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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, City Hall, Belfast and via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday, 2nd May, 2023, immediately following the special Council meeting commencing at 6.00 p.m., for the transaction of the following business:

1. Summons
2. Apologies
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Minutes of the Council (Pages 1 - 8)
5. Official Announcements
6. Minutes of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee (Pages 9 - 48)
7. Minutes of People and Communities Committee (Pages 49 - 68)
8. Minutes of City Growth and Regeneration Committee (Pages 69 - 102)
9. Minutes of Licensing Committee (Pages 103 - 112)
10. Minutes of Planning Committee (Pages 113 - 130)
11. Minutes of Climate and City Resilience Committee (Pages 131 - 142)

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

Chief Executive

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Council

MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held in the Council Chamber, City Hall and remotely, via Microsoft Teams, on Monday, 3rd April, 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, Sandford and Rodgers;
and Councillors Beattie, Bower; Bradley, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, Matt Collins, , de Faoite, M. Donnelly, R. M. Donnelly, Doran, Douglas, Duffy, Ferguson, Flynn, Garrett, Gormley, Groogan, Hanvey, Heading, Hutchinson, Howard, Hussey, T. Kelly, Long, Lyons, Magee, Maghie, Maskey, McAteer, McCabe, McCann, McCullough, McCusker, McDonough-Brown, McKeown, McLaughlin, McMullan, Murphy, Murray, Nelson, Newton, O'Hara, Smyth, Spratt, Thompson, Verner, Walsh and Whyte.

Summons

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillor Michael Collins.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Groogan declared an interest in relation to the minute of the People and Communities Committee of 7th March, under the headings "Community Support Programme Additional Funding 2022/23" and "Timeframe for Reviews (Strategic Partners and Fuel Hardship)", on the basis that she was employed by Forward South Partnership.

Alderman Copeland and Councillors Gormley, Hutchinson, Thompson and Verner declared an interest in relation to the minute of the People and Communities Committee of 7th March, under the heading "Timeframe for Reviews (Strategic Partners and Fuel Hardship)", in that they worked for organisations which were Strategic Partners or were in receipt of Strategic Partner Funding.

Councillor R. M. Donnelly declared an interest in relation to the minute of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 24th March, under the heading "Contracts Update", on the basis that the organisation she worked for had applied for funding.

In relation to the agenda item 15.c) Motion on Vaping, Councillor McKeown declared an interest in that his work included smoking cessation and left the room whilst the item was being considered.

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Councillor Bower declared an interest in relation to the minutes of the Planning Committee of 14th March in that she was the property owner of a Planning Application of included in the minute.

Councillors Beattie, Lyons, McDonough-Brown and O'Hara declared an interest in in relation to the minute of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 24th March, under the heading "Asset Management", in that they were Council representatives on the Board of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners.

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 March be taken as read and signed as correct.

Official Announcements

Condolences

Councillor Garrett and Alderman Copeland paid tribute to Geraldine McKee, a renowned volunteer for older people and community campaigner, who had died recently. They praised her for her community and voluntary work and extended their condolences to her family and the wider community.

Councillor Howard condemned the Nashville school shooting attack of 27th March and extended her condolences for the victims and family members affected by the senseless act of violence.

Appeal

At the request of Councillor de Faoite, the Lord Mayor agreed to make an appeal to the Secretary of State, the Northern Ireland Office and the Department for Education in relation to the cuts that had been made which impacted young people and to convene an urgent meeting with the Department for Education and the relevant stakeholders of the Holiday Hunger Payments and Happy Healthy Minds scheme and youth services.

Congratulations

At the request of the Deputy Lord Mayor, the Lord Mayor agreed to forward a letter of congratulations to the Belfast Giants on winning their third Elite League title in a row and agreed to invite them to the City Hall for a Reception.

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Ice Hockey Event

The Chief Executive advised that a request had been received from the Odyssey Trust in relation to funding for a proposed Ice Hockey match between the Belfast Giants and a Ukrainian Team on 19th April. The Council agreed to delegate authority to the Chief Executive for the Council to provide a financial contribution of £10,000 for the event to be funded from existing departmental budgets.

