Eastern Bank.

The Committee was reminded that various workstreams and programmes of work were underway to support the implementation of BCCRIS, including the Future City Centre Programme, A Bolder Vision, the Vacant to Vibrant Programme, Clean, Green, Safe and Inclusive, along with a programme of environmental improvement schemes across the city aimed at improving sustainable and active travel, improving safety and cleanliness, addressing dereliction and informing the emerging major public schemes coming forward within the city. These interventions had also formed a critical role in setting the future aspirations of the city as well as informing design and place-making objectives within developments as they come forward through design and delivery.

The Members were also briefed on the importance that occupiers, investors and delivery agents were putting on delivering Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) outcomes, with more of a focus on delivering BREAMM excellent buildings, with an

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expectation that in the future it was likely that future developments would see an increase in reusing existing building stock.

During discussion, Director of City Regeneration and Development and Senior Development Manager answered a range of questions in relation to city centre living, social and affordable housing in the city centre and clusters of student accommodation.

Noted.

Horizon Europe Urban Planning 2030 Update

The Committee was reminded that, it had been reported in November 2022, that the Climate Unit and City Regeneration and Development Division were working together to ensure an integrated approach between urban planning, achieving net zero and aspects of resilience such as supporting play and environmental sustainability through engagement with key stakeholders such as young people, families, and businesses, and the Council had been invited at short notice to participate in a Horizon Europe funding application from the UP2030 (Urban Planning 2030) fund. Belfast had been selected as one of the pilot cities and had received a Letter of Intent from UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) to participate as an associate member of the project. This letter provided €204,250 of revenue funding to support research, training and policy development and officers were working with UKRI to finalise the funding agreement.

The Senior Development Manager advised that, through the UP2030 funding, the Council would seek to create a scalable framework that would be applied to cross-cutting projects that integrated tree planting, green infrastructure, play and co-design with young people and supported the integration of play and environmental sustainability into city design. Strategically, this connected A Bolder Vision and the Net Zero Roadmap and would test adaptation and mitigation measures to support the emerging Climate Plan.

He reminded the Committee that, at its meeting in November, the Linen Quarter District was the proposed pilot area, however, the Committee had sought further clarification as to the rationale for choosing the proposed area, and whether it was something that could be further applied to other areas. Following further engagement and participation in the project launch event, approval is sought to enable the project work to commence in the proposed pilot area. He highlighted that, while this work would be undertaken within a defined boundary, the purpose was to produce a framework that could be adapted and used within all communities and districts to set forward net zero approaches, attract funding and deliver climate adaption plans tailored for the issues of that specific district.

To maintain alignment with A Bolder Vision, the Resilience Strategy and, following dialogue with the project organiser, UP2030, the optimal location was one that combined a mix of core city functions and uses. It was proposed to locate the project in a mixed-use environment that contained residential, hospitality, tourism, commercial, public transport corridors and large transport hubs to ensure adequate capture of a holistic concentration of issues to form a framework that can be easily adapted into any area within the city. The proposed pilot area included mixed functions and land uses, including residential and commercial areas with a focus on those communities that bound the city centre. This area

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encapsulated an area bounded by May Street and Shaftesbury Square, and the Gasworks and Great Victoria Street, and adjacent city centre communities in the Market, Donegall Pass and Sandy Row, providing a total approximate base of 9,000 residents. This would enable the Council to consider inter-related issues such as the severance and climate issues created by the road infrastructure and other factors such as poor public realm / open space / play provision, air quality and connectivity and specifically the impacts and mitigation measures on existing local communities, newer city centre residents, and mixed commercial uses including offices, hospitality and tourism.

The Senior Development Manager informed the Committee that the intention was to work across Council departments and with city stakeholders to elevate and embed the learning and approaches from this pilot and identify opportunities in other neighbourhoods to bring forward the concept of net-zero districts across the city.

He pointed out that, given that the UK was no longer within the EU, the status of the Council had been changed from to being a Partner to that of an Associate which meant that funding would be underwritten by the UK government (UK Research and Innovation, UKRI) fund rather than the EU. The funding was for revenue and did not include any capital costs. He advised that the Council was currently finalising the funding agreement with the UKRI, and project delivery would take place over a three-year period following the kick off meeting in February. Belfast had been assigned a liaison partner, an organisation called Mapping for Change, who would support Belfast throughout the project life span.

He confirmed that further reports would be brought to this Committee and the City and the Climate and City Resilience Committees as the project progressed.

During discussion, one Member highlighted the need to ensure the Divis Street area between the M1 and the Inner Ring was also included and the Senior Development Manager confirmed that this area would be included within the Framework.

After discussion, the Committee:

- Noted that Belfast, represented by Belfast City Council, was a pilot city within the Horizon Europe UP2030 project which would focus on the development of a net zero neighbourhood framework and toolkit and the use of climate tools to support analysis, mapping and engagement in city neighbourhoods. The project would entail the exchange of knowledge between cities, including site visits and meetings with partner cities and potentially hosting a visit to Belfast within the project lifetime.
- Noted that, following the report to the Committee on 9th November, 2022, an update was brought to the Climate and City Resilience Committee on 9th February that outlined progress, which included the project start meeting on 1st and 2nd February and provided an outline of the queries raised by the City Growth and Regeneration Committee in November in

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relation to the location of the project and proposed that the UP2030 included the Linen Quarter BID district and surrounding city centre neighbourhoods of Sandy Row, Markets and Donegall Pass.

- Agreed to the proposed geographical location of the UP2030 pilot as outlined in 3.5 of the report, namely, an area bounded by May Street and Shaftesbury Square, and the Gasworks and Great Victoria Street, and adjacent city centre communities in the Market, Donegall Pass and Sandy Row, and to include the area bounded by the M1, the Inner Ring and Divis Street, which would align with A Bolder Vision, Net Zero Roadmap, and provided a holistic mix of local communities, city centre living, commercial and tourism and hospitality.

Update on Department for Infrastructure Blue and Green Infrastructure Fund

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on elements of the Council’s capital funding applications via the DfI Green & Blue Infrastructure Fund and DfC Revitalisation Scheme.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- **Note the response from the DfI Permanent Secretary in relation to the Green & Blue Infrastructure Fund and longer-term strategic funding**
- **Note the update on the DfI 2022/23 Blue and Green Infrastructure Fund, DfC Revitalisation Fund and the South-West Quarter / Shaftesbury Square project.**

3.0 Main report

3.1 In June 2022, Council submitted proposals to the DfI for greenway and active travel projects that could potentially receive capital grant funding this financial year under the DfI Blue and Green Infrastructure Fund 2022/23 and Active Travel Projects. Subsequent to this a Letter of Intent to fund was received from the DfI Minister in September 2022 and the CG&R Committee provided approval for the business case applications to the 2022/23 DfI Blue and Green Infrastructure Fund (BGIF), and the DfC Revitalisation fund. The projects

approved at the October CG&R Committee included Active Travel Enablers, Grey to Green and the South-West Quarter/Shaftsbury Square projects under the DfI BGIF, and the South-West Qtr / Shaftsbury Square project under the DfC Revitalisation Fund.

- 3.2 At the October meeting the Committee agreed to write to the Department for Infrastructure to outline concerns in relation to the short timeframe for the delivery of the greenway and active travel projects under the DfI Blue and Green Infrastructure Fund 2022/23 and suggest the potential for multi - year funding in the future, so that opportunities for strategic alignment of such projects could be achieved. A copy of the letter issued to DfI is attached in Appendix A of this report, and the subsequent response from DfI Permanent secretary attached in Appendix B of this report. The response outlines the intention to issue Letters of Offer shortly subject to final approval of business cases, and a willingness to further discuss potential longer term funding opportunities subject to compliance with the parameters of public expenditure.

Capital Funding Application Updates

- 3.3 Further to this Officers have had ongoing engagement with DfI officials to proceed with these applications, and while a Letter of Offer is still pending it is expected to close these out prior to the middle of March. DfI officials have also conveyed that the funding will be required to be committed by the end of March 2023, however, spend will be carried over until March 2024. These Letters of Offer will be subject to review on receipt and subsequent SP&R approval. As outlined to the CG&R Committee in October 2022 Expressions of Interest for the Active Travel Enablers and Grey to Green projects were completed to establish deliver partners in advance of the Letter of Offer, however given the time lapse between that exercise and potential Letter of Offer it is intended to recommence these Expressions of Interest following approval of the Letters of Offer. A summary of these projects as below;

Active Travel Enablers;

- 3.4 It is understood that a Letter of Offer from the BGIF will be issued shortly for this element of the application. This element will include covered cycle stands and secure cycle units as reported to the CG&R meeting in October 2022

Grey to Green;

- 3.5 It is understood that a Letter of Offer from the BGIF will be issued shortly for this element of the application.

Great Victoria St / Shaftsbury Sq;

- 3.6 This project was to bring together a number of funding opportunities to deliver on wider benefits in terms of addressing dereliction along this key connectivity and economic corridor. To this end a summary update on the various funding streams is included below;

- A Letter of Offer (£250k) has been received from DfC for the Revitalisation fund for this project and subject to final approval works will commence shortly.
- Under the Belfast City Council Business Cluster & Community Grant Programme three grant applications have been approved to undertake localised environmental improvement works and shop frontage improvements and work will commence shortly.
- Developer Contributions secured in the area were approved at the SP&R Committee in January 2023 to bring forward Public Realm Improvement Works and are currently under procurement.
- A number of land and building owners have reacted positively to the funding coming forward and have commenced, or committed to undertaking works to address issues within their frontages. This includes power washing, graffiti removal, and repairs to hoarding. In addition to this NIHE have commenced a project to replace the existing chain link boundary fence to the Hope St Car Park with a planted hedge to improve the visual impact of this key gateway site in the immediate term.
- The Linen Quarter have successfully completed their ballot for a second 5-year term and have gained support to increase their district area to include up to and including Shaftsbury Sq. Within their 5-year manifesto the BID have committed to undertaking enhanced cleansing and community safety within the area, and to work with BCC and other agencies to bring forward environmental improvement and public realm capital projects.
- Officers have also brought forward proposals for the DfI BGIF element of the Victoria St / Shaftsbury Sq however it has become evident that this work will require a substantial level of design and statutory

approval work that will substantially increase the risk of delivery of the project within the permitted timeframes. In addition to this the works will require an increased level of liability for the Council to undertake on the public highway that outweighs the benefit that the scheme would bring forward. This liability would include an undertaking by Council to sign a License from DfI undertaking all liability for the areas involved until the subsequent removal and reinstatement of the pavements to the original surface treatment. To this end Officers are recommending to withdraw from this element of the 2022/23 BGIF fund application and to focus instead on the deliverable works and funding coming forward from other sources.

- 3.7 Further updates on the delivery of these proposals will be brought to this Committee as works progress.**
- 4.0 Financial & Resource Implications**
- 4.1 All costs associated with this paper are covered from within external funding applications or previously agreed and committed BCC programmes.**
- 5.0 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment**
- 5.1 Officers are currently developing the Equality, Good Relations and Rural Needs Screening and will incorporate within the emerging proposals.”**

During discussion, one Member praised the work which had been undertaken in relation to the replacement of Browns Bridge in Lagan Valley Regional Park and suggested that the Physical Programme’s Department provided an update to the relevant Committee.

During further discussion, Members raised concerns in relation to the withdrawal of the DfI BGIF element of the Victoria St. / Shaftsbury Sq. proposal. The Director of City Regeneration and Development noted that the issues raised in relation to statutory approval timeframes would be raised by officers in their meeting with the Permanent Secretary.

After discussion, the Committee:

- Noted the response from the Permanent Secretary in relation to the Green and Blue Infrastructure Fund and the longer-term strategic funding;

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- Noted the update on the DfI 2022/23 Blue and Green Infrastructure Fund, Department for Communities Revitalisation Fund and the South-West Quarter / Shaftsbury Square project; and
- Noted that the issues raised in relation to statutory approval timeframes would be raised by officers in their meeting with the Permanent Secretary.

Lobbying/Advocacy Paper and Regeneration Framework

It was reported that it had been recognised that NI/Belfast did not benefit from the same regeneration and place based funding abilities as other UK Cities, for example Stronger Towns Fund; Future High Streets Fund; Homes England funding etc. which arguably placed Belfast at a disadvantage from a regeneration and economic growth perspective. Work was currently underway with Avison Young (strategic regeneration, finance and business consultancy) to consider this in more detail and explore the case for advocating that Belfast received the equivalent investment and funding powers available elsewhere.

In addition, in order to help bring forward regeneration schemes at scale and given the number of potential opportunities across the city, it had been agreed that there was a need to develop a Regeneration Framework and Prioritisation Process aligned to regeneration, economic, social and environmental outcomes. Other UK cities had deployed similar Regeneration Frameworks to help inform city priorities aligned to growth propositions and to prioritise funding bids.

In relation to the Lobby and Advocacy Paper, the Director of City Regeneration and Development advised that it centred around the case for devolving aspects of place based regeneration and funding to the Council. To include exploring the case for ensuring Belfast received the equivalent investment, funding powers and freedoms that were available in England. The focus should be on place based regeneration and include measures that might promote housing led regeneration (including city centre living), city centre and wider city regeneration and development and alignment with other strategic priorities. To include the socio and economic impact /outputs from such investment and regeneration aligned to our growth ambitions.

She advised that, subject to further engagement, it was envisaged that the work would have three main outputs:

1. An outward facing proposition for the NI executive focusing on the strategic, economic and financial case for amended place-based and regeneration funding abilities for Belfast;
2. An inward facing brief for Belfast stakeholders focusing on the specific benefits to wider communities and geographies derived from programmes and structures designed to regenerate the city; and
3. A wider public facing document providing the case for Place Based Regeneration in Belfast and the economic impact and social value of potential initiatives.

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The Director of City Regeneration and Development provided an overview of the development of a Regeneration Framework, A 'Regeneration Scheme Prioritisation and Audit Exercise' and 'Regeneration Scheme / Programme Level Business Case'. She highlighted that part of the Lobby and Advocacy work involved strategic consultation and engagement with relevant public and private sector stakeholders and a programme of engagement would be progressed, with initial engagement to include the following meetings, together with further engagement with a number of other stakeholders:

- 21st March – Meeting Permanent Secretaries of DfI, DoF, DfC, DfE (Avison Young and the Chief Executive)
- 30th March – Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum

In relation to the Project Pipeline and Funding Opportunities, the Director of City Regeneration and Development advised that work was underway via the City and Organisational Services to collate a Project Pipeline and Funding Opportunities across Council for Members consideration and it would be important to consider how this would align to the Regeneration Framework and Project Prioritisation Process.

The Committee:

- Noted the work which was underway in relation to the commissioning of a Lobby and Advocacy Paper for Place Based Regeneration Funding and the development of a Regeneration Framework and Project Prioritisation Process;
- Noted the scheduled engagement with Party Group Leaders and Permanent Secretaries as part of a wider engagement plan; and
- Noted the alignment with ongoing work via City and Organisational Services to develop a project pipeline for Council aligned to funding opportunities and city priorities.

Growing Business and the Economy

Work Plan - 23-24 Enterprise and Business Growth

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on activity undertaken by the Enterprise and Business Growth team in 2022/2023 to support the development of new and existing businesses across the city. The report sets out key priority areas of work for the 2023/24 financial year, seeking approval areas of activity to support the delivery of the targets under the Our Economy pillar of the Belfast Agenda.**

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Agree the priority work areas presented for the 2023/24 financial year and approve the allocations from the existing 2023/2024 Enterprise and Business Growth budget as set out in section 3.8
- Note and agree a financial commitment of £140,000 to Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (LCCC) towards the Go for It programme
- Note and endorse the proposal to invest in the Way to Scale programme and extended support to innovation-focused businesses up to a maximum of £90,000 (work to be coordinated through Catalyst)
- Note and endorse the contribution to support the ongoing development of the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor (work to be coordinated through Newry, Mourne and Down District Council) up to a maximum of £35,000
- Note and agree a financial contribution of £5,000 towards the New York, New Belfast event and agree the attendance of Lord Mayor, Chief Executive and Economic Development Director or their nominees at the event (budget set aside within existing International Relations budget).