Request to Film Proceedings

The Council approved a request which had been 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.

Minutes of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

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

That the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 24th March, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Amendment

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

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

That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 24th March, under the heading "Business Cluster and Community Grant Scheme Re-allocation" be rejected and, accordingly, the Council agrees that monies be reallocated and used towards the expansion of the kerbside glass recycling project.

On a vote, thirteen Members voted for the proposal and forty-six against and it was declared lost.

Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service

At the request of Councillor Ferguson, the Council agreed to the following addition to the decision: That the Council also commits to find funding from other funding resources, if the use of any in-year underspend does not cover the shortfall of up to £279,315 to fund the Citywide Tribunal Service in 2023/24.

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Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendments, the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 24th March, were approved and adopted.

Minutes of People and Communities Committee

Moved by Councillor Murray,
Seconded by Councillor McLaughlin and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 7th and 22nd March be approved and adopted.

Minutes of City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Moved by Councillor Murphy,
Seconded by Councillor McLaughlin,

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

**Request for Matter to be Taken
Back for Further Consideration**

Belfast Zoo - Fees and Charges

At the request of Councillor Ferguson and with the permission of the Council, the Chairperson (Councillor Murphy) agreed that the minute under the heading "Belfast Zoo - Fees and Charges" be taken back to the Committee for further consideration.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendments, the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 8th March, were approved and adopted.

Minutes of Licensing Committee

Moved by Councillor Matt Collins,
Seconded by Councillor Hutchinson and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Licensing Committee of 15th March, 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 Planning Committee of 14th and 16th, omitting matters in respect of which the

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Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

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

Moved by Councillor Maghie,
Seconded by Councillor Howard and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Ltd. Shareholders' Committee of 13th March, be approved and adopted.

Minutes of Climate and City Resilience Committee

Moved by Councillor Walsh,
Seconded by Councillor McCabe and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Climate and City Resilience Committee of 9th March be approved and adopted.

Minutes of Standards and Business Committee

Moved by Councillor Harvey,
Seconded by Councillor McCabe and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Standards and Business Committee of 28th March, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted

Motions

50th Anniversary of Greenfinches in Northern Ireland

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

“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.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor T. Kelly

The Council agreed to vote on the motion, when twenty-nine Members voted for the motion and twenty-six against, with four no votes and it was declared carried.

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Police Service of Northern Ireland

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

“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.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Douglas.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Ferguson,
Seconded by Councillor Matt Collins,

That the motion standing in the name of Councillor Spratt and seconded by Councillor Douglas be amended as follows:

To delete the first and concluding paragraph and edit the middle paragraph to replace it with the following: ***“Violence inflicted down the barrel of the gun has no place on our streets and will only bring more pain, heartache and suffering. Paramilitaries who carry out violent attacks do so against the wishes of the vast majority of people, and against their communities. The Council therefore condemns the attempted murder of DCI John Caldwell and the subsequent threats to other officers and families which are futile and senseless; and calls for an immediate cessation of all paramilitary activity.”***

The motion, as amended, therefore read:

“Violence inflicted down the barrel of the gun has no place on our streets and will only bring more pain, heartache and suffering. Paramilitaries who carry out violent attacks do so against the wishes of the vast majority of people, and against their communities.

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The Council therefore condemns the attempted murder of DCI John Caldwell and the subsequent threats to other officers and families which are futile and senseless; and calls for an immediate cessation of all paramilitary activity."

The Council agreed to vote on the amended motion, when thirty Members voted for the motion and twenty-eight against and it was declared carried.

Accordingly, the motion as amended was put to the Council as the substantive motion and passed.

Vaping

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

"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."

The motion was seconded by Councillor Lyons.

The motion was put to the meeting and passed.

Rosetta Way – "quietway"

In accordance with notice on the agenda, Councillor de Faoite proposed:

"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;

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- 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.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor McKeown.

The motion was put to the meeting and passed.

Lord Mayor
Chairperson

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 21st April, 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, Garrett, Groogan,
Long, Lyons, McLaughlin, McMullan, Murphy, Spratt,
Thompson, Verner and Walsh.