3.0 Main report

3.1 Members will be aware that within the 2022/23 period, the Enterprise and Business Growth team has been working to develop and deliver a range of activity to support the growth and development of new and existing businesses across the city, aligned with the Our Economy pillar of the Belfast Agenda. This range of activity was approved at the meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee on the 6 April 2022.

3.2 As well as aligning with the Belfast Agenda, the actions also support and add value to work underway through the Belfast Region City Deal, Innovation City Belfast, Smart Belfast and the Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission as well as the draft Economic Strategy for Belfast. The consultation on the draft Economic Strategy closed at the end of January 2023. Officers are currently analysing the responses in order to ensure that the revised version reflects key elements of commentary. This will be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee for endorsement. In the interim, the work plan

will take account of the likely priority action areas within the strategy.

- 3.3** Officers have been engaging with councils across the region to progress the enhanced approach to business start-up and growth support set out to this Committee in October 2022. Since the last update, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has made a commitment to support an 11-council Entrepreneurship Support Service (ESS), valued at up to £17million over 2 years from April 2023. This represents a significant scaling up in ambition of the councils' statutory remit around business start-up and targeted entrepreneurship support. At the 17 February meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, members agreed that Belfast City Council will play the role of lead council on behalf of each of the 11 councils across the region. The new service will mobilise in September 2023 and, until such time, the Enterprise and Business Growth team will continue the delivery of existing services to support new and existing businesses, social enterprises and cooperatives across the city.
- 3.4** Since April 2022, the team has been working with partners to develop and deliver interventions that address the City's challenges in relation to low levels of business start-up, innovation, competitiveness and productivity. Some of the key achievements in 2022/23 include:
- **Enterprise awareness activity:** engaged 755 individuals, supporting them to progress to start a business. We continue to extend our reach to engage those individuals who are under-represented. This includes an increased focus on support for people with disabilities, individuals who are economically inactive, females and young people providing them with tools to overcome barriers to take positive steps to starting a business. 40 students and graduates also accessed support, 12 of whom are currently accessing salary support through Invest NI's Student to First Sale intervention. We also enabled test trading opportunities for 31 new businesses through our dedicated start up space at St George's Market and many of those are seeking to trade at the market on a more regular basis or are exploring alternative retail outlets for their products
 - **Start a business activity:** 503 individuals engaged in business start-up activity, 476 of those individuals developed a business plan through the Go For It programme supporting the creation of 299 jobs.

We provided additional support to 70 individuals through 1-1 mentoring and access to financial support of up to £1,500 to help kick start their business

- **Support for Social Enterprises and Co-operatives:** 60 organisations were supported with one-to-one mentoring, advice and guidance. Four of these organisations were new co-operatives. Overall the Social Enterprise and Co-operative Support programme has facilitated 25 events/workshops with over 300 attendees including regional networking event, virtual global best practice visit and workshops. Our focused engagement with co-operative organisations has continued, and we organised 10 events, attracting 42 attendees. The Social Economy Incentive Fund launched in September 2022, with an available pot of almost £50,000 to support social economy businesses to bring forward their business growth plans. 46 applications for support were received, 17 of which were shortlisted to pitch and we chose 8 winners. We have been developing our outreach and engagement to increase awareness of the sector, including targeted engagement activity with more than 50 young people in community settings. In recognition of these efforts, Belfast City Council won 'Council of the Year' at the Social Enterprise Northern Ireland Awards in October 2022. In order to move forward on our plans for next year, we have recently completed a mapping piece of the sector to use as a baseline for current position and to explore key development needs. As part of this work, we undertook a benchmarking analysis with two well-performing social economy cities in the UK, Edinburgh and Plymouth
- **Business growth support:** through our business growth support, we have assigned mentors to over 246 businesses and delivered 20 workshops with over 265 attendees. Through one-to-one engagement we have helped them to implement growth strategies, become more resilient, enhance their digital and online presence, improve tendering skills and access specialist support for businesses with high growth potential. We delivered a large-scale Opportunity Export event for businesses on 28 February with over 70 attendees and speakers from Invest NI, DIT and Intertrade Ireland. We also launched the Digital Surge programme in partnership with the 10 other councils. This supports businesses by helping them develop an innovation and digital transformation plan covering areas such as artificial intelligence, data analytics and

immersive technology in order to drive business growth and productivity. 22 Belfast-based companies have benefitted from this support

- **City vibrancy:** in January 2022, we launched the Vibrant Business Destinations programme in partnership with DfC. This aims to support local business associations to develop and deliver interventions that will drive footfall and create vibrancy in areas outside of the city centre. Four associations have now been supported to develop area-based action plans, 2 of which have accessed funding through the scheme to deliver local marketing activity, events and small-scale environmental improvements. The Enterprise and Business Growth team have also worked with colleagues in the City Regeneration and Development Team to put in place support for local businesses to access the Vacant to Vibrant Scheme
- **Innovation Factory:** the centre is now at 77% occupancy (yearly average) and the operator has ambitious plans to increase those numbers in 2023/2024. It has seen a high level of interest from new firms in sectors including TV/film, digital, engineering and green tech. Over the year, 78 businesses engaged in masterclasses and events at the centre. As part of their social and economic regeneration activity, 38 work placements have been facilitated by IF customers, and a series of school engagement activities took place involving 223 young people
- **Scaling and growth:** in partnership with Catalyst and Invest NI, the Way to Scale programme supported 40 individuals to participate on a series of bootcamps to transform their businesses and support them to scale and grow to turnover of more than £3million. 10 were supported to participate in a one week residential at MIT and access a peer-to-peer workshop series with Catalyst. We also put in place support for businesses in creative and digital industries and financial services sectors to build capacity and access opportunities for finance to support the growth and development of their businesses. 90 new companies will be supported through these services
- **Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor work:** as previously reported to this Committee, the strategy and action plan to support this work have recently been finalised. The partnership members have agreed to jointly fund two staff resources to drive delivery against priority actions in 2023. €150,000 funding was secured from the Shared Island Fund to conduct a feasibility study on regional Innovation Hubs. This was complemented

by a successful joint application with Dublin City Council to the Shared Island Fund for a €250,000 award to conduct a feasibility study on circular economy facilities in both cities.

3.5 Building on these achievements, the proposed work programme for the next financial year will include a number of new work areas including:

- **Starting a Business:** One of the most significant areas of work in this coming year will be the establishment of the Entrepreneurship Support Service, with the associated transition into a delivery model that is more flexible and focused on client needs. This service aims to attract more people into the pipeline and to help more growth-focused start-ups to get the help they need to grow and scale. The ability to attract more people into the pipeline will require innovative approaches, particularly where there is a need for cultural change amongst under-represented groups. The planned go live date for the new service is September 2023. In the interim, the Go for It contract will remain in place, with a target of engaging 658 individuals in the first six months of the year. It is expected that this will support the creation of 163 new jobs. Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (LCCC) will remain the lead council for the duration of this programme. In order to support delivery of the numbers highlighted above, Belfast City Council will make a payment of £140,000 to LCCC.
- **Social Enterprise and Cooperative Development:** In the next financial year, we will finalise the refresh of our social economy action plan based on research and engagement with sector partners such as SENI, Cooperative Alternatives and Trademark. One new area of activity will be the development of a new financial incentive working alongside Community Finance Ireland (CFI). This will be a hybrid funding model (part loan; part grant funding) in order to improve the financial management skills of new and growing social enterprises. Belfast City Council will make an allocation of up to £60,000 towards the grant element (likely to be up to 25% of overall financial awards to social enterprises) while the remaining element 75% will come from CFI in the form of a loan. In addition to the new financial mechanism, a budget of £120,000 has been set aside for dedicated social enterprise and co-operative support. This will cover a range of support

interventions including mentoring, workshops and events

- **Growing a Business:** the new Entrepreneurship Support Service will include growth support for existing businesses. As with the start-up support, this will be more flexible and in keeping with business needs. Pending the introduction of the new service, we will continue to provide mentoring and guidance support to around 160 Belfast based businesses in the period to September 2023. We will also work to deliver a series of workshops and events on issues such as Website and SEO basics, E-commerce essentials, Sales and Marketing, Investment Readiness, Writing a Winning bid, Strategy and Business Planning and Introduction to Innovation. We will also have a range of support services to advice small businesses on critical issues such as environmental sustainability and cyber awareness. A key development area for us this year will be a commitment to increase the number of businesses engaging in export activity. We have set a target of achieving a 10% increase in the value of exports by Belfast-based businesses, bringing them up to the regional average. Through this work, we will engage with our partners such as InterTradelreland and Invest NI
- **Scaling Support and Innovation:** The Economic Strategy identifies the need to focus on key technologies and priority sectors. These include Fintech and Financial Services, Creative and Digital, Life and Health Sciences, and Advanced Manufacturing, as well as identifying opportunities as part of the green transition and a drive for more sustainable investment. Working with the City Innovation Team, we are delivering a new intervention to build capacity among local businesses, with a particular focus on helping them to access challenge funds and alternative funding sources, including those coming from the Belfast Region City Deal. We will also continue to work with key partners including Digital Catapult, Ulster University, Queen's University, Catalyst and Invest NI to increase the number of innovation driven enterprises and scaling businesses. This will include support for investment in the Way to Scale Programme. This is an MIT-based intervention that has been successful in significantly enhancing the growth and innovation ambitions of local businesses. It is reaping rewards in terms of fast-tracking growth and job creation plans for participating companies. Based on learning from the initial cohorts, we want to

increase the number of businesses engaging in this programme and to offer extended support from specialist mentors once they complete the programme. We are working with Catalyst and Invest NI to create a collective funding allocation to support delivery – with the expectation that participating businesses will also contribute towards programme costs. Final details of the overall programme are currently being worked through but it is expected that the Belfast City Council contribution will not exceed £90,000. Catalyst will act as the contract lead for this intervention and all expenditure will be managed through them

- **Investing in Belfast:** We will continue to build on our partnerships in London and Dublin to develop co-operation and investment promotion opportunities for mutual benefit. Following development of the strategy and action plan, the work on the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor will focus on delivery of key interventions within the plan, supported by the recruitment of dedicated support staff. Belfast City Council will contribute £35,000 towards the work, which is being led by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council who are acting as the chair and secretariat to the partnership. The partnership will also work to complete the feasibility studies on innovation and circular economy that have been funded through the Shared Island Unit
- **Supporting events:** The Enterprise and Business Growth Team is regularly asked to sponsor/financially support events and conferences in areas that – to a greater or lesser extent – are associated with the unit's priorities, as set out above. While these events can often act as a useful promotional vehicle for Council interventions and can help secure referrals to programme activity, many of these tend to be last-minute requests for relatively small amounts of money and provide little measurable return. In order to assess the impact of the requests, officers have developed a process to measure and score these requests based on their alignment to the Our Economy pillar of the Belfast Agenda, the contribution to the work of the team as set out in this report and the potential to profile the Council activities and generate interest and demand for the services. The total budget to support contributions to events and conferences in this financial year is £62,000 and it is proposed that each application for support will be capped at a maximum of £10,000. Objectives and outputs will be agreed through a funding agreement with the event organisers. This approach has been

effective in the past and has helped ensure that our resources are focused on areas of maximum return. Any events that will have wider corporate impact will be brought back to the relevant Committee for consideration and endorsement.

3.6 New York New Belfast (NYNB) 2023– request for financial support

Members will be aware that NYNB has been running for more than a decade. The event, which takes place in New York, brings together leaders from both cities to build business, community and cultural linkages. The 2023 event will take place on 22 June 2023. It will focus on innovation and key growth sectors, in particular financial technology. This is one of the priority technologies set out in the 10X Economic Vision and it is also reflected in the draft Belfast Economic Strategy.

3.7 The event will bring together a targeted audience of 180 of the top business leaders, investors, banks, Government and academia along the US East Coast. A number of key local partners will attend the event including Belfast Harbour; some of the major construction and consultancy businesses and a number of the major FDI businesses that have located and expanded in Belfast. Several partners have already committed sponsorship, including Invest NI, Tourism Ireland, KPMG and NI Bureau. Belfast City Council has been asked to participate in the event and provide a financial contribution of £5,000 towards the overall programme. Both the Lord Mayor and the Chief Executive have been invited to have speaking roles as part of the programme. In addition to the event itself, officers have been working collaboratively with Invest NI New York’s office to set up a series of follow-up meetings and new contacts within the Fintech and Net Zero sectors. Funding for attendance at the event has been set aside within the International Relations budget.

3.8 Financial & Resource Implications

The activities outlined within this report will be resourced through the existing Enterprise and Business Growth budget for 2023/24.

<u>Work area</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Starting a Business (Including Social Enterprise and Co-operatives)	£621,823
Growing a Business, Scaling and Innovation	£438,230

Investing in Belfast (including DBEC and City of London engagement)	£78,300
Contribution to events and conferences	£62,000

3.9 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

The unit is currently undertaking an equality screening on the overall work programme. This will ensure that due consideration is given to equality and good relation impacts throughout the delivery of the collective workplan.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Work Plan - 23-24 Employability and Skills

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise members of a range of activity undertaken in 2022/23 to support skills development, economic engagement and job outcomes for key target groups and to set out the proposed workplan for the 2023/24 financial year.

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

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the work undertaken in the financial year to date and the positive employability and jobs outcomes associated with this work

- Approve the priority interventions for the 2023/2024 financial year.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Labour market context

Having emerged from a period of significant volatility within the labour market due to the pandemic, ongoing challenges remain as a result of macroeconomic incidents and the associated cost of living crisis. Demand is hugely outstripping supply across a range of sectors such as tech and digital, logistics, business services as well as health and social care. On a more positive note, employers are now demonstrating a willingness to consider innovative and inclusive pathways to employment, particularly in strong growth sectors.

- 3.2 In terms of the wider employability and skills ecosystem in the city, Council interventions – particularly Employment Academies – are largely reliant on localised provision that can engage, support and prepare people to become ready for the final step into work that an Employment Academy can offer. The impending withdrawal of ESF funds will have a significant impact on the provision in this space, potentially reducing the ‘pipeline’ of candidates coming through.

3.3 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 support residents to secure a better job or a better job. While the content of Employment Academies varies from programme to programme, there are a number of consistent components, namely:

- Pre-academy matching and selection to ensure all individuals who participate have a meaningful chance of securing employment after successful completion
- Employer-led vocational skills, qualifications, licences and training related to the specific job role
- In-situ work sampling/work placements
- Provision of additional supports to undergo and complete the academy, from equipment and clothing through to childcare, travel and subsistence
- Employability support particularly focused on the final employment interview (all candidates are guaranteed a job interview).

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

- The 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 programme completion
- 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
- Employers with entry level and lower paid jobs – particularly in sectors such as hospitality and social care – continue to experience significant challenges in finding workers. Officers are working with these employers to consider issues such as terms and conditions and payment of the real living wage in order to attract and retain talent, aligned with the implementation of the Belfast Business Promise
- Opportunities to support existing employees who are in low-paid work and/or underemployed 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.

3.5 Stakeholder and partner engagement

A vital element of our work is our engagement with employability and skills providers across the city. This underpins the ability of Employment Academies to successfully match people to the opportunities on offer. Officers have engaged with organisations such as EBM, GEMS, USDT, Shankill JAC, Ashton Centre, Women’s TEC, Action Mental Health, JBOs, GLOW, NOW Group, Community Sports Network, Harmoni Homeless Hostel, Shankill Women’s Centre, Walkways, City Life Projects, Revolution Youth, African Caribbean Society, Start 360, Orchardville, NIACRO, Disability Action etc. We have also engaged with and worked

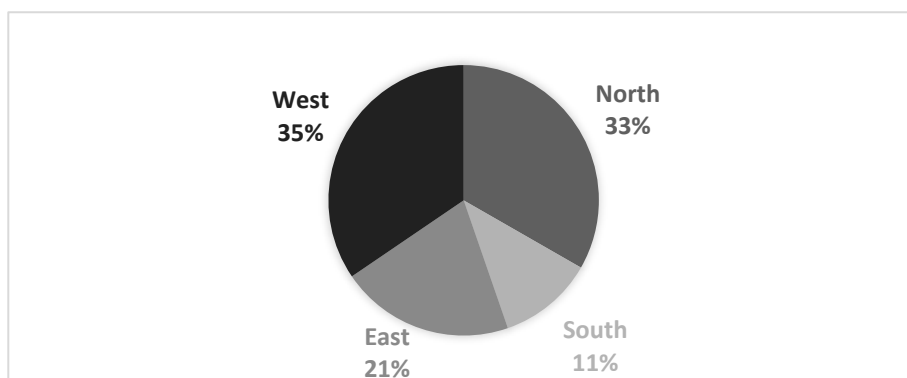
through existing networks such as Migrants' Forum and NIUSE.