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

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of the Chairperson (Councillor McDonough-Brown) and Councillor Ferguson.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 24th March were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council, at its meeting on 3rd April, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

Declarations of Interest

Alderman Haire declared an interest in relation to agenda item 2i – Request for the use of Barnett Demesne and the Cenotaph, on the basis that he was a Trustee of the County Grand Orange Lodge of Belfast and left the meeting whilst it was under consideration.

B4525

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Councillor Beattie declared an interest in relation to agenda item 2g - Community Support Programme, in that the organisation for which he worked was a recipient and left the meeting whilst it was being discussed.

Councillor Bunting declared an interest in relation to agenda item 2e – Summer Community Diversionary Festivals Programme, on the basis that she acted as the secretary to the Belvoir Area Residents' Group, which had applied for funding through one of the applicants and left the meeting whilst it was being considered.

Councillor Groogan declared an interest in relation to agenda item 2g – Community Support Programme and item 2h – Micro and Medium Grants, in that the organisation for which she worked was a potential beneficiary and left the meeting whilst they were being discussed.

Councillor Thompson declared an interest in relation to agenda item 2h – Micro and Medium Grants 2023/24, on the basis that she was on the Board of the Shankill Women's Centre and left the meeting for the duration of that item.

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.

**Appointment of Deputy Chief Executive/
Strategic Director of Corporate Services**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 16th December, it had approved the recruitment of the post of Deputy Chief Executive/Strategic Director of Corporate Services on a permanent basis.

The Chief Executive provided details of the recruitment and selection process and confirmed that Mrs. Sharon McNicholl had been appointed to the post.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

**Update on Organisational Reviews
and Change Programme**

The Committee noted the contents of a report providing a quarterly update on the progress of the Organisational Reviews and Change Portfolio and indicative timescales.

**Update on Employees on Temporary
Contracts and Agency Workers**

The Director of Human Resources submitted for the Committee's consideration a report providing an update on the number of employees on temporary contracts and agency assignees engaged by the Council and outlining the steps being taken to reduce the Council's reliance on these two categories.

She reported that, at 31st March, 215 staff had been filling posts on a temporary basis, 138 of whom had substantive Council posts to return to when no longer required. The other 77 were Fixed Term Contract employees who did not have a substantive post to return to. 279 agency assignees had been engaged by the Council on that date, with the increase of four on the previous quarter being attributed to the need for additional seasonal cover at Belfast Zoo over the Easter period. She then provided details on the projected cost of using agency assignees for the period from January to March, 2023 and pointed out this did not represent an additional financial burden on the Council, as it was met through vacant posts and underspends.

She reported further that a Corporate Contract Manager, who been appointed to manage, challenge and control agency usage across all Departments, had been in post since 6th February and was now establishing regular compliance and challenge meetings. In addition, data on agency usage was being assessed, with a view to examining the potential for creating a pool of permanent peripatetic posts to provide greater flexibility in terms of covering, for example, career breaks, long-term sickness, maternity leave and seasonal fluctuations.

The Director went on to remind the Committee that it had, at its meeting on 21st October, granted approval to engage an external consultant to undertake a feasibility study on the potential for establishing an in-house agency. A procurement exercise was now underway, the outcome of which would be reported to the Committee in due course.

After discussion, during which the Director of Human Resources undertook to circulate to Members a breakdown of the costs associated with using agency assignees, the Committee noted the contents of the report.

**Update on City Centre Public
Realm Catalyst Projects**

(Mr. S. Dolan, Senior Development Manager, City Regeneration and Development Unit, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered a report providing an update on the status of the secured financial developer contributions aligned to public realm and pedestrian crossings and adopted the recommendations to:

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- i. commit secured developer contributions totalling £1,298,000 to progress the Little Patrick Street and Little York Street Public Realm Improvement Works and the upgrade of the Lancaster Street Entrance Gateway;
- ii. commit secured developer contributions totalling £615,375 to progress the Blackstaff Square Area Public Realm Improvement Works, in conjunction with the Department for the Communities; and
- iii. noted that a report on a review of the Developer Contribution Framework would be submitted to a future meeting.

Summer Community Diversionary Festivals Programme

The Director of Neighbourhood Services submitted for the Committee's consideration a report providing details of the initial assessment of applications which had been received under the Summer Community Diversionary Festivals Programme for 2023 and seeking approval to award funding. The report provided details also of the eligibility criteria, the two-stage eligibility assessment process and the overall process.

July Programme

For the July programme, for which £250,000 was available, eight applications had been received, with a total funding request of £409,521, which was an oversubscription of £159,521.

He provided a brief summary of the projects and officer scores for Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the assessment process and pointed out that, after allocations had been made to those organisations which had passed both stages, £47,745 remained within the budget for the Committee's consideration.

August Programme

Three applications had been received for the August programme, for which £250,000 was available. He provided details of the projects and officer scores for Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the assessment process and confirmed that the total amount being requested was £256,935, which was an oversubscription of £6,935. To address this, it was proposed that the organisations would be allocated the same amount as in 2022, totalling £250,000.

Accordingly, the Committee:

- i. agreed to award funding for the 2023 Summer Community Diversionary Festivals Programme as set out below, with any funding awarded being subject to further engagement with groups and an analysis of projects and associated budgets, in line with the Council's due diligence procedures, including any outstanding financial and monitoring returns in respect of other Council funding and funding not to be awarded until approved contracts are issued and signed;

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July Programme

Group	Overview of Project	Award 2023
Twaddell and Woodvale Residents' Association	Events in Woodvale park and other local venues from June and July. These will include a community cultural activity programme, diversionary youth work and three large scale musical events	100,000
Charter NI	Youth work, community, cultural, creative art and sporting events 4th – 12th July promoting heritage, educating on broader cultural contexts, and showcasing local artists	41,170
EastSide Partnership (Eastival)	Programme of music and community events 7th – 9th July. Including large scale community event CS Lewis and Ballymacarrett walkway This project will work with youth practitioners to identify relevant young people.	61,085
Total		202,255

August Programme

Group	Overview of Project	Award 2023
Feile (Feile August Diversionary Dance Night)	Delivery of a free Dance music event as part of Feile on 8th August and ongoing targeted outreach work in partnership with local community groups across Belfast. A community event will also take place in Distillery Street	100,000
Feile (South and East Summer Diversionary Intervention Programme)	Delivery of outreach and diversionary work during the summer, in the lead up to 8th August. Headline two-day community festival on the Lagan walkway and river 6th – 7th August and music event St. George's Market.	75,000
Ashton Community Trust	Delivery of a number of diversionary outreach activities and community and sporting events (including boxing event) in the lead up to 8th August	75,000
Total		250,000

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- ii. agreed, given the timescale for events, that officers engage with groups in advance of decisions on allocations and budgets being ratified by the Council on 2nd May;
- iii. agreed that groups in receipt of funding be also asked to work with an appointed external consultant with event management expertise to ensure that they had the necessary procedures in place to run events, in line with Health and Safety and legal requirements;
- iv. granted approval for those organisations being funded to use the Council's Parks for their event or activity and delegated authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to negotiate satisfactory terms and conditions of use, via an appropriate legal agreement prepared by the City Solicitor, including managing final booking confirmation dates and flexibility around 'set up' and take down' periods and booking amendments, subject to:
 - the completion of an appropriate management plan; and
 - the promoter resolving any operational issues to the satisfaction of the Council and meeting all the statutory requirements of the Planning and Building Control Service, including the terms and conditions of the Park's Entertainment Licence; and
- v. agreed, in terms of allocating the underspend of £47,745 in the July Programme, that Council officers would, in the first instance, meet with the five unsuccessful groups to discuss their requirements in terms of capacity building, with the outcome to be presented to a special meeting of the Committee;
- vi. agreed that a review be undertaken of the Summer Community Diversionary Festivals Programme moving forward; and
- vii. noted that the Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services would provide a Member with clarification directly on an issue which he had raised around the equality screening process referred to within the report.