- 3.6 In addition to this, officers have continued to expand and consolidate the Employability and Skills Provider Network, with 209 members from all across the city covering key target groups (disability, women, young people, justice leavers, care leavers etc.). The team has regular engagement and provides updates on future plans for Employment Academies, setting out details of employers, jobs, eligibility, pre-requisites, programme content, duration, additional support offered (childcare, sign-language interpreters, travel, subsistence etc.). We are also working closely with the Institute of Employability Professionals (IEP), facilitating continuous improvement and raising standards within the ecosystem in the city. We have provided access to IEP membership, shared learning and benchmarking, and the delivery of vocationally specific employability training for those working in the sector.

3.7 Participant engagement across the city

In addition to engaging directly with provision in local communities across the city, officers normally hold roadshows in a variety of venues to optimise engagement in every part of Belfast. Participation rates are tracked to ensure that they reflect geospatial disparities in relation to deprivation, unemployment and economic inactivity. Taking all of this into account, a working assumption would be that we would have one third of participants from North, one third from West and one third from South and East combined. While the geospatial balance is on track overall, the balance between East and South needs attention. This will be reflected in our engagement strategy for the coming year and, as a result, we expect to be able to see a correction of this over the course of the year.

Belfast City Council Employment Academies: % breakdown of participants



3.8 As an illustration of our commitment to ongoing evaluation of our work, officers have recently (since end 2022) taken a more nuanced engagement strategy to focus on targeting areas in South Belfast instead of traditional roadshows across the city. This has included building links with organisations working within Taughmonagh, Donegall Pass, Ormeau, the Markets etc. to ensure that residents here are aware of and prepared for the opportunities on offer, and to build stronger links with support organisations in those areas. Officers have also been undertaking more localised outreach in shopping centres in conjunction with JBOs, as well as collaborating on more localised jobfairs and roadshows.

3.9 Employment Academy 2022/23 Performance

Since April 2023, we have been able to make investments in over 700 places on Employment Academies, utilising our own resources and attracting additional resources through the Labour Market Partnership, Learning & Work Institute’s New Futures programme and the Community Renewal Fund. The availability of these additional resources as well as having a flexible, responsive commissioning model, means that we have been able to respond to opportunities, meeting employer demand and bringing forward solutions that benefit local businesses and residents.

3.10 Due to the pre-academy matching, screening and selection, attrition rates tend to be low with an average of 93% of those who start an Employment Academy successfully completing and with an average into-work rate of 75% for those who complete. The level of demand – both from employers as well as those looking for a job or a better job – remains high.

<u>Employment Academy</u>	<u>BCC resources</u>	<u>Other: LMP, LWI & CRF</u>	<u>Total</u>
Logistics & Bus Driving	54	100	154
Retrofit Academy*		97	
Construction & General Operatives	7	65	72
Fibre		30	30
Tech		17	17
Business Services	16	39	55
Classroom Assistant	52		52
Social Care and Childcare	29		29

Childcare/HSC Upskilling: Level 3-5	68		68
Health & Social Care Upskilling: Level 3-5	65		65
Classroom Assistant Upskilling: Level 3	37		37
Customer Services: Leisure and Hospitality		40	40
TOTALS	328	388	716

*The purpose of this Academy is to create the skills infrastructure needed – numbers reflect training places.

3.11 In terms of volume, the most popular Employment Academies are within logistics, education, construction as well as upskilling academies in traditionally low-paid sectors such as social care, childcare and education for those wanting a better job. Sectors that we struggle to recruit for include hospitality and social care, where pay and conditions play a large factor in sector attractiveness.

3.12 **Employment Academy 2023/24 Workplan**

While LMP resources provided capacity to almost double Employment Academy participant numbers in 2022/23, this will reduce to 100 additional places in 2023/24 as the LMP begins to implement other interventions outlined in this report such as the Gateway Service and Bridges to Progression for Young People.

3.13 Across 2023/24, we expect that the Employment Academies – resourced through Council revenue as well as other sources – will engage around 500 participants with at least 70% expected to gain employment/self-employment in sectors such as:

- Practical sectors such as logistics, construction, utilities, fibre etc.
- Professional services such as administration, business and tech etc.
- Care and education sectors including classroom assistants, health and social care, childcare and playwork, with a focus on including recognised vocational qualifications between Level 2 and Level 5 to enable people to not only gain employment but also progress to a better job within these occupations
- Customer service sectors such as leisure and tourism.

3.14 We will also continue to work with public sector bodies such as:

- Individual schools and Education Authority to meet the increasing job demand for classroom assistants and, crucially, build in the Level 3 qualification required to secure permanent and better paid roles
- Queen's University, where planning is underway to deliver a bespoke Employment Academies for hard-to-fill posts within administration, with an in-built Level 2 qualification when people are in work that will lead to job progression within QUB
- Belfast HSC Trust, where planning is underway to deliver bespoke Employment Academies for nursing assistants and within health and social care roles
- Belfast City Council, where planning is underway to deliver Employment Academies for hard-to-fill vacancies within community services as well as driver posts and, potentially, Digital Services.

3.15 One growing area of work is our new pathways into the tech, digital and professional service sectors. While this sector has remained largely resilient throughout the pandemic, our research shows that there are limited pathways into the sector for those that do not have a degree. This challenge, identified through the work of the Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission, has led to a pilot programme with 17 starters, two leaving early as they found employment and 11 of the 14 completers gaining a software development role with a starting salary range between £23,000-£28,000 per annum. We are now working intensively with these employers as well as across the tech sector to expand this in the coming year, bringing on additional employers and expanding the job roles. In expanding this activity, we propose to continue to work with the Learning and Work Institute through their New Futures programme. In recognition of the significant budget challenges, we are working with DfC to utilise Advisor Discretionary Fund (ADF) resources that blend with Employment Academy delivery – thereby making our resources go further and engaging more people.

3.16 Improving employability outcomes for young people

While a significant proportion of activity has focused on those already in the labour market or trying to find a job or move to a better job, we have delivered a number of smaller interventions for young people, both in the formal education setting and outside of the school environment. Our focus has been on improving educational attainment and helping young

people at risk to find positive employment and training outcomes.

- 3.17 Our GCSE support programme's delivery within the current academic year has been back to pre-Covid engagement and participation rates, with learning workshops/classes and revision support being delivered in both school-based and community-based settings. Since September 2022, 281 young people have been engaged on the programme. These young people have been identified as being unlikely to achieve at least Grade C in GCSE English and Maths, without the additional support of the programme. In the 2022/23 academic year, this programme is expected to support 365 young people, providing access to the learning and revision support on offer.
- 3.18 We are also supporting 170 young people through our Youth Support Programme. These participants either already have or are at risk of dropping out of the education system, employment or training. Of those young people currently participating, 87 have completed accredited training and 65 are undertaking essential skills qualifications. This programme is due to complete in summer 2024 with an expected 55% achieving a positive destination, either into training, education or employment.
- 3.19 A Summer Work Experience Programme was piloted in summer 2022 for young people aged 14-16 years at highest risk or who had already disengaged from the formal education system with 30 completing the programme and 28 moving into positive outcomes (14 continued in formal education at year 13 and the remainder moved into vocational training).
- 3.20 A review of our delivery within this workstream is currently concluding, and while the outcomes from our interventions in this space have been positive, there are a number of factors at play in recommending a reduced level of activity going forward:
- The dynamic policy environment in this space: the Fair Start and Reducing Education Disadvantage (RED) policy initiatives led by Department for Education are progressing, with new interventions currently being developed. We are working closely with both EA and DE to share the learning from our successful pilot activity with the expectation that Council delivery can be 'lifted and shifted' within the context of these new initiatives

- The reduced financial capacity within the team means that difficult decisions need to be made, with officers recommending that Belfast Employment Academies – as the flagship Council intervention in the employability space – are protected as far as possible.

3.21 Taking account of these factors, it is proposed that our work on 'Improving employability outcomes for young people' is prioritised on two key areas, namely:

- Continued support for the GCSE Support Programme for a final interim year, using this time to work with the Partnership Boards (who currently deliver this programme) as well as the Education Inequalities sub-group under the Jobs, Skills & Education Board to secure a longer-term future within the context of Community Planning and Fair Start/Reducing Educational Disadvantage policy initiatives
- Working with the Education Inequalities sub-group to consider alternative provision for those young people at risk of disengaging from formal education once the Youth Support Programme comes to an end.

3.22 Labour Market Partnership

Members will be aware that the Labour Market Partnership is an intervention supported by DfC within all 11 council areas. Each LMP is required to submit an annual action plan for agreement. The Belfast Labour Market Partnership has met on a number of occasions recently to finalise the plan for 2023/24. Priority work areas are:

- **Quickly back to work:** Ensuring a co-ordinated response to the substantial number of people in the city who have been or are risk of being made unemployed, especially as a consequence of the economic shocks
- **Increasing Opportunities:** Empowering those furthest from the labour market to succeed through quality support, especially those who will be considered long-term unemployed as well as the economically inactive
- **No-one Left Behind:** Targeting of those disadvantaged groups through the delivery of an integrated, comprehensive, inclusive, holistic and local employability approach
- **Catching Up:** Supporting access to careers pathways, re-skilling and upskilling for those unemployed as well as those on low incomes.

3.23 Resources from the Labour Market Partnership enable the Council to increase the range and scope of employability and skills activity. The Partnership also provides a platform for engagement with government departments, community partners and business organisations as a means of refocusing regional programmes more effectively within the Belfast area. The LMP action plan recognises that, while there are gaps that have been identified that will necessitate the creation of new interventions, not all activity need be new 'provision' or 'programmes'; sometimes it is equally important to profile and/or promote existing interventions. In addition to the extra support for Employment Academy places, the headline programme of work within the action plan includes the following:

- **Gateway to Choices Service:** a key issue that emerged in our engagement with the LMP partners was the need for independent advice and guidance outside of mainstream JBO support for those who are out of work and non-job ready such as long-term unemployed and the economically inactive. In our engagement with LMP members, they considered that these groups required enhanced support to navigate the existing provision and identify the right support, at the right time, to help move them towards positive job, skills and qualification outcomes. It is proposed that the Gateway will support up to 1200 people in the coming year. Participants will engage on a voluntary basis and the delivery model is being co-designed with key stakeholders such as the JBO Network, Careers Service, VCSE sector etc. Delivery will commence in April 2023
- **Labour Market Observatory:** officers have completed scoping and preparatory work and secured additional resources from DfC to establish a Labour Market Observatory. When fully operational, this will provide the intelligence, data and evidence-base needed to underpin decision-making in through the prism of demand, supply, provision and policy. DfC resources will ensure that the insights are available for all council areas
- **RSA Cities of Learning:** the number of people in Belfast with no or low formally-recognised skills is significantly above the NI and UK average. Officers have been working with the RSA to explore how a Digital Badges scheme could help recognise the non-accredited skills of these individuals. All Employment Academies are now digitally badged as an alternative validation of achievement, with 779 badges issued to

participants. In addition to this, the Council has offered 22 organisations in the city access to Digital Badging for their own participants/employees. During 2023/24 officers will continue to work with RSA Cities of Learning, including their partners Badge Nation and Navigatr to expand Digital Badging to an additional 20 organisations/employers, including employability and skills providers – and support them in creating their own Digital Badges

- **Bridges to Progression targets young people 16-17 years who are at risk of disengaging from Training for Success/Skills for Life & Work due to their personal circumstances. Through this intervention, participants can access intensive personal support to help them progress in and complete their formal training, with the ambition of improving the levels of progression into employment or further training. At the December 2022 meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, it was agreed that officers would seek expressions of interest from organisations delivering these programmes, outlining how they would use resources to add value to the core activity with the objective of improving outcomes for participants. It was also agreed that officers would ‘undertake assessment of the applications for funding in line with the approach detailed in this report...’ and that ‘A report will be presented at a future meeting of this committee outlining the outcomes and learning from this approach.’ Delivery partners were invited to submit applications outlining how they would use the resources. Following the application process, indicative funding awards have been issued to providers as detailed below. Officers will work with the organisations in the coming months to pick up on the learning from this pilot activity and to understand how the varying approaches across providers is making an impact on the young people. A more detailed report on findings will be shared with the Committee towards the end of the year.**

- **Workforce Training Services - £20,000**
- **Bryson - £18,750**
- **Impact Training - £15,000**
- **People 1st - £14,808**
- **Springboard Opportunities - £12,317**
- **Rutledge - £9,125.**

3.24 The LMP action plans are submitted on an annual basis at this point (due to the annual budget settlements in the government

departments). However, as part of the strategic assessment that underpins the plan, officers have identified a number of developmental areas where we consider that there is a need to undertake additional scoping work in order to understand the issues at play and consider whether the council might play an active delivery role in the future, or lobby government partners to do more in this space in order to improve outcomes for Belfast residents. Two of these areas relate to place-based and people-based targeted interventions. The strategic assessment identified a number of key groups that were under-represented in the labour market or that faced significant barriers to finding work. These groups include (among others) those with a disability and migrants. Likewise, the research identified that there are specific parts of the city where levels of LTU and economic inactivity are more than twice the city average. Government programmes over many years have tried different approaches to support these groups. We propose to explore some new models that are either target group-based and/or location-based in order to support incremental improvements in employment outcomes among the target populations.

3.25 Partnership, policy influence and guidance

In addition to direct delivery, officers will also continue to work with internal and external partners to use all tools at our disposal to address the key employability and skills challenges and to lever resources to support additional delivery, focusing on the council's inclusive growth ambitions. There are a number of key mechanisms through which this can be achieved:

- **Developer Contributions:** on a practical level, officers are supporting the Planning team in the development of the Developer Contributions Framework and are actively engaged with a number of emerging development schemes to ensure that relevant employability and skills interventions are incorporated and that compliance is ensured
- **Social Value Procurement Policy:** officers are working closely with Corporate Procurement Services to support the implementation of the policy, focusing on the employability and skills measures. This includes working with Council contracts – as well as contractors across the city where Social Value applies – to achieve their Social Value requirements in a meaningful way.

3.26 Finance and Resource Implications

The activities outlined in this report will be resourced from the 2023/24 budget for the Employability & Skills section of the Place and Economy departmental budget that was included as part of the 2023/24 estimates.

3.27 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

Each of the proposed projects referenced in this report is informed by statistical research, stakeholder engagement and complementary policies and strategies. New projects or service areas are equality screened and a rural needs assessment completed. Considerations given to equality and good relation impacts at the initial stages of project development. Officers will work closely with the Equality and Good Relations Team on this activity. A new CRM system has been established to enable officers to regularly review participant engagement and address any equality or good relations issues arising.”

During discussion, the Director of Economic Development explained further the work plan and the labour market context, together with the referral process for the employment academies.

In relation to queries raised by the Committee, the Employability and Skills Manager advised that she would liaise with Members in relation to promoting engagement with Outer South Belfast residents and would also contact Translink in relation to further employment events.

Accordingly, the Committee:

- Noted the work undertaken in the financial year to date and the positive employability and jobs outcomes associated with this work;
- Approved the priority interventions for the 2023/2024 financial year; and
- Noted that the Employability and Skills Manager would liaise with Members in relation to promoting engagement with Outer South Belfast residents; and
- Noted that the Employability and Skills Manager would contact Translink in relation to further employment events.

Positioning the City to Compete

Christmas Evaluation 2022

The Committee was reminded that, in 2021, officers had adopted a different approach to the Christmas 2021 programme which replaced the traditional switch - on ceremony. In the context of Covid, the challenge for officers was to design a programme that continued to be cognisant of safety considerations and have the ability to respond to

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a changing environment, whilst meeting the needs of city stakeholders including those businesses impacted by the pandemic.

The Director of Economic Development advised that feedback from city centre traders on the traditional light switch was not entirely positive, with many highlighting traffic, parking congestion and the event itself acting as a barrier to normal trading at a crucial time of year.

He informed the Committee that, as well as responding to the pandemic, the Christmas programme also aimed to meet the development objectives set out in the ten-year Cultural Strategy. As a consequence, in 2021, the Christmas programme consisted of a combination of creative initiatives such as street performance, projections, music, window dressing and lighting installations all inspired by the theme *'Once Upon a Time in Belfast'*, utilising local artists, creatives and designers to create an authentic and engaging experience for all throughout the festive season.

In 2022, the 2021 model of Christmas animation and event delivery was further consolidated through a programme of seasonal animation in the city centre, which supported economic recovery in the city post pandemic and uplifted the city and visitors in the context of the current economic climate.

Benefits of the new approach included:

- Improving the cultural vibrancy of the city;
- Fostering civic pride;
- Positioning the Belfast brand;
- Supporting the local culture, arts and events sectors;
- Delivering direct economic benefits; and
- Supporting businesses.

The Director of Economic Development provided an overview of the Christmas Programme 2022. He pointed out that the Belfast's Christmas celebrations officially began on Saturday, 19th November with the 'Christmas in Belfast' opening day event, which took place from 6pm to 9pm. In 2022, the opening weekend activity was reduced from two nights to one and focused on Saturday night only. This decision was taken based on the findings of the independent evaluation and feedback from 2021, which evidenced that the opening evening (Saturday) was much better attended than the Sunday. By reprofiling the event and animation budget into the Saturday activity only, the programme was uplifted to enhance the visitor experience and increase impact. The event schedule consisted of a range of elements including:

- Christmas lighting scheme;
- Lighting projections;
- Music programme;
- Procession;
- Window animation;
- Street animation;
- 2 Royal Avenue;
- Christmas Market;

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- Lord Mayor Role; and
- Marketing and Communications Activity.

He highlighted that the Christmas Lighting Scheme in 2022 was year 3 of the existing Christmas Lighting Scheme which also began on the 19th November and ran until the 4th January. The scheme was identical to the 2021 programme, with the addition of icicles on Ann Street and the positioning and lighting on 12 additional trees on Donegall place. He advised that feedback on the scheme was positive, however, there continued to be requests for an extension of the scheme to include arterial routes. He advised that this also included lighting projections and additional illuminations across the city.

The Director of Economic Development provided an overview of the Christmas Music Programme and animation programme which had taken place across the city across a number of zones. He pointed out that a raised platform was in situ on the evening of the 19th (in front of 2 Royal Avenue) with a three-hour set from 6pm to 9pm showcasing local musicians. In addition, a music programme was curated across the Christmas period, including several music elements for the opening night including performances at Rosemary Street Presbyterian Church and music on Berry Street and Lower Garfield Street.

He described the 4 - week 'weekend programme' of Christmas Animation that was also delivered, together with details on the interactive 'White and Bright' Procession, which had been created by an external provider (Luxe) and included a cavalcade of props and performers which passed through Royal Avenue / Donegall Place on the evening of the event, together with a community engagement programme of choreographed costumed performances, creating a festive spectacle with up to 150 participants and 7,000 visitors across the evening.

He pointed out that Window Animation and Street Animation also formed part of the programme and there was a range of events in 2 Royal Avenue over the festive period. This included a Winter's Den, Up-cycling Christmas decoration programme, Sustainable Christmas Crackers, 'Swap - shop', Santa's Post Box, Teddy Bear Hospital and Toy repair café and a Sustainable Wrapping service (cash for Kids drop-off point), twilight pottery and art markets, Christmas carolling events, storytelling, music, festive jazz for seniors, family silent discos, sustainable arts and craft and workshops and a Crufty Christmas Fashion Show in aid of Guide Dogs NI.

He provided an overview of the statistics that had been recorded against 2 Royal Avenue Christmas Programming, which included Footfall of 48,639 between 19th November 2022 to 31st December 2022 (an average of 1,131 per day) with 30 Events/Workshops/Markets.

The Director of Economic Development summarised the Christmas Market activity which ran this year from Saturday 19th November to Thursday 22nd December. He highlighted that the total attendees were 1,015,565.

He outlined the role of Lord Mayor in leading the Christmas procession, as well as the official opening of the 2 Royal Avenue Christmas programme on 19th November, together with a video message to citizens and visitors to the city.

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In relation to marketing and communications activity, the Director of Economic Development advised that the Council operated a digital campaign with pulse screens and online advertising to promote the events and promotion also took place across digital platforms and via key partners.

He provided an overview of the Post Event Evaluation. He informed the Committee that the Council had commissioned an independent socio-economic survey for the Christmas in Belfast themed - event. Results included the following feedback:

- 55% of visitors were from the Belfast City Council area and a further 45% from elsewhere;
- 77% of visitors had previously attended the event with 23% attending for the first time;
- 69% of visitors agreed that it was a good event for the city to host with 19% views that it was one of the best events to take place in Belfast. 0% rated the event as a poor event;
- 81% of visitors preferred the current event format to the traditional switch on event; and
- 53% of visitors said that the event improved their view of the city.

The Director of Economic Development provided a summary of the stakeholder feedback which had been undertaken in relation to the current programme versus the traditional Christmas Lights Switch on Event:

- Translink was clear that the recent version of the Christmas event (2021 and 2022) was its preference. They stated that the older format caused major disruption, particularly to the Glider services, and had health and safety concerns around pedestrian footfall, particularly after the event.
- The Council contracted Production Management Company and external Health and Safety Advisor had very similar opinions when comparing the two formats - they cited a number of difficulties with delivering the old-style event; the open space itself was not conducive to the delivery of a public event. It was a busy City centre with live traffic and heavy pedestrian footfall. This provided not only a challenging environment in which to operate but significantly increased the safety risk for staff and pedestrians, and significant resources to manage. This risk was exacerbated by public non-compliance, particularly during the de-rig. Their preference was for the new style event, also highlighting that for the old style to be delivered safely, (which they acknowledged it could) it would require significant stakeholder buy-in, and it would require a longer build/de-rig (out of hours) which would have significant resource implications. Both also noted how the Market opening added further complexities.

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- An Eventsec manager with several years' experience of the event stated a preference for the new format, with the parade route amended.
- City Events Unit officers commented that the former 'traditional' lights switch on format held prior to the pandemic was undoubtedly the most challenging event to deliver annually. The city centre space on Donegall Square North was not suitable to host the build and de-rigging of a public event with live or partially live traffic. There were significant risks when live traffic mixed with staff building the event, and particularly with the heavy public pedestrian footfall in the area. Given the inconvenience of the structure build required, the public had been seen to take unnecessary risks in crossing the four lanes of traffic. This took place even with a considerable stewarding presence. This was also a challenge with the de-rig.
- There were also pressures to re-open the roads within an hour of the event ending, a period where many contractors were removing structures and equipment, yet the Donegall Square North was bustling with pedestrians. These issues had been consistent for more than a decade of delivering this format.
- Officer feedback had also indicated that the 2021/2022 event provided a much safer space within which to operate, and with less disruption of traffic and transport services within Donegall Place and Castle Junction, and less event equipment on site, the de-rig was more easily managed. The latter format had entertainment which was more varied in nature and catered for a wider audience than the previous format. There was more scope for using other spaces and buildings within the wider City Centre.
- Feedback from Belfast Chamber (circa 20 businesses) had indicated that retail did not necessarily view the switch on event as boosting trade, while the hospitality sector within the city had a converse opinion. Some businesses had expressed surprise that there was not a return to a normal 'switch on' in 2022. Feedback had also demonstrated a desire for an increased investment in Christmas lighting, strong Christmas marketing brand and drawing on best-practice examples from elsewhere. A meeting with the Belfast Chamber had been scheduled for February to further discuss this feedback in detail.
- Linen Quarter Bid Board feedback had indicated that organisations welcomed a diffuse approach to Christmas lighting with animation across the city centre. Linen Quarter BID welcomed a high profile family event to switch on the Christmas lights, as this would help kickstart the season and provide positive marketing for the city centre. However, the event would not necessarily deliver an

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immediate benefit, as many participants come for the switch-on and then depart again. Maintaining diverse areas of interest and activities across the city centre was therefore deemed important, as this encouraged greater dwell time throughout the day.'

- Officers had also conducted research into what format was deployed across other Local Authorities from a benchmarking perspective. Official Christmas Lights Switch On events varied from live performances in a dedicated public space (Newry, Lisburn, Bangor, Antrim, Ballyclare, Cookstown, Magherafelt, Glasgow and Liverpool) supplemented by family friendly activities. Other formats included processional parades taking place in Derry City and Strabane and across Causeway Coast and Glens Local Authorities.
- Further afield, Councils that decided to not have official Christmas Lights Switch-on events included Manchester, which was due to major construction works across the city; Brighton, Leeds and Inverness who cited budget pressures, and York who cited Covid concerns.
- Alternative approaches include Edinburgh Winter Festival and Cardiff, whose Christmas activity comprises markets, funfairs, ice rinks, and light installations and did not host a standalone lights switch-on event, but rather promoted when the lights would first be switched on, signalling the opening of Christmas markets and related activity.

The Director of Economic Development highlighted that a proposed solution could be found in taking some attributes of the old format, and hosting within the 2021/2022 event space. A 'switch on' element would take place on a small stage at Castle Junction/Donegall Place, allowing the audience within Donegall Place to view the lighting of the Tree and Festive Lighting within the immediate City Centre, without the requirement to close Donegall Square North. The entertainment throughout the City Centre could then be programmed. However, it was important to consider that the costs for a traditional light switch on was £96,300 in 2019. Within departmental estimates we currently have secured £122,864 for Christmas activities.

During discussion, in relation to planning the 2023 Christmas Programme, several Members suggested that the Christmas Tree Switch-on event be resumed and consideration be given to community engagement and local organisation involvement, choir competitions, a procession and the extension of the lighting schemes.

During further discussion, Members highlighted that details of the environmental impact and comparison of event feedback of recent Christmas event programmes would also be useful to assess the future Christmas Programme.

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Proposal

Moved by Councillor Beattie,
Seconded by Councillor T. Kelly,

Resolved – that the Christmas Tree Switch-on event, outside the City Hall, be resumed and included in the Christmas 2023 programme and that a report be submitted to a future Committee on the development of the Christmas 2023 programme to consider the suggestions raised.

Issues Raised in Advance by Members

Lifelong Learning Alliance (Cllr Spratt to raise)

Councillor Spratt outlined his request for the Committee to receive a presentation from the Lifelong Learning Alliance at a future meeting. He highlighted the importance of adults engaging with education as 34 per cent of adults in Northern Ireland had not engaged with education since leaving school.

The Committee acceded to the request.

Chairperson

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Licensing Committee

Wednesday, 15th March, 2023

MEETING OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE LAVERY ROOM AND
REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Matt Collins (Chairperson); and
Councillors Bradley, Bunting, Canavan, Doran,
Gormley, Howard, Hutchinson M. Kelly, T. Kelly,
Magee, McAteer, McCann, McCoubrey, McCullough,
McKeown, Murray, Nelson and Smyth.

In attendance: Ms. N. Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and
Civic Services;
Mr. S. Hewitt, Building Control Manager;
Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;
Ms. L. Hillis, Principal Building Control Surveyor;
Ms. E. Symmington, Licencing Officer;
Mr. J. Cunningham, Senior Licensing Officer;
Mr. C. McLaughlin, Solicitor (Regulatory and Planning)
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer; and
Ms. G. Boyd, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies were noted.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 15th February 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 March, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Magee expressed an interest in item 2c - Stationary Street Trading Licence Application for Donegall Quay as he said he was related to the applicant. Councillor Magee left the meeting while the stationary street trading licence was under consideration.

Delegated Matters

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

**Licensing Committee,
Wednesday, 15th March, 2023**

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)

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.

Licences Issued 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.

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.

The information contained in the reports associated with the following item 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 item 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.

Stationary Street Trading Licence Application for Donegall Quay

The Building Control Manager advised the Committee that the Council had received a Stationary Street Trading Licence renewal application from Mr. Gary Quinn to trade at one of the designated sites located at Donegall Quay. He said that the application complied with the designating resolution for the site. The Members of the Committee had received additional information about the applicant with their report pack and the applicant had been invited to attend the meeting.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to grant the renewal of Mr. Quinn's stationary street Trading Licence for the following:

- selling hot and cold food and non-alcoholic beverages during Monday till Saturday from 9.00am till 9.00pm from a trailer measuring 3m by 1.8m.

Chairperson

E1177

Planning Committee

Tuesday, 14th March, 2023

HYBRID MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Whyte (Chairperson);
Alderman Rodgers;
Councillors Bower, Carson, Matt Collins,
Douglas, Garrett, Groogan, Hanvey, Hussey,
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;
Ms. C. Reville, Principal Planning Officer;
Ms. U. Caddell, Senior Planning Officer; and
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies for inability to attend were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the Predetermination Hearing and meeting of 14th February 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 March, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Bower declared an interest in relation to item 8k, LA04/2023/2458/F - Demolition of existing garage and conservatory and erection of single storey extension to side and rear of dwelling, 61 Belmont Park, on the agenda, in that she was the property owner and left the meeting while the item was being considered.

Councillor Douglas and Councillor Hutchinson declared an interest in relation to item 8b, LA04/2021/2815/F - Deferred Item returning to committee. 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 on the agenda, in that they were both a season ticket holder at Linfield Football Club, and left the meeting while the item was being considered.

Councillor Garrett declared an interest in relation to item 8e, LA04/2021/0319/F - (Addendum Report, withdrawn from February Committee) Proposed use of hard standing area as overflow car park with a free draining surface and soft landscaping scheme, to serve

**Meeting of Planning Committee,
Tuesday, 14th March, 2023**

existing approved uses on-site. 115 Blacks Road - Lands to north of square golf training area east of the 3G Dome, south of 45 and 46 Garnock Hill, on the agenda, in that he had facilitated site meetings with objectors and applicants and left the meeting while the item was being considered.

Withdrawn Items

The Committee noted that the following item had been withdrawn from the agenda:

- **LA04/2022/1861/F, LA04/2022/1869/DCA, LA04/2022/1860/A** - Replacement facade to active facade to facilitate the display of internally illuminated moving images, 1-3 Arthur Street.
- **LA04/2021/2846/F** – Change of use of ground floor of No. 23 to amusement arcade including extension and frontage alterations to allow for amalgamation with No22, 22/23 Shaftesbury Square.

Schedule of Meetings Update 2023

The Committee approved the following changes to the dates of the Committee Meetings:

- Monthly meeting from Tuesday, 13th April to Tuesday, 18th April;
- Monthly meeting from Tuesday, 13th June to Tuesday, 20th June;
- and
- Reserve meeting/workshop from Thursday 15th June to Thursday 22nd June (if required).

Committee Site Visits

The Committee noted that site visits had taken place in respect of the following planning applications on 24th February, 2023:

- **LA04/2020/2105/F** - Residential development comprising 55no. apartments comprising 6 no social, 6 no intermediate, and 43 no private apartments and associated site works, 1-5 Gaffikin Street, Belfast.
- **LA04/2022/1249/F** - Partial redevelopment of former Kennedy Way Waste Water Treatment Works to include the development of new Mechanical and Electrical (M&E) workshops, storage, changing facilities and ancillary offices (development to include three new buildings 1) the main hub building; 2) a store to hold an alternative bottled water supply; and 3) a generator store), access improvements, parking, service yards, storage areas, contractors compound, boundary fencing, cesspool, solar PV panels and landscaping, Former NI Water Ltd Sewage Treatment Works, Blackstaff Road

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- **LA04/2022/1280/F** – Proposed social housing led, mixed tenure residential development comprising of 52 no. dwellinghouses and 87 no. apartments with public open space, children's play park, landscaping, car parking, associated site works and infrastructure and access arrangements from Blackstaff Road (139 no. units in total). Former Kennedy Enterprise Centre (north of Westwood Shopping Centre) Blackstaff Road Belfast BT11 9DT
- **LA04/2022/1046/F** - 18 Annadale Avenue, Proposed demolition of existing building and construction of a residential development consisting of 14 No. units (9 No. apartments and 5 No. terraced dwellings) with associated landscaping and car parking (amended plans received).