Update on the Beacon Programme

The Director of Neighbourhood Services submitted for the Committee's consideration a report providing an update on the provision of beacons for 2023, as an alternative to traditional bonfires over the 12th of July period.

He explained that the programme, which was open only to constituted community/voluntary groups, had been in existence for over fifteen years and that it had,

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in 2019, been extended to provide sixteen groups with a beacon. However, in 2022, due to ongoing issues associated with the pandemic, only eight had been allocated.

He went on to recommend to the Committee that officers contact those eight groups to determine if they wished to avail of a beacon in 2023, as well as four others which had expressed an interest. That would bring to twelve the number of beacons to be allocated, should all groups accept and conditions be met. He recommended also that, should any of those groups decide not to avail of a beacon, it be allocated on a first come first served basis where Members or constituted groups had expressed an interest.

The Director then provided details of the cost of storage, assessment, repair and fill of beacons for 2022/23. He pointed out that the current budget allocation for the Beacon Programme was £72,000, which included a contribution of £15,000 from the Executive Office, through its District Council Good Relations Programme. However, as no Executive budget was in place in 2023/24 for that Programme, its contribution could not be guaranteed at this stage. He explained that, in a scenario in which twelve beacons were required and the Executive Office's contribution was not forthcoming, the Council would be required to provide additional funding of between £20k and £25k through the alignment of existing budgets.

The Committee noted the contents of the report and adopted the recommendations in terms of prospective participants in this year's programme.

Community Support Programme

The Director of Neighbourhood Services informed the Members that the People and Communities Committee, at its meeting on 4th April, had agreed to refer to this Committee for consideration a report on the Community Support Programme.

He reminded them that the Department for Communities provided an annual grant to the Council to help deliver the Council's Community Support Programme. On 27th March, the Council had received correspondence from the Permanent Secretary of that Department advising of the potential for reductions in his final 2023/24 budget allocation due to the pressures being faced at a Northern Ireland Block Grant level. The Permanent Secretary had, in response to concerns raised by the sector and to alleviate some of the pressures being faced by organisations, taken a decision to provide a level of support to sustain services and posts. That support would cover the three-month period up to 30th June, 2023, with the allocations being based on the 2022/23 budget settlement.

The Director went on to outline the impact which the aforementioned decision would have upon the various grants which were funded through the Community Support Programme and recommended that the Committee:

- i. approve the offer of an initial contract of six months and 50% payment to those organisations funded via the Revenue for Community Buildings, Capacity Building and Advice Grants, as set out within the report;

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- ii. approve the full allocation of the planned identified budget towards Summer Scheme Grants, at risk, and Micro/Medium Grants, as set out within the report;
- iii. approve the offer of a three-month contract to the five organisations which the Department for Communities directly funded via the Welfare Reform Mitigation Face to Face funds, as set out within the report; and
- iv. note that a further report would be submitted to its meeting in August detailing the proposed arrangements for second payments, pending formal notification/confirmation of the remaining Community Support Programme allocation for 2023/24.

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations, with the exception of the approval of Micro/Medium Grants funding, which it was agreed would be considered in the context of the report on the yearly underspend to be submitted to its meeting in June.

Micro and Medium Grants 2023/24

The Committee noted that it had, as part of the previous agenda item, agreed to defer consideration of the allocation of micro and medium grants funding to enable it to be considered in the context of the report on the yearly underspend to be submitted to its meeting in June.

Request for the use of Barnett Demesne and the Cenotaph

The Director of Neighbourhood Services reported that the Council had received from the County Grand Orange Lodge of Belfast a request for the use of the Cenotaph in the grounds of the City Hall on the morning of 12th July for a Service of Remembrance and of Barnett Demesne later that day for its annual Belfast demonstration.

The Committee acceded to the request and delegated authority to the relevant Directors to negotiate satisfactory terms and conditions of use, via an appropriate legal agreement prepared by the City Solicitor, including managing final booking confirmation dates and flexibility around 'set up' and take down' periods and booking amendments, subject to the promoter:

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- resolving any operational issues to the satisfaction of the Council and meeting all the statutory requirements of the Planning and Building Control Service, including the terms and conditions of Barnett Park's Entertainment Licence.