Planning Appeals Notified

The Committee noted the Appeals Decisions.

Planning Decisions Issued

The Committee noted the Planning decisions issued between 1st and 28th February, 2023.

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.

Update on the Regional Improvement Report

The Director of Planning and Building Control provided the Committee with an update on the Regional Planning Improvement work that had been progressed since the publication of the Department for Infrastructure's review of the Implementation of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, and the Northern Ireland's Audit Office's review of the NI Planning System.

The Committee noted the content of the report and agreed that the Director of Planning and Building Control would convey the Committee's concern that Elected Members had not been included as stakeholders or represented on the interim Regional Planning Commission and Focus Group.

**Meeting of Planning Committee,
Tuesday, 14th March, 2023**

Quarter 3 Finance Report

The Committee noted the content of the report.

Restricted Planning Applications

Part Restricted Item: 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.

The Planning Manager pointed out to the Members that the application had been considered by the Committee, at its meeting in June, 2021, where it had been recommended that the Chief Executive use her delegated authority to approve the application, subject to conditions, and that the Chief Executive had subsequently resolved to approve the application, in line with the Committee's recommendation.

He highlighted that one of the conditions had been that the application would be brought back to the Members of the Planning Committee for final agreement, to include the outcome of a formal consultation and presentation of the draft Section 76 Planning agreement, before a final decision would be taken.

He provided the Committee with an overview of the application and reported that there had been no changes to the design of the scheme since the Committee's meeting in June, 2021 and informed the Members that officers had recommended that planning permission was granted, subject to conditions and a Section 76 Planning Agreement.

The Committee were provided with further details of the application and heard from representatives of the Applicant and of the objectors in a restricted sitting of the Committee.

Proposal

Moved by the Chairperson (Councillor Whyte),
Seconded by Councillor Maskey,

"That the Committee agrees to grant the planning permission, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement, and grants delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and Section 76 planning agreement."

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

**Meeting of Planning Committee,
Tuesday, 14th March, 2023**

Restricted Item: LA04/2022/1503/F Proposed erection of a freestanding 6.8-metre high screen erected on steel structural supports (9 metres in total height) with associated site works. Lands within Musgrave Police Station 60 Victoria Street, Belfast.

The Planning Manager provided the Committee with an overview of the application.

The Committee approved the application, subject to conditions and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions.

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)

LA04/2022/1284/F - Deferred Item returning to committee. Erection of Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation (PBMSA) development comprising 795 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. Lands bounded by Library Street (to south); Stephen Street (to west); Little Donegall Street (to north); and Union Street (to east)

The Planning Manager provided the Committee with an update on the application which had previously been considered at its meeting on 14th February, 2023, when the Committee had resolved to refuse planning permission with the detailed wording for the reasons for refusal to be set out by officers at the subsequent meeting of the Committee.

He outlined the following draft reasons for refusal to the Committee:

- Prejudice delivery of housing on adjacent car park site;
- Prejudice delivery of open space to support new housing in the area;
- Inappropriate scale, height and massing;
- Inadequate open space and amenity space; and
- Impact on setting of Listed Frames Building.

He referred to the consultation response which had been received from DfC Historic Environment Division which indicated that it was content with the proposal, as presented, subject to conditions.

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Proposal

Moved by Councillor Groogan,
Seconded by Councillor Murphy,

That the Committee agrees the undernoted reasons for refusal for the application which had been refused as its meeting on 14th February, 2023 and delegate authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the refusal reasons:

1. The key objectives of the Inner North West Masterplan include the delivery of a variety of accommodation or tenures to support population growth and city centre living. The proposal, by reason of its excessive scale, height and massing, would prejudice the delivery of mixed-tenure housing on the adjacent existing car park site on Stephen Street and Little Donegall Street to the immediate north-west, which forms part of the Inner North West Masterplan area and is zoned for social housing in the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014), through over-dominance, shadowing, impact on light, and inter-overlooking. The proposal is therefore contrary to the Inner North West Masterplan, in Page 201 Agenda Item 8a conflict with zoning CC 04/03 of draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (v2014), paragraph 6.136 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement and Policy QD1 of Planning Policy Statement 7: Quality Residential Environments;
2. The key objectives of the Inner North West Masterplan include the delivery of a variety of accommodation or tenures to support population growth and city centre living. There is extant permission for Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation on the adjacent land to the north and south. Moreover, the existing car park site on Stephen Street and Little Donegall Street to the immediate north-west is zoned for social housing in the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014) (zoning CC 04/03). The Inner North West Masterplan recognises that it is important that there is provision of well-designed public space and new open space which complete the network of public spaces to support new housing. The Inner North West Masterplan illustrative masterplan identifies the site for the location of new public space ("Union Square"). Whilst the proposal includes open space, it is private, and the proposal would prejudice the provision of much needed public open space to support new housing in the area. The proposal is therefore contrary to the Inner North West Masterplan, and paragraph 6.137 and 6.201 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement;
3. The Union Street/Library Street area of the Inner North West Masterplan has a tighter grain characterised by historic buildings,

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terraced houses and industrial buildings. The proposal, by reason of its excessive scale, height and massing, would fail to respond to the existing urban context on Little Donegall Street and Carrick Hill, nor contribute positively to the cityscape and the legibility of the masterplan area. The proposal would therefore have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area, contrary to paragraphs 6.136 and 6.137 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement and Policy QD1 of Planning Policy Statement 7: Quality Residential Environment; and

4. The proposed development would provide 1,300 sqm of outdoor private amenity space (an average of only 1.6 sqm per student bed space), substantially less than the guidance contained in Creating Places of a minimum of 10 sqm to 30 sqm. Moreover, the proposal fails to provide public open space with the development with none of the exceptions criteria set out in Planning Policy Statement 8 having been satisfied. The proposal would provide a substandard level of private communal amenity space and public open space and would therefore create a deficient living environment for residents, contrary to the principles of good place making. The proposal is contrary to paragraph 5.20 of Creating Places, paragraphs 6.137 and 6.201 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement, Policy OS 2 of Planning Policy Statement 8: Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation, and Policy QD1 of Planning Policy Statement 7: Quality Residential Environments.

On a vote, seven Members voted for the proposal, two against and five no votes, and the proposal was declared carried.

LA04/2021/2815/F - Deferred Item returning to committee. 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 Principal Planning Officer outlined to the Committee an additional objection that had been received from Tesco and he reported that, following the receipt of the objection, an independent review of the retail impact assessment had been carried out on behalf of the Council that concluded that the proposal was acceptable from a retail impact perspective.

He stated that the report had considered the original objection from the Irish Football Association (IFA) and that the boulevard remained in Council ownership and that the IFA had been granted limited control of the boulevard before, during and after a major event only and

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that officers had considered this the main issue for concern for the IFA and were satisfied that all issues had been addressed.

He pointed out that the Department for Infrastructure had been consulted and had indicated no concern with regard to access, parking and traffic management.

He concluded by stating that it was recommended that the application be approved, subject to conditions as the proposal was compliant with planning policy and the development plan and that third party objections had been considered.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. P. Stinson and Ms. E. Kelly from Turley, and Mr. J. Pringle from A&L Goodbody, who attended on behalf of the IFA in objection to the application. Ms. Turley explained that the IFA was not against the principle of the proposed development but had concern with regards to how the stadium would be able to operate and co-exist with the proposed development without impacting the operations of the stadium and maintain a safe environment on event days.

She stated that it was the view of the IFA that the Council had failed to properly relay the obligations set out in the overarching agreement to Lidl, which applied to all events and pointed out that the PSNI would not necessarily be present on event days.

She concluded by stating that the IFA was requesting that the agreement for all parties would be updated to reflect the measures that occur at all events and that the agreement should be a condition of grant of planning permission.

The Chairperson invited Councillor Tracy Kelly, who was in attendance in support of the application to make a representation to the Committee.. She welcomed the support for the application and stated that the local community was in need of a discount supermarket and wished for the application to be approved. She stated that the objection to the proposal was disappointing and pointed out that any development on the site would be accompanied by increased traffic.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. S. Beattie KC, Mr. D. Monaghan of MBA Planning and Mr. S. Tomlinson from AECOM to the meeting on behalf of the applicant, and Mr. B. Dickson and Mr. E. Poots MLA in support of the application.

Mr. Beattie KC explained, in response to the objection to the application from Tesco, that there was almost 9000 people within the catchment area with ample accessibility through public transport and that there was strong local support for the application.

He addressed the concerns that had been raised by the IFA and stated that the applicant had no issue with regard to major events and that Lidl would have little influence in regard to issues that may occur with patrons of the Olympia Leisure Complex accessing the boulevard during fixtures. He concluded by stating that the proposal was a good inward investment.

Mr. Poots MLA stated that the proposal would be of great benefit to the local community and did not believe any of the objections received had been valid and encouraged the Committee to support the recommendation and approve the application.

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The City Solicitor referred to the established procedures which were in place since 2016 in relation to major events and assured the Committee that if there were any issues or learnings with regard to how the Council manages and controls the land that it owns at the boulevard, it would be addressed by officers.

The Committee granted full planning permission, subject to conditions, and delegated authority for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions and to deal with any other matters which may arise.

LA04/2022/1479/F - Deferred Item returning to committee. Partial redevelopment of former Kennedy Way Waste Water Treatment Works to include the development of new Mechanical & Electrical (M&E) workshops, storage, changing facilities and ancillary offices (development to include three new buildings 1) the main hub building; 2) a store to hold an alternative bottled water supply; and 3) a generator store), access improvements, parking, service yards, storage areas, contractors compound, boundary fencing, cesspool, solar PV panels and landscaping. Former NI Water Ltd Sewage Treatment Works, Blackstaff Road

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the item in order that it is considered at the same Committee meeting as application. LA04/2022/1280/F relating to the adjacent land.

LA04/2022/0311/F - Erection of 40 no. residential units and 2 no. commercial units with associated car parking, cycle storage servicing, landscaping with access off Balmoral Avenue. The King's Hall and RUAS site south of Upper Lisburn Road/Balmoral Avenue west of Harberton Park and north-east of Balmoral Golf Club Belfast

The Senior Planning Officer provided the Committee with an overview of the application and highlighted the following issues for consideration in the assessment of the application:

- Principle of development;
- Impact on the Conservation Area;
- Height, Scale, Massing Design, Layout and Materials;
- Impact on surrounding amenity;
- Impact on the setting of the listed King's Hall;
- Landscaping;
- Access, Movement and Parking;

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- Environmental (Contamination, Noise, Air Quality); and
- Drainage/Flood Risk.

She pointed out that eight objections had been received with regard to the proposal which raised concerns relating to the access arrangements from Balmoral Avenue and the impact of the development on neighbouring amenity, and that the access arrangements had been approved as part of phase one of the King's Hall redevelopment. She referred to a late objection which had been received that raised concern that the new access would be used as a through road between Lisburn Road and Balmoral Avenue and pointed out that a condition of the original permission was that there would be no through route between Lisburn Road and Balmoral Avenue, except to permit servicing and that a permanent barrier would access control.

She concluded by stating that the recommendation to the Committee was that the application be approved, subject to conditions and a Section 76 Agreement, as there had been no objections received from consultees, all third-party objections had been considered and that the application complied with planning policy and the development plan.

The Committee approved the application, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement to secure green travel measures and management of open space, and delegated authority for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions, the Section 76 Agreement and any other issues which might arise

**LA04/2021/0319/F - (Addendum Report,
withdrawn from February Committee)
Proposed use of hard standing area as
overflow car park with a free draining
surface and soft landscaping scheme,
to serve existing approved uses on-site.
115 Blacks Road - Lands to north of square
golf training area east of the 3G Dome, south
of 45 and 46 Garnock Hill.**

The Planning Manager explained that the application had been withdrawn from the meeting of the Committee in February following the submission of late supporting information from the application and that following consideration of the further information, the officers' recommendation had changed to, on balance, approval of the application.

He outlined the application to the Committee and stated that, having regard to the nature of the site and the wider area of open space, officers were content that the proposal presented exceptional circumstances and therefore complied with Policy OS1 of PPS 8.

He added that there had been no objection received from DfI Roads, Environmental Health or consultees and that four third-party objections had been considered.

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions, and delegated authority for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions.

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LA04/2021/2396/F - Conversion, alteration and demolition of rear return of former office building to 6No. apartments and construction of 30No. apartments, parking and associated developments, Land to the west and including No. 81 University Street

The Senior Planning Officer provided the Committee with an overview of the proposal and highlighted the following key issues to be considered:

- Principle of development;
- Height, Scale, Massing, Layout and Design;
- Residential Amenity;
- Access / Parking / Movement pattern;
- NI Water Consultation; and
- Consideration of Representation.

She reported that officers were recommending that the application be approved, on the basis that the previous refusal reason for lack of parking had been addressed with additional parking and proposed green travel measures and that the application had been deemed compliant with relevant policy and the development plan.

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions and the completion of the Section 76 planning agreement, and delegated authority for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions.

**LA04/2021/2846/F –
Change of use of ground floor of No. 23 to
amusement arcade including extension and
frontage alterations to allow for amalgamation
with No22, 22/23 Shaftesbury Square.**

The Planning Manager outlined the application to the Committee and highlighted the following key issues:

- Principle of amusement arcades in this location;
- Impact on the character and appearance of the area; and
- Impact on amenity.

He explained that Building Control had expressed concern around the increase in arcade machines which had been considered and he highlighted that the proposal was to extend an existing amusement arcade and not to create a new amusement arcade premises, located within the city centre where main town centre uses, as such, were considered acceptable, in principle. He reported that there would be no harmful impacts on the character and appearance of the area, amenity or transportation.

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He pointed out that no third-party objections had been received and that it was recommended that planning permission be granted.

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions, and delegated authority for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the conditions.

LA04/2022/2137/F - Proposed detached modular temporary classroom and toilet unit with ramp for access at Gael-Ionad Mhic Goiland. Relocation of existing temporary classroom (ref LA04/2021/2577/F) and existing palisade fencing on boundary moved 10.5m south to facilitate the new temporary unit.

The Committee considered the application and approved the application for a temporary period of 36 months, subject to conditions, and delegated authority for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions.

LA04/2022/2220/F - It is proposed to erect an art installation of 10 no. printed diabond panels of 2400mm x 1200mm, which will be attached to the existing metal boundary fence of the premises using appropriate fixings. The work is to be undertaken as part of a Business Cluster Support Project funded by Belfast City Council, 10-14 York Road

The Committee considered the application and granted temporary planning permission for a period of three years, subject to conditions and delegated authority for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions

LA04/2023/2458/F - Demolition of existing garage and conservatory and erection of single storey extension to side and rear of dwelling, 61 Belmont Park.

The Committee considered the application and granted planning permission, subject to conditions, and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the conditions.

Miscellaneous Items

Delegation of Local Applications with NIW Objections

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 The Planning Committee will recall that at its meetings on 27 June 2022, 14 November 2022 and 14 February 2023, it agreed to delegate authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control the determination of a number of Local applications to which NI Water had objected.
- 1.2 The Council continues to receive objections from NIW to some Local applications. The purpose of this report is to seek the Committee’s agreement to delegate to officers those Local planning applications to which NI Water has objected.
- 1.3 For the avoidance of doubt, it is only those applications which would have been delegated to officers under the Scheme of Delegation were it not for the objection from NI Water which are proposed to be delegated. Therefore, any of the Local applications which it may later transpire require to be referred to the Committee for other reason/s (other than the NI Water objection) will be reported to the Committee to determine. Individual Members can also still request that the applications are referred to the Committee under paragraph 3.8.1 of the Scheme of Delegation.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Committee agrees to delegate to the Director of Planning and Building Control those Local planning applications to which NI Water has objected.

3.0 Main Report

Background

- 3.1 The Committee will be aware from the Committee Workshop on 18 November 2021 that NI Water has objected to a significant number of Local applications on grounds of insufficient waste-water infrastructure capacity.
- 3.2 As advised at the Committee Workshop, officers have been engaging with NI Water to try to resolve those objections. Whilst progress is being made, and NI Water is actively considering a threshold for the scale and nature of development above which they would like to be consulted on future planning application, the objections to these Local applications remain.

Scheme of Delegation

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- 3.3 Members will be aware that the Council operates a Scheme of Delegation for Planning which identifies which matters are to be determined by the Committee and which are delegated to officers.
- 3.4 Paragraph 3.8.5 (f) of the Scheme of Delegation (January 2020) states that planning applications are not delegated where '*There is an objection from a statutory consultee and the recommendation of the Planning Officer is to approve.*' This means that those applications are required to be determined by the Planning Committee.
- 3.5 The Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016 identifies NI Water as a statutory consultee '*...where a development proposal is likely to significantly impact upon the availability of suitable water and sewerage infrastructure to service development proposals.*'
- 3.6 This means that where NI Water has lodged an objection to a Local application and the officer recommendation is to approve, the application cannot be delegated and must be determined by the Committee.
- 3.7 Therefore, at its meeting on 27 June 2022, 14 November 2022 and 14 February 2023, the Committee agreed to delegate 97, 25 and 18 Local applications respectively with NI Water objections to the Director of Planning and Building Control. This has avoided the potential need to report all 140 applications individually to the Committee. To have reported all those applications to the Committee would have been logistically extremely difficult, costly and would have resulted in further delays for applicants.

Nature of NI Water objections

- 3.8 NI Water has lodged objections to Local applications for one or both of the following reasons.
- a) There is insufficient capacity at the local Waste Water Treatment Plant to support the proposed development; and/or
 - b) There is insufficient network capacity within existing Combined Storm Overflows to support the development.
- 3.9 In broad terms, NI Water is concerned that a lack of infrastructure capacity would give rise to risk of environmental harm including pollution, flooding and adverse impact on existing property. In some cases, NI Water is concerned that the application site may be hydrologically linked to Belfast Lough and may harm its water quality.

- 3.10 However, despite requests, NI Water has to date not provided robust evidence to support individual objections including demonstration of actual specific impacts resulting from individual proposals that stems from their broad concerns outlined above.
- 3.11 Importantly, allowance must be made for existing significant committed development across the city including extant planning permissions. It is highly unlikely that all such development, which includes unimplemented permissions for over 20,000 houses and significant levels of commercial floor space across the city, will come forward at once, if at all. In practical terms it would be unreasonable for the Council to withhold planning permission given the fall-back of the need to connect those developments to existing waste water infrastructure.
- 3.12 In the case of Waste Water Treatment capacity, NI Water advises that there will be increased capacity from July 2023, albeit this will not be sufficient to address long term waste water treatment plant infrastructure requirements.
- 3.13 The Council must be mindful that were it to refuse planning permission based on NI Water's concerns, it would need to provide robust evidence to the Planning Appeals Commission in the event that the applicant appeals the decision. In the absence of robust evidence, it would be unreasonable to refuse planning permission.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 3.14 Officers have met with Shared Environmental Services (SES). Belfast City Council is the Competent Authority under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended) for undertaking an Appropriate Assessment where a proposal is likely to have a significant environmental effect on Belfast Lough, an environmentally protected Special Protection Area (SPA), RAMSAR and Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Water quality of the lough is a key consideration. The Habitats Regulations are framed in such a way that it is not only the impacts of individual development proposals that need to be considered, but also 'in combination' impacts with other development.
- 3.15 Whilst a precautionary approach applies to Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), SES confirms that the onus is on NIW to provide evidence of likely actual impacts, rather than hypothetical impacts. As Competent Authority, the Council may take its own objective view on whether a proposal is likely to have a 'significant effect' on water quality of the Lough. However, having regard to the precautionary approach, where there is clear intensification the Council will consult SES and ask them to undertake a HRA

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Appropriate Assessment Screening to ascertain whether there would be a likely significant impact. This would also trigger statutory consultation with DAERA NI Environment Agency. The Planning Service will consult SES and DAERA on a case by case basis as required.

Local applications for which delegated authority is sought to determine

3.16 The further Local applications to which NI Water has objected and which delegated authority is sought to determine are listed at Appendix 1.

3.17 It should be noted that only those applications which would have been delegated to officers under the Scheme of Delegation were it not for the objection from NI Water are proposed to be delegated. Therefore, any of the Local applications listed which it transpires need to be referred to the Committee for other reason/s under the Scheme of Delegation will be reported to the Committee to determine. Individual Members can also still request that the applications are referred to the Committee under paragraph 3.8.1 of the Scheme of Delegation.

4.0 Financial & Resource Implications

4.1 Officers are aware of the infrastructure issues which NI Water are facing and have had regard to that in making this recommendation to Committee. However, each application must be assessed on its own merits and officers have sought detailed evidence to support the objections which have been provided by NI Water. That has not been forthcoming.

4.2 The cost and resources involved in individually reporting all Local applications to which NI Water has objected to the Planning Committee would be considerable. It would also require several additional sittings of the Committee.

4.3 Regard is also had to the considerable current pressures on the Planning Service and staff with an extremely high volume of live applications on hand due to the longer-term impacts of COVID-19 and ongoing technical issues with the new Planning Portal. The impacts of COVID-19 and other operational pressures were reported in detail to the 15th February 2022 Planning Committee, [item 12a](#). (hyperlink). In addition, technical issues with the new Planning Portal have reduced the rate of decisions. Combined with several key vacancies, total live applications have increased to around 1,100 application, an approximate 40% increase since pre-pandemic levels. It is very important that the Planning Service implements a range of measures to reduce live applications back

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down to more manageable levels. This includes securing delegated authority from the Committee for officers to deal with these Local applications subject to NI Water objections.

4.4 For the reasons set out above, officers are of the view that it would be appropriate to continue to delegate these applications.

5.0 Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment

5.1 No adverse impacts identified.”

The Committee agreed to delegate authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to determine those Locals applications, subject to NI Water objections.

Chairperson

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Special Planning Committee

Thursday, 16th March, 2023

REMOTE MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Whyte (Chairperson);
Alderman Rodgers; and
Councillors Bower, Carson, Matt Collins, Douglas, Garrett,
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;
Mr. K. Sutherland, Planning Manager;
Mr. D. O'Kane, Principal Planning Officer; and
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies for inability to attend were reported.

Declarations of Interest

The Chairperson (Councillor Whyte) declared an interest in relation to Item 2, LA04/2021/1672/O, on the agenda, in that Radius Housing had previously been a client and left the meeting while the item was being considered.

Planning Applications

(The Deputy Chairperson, Councillor Maskey in the Chair)

LA04/2021/1672/O Outline planning permission (with all matters reserved) for mixed use development on Sites A, B, C, D. Comprising up to 7,710 sqm GEA mixed use to include tourist hostel, residential, office, retail, commercial including community enterprise, community infrastructure and social enterprise floor space (A1 or A2 or B1 or B2 or C1 or C2 or D1) units on Site A, up to 6,980 sqm GEA of Hotel (C2) floorspace on Site B, the erection of a multi-storey car park comprising of up to 231 spaces (4,130 sqm GEA) and up to 7,130 sqm GEA of employment or community (A1 or A2 or B1 or B2) floorspace on Site C and up to 1,110 sqm GEA mixed use to include residential, office, retail, commercial including community enterprise, community infrastructure and social enterprise (A1 or A2 or B1 or B2 or D1) floorspace on Site D.

Outline planning permission (with no matters reserved)

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for the erection of 94 residential dwellings (social housing). Comprising of 44 residential units on Site A and 50 residential units on Site D/NIE. Access to be provided from Raphael Street and Stewart Street respectively. Along with the provision of landscaping, parking, public open space, pumping station and associated works. Lands at the Gasworks Northern Fringe site; bounded to the north by McAuley Street Stewart Street and Raphael Street; Cromac Street to the west; the River Lagan and Belfast-Newry railway line to the east; and the Gasworks Business Park to the south

The Planning Manager explained to the Committee that the application had been approved at its meeting in February, and that late issues had been raised by the Department for Infrastructure with regard to the private streets determination layout.

He explained that, in relation to Site A of the application, DfI Roads had raised concern that four parking bays would interfere with visibility and would create a highway safety issue. He reported that Radius Housing, the joint applicant, was in agreement with the removal of the four spaces, that would require an amended plan to be submitted.

He reported that DfI Roads had also raised concern with regard to the surface material of the spine roads within Sites A and D. He stated that the proposal had been for the spine road to be finished with paviers, which had been important from an aesthetic and placemaking perspective, and that Radius Housing had already gone to tender for the provision and construction of the roads, in accordance with the plans which had previously been approved by the Committee. He added that Radius Housing was not in a position to make the changes, in accordance with DfI Road's subsequent request, to change the spine road surfaces from paviers to asphalt.

He stated that officers were of the opinion that the removal of the four parking bays on Raphael Street was necessary to secure appropriate visibility at the junctions into the housing site, and that paviers were the preferred spine road surface for reasons that included placemaking and the architectural and design quality of the scheme, however, on balance, it was considered acceptable, when taking into consideration the wider benefits of the scheme.

The Planning Manager responded to questions from Members of the Committee in relation to the replacement of a permeable surface with an impermeable surface and future maintenance of the road surface, and several Members expressed concern with regard to late issues having been raised by DfI Roads in relation to previously approved applications for social housing.

The Committee agreed to the removal of four of the parking bays on Raphael Street. and refused the substitution of paviers for asphalt surface material on the spine road.

The Committee also delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to vary the decision as a compromise, should the applicant and DfI Roads be unable to reach an agreement on the issue of paviers on the spine road.

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(The Chairperson, Councillor Whyte, in the Chair)

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 Committee meeting during discussion on the following 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.

Consideration of Processes and Final Documentation to support the LDP Plan Strategy Adoption

The Planning Manager provided the Committee with an update on the ongoing efforts to adopt the Plan Strategy of the Local Development Plan and referred the Members to the final draft versions of documents that would form the basis of the Plan Strategy to be approved by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

The Committee endorsed the submission for consideration by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee as the basis for the formal adoption of the LDP Plan Strategy.

Approval of Final Version of the SPG to support the LDP Plan Strategy Implementation

The Planning Manager provided the Committee with an update on the preparation of the Supplementary Planning Guidance and referred the Members to the final draft versions for publication.

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the Supplementary Planning Guidance, to a future meeting of the Committee, to be held in April.

Chairperson

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Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee

Monday, 13th March, 2023

MEETING OF THE MEMBERS OF THE BELFAST WATERFRONT
AND ULSTER HALL LTD. SHAREHOLDERS' COMMITTEE
HELD IN HYBRID FORMAT

Members present: Councillor Maghie (Chairperson);
Alderman Haire; and
Councillors Bradley, Flynn, Howard, Magee,
McAteer, McCann, Nelson, Newton and Smyth.

In attendance: Ms. J. Corkey, Chief Executive, ICC Belfast
(Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd.);
Mr. I. Bell, Director of Finance, Risk and Corporate
Services, ICC Belfast (Belfast Waterfront and Ulster
Hall Ltd.);
Mr. F. Grant, Operations Development Manager; and
Ms. V. Smyth, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor Cobain.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 16th January 2023 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

There were no declarations of interest.

Restricted Item

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 item 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.

Quarter 3 Performance Report

The Chief Executive, ICC Belfast, Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd (BWUH Ltd.) provided the Committee with an update on performance for Quarter 3 Year-To-Date 2022 covering the period 1st April 2022 to 31st December 2022.

She highlighted that this was the seventh year of operation for the new company, with ICC Belfast operational from April 2016 and reported that the third quarter of 2022/23 contained a good mix of events but with a higher proportion of entertainment events, including the Snooker and Panto which was very well attended. This followed on from the high-profile events previously mentioned in the Quarter 2 Year-To-Date review, including International Society for Influenza and other Respiratory Diseases, Vascular Anaesthesia Society GBI, Association of Anaesthetists GBI, British Transplantation Society, and European Society Clinical Cell Analysis which had fed through into the financial results.

She provided the Committee with an overview of the BWUH Ltd.'s financial performance for Quarter 3 Year-To-Date 2022/23 and provided context around the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

Corporate and Social Responsibility

The Chief Executive, ICC Belfast (BWUH Ltd.) advised that BWUH Ltd. had been awarded the Autism NI Impact Award and would continue to support the charity until 31st March 2023. She informed the Members that work was ongoing for a call for new charity partners for Financial Year 2023/24. Sensory space was introduced for the Panto and feedback from patrons had been positive on venue adjustments for accessibility.

She advised the Members that BWUH Ltd. continued to support the 'Changing the Menu for Good' initiative and surplus food from conferences had been donated to the People's Kitchen, and it had also hosted drop off points for dry and canned goods, clothing, and much needed toiletries for the team to support internally. BWUH Ltd.'s catering partners and team members had attended volunteer days with the People's Kitchen, serving food to those most in need in the community.

BWUH Ltd. were continuing with apprenticeships/placements, offering suitable employment opportunities to various universities, colleges, schools, and schemes like Work+. There had been a focus on underrepresented departments and BWUH Ltd. had taken on female team members in these areas with further work to be completed with education bodies to encourage women in these areas.

Senior leaders continued educational outreach in the form of guest lectures and site visits for University of Ulster and the South Eastern Regional College.

The Chief Executive, ICC Belfast (BWUH Ltd.) reported that the Green Team was meeting regularly and had developed an action register to ensure initiatives continued through the organisation. Progress had been made with exploring the tracking of the

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carbon emissions from events and BWUH Ltd. hoped to activate this in Quarter 1 of Financial Year 2023/24. Ongoing education for the team was in place with regular segments in the internal newsletter and training and development was underway for the team.

She reported that the Ulster Orchestra continued to utilise the Ulster Hall for rehearsal space and had offered performances throughout Quarter 3 for patrons, subscribers, and the general public. BWUH Ltd. had further supported the ongoing marketing and communication with the Ulster Orchestra through a collaborative approach which had been well received by the senior leaders in the organisation.

Governance

The Chief Executive, ICC Belfast (BWUH Ltd.), advised the Members that Board meetings had been held throughout the year as scheduled. The Audit and Risk Sub-Committee meetings were also held on the same days as the main Board meetings.

Board meetings had been held in April, May, September, November, and December 2022 (Business Plan Review) with further Board meetings scheduled on a quarterly basis. In addition to these Committee and Board meetings, regular monthly meetings had been held with the Senior Reporting Officer to review progress.

The Director of Finance, Risk and Corporate Services provided a high-level financial performance summary upon what he described as a backdrop of inflation and rising costs. He reported positive trends had been seen in relation to ticket and catering sales and measures had been taken to offset costs and grow revenue. He referred to the risks and opportunities which were detailed in the report. He highlighted cybersecurity and advised that issues which had been identified were being closed out.

A Member commended BWUH Ltd's upturn in business performances post Covid.

The Members noted the contents of the report and information provided.

Capital and Maintenance Report

The Operations Development Manager provided the Committee with an update on capital and maintenance works at the ICC Waterfront and Ulster Hall.

The Members were reminded of major capital projects which had been identified at the Waterfront and were provided with a progress update.

- Escalator Replacement

Following the installation of the 6 new escalators, the performance of the units had been monitored. Initially, performance of the units was satisfactory, however, several outages had recently been experienced, particularly with the ground to first floor units, in excess of what would be considered to be normal levels of faults. These issues were escalated to the Director of TKE European Operations, and he had committed to providing engineers from the main factory to resolve the issues. Consequently, engineers

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from Germany had attended the site week commencing 30th January and, following a series of tests, they had replaced a range of contactor units and carried out sensor adjustments and software upgrades. It had been impressed upon TKE the disappointment with the performance of the units and the recent outages effectively resets the monitoring period. TKE had been informed that only after a successful period of operation and subsequent recommissioning of the units would consideration be given to release of the outstanding account balance.

- Replacement of the Chiller Units

The Members recalled that a report was commissioned to examine technical solutions for the replacement of the chiller units serving the Waterfront Hall. The report made a series of recommendations with one considered the most viable. The report was based on the replacement of the chiller units with a similar capacity. However, to inform the final option and ensure it was the optimum option, it was agreed that further work was required and therefore as previously reported financing had been secured to install additional metering required to monitor the performance of the chilled water system. The meters had now been installed with some final connections to take place with the building energy management system to allow monitoring. This information would be fed into the dynamic model already available to assist in more accurate sizing of the replacement chiller units.