Asset Management

Unit 3, St. George's Market

The Committee approved the surrender of a lease for Unit 3, St George's Market and agreed that a portion of the rental arrears accrued, equating to £13,450, be written off, in accordance with Section K12 of the Council's Financial Regulations.

North Foreshore

The Committee approved the granting of a licence to John Graham Construction Limited for land at the North Foreshore to be used as a contractor compound for the storage of materials, with the Council to receive £1,000 + VAT per month for the duration of the agreement.

8 - 9 Donegall Square North

The Committee agreed to extend the current Management Agreement with Visit Belfast for premises leased by the Council at 8 - 9 Donegall Square North for a period of one year from 16th July, 2023 and on a year-to-year basis thereafter, until a date no later than 15th July, 2028, in line with the expiry of the lease.

IFA-DCMS Funding Applications

The Director of Neighbourhood Services submitted for the Committee's consideration a report providing information on an opportunity which had been presented by the opening of the Irish Football Association/Department for Culture, Media and Sport's 2023 – 25 Grassroots Facilities Investment Fund and seeking approval in relation to two applications.

He pointed out that the Fund, which would target large capital projects and have a pitch proposal at its core, was open to councils, football clubs, association football-focused sports community organisations, association football-focused charitable organisations and schools/ colleges/ universities. The Fund had opened on 6th April, with £2 million being made available for 2023/24 and £3.59 million in 2024/25. However, there had been only one call for applications, which meant that the imminent deadline of 4th May applied regardless of the year in which the funding was intended for use.

He then provided details of the main objectives and key criteria governing the Investment Fund and on the two proposed projects.

After discussion, during which a Member highlighted the urgent need to address gaps in pitch provision across the City, the Committee:

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- i. granted approval for the Council to submit an application to the Grassroots Facilities Investment Fund for an upgrade of the current polymeric MUGA at Woodvale Park to a 3G surface, along with an upgrade of the existing floodlighting;
- ii. noted the proposal which had been received from Crusaders Football Club for a project on the former shale pitch at Loughside Playing Fields which it wished to submit to the Grassroots Facilities Investment Fund under the funding stream and agreed, given the timeframe for the application process, that the club proceed with a submission in which it would act as the applicant and that the Council enter into a lease agreement with the Club, subject to funding approval and full due diligence, which officers would commence immediately; and
- iii. agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting providing information on those football clubs which had submitted expressions of interest for funding for projects on Council assets but had not been recommended for submission on the basis that they would not meet the eligibility criteria.

Governance

**Governance Arrangements for
the New Council 2023-27**

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 To consider the governance arrangements to apply for the new Council term commencing in 2023.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is requested to consider the issues set out in the report and agree the governance arrangements for the new Council term.

In particular, Members are asked to agree to continuing with the following arrangements:

- i. to operate with a traditional Committee structure;
- ii. to allocate positions of responsibility using the D’hondt method;

- iii. to allocate Committee places using the quota greatest remainder method;
- iv. the current standing Committees to remain the same, save for reviewing the membership numbers of Planning and BUWHL Shareholder Committees;
- v. 9 political appointments to be made to the PCSP and DPCSPs using D'hondt method from the bottom up;
- vi. to agree the arrangements for Working Groups as set out in the report; and
- vii. appointment to Outside Bodies using the Sainte Lague method.

Main Report

Background

At the meeting of the new Council following the Local Government Elections in May, it will be necessary to agree the new Council's governance arrangements for the period 2023-27.

In order for the proper arrangements to be made, including meetings with the Nominating Officers of the Parties returned after the elections, in advance of the Annual Meeting of the new Council on 5th June, it is now necessary for decisions to be made.

Key Issues

1. Council Governance Arrangements

The Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 provides for a number of types of governance arrangements, namely:

- Traditional committee arrangements (default position)
- Executive model

In 2014 and 2019, the Council adopted a Constitution which, amongst other things, agreed the default governance arrangements prescribed in the 2014 Act namely:

- Traditional Committee system
- Positions of responsibility selected using the D'hondt model

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- Committee places allocated using the quota greatest remainder model

Adoption of an alternative arrangement requires a qualified majority vote (80%).