In addition, further financing had been secured to install solar film to the glazing in the bar areas. The design had been completed and the work was currently out to tender with contractor appointment expected by the end of March and works to commence at the start of April (subject to tender costs being within budget). This would help alleviate the problem of heat build-up within these areas and reduce the cooling requirement placed on the existing chiller units as well as contributing to a more sustainable operation of the facility.

- Works to the Roof

There had been some leaks at the Riverside Foyer Hall 1 A - 1 B and it had been identified that the Ballast Roof on the original building may be the issue. A temporary solution was now in place that had resulted in no further leaks. A more permeant solution was required in this area. Further capital funding with regard design and works would be required.

- Refurbishment of Toilet Facilities

The Members were reminded of the allocated budget for the refurbishment of 11 toilets within the Waterfront Hall, and that, subsequently, a changing places facility was added.

The design had been completed and signed off Consultation with Building Control had taken place and a Building Control Application had been submitted. Preparation of tender documents was now underway. The Members were reminded of the significant increase in the cost of materials and labour across all elements of construction as part of

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the general cost of living increases currently being experienced. The Members were advised that this may impact on the total number of toilet refurbishments that could be completed within the available budget. This would be assessed following tender returns once the actual costs had been identified.

- Fire integrity arrangements to the Waterfront Hall main auditorium

In November 2022, the Waterfront Hall Facilities team engaged the services of a specialist engineer to review the fire strategy for the Waterfront Hall main auditorium. In the course of this survey the engineer identified a lack of containment between the underside of the auditorium roof and the top of the deployable fire curtains. Subsequent investigations identified that a concrete soffit had been replaced with an open slotted grid feature, the effect of which potentially allowed smoke to access the void space above the existing fire curtains. The circumstances that brought about this change were unknown but it is apparent the original Fire Strategy was not updated to reflect the omission of the concrete soffit.

The Operations Development Manager reported that there was no obvious or straightforward solution to this issue. Physical Programmes had examined the options and were going to engage an architect and specialist engineers to review the current construction and suggest potential solutions. Further updates would be brought back to Committee. He advised that, in the interim, the Waterfront Hall had amended its Fire Strategy with the inclusion of additional staff in the affected areas during performances to ensure safe evacuation if required.

The Members reviewed and noted the update presented in relation to ongoing capital and maintenance works at the ICC Waterfront and Ulster Hall.

Draft Business Plan 2023-2034

The Chief Executive, ICC Belfast (BWUH Ltd.), presented the Business Plan for the financial year 2023/24. The Business Plan had been presented to and approved by the BWUH Ltd. Board in December 2022, subject to approval by the Shareholders.

She provided more detail around the Vision, Mission and Values which would guide the Business Plan, and highlighted that ICC Belfast was competing with other venues nationally and internationally.

The Chief Executive, ICC Belfast (BWUH Ltd.), provided details of BWUH Ltd.'s areas of focus which included the strategic pillars in the Business Plan which included digital transformation, organisational development, maximising revenue and cost management, and sustainability which would drive the business forward in the year ahead. She gave special mention to the strong stakeholder relationships with Belfast City Council, Tourism NI and Visit Belfast, and highlighted a principal focus on the Republic of Ireland market.

A Member questioned the new markets she had been referred to and asked if remote meetings were still a challenge to the business. The Chief Executive, ICC Belfast (BWUH Ltd.) explained that a new market was developing and she referred to research

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that had been undertaken in this regard which showed that, due to the nature of conferences in a world of hybrid working, there was an appetite to meet and it was for this reason that BWUH Ltd. were targeting the corporate market. She informed the Members that the business was targeting 120 national associations as part of the business' growth plan which would result in 30 conferences per year and provided a sales context in relation to the data used to drive the business.

The Chief Executive, ICC Belfast (BWUH Ltd.), referred to Belfast's new link to Frankfurt which would provide opportunities. She advised that the business was building a pipeline of conferences from Northern Ireland FDI companies and the team were working with Tourism NI in relation to new market development.

The Members reviewed the report and approved the draft BWUH Ltd. Business Plan.

Ratification of Non-Executive Directors

The Chief Executive, ICC Belfast (BWUH Ltd.), requested that the Committee ratify the appointment of 5 new Non-Executive Directors for the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Board of Directors and approve the transfer of Company Secretary duties to the Head of Governance and Stakeholder Engagement.

The Members noted that there were 3 outgoing Board members, who were extended to 31st March 2023 due to the original pause in recruitment caused by Covid-19 and the subsequent appointment of the new BWUH Ltd. Chairperson in November 2022. At the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Board meeting on 16th February 2023, John Walsh, Belfast City Council Chief Executive, placed on record his thanks on behalf of the Council to the outgoing Non-Executive Directors.

Moved by Councillor McAteer,
Seconded by Alderman Haire; and

Resolved - that the Committee:

1. Ratify the appointment of 5 new Non-Executive Directors for BWUH Ltd.
2. Note the outgoing 3 Non-Executive Directors for Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Board.
3. Approve the transfer of Company Secretary duties to the Head of Governance and Stakeholder Engagement.

Chairperson

Climate and City Resilience Committee

Thursday, 9th March, 2023

MEETING OF THE CLIMATE AND CITY RESILIENCE COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER AND REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Walsh (Chairperson);
Councillors Bower, Copeland, de Faoite, Donnelly,
Gormley, Haire, Maghie, McCabe, McCann, McKeown,
McLaughlin, Murray, Smyth, Spratt

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;
Mr. A. Wardle, Project Support Officer, Resilience;
Ms. C. Young, Corporate Communications;
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer; and
Mrs. G. Boyd, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for an inability to attend were noted from Councillors Newton and Thompson.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 9th February, 2023 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 March.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of Interest were noted.

Translink's de-carbonisation plans – presentation by Ian Campbell

The Chairperson welcomed Mr Ian Campbell, Director of Service Operations at Translink, to the meeting. Mr Campbell thanked the chairperson and addressed the Committee meeting highlighting that the purpose of the presentation was to highlight Translink's plans for decarbonising public transport in Northern Ireland. He advised the members of the Committee that there were a number of reasons why transport must be decarbonised; these included the climate crisis, the energy consumption of the current fleet, the health impact of poor air quality and economic drivers to meet the current cost of living

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crisis – public transport provided an affordable option for the public. He advised them that the public transport levels were back up to 85% of the pre covid delivery. He went on to outline what the modal shift to public transport (people choosing to give up their cars) along with decarbonisation would mean for Northern Ireland in terms of support for a number of common strategies the decreased emissions targets, supported the agenda for doing more with less of our natural resources and supporting the green growth economy by creating green jobs in green technology infrastructure and fleet. He said that Translink worked collaboratively to support the Green agenda and they played an active role in the Climate commission.

Mr Campbell outlined Translink's plans to reach zero emission targets as set out in their climate positive strategy. He explained their phased approach from the pilot of 3 Hydrogen buses that went live in December 2020 to the 80 Electric buses and 20 Hydrogen for Belfast which went live in March 2022. He advised the Committee that the current phase was incorporating a new Foyle Metro Electric Fleet and that would go live in Summer 2023. Phase 3 was for 100 electric buses for Ulster Bus and Metro and he said it was planned that these would go live in August 2024. He added that Translink had created 2 green electric vehicle charging points at Milewater Road and the bus depot in the Short Strand. He went on to outline how their changes had impacted their carbon emissions explaining that Belfast had the 4th largest zero emissions bus fleet in the UK and Ireland.

He said that rail was a bit more challenging but they did see the value in investing in the rail service and said they were undertaking a detailed feasibility study to look at electrifying the rail network in Northern Ireland. He highlighted the collaborative working between the governments and SEUPB. He concluded his presentation by highlighting what was needed to ensure their work towards zero emissions was successful, these included support from local and central government to ensure the modal shift required along with the other steps outlined.

The Chairperson thanked Mr Campbell for his comprehensive presentation.

A member asked Mr Campbell how funding cuts would impact the work going forward. He said that it was given Translink real challenges, but they were working with the Departments who had been supportive and wanted to see this work progress. They had made significant efficiency savings in recent years and were continuing to look at areas of cost saving. Members also raised concerns around the service provision in areas of the city that fell outside the Metro service and asked how they could ensure their views were captured. Mr Bannon highlighted that the process Translink used to ensure service provision was adequate and viable in the various sectors of the city and said there was a monthly service meeting to review requests. He added that he would be happy to attend a future meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration committee to feed back on the outcomes. The Chairperson also suggested that it might be worth inviting Translink to the member's area working group to deal with the matter there also.

After discussion the Committee noted the contents of the presentation.

**EVI strategy update –
presentation by Urban Foresight**

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The Chairperson welcomed Mr Gary McRae, Head of Electric Mobility for Urban Foresight, to the meeting. Mr McRae thanked members of the Committee for the opportunity to present the update on the EV strategy for Northern Ireland. He said they were a consultancy based in Scotland who had been working with electric vehicle infrastructure for around 12 years, working closely with local authorities. He outlined the framework for the work that they were doing with Belfast City Council and the challenges that were often faced. He said there were 3 key areas to transition; vehicles, infrastructure and people and highlighted there was quite a lot to be done to make the transition smooth. Those 3 things needed to grow simultaneously to make sure the transition was smooth. They used these 3 themes as a framework to help develop the strategy for Belfast. He discussed the framework that had been created for Belfast City Council and highlighted the steps that would be taken to implement the smooth transition, including not only areas that a city council had control over but also the areas that they would have indirect control.

He went on to outline their approach to the strategy along with the implementation plan. He added that they were engaging with a wide range of stakeholders to ensure the policy sat within the wider context of the plans for Belfast. He outlined the vehicle sectors that were included in the strategy and said that they started with local authority fleets to ensure that the city led by example. He said that bikes, trucks, buses and micro mobility devices were not included in the strategy due to the type of infrastructure they required but they would still be considered throughout the process. Mr McRae showed an example of what the mapping would look like for the Council with the long term plan to 2045 and explained that this would be broken into realistic chunks to ensure targets could be met by 2030. He outlined the AST (Area, Site Technology) model that they would use to plan the infrastructure and showed the heat maps they would be developing to see what was possible for each area of the city. He showed a number of examples of the types of on street parking that could be used and also the positioning of charge points at public car parks and discussed how they built in scope for the development in technology. He said there were a number of business model options that local authorities could use, including looking to private investors as well as grant schemes. He concluded his presentation by outlining the challenges and opportunities for the city of Belfast.

Members of the Committee raised a number of queries around the presentation, including the use of council owned carparks to install EV charging points and asked if this would have a detrimental impact on the revenue generated at these spaces. Mr McRae said these queries would be addressed throughout the duration of the strategy process and welcomed any input from the Council to ensure these matters were addressed.

The Chairperson thanked Mr McRae for his presentation and said he looked forward to receiving future updates on the strategy development process.

Noted.

**Carbon Offset Fund update –
presentation by Anthesis**

The Chairperson welcomed Matt Badic, senior consultant at Anthesis, to the meeting. Mr Badic thanked the Committee for the opportunity to present to them. He said that Anthesis was the Sustainability Activator. They were the largest group of dedicated

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sustainability experts in the world. He continued that Anthesis had significant experience supporting local authorities who had declared a climate emergency and were working towards net zero. He continued that they were the developers of the SCATTER tool, which was free to use for all local authorities. He added that they had also performed bespoke support services in response to the climate emergency with 40 cities and local authorities over the last two years. He outlined the objectives of the project with Belfast and other Council's in Northern Ireland and then went on to explain the proposed project outcomes including the report scope and the report insights. He explained area based insetting to the Members of the oCmmittee and said that the aim was to address any barriers that traditional offsetting could present. He updated the Committee on the business survey that they had launched with questions on current approaches, attitudes and appetites to offsetting. He explained that it was a 10 minute survey and that, whilst the audience was primarily businesses, it could also be shared more widely. This would allow them to gauge market demand and potential partners for a local scheme.

The Committee noted the contents of the presentation and the Chairperson thanked Mr Babic for attending.

**Shared Island Development Fund - update on phase 1
projects in Cork and Dublin**

The Committee considered the undernoted report.

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on Belfast City Council's Shared Island Development Fund supported projects which are progressing in partnership with Dublin City Council and Cork City Council.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Members of the Committee are asked to:

- i Note that Belfast, represented by Belfast City Council, has been liaising with both Dublin City Council and Cork City Council in the development of projects under the Shared Island Development Fund.**
- ii Projects must be led by a Local Authority from the South of Ireland, working in partnership with a Local Authority from Northern Ireland.**
- iii Three projects have been funded to date through the Shared Island Development Fund:**
 - Dublin/Belfast Circular Economy Initiative (€250k)**
 - Cork/Belfast Climate and Docklands Initiative (€90k)**
 - Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor Initiative (€150k)**

- iv A detailed report on the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor Initiative will be provided separately from this report.
- v Further opportunities through the Shared Island Community Climate Action Programme and Creative Ireland programme are being explored at present with contacts in Dublin, Cork and Galway, with further updates to be provided should these opportunities progress to become funded projects.
- vi A further scheme to support EV charging for sports clubs is currently open with expressions of interest to be presented through governing bodies. This process is taking place independently of the Local Authority to Local Authority projects referred to above, however is relevant to the development of the Belfast EVI Strategy and ongoing discussions on the introduction of additional EV charging points in the city.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Background

3.2 Belfast City Council has been liaising with both Dublin City Council and Cork City Council in the development of projects under the Shared Island Development Fund. Projects must be led by a Local Authority from the South of Ireland, working in partnership with a Local Authority from Northern Ireland. Three projects have been funded to date through the Shared Island Development Fund:

1. Dublin/Belfast Circular Economy Initiative (€250k)
2. Cork/Belfast Climate and Docklands Initiative (€90k)
3. Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor Initiative (€150k)

These projects are described in more detail below.

Dublin and Belfast Circular Economy initiative

3.3 Dublin City Council in partnership with Belfast City Council (BCC), are striving to make their respective cities leaders in the transition to a circular economy. The successful proposal under the Shared Island Fund will involve undertaking a feasibility assessment to enable the development of capital projects in Dublin and Belfast that support the expansion of the circular economy island wide leading to a Connected Circular Economy. At present, Dublin and Belfast are developing their circular economy ecosystems and have established strengths and partnerships that will contribute to identifying challenges and

opportunities to be explored and addressed in the feasibility assessment.

- 3.4 The project aims to develop an implementation plan for realising a Connected Circular Economy that builds on the existing strengths of both cities and unlocks the latent potential of private enterprise identified via the feasibility assessment. Both cities recognise through their independent efforts described in detail in the appendix, that there are significant gaps that need to be identified and addressed to bring coherence to existing policies and plans. The aim is to identify and address these gaps through this feasibility assessment with funding from the Shared Island Fund. This will include feasibility on the capital expenditure needs, and economic analysis. This will be carried out according to the Public Spending Code and under UK ‘Green Book’ guidelines to present both authorities with a detailed and robust case to guide investment decisions.
- 3.5 The primary objective of the feasibility assessment is to inform the development of an official business case for delivering infrastructure and programming for a Connected Circular Economy between Dublin and Belfast. A partnership between the two largest local authorities on the Island, will provide opportunities to create scale, exchange knowledge and complement initiatives on an all- island basis. The feasibility assessment will identify how and what we need to invest in, to realise a Connected Circular Economy and to take advantage of the opportunities provided by all-island co-operation. The feasibility will focus on the economic and social potential of the circular economy, as well as sustainability and climate change – in other words how can the circular economy support a just transition by creating jobs that strengthen communities affected by the transition away from fossil fuels.
- 3.6 This will then help both Belfast and Dublin City Council to evaluate and to prepare a comprehensive business case for a Shared Island capital project that results in a Connected Circular Economy, with infrastructure needs and support regimes informed by evidence, expert knowledge and lived experience of SMEs. Tender submissions will be assessed on the 23rd March 2023.

Cork and Belfast Solar PV Study

- 3.7 Both Belfast and Cork cities are developing ambitious climate action spans that will incorporate a mix of technical and behavioural change interventions required to address climate change adaptation and mitigation. Some of the interventions needed will involve significant capital investment. This project

will focus primarily on examining best practice and innovative measures that could be used to scale the uptake of rooftop solar PV across both cities.

3.8 The overall objective is to develop a scoping study a focused on scaling the uptake of rooftop solar PV solution in the two cities. This will be achieved by initially identifying five public buildings in each city and assessing their suitability for solar PV. The specific objectives are to:

- 1. determine low, medium and high levels of potential rooftop solar PV installations based upon total roof space, building orientation, assumptions re building age and condition;**
- 2. review the policy and regulatory frameworks including any support schemes that apply to rooftop solar in Cork and Belfast and identify current barriers to rooftop solar PV installation;**
- 3. determine the necessary (policy, institutional, financial) interventions required to stimulate rooftop solar PV installations at the low, medium and high levels of penetration;**
- 4. review current initiatives being used to scale solar PV solutions and prepare a at least 5 rooftop solar PV case studies to showcase best practice for a range of different building types (e.g. domestic, school, public sector, community-use, retail/office building);**
- 5. identify one or more eligible projects that can be taken forward under phase 2.**

3.9 The scoping study will be prepared by experienced and qualified consultants in the area of energy planning include national and international context and best practice. A small working group will be formed to guide the preparation of the Strategy. The working group will include:

- Solar PV installers**
- Building managers and property owners**
- Local authority climate representatives**
- Local authority energy representatives**

3.10 A second strand of the scoping study will undertake a 3D spatial analysis of VU.CITY's highly accurate 3D model of Belfast, to understand the potential for Solar Rooftop PV across the whole city of Belfast, with a particular focus on the potential for carbon emissions savings within a smaller selection of council-owned buildings. This work will include:

- identification of flat roofs across Belfast that are suitable for PV installation;
 - calculation of potential kWh for each rooftop (including a detailed assessment of ~10 council-owned buildings, and then a more approximate calculation for all other buildings); and
 - where power consumption data is available, we will calculate the saved emissions (dependant on provision of suitable data from Belfast CC)
- 3.11 The scoping study will inform a phase 2 application for capital funding to scale solar PV across both cities with Local Authorities as exemplars in this area making effective use of their rooftop real estate to reduce their energy costs and achieve local and national climate action targets.
- 3.12 **Cork and Belfast Docklands Regeneration**
- 3.13 This project focus arose from the opportunity to connect two important maritime economies and drive decarbonisation, growth and innovation. Ports are key hubs for trade and investment and support SME's and employ thousands of workers. Significant capital investment is planned for both the Belfast Waterside and Cork City Docklands areas. These are two of the largest regeneration areas in Europe. Belfast City Council and Cork City Council have secured funding under the Shared Island initiative to assess the synergies and opportunities to overcome the existing challenges within the respective areas. This work will set the wider benefits of the proposed Cork-Belfast collaboration under the Shared Island initiative, and to provide a list of catalyst regeneration projects including providing spatial requirements, connectivity infrastructure and place-making requirements and capital investment schedules for the emerging list in conjunction with key stakeholders within each of the respective areas.
- 3.14 This scoping work will identify opportunities and mechanisms for collaboration between the two waterfront areas aligned to Climate Action, inclusive community connectivity, heritage, tourism and innovation.
- 3.15 Further updates on these scoping studies will be brought to a future meeting of this Committee.
- 3.16 **Additional information**
- 3.17 A detailed report on the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor Initiative will be provided separately from this report.

- 3.18 Further opportunities through the Shared Island Community Climate Action Programme and Creative Ireland programme are being explored at present with contacts in Dublin, Cork and Galway, with further updates to be provided should these opportunities progress to become funded projects.**
- 3.19 A further scheme to support EV charging for sports clubs is currently open with expressions of interest to be presented through governing bodies. This process is taking place independently of the Local Authority to Local Authority projects referred to above, however is relevant to the development of the Belfast EVI Strategy and ongoing discussions on the introduction of additional EV charging points in the city.**

4.0 Financial & Resource Implications

4.1 Belfast City Council and Cork City Council 90,000 Euro, of which 45,000 Euro is allocated to Climate Initiative (Solar PV) and 45,000 Euro for Harbour Initiative.

4.2 Belfast City Council and Dublin City Council 250,000 Euro, to undertake feasibility works to lead to potential capital works that link Dublin and Belfast circular economies through learning and operation.

5.0 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

5.1 Officers are currently developing the Equality, Good Relations and Rural Needs Screening and will incorporate within the emerging proposals.”

A Member raised the matter of funding available through the shared island fund and asked officers to explore potential opportunities that would be available to the Council. Officers agreed to bring a report to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee aligning all funding opportunities available to the Council. The Member also raised the possibility of officers from Belfast City Council conducting an exchange with officers in Dublin City Council and the Director of City and Organisational Strategy agreed to pursue the possibility of this exchange.

Noted

Update on UPSURGE Project

The members of 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 of the Committee, following the successful award of funding for the Horizon 2020 EU ‘UPSURGE’ project, which Members of People & Communities Committee initially approved at their August 2020 Committee meeting.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to note the update on the UPSURGE project.

- Note the update on the development of the UPSURGE main demonstrator site at Lower Botanic Gardens is given, as well as an overview of the work completed to date to include a codesign process which has resulted in an early**

concept plan for the site which is now at detailed design stages for the first phase.

- Note that the first phase i.e. the research gardens to be used by QUB and associated paths and infrastructure will be going on site in late March 2023. At the same time a series of community engagement initiatives will take place including a survey, storyboards on site and a collaborative workshop that will shape the final design for the community gardens.

3.0 Main report

Background

- 3.1 Members are reminded that the ‘UPSURGE Project’ focuses on testing nature-based solutions, to environmental issues in partnership with four other EU cities, with the aim of sharing learning and good practice.
- 3.2 Following approval by Members of P&C Committee, in August 2020, the project utilises the Lower Botanical Gardens site, close to Queens University Physical Education Centre (PEC). The aim of the project is to develop a demonstrator site to test different nature-based solutions and support learning on how adaptive practices and management of green spaces in the city can support pollution alleviation, citizen health and climate resilience. Residents of Belfast will benefit from environmental and scientific testing and learning, where soil enhancement, food production and testing can be undertaken, with the outcome being to increase learning and resilience across the city. The project will help deliver on the Belfast Resilience Strategy which aims to transition the city to an inclusive, net-zero emissions, climate resilient economy in a generation.
- 3.3 The UPSURGE project was co-designed by the Council in conjunction with QUB staff. The proposed works are shown in the concept drawing at Appendix 1. Members are asked to note that the works are focused towards the top end of the site near the PEC and allows the potential for other developments on the site in the future subject to budget being secured. Members are asked to note that works will commence this month.

KPIs for the project

- 3.4 One of the key aims of the project is to monitor and test nature based solutions being applied to the site. The KPIs for the project include social-economic diversity, gender, soil contamination, urban heat island effect, ecosystem connectivity, mobility, air

quality and health. Given the opportunity to build evidence and learning. The project team and partners see opportunities to apply learning and knowledge sharing across the city and for informing more climate resilient practice across Belfast.

QUB research plots

- 3.5 The QUB research plots will begin 'in-ground planting' of a number of vegetable types, as well as other plant categories, to measure the transmission of contaminants to potential food and plant matter over the initial period of the project and a QUB Research Fellow will manage the development and ongoing monitoring of this element. Information will then be disseminated within the overall EU project and be shared with local relevant partners, to enhance further development of urban agriculture.

Deployment of environmental sensors

- 3.6 As part of the overall environmental learning from the site, sensor-based technologies will be installed (with the procurement process underway) to measure certain particulate levels over the life of the project, with the overall objective to measure impact of the initiative on these localised particulates. Other mobile and personal sensors are also being considered.

Measurement of the following environmental impactors will be an ongoing part over the life of the project and hopefully beyond (subject to future funding):

Impactors to be measured:

Temperature

Humidity

Pressure

Ozone

Nitric Dioxide

Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂)

Particle Matter – Dust

Noise Level

The information gathered by the sensors will be regularly sent for analysis to our European partners and disseminated as part of the overall learnings of the project. To complement this, and hopefully coordinate longer term Belfast monitoring, the project delivery team will explore how best to integrate longer term monitoring for the benefit of the city.

Bee monitoring

- 3.7 Additional testing will also be undertaken to measure pollen contaminants and biodiversity, utilising the installation of a

number of beehives in secure locations on the site. A European analysis, managed by 'Beeodiversity', will be carried out, with local beekeepers being trained to monitor and gather samples from the hives. It would be hoped that a social enterprise element may be developed from this, as well as other growing elements of the site

Development of the community growing aspects of the site

- 3.8 The project will also include opportunities for communities living and working in the vicinity to benefit from the development of a number of community gardens on the site. Some initial engagement with existing stakeholders has taken place to co-design the community garden elements of the site and other stakeholders, such as QUB volunteers, local schools and community organisations are being engaged with to ring-fence garden space to support their engagement. This will complement the overall success of the project and further enhance learning, as well as community engagement, community cohesion/diversity opportunities.

Continuing engagement

- 3.9 As the research gardens are developing on site, the codesign process will continue with various engagement activities taking place to inform the detailed site design for the wider site. A presentation of the project will be brought to the South Area Working Group in February/March. Following agreement of the detailed site design, council officers will initiate the physical development of the site in partnership with relevant stakeholders and local communities.

Governance and delivery arrangements

- 3.10 The UPSURGE project presents an innovative opportunity to develop an underused area of land within Belfast City Council's ownership, through a partnership with QUB, EU partners, and local community organisations. A project team has been established which includes Belfast City Council's Climate Team, Innovation Unit, City and Neighbourhood Services, Physical Programmes, City Regeneration, and Planning in addition to QUB representatives. Physical programmes unit is leading on the delivery of the capital works programme. The project will act as a hub, with the potential to support rewilding, enhanced local food production, stimulation of local circular economy, and will develop community education programmes in relation to climate, digital innovation, and community resilience. Note that Members will also get an opportunity to feed in to the project at a

presentation which will be given to the South Area Working Group in March.

Knowledge sharing and learning across satellite sites

- 3.11 The delivery of the project will also work with partners across the city to engage with a number of satellite sites, which will benefit local neighbourhoods and create a citywide network of learning and education. The development of satellite sites will also benefit the overall wellbeing of residents across Belfast. Updates on the identified sites will be brought back to Committee as they are agreed.

The satellite sites have not yet been defined for the project, and whilst do not have an allocation of capital funding, will provide opportunities for learning and knowledge sharing programmes on nature-based solutions across the city.

Budget

- 3.12 The current budget, awarded through EU funding is categorised below:

- Project costs of €115,800, which include € 22,000 for the development of satellite sites across the city.
- Infrastructure costs of € 346,800, which includes monies for the physical development of the site and € 16,800 for the delivery of educational and training workshops related to the site.
- € 122,500 for staff costs towards the project.

Total funding awarded by the EU is € 660,375.

4.0 **Financial & Resource Implications**

There are no Financial & Resource Implications.

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

There are no direct equality and good relations implications.”

The Committee welcomed the report and said they looked forward to receiving regular updates.

After discussion, Committee noted the contents of the report.

Chairperson

Standards and Business Committee

Tuesday, 28th March, 2023

MEETING OF THE STANDARDS AND BUSINESS COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE LAVERY ROOM AND
REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

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

In attendance: Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor;
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer; and
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies for inability to attend were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 21st February 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 March.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Motions

The City Solicitor informed the Committee that six motions had been received in advance of the Council on 3rd April.

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

**Standards and Business Committee,
Tuesday, 28th March, 2023**

**50th Anniversary of Greenfinches
in Northern Ireland**

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Duffy,
Seconded by Councillor Ferguson;

“That the motion be rejected.”

Amendment

Moved by Councillor T. Kelly,
Seconded by Alderman Haire,

“That the Motion be referred to Council for debate, with no restrictions on the number of speakers.”

On a vote, nine Members voted for the amendment and nine against and, there being an equality of votes, the Chairperson cast the deciding vote in favour of the amendment.

The amendment was then put to the Committee as the substantive motion and accordingly agreed.

Police Service of Northern Ireland

That the Motion be referred to the Council for debate, with no restrictions on the number of speakers.

**Graffiti - Development of Memorandums
of Understanding**

That the motion be referred, in the first instance, to the People and Communities Committee.

Vaping

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Kyle,
Seconded by Councillor Hanvey;

“That the Standing Orders be set aside, and the Motion be referred to the Council for debate.”

**Standards and Business Committee,
Tuesday, 28th March, 2023**

On a vote, sixteen Members voted for the proposal and none against and it was declared carried.

Wilmont House

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

Rosetta Way "Quietway"

Proposal

Moved by Councillor de Faoite,
Seconded by Councillor Flynn;

“That the Motion be referred to Council for debate, with no restrictions on the number of speakers.”

Amendment

Moved by Councillor McCabe,
Seconded by Councillor R-M Donnelly,

“That the Motion be adopted.”

On a vote, six Members voted for the amendment and eleven against and it was declared lost.

Accordingly, the proposal standing in the name of Councillor de Faoite was put to the Committee as the substantive motion and agreed.

Chairperson

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50th Anniversary of Greenfinches in Northern Ireland

“That this Council recognises the 50th Anniversary of Greenfinches in Northern Ireland; remembers that on 6th July 1973 the Ulster Defence Regiment Bill permitted the recruitment of women into the Ulster Defence Regiment. Women were given the codeword ‘Greenfinch’ and defended Northern Ireland throughout the period known as ‘The Troubles’. We are forever grateful for their commitment and sacrifice.”

Proposer: Councillor Sarah Bunting

Seconder: Councillor Tracy Kelly

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Police Service of Northern Ireland

“That this Council expresses its full and unconditional support for the Police Service of Northern Ireland and stands with those officers who serve our community so magnificently on a daily basis.

We condemn the attempted murder of DCI John Caldwell and call upon anyone who can assist in the apprehension and conviction of those responsible, to come forward. We also condemn the series of subsequent threats to both serving officers and their families. These are abhorrent to all right thinking people and again we urge that anyone with information should come forward to the PSNI. Threats will not work.

We urge all those in our community who would consider policing as a career not to be deterred from pursuing this option, and that the united front of politicians following the aforementioned attack continue, to ensure that all necessary resources are in place to protect officers and their families.”

Proposer: Councillor Gareth Spratt

Seconder: Councillor Sammy Douglas

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Vaping

“Belfast faces a growing problem of vaping by children and young adults. These products are addictive, damaging to health and often contain illegal substances.

The legislation covering their sale is inadequate. While it is illegal to sell them to under 18s there is no registration of retailers, no restriction on the display of the products and no resources to identify illegal and harmful additives.

Some disposable vapes are designed to be attractive to children and many are discarded in the street posing an environmental and health risk.

In the face of a developing public health crisis this Council will convene a working group with other stakeholders, including the Department of Health, the Public Health Agency and the PSNI to consider measures to strengthen current legislation and enforcement, including the consideration of a ban on the sale of disposable vapes.

Furthermore, the Council will ban the use of vapes by under 18s in all its sites and premises.”

Proposer: Councillor John Kyle

Seconder: Councillor

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Rosetta Way – “quietway”

“Belfast City Council:

- Recognises that many neighbourhoods across the city suffer from the blight of congestion, poor air quality, commuter traffic, under investment in active travel measures and road safety issues;
- Recalls that the Council has already expressed its support for measures like School Streets and Low Traffic Neighbourhoods as well as the creation of a “quietway” linking Lagan Gateway to Cregagh Glen, through Cherryvale Playing Fields;
- Believes that a “quietway” through Rosetta - a “Rosetta Way” along with associated measures like active travel infrastructure, reduced speed limits, the closing up of rat runs, the installation of tree pits as chicanes could all help to reduce congestion, poor air quality, commuter traffic and road safety issues;
- Agrees to write to the Department for Infrastructure seeking an update on the agreed puffin crossing on the Knockbreda Road which would facilitate the opening of the pedestrian gate into Cherryvale and the creation of the Rosetta Way “quietway”;
- Further agrees to ask the Department for Infrastructure to draw up an action plan, in consultation with the Council and relevant local organisations and residents, to deliver the Rosetta Way “quietway” and tackle the challenges associated with congestion, poor air quality, commuter traffic and road safety issues in the area.

Proposer: Councillor Seamus de Faoite

Seconder: Councillor Gary McKeown

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