Looking forward to the new Council term, should the Council agree to continue with the existing arrangements as set out in the Council Constitution, then the decision-making process requires a simple majority vote to do so.

Decision Required:

- Do members wish to continue with existing governance arrangements that is, a traditional committee system?

Please note that a mini governance review is underway in relation to the remit of Committees, Standing Orders etc. and a report is likely to be presented to the new Council in September.

2. Standing Committees

The Council currently has established seven Standing Committees which promote cross-departmental and thematic working across the organisation supporting the delivery of the Belfast Agenda and the developing process of Outcomes Based Accountability:

Committee	Number of Members	Responsibility
Strategic Policy and Resources	20	Responsible for setting the strategic direction of the Council through the development of its corporate plan and other key corporate and cross cutting strategies and policies and for setting the budget overseeing the appropriate use of Council finances.
City Growth and Regeneration	20	Responsible for the development and implementation of strategies, policies, programmes and projects directed to the regeneration and inclusive growth of the city.
People and Communities	20	Responsible for the development and implementation of strategies,

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		policies, programmes, services and projects aimed at improving life at a local level.
Licensing	20	Delegated responsibility for the consideration of all matters pertaining to policy and legislation in relation to licensing issues save for those matters reserved to full Council.
Planning	14	Delegated responsibility for all the Council's planning functions, save for those matters reserved to full Council.
Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders'	14	Responsible for making the decisions required by the Shareholders' Agreement and ensure that the Company complies with the contract for the operation of the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Halls.
Climate and City Resilience	20	Responsible for the political oversight of the resilience strategy for Belfast, Brexit and establishing links and collaborating with relevant authorities and organisations on a North/South and East/West basis and connections with Europe.
Standards and Business	20	Responsible for the promotion of standards and conduct of councillors and the improvement of processes in relation to the bringing of business before the Council.

Decisions Required:

- Do we wish to continue with these Committees?
- Do we wish to maintain the current remit of each Committee?
- Do we wish to continue with these Committees with the same numbers of Members?

It should be noted that, during the current Council term, Members have suggested that the number of Members on each

of the Committees should be equal, with all Committees having 20 Members.

3. Annual Review of Committee Membership

In the current Council term, members were appointed to the Committees for one-year terms and reappointed at each Annual Meeting. This allows for any changes in political affiliation which can occur during a council term to be accounted for. The City Solicitor believes this to be in keeping both the spirit and intent of the 2014 Act.

Decision Required:

- Would Members be supportive of retaining a one-year committee membership term?

4. Method of Appointing Positions of Responsibility, including PCSP and DPCSPs

The positions of responsibility include the Lord Mayor, Deputy Lord Mayor, Committee Chairpersons and Deputy Chairpersons, some prescribed outside bodies and the Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) and the four District Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (DPCSPs). In dealing with the appointments of members to the PCSP and DPCSPs, the Council needs to ensure that the appointments are made in accordance with not only the LGA 2014 but also the Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and are considered as part of the allocation of positions of responsibility.

The solution, which was agreed by all parties in 2015 - 2019, was that the appointments to the PCSP and DPCSPs were made by allocating those parties' D'hondt choices from the bottom up. Therefore, the parties' earlier choices for positions of responsibility were not adversely affected by the requirements of the Justice Act as to how the appointments to the PCSP and DPCSPs had to be made.

A separate decision is also required in relation to the size of the main Policing and Community Safety Partnership. The Justice Act provides that the Council may appoint 8, 9 or 10 Political Members to the PCSP. The number of Independent Members is then set at one less than the number of Political Members. The Justice Act also provides that each DPCSP must have 6 Political and 5 Independent Members so no decision is required with regard to the DPCSP size. In 2015-2019, the Council agreed to appoint 9 Political Members to the PCSP, resulting in a membership of 17 in total (9 political and 8 independent members).

Decisions Required:

- Are we content to again employ the solution with regard to the Positions of Responsibility in 2023?
- Are we happy to again appoint 9 Political Members to the PCSP?

5. Appointment of Working Groups

The Council decided to appoint a number of Working Groups in 2019, with a number of additional groups established throughout the Council term. These Working Groups are not specified in the 2014 Act and the Council is free to establish as many as it so wishes and use whatever mechanism it sees fit to appoint members to them.

The following is a list of the 16 Working Groups which the Council has currently:

Current Working Group	Main Role(s)
All Party Working Group on the city Centre	Acts as a reference panel for the wider development and regeneration of city centre
Audit and Risk Panel	It provides an independent and high-level focus on the audit, assurance and reporting arrangements that underpin good governance and financial standards.
Castle, Cavehill, Zoo and North Foreshore Steering Group	The remit of this Group is to oversee the management of the North Foreshore, especially in regard to policy, resource allocation and financial risk of future development at the site.
Community Planning Working Group	Provides recommendations on the strategic direction and political input to the community planning process within Belfast
Disability Working Group	To discuss the progress and implementation of the Belfast City Council Disability Action Plan 2022-2025 and ensure alignment with the Council's Disability Strategy

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<p>East Area Working Group North Area Working Group South Area Working Group West Area Working Group</p>	<p>To enable and ensure that the socio-economic conditions and needs of local people, areas and communities are given due consideration with respect to the delivery of our plans, services and projects.</p>
<p>Installations – City Hall/City Hall Grounds Working Group</p>	<p>Consider and provide recommendations relating to City Hall and its grounds ensuring these are reflective of the principles set out in the EQIA whilst ensuring compliance with City Hall’s status as a Grade 1 Listed Building.</p>
<p>Language Strategy Working Group</p>	<p>To provide elected members with a forum to discuss the impact of the languages in the Strategy across the above areas of work.</p>
<p>Party Leaders’ Consultative Forum</p>	<p>To receive briefings and updates on the Council’s programmes of work relating to the Belfast Agenda priorities. Council’s Corporate Plan and associated programmes of work.</p> <p>To introduce complex or sensitive reports/issues or proposed reports prior to committee or to discuss issues arising from committees/Council</p> <p>To receive information on oversight of the Council’s finances and discuss future rates setting.</p> <p>To receive and consider complex or sensitive information prior to decision making through committee and Council.</p> <p>To raise sensitive resource (particularly human resource) issues</p>

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	To receive and discuss proposals relating to governance arrangements.
Reference Group on Older People	To provide political direction and input to the development of the city planning process for improving the health, wellbeing and independence of older people within Belfast
Shared City Partnership	To assist the elected political leadership of the Council, staff, diverse civil society interests and partnering agencies to engage pro-actively on all Good Relations issues on behalf of citizens and be a collective voice, promoting a common vision for Good Relations in the City.
Social Policy Working Group	Oversee the creation of a robust and ambitious approach for the integration of social value through the Councils procurement processes, with consideration given to financial affordability, legal implications and the maximisation of impact.
Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Working Group	To support cemetery and crematorium development and improvement of bereavement services for Belfast.

It is proposed that the decision to re-establish the working groups as outlined above is taken during the new Council term, except for the following, which approval is sought from the Committee to appoint from the beginning of the new Council term:

- **Audit and Risk Panel** - the panel is well established working group and, during June, before the meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee considers quite a number of reports, including the Council's Statement of Accounts and it would be beneficial to the decision-making process to have this in place.

- Shared City Partnership – Again another established group which includes representation from many outside organisations. The Partnership deals with many funding issues, including PEACE IV. The Group last met on 27th March and be preferable to agree to its establishment from the start of the new Council term.

Decision required:

- Would Members be supportive of the proposals as outlined above?
- In line with previous Council policy, to appoint 1 Member from each of the Parties on the Council, with a Party being defined as having 2 or more Members.

6. Process for Nomination for High Sheriff

The current Council agreed to use a separate D'hondt process to decide which Parties would be entitled to nominate a person for consideration for appointment as High Sheriff for each year of the Council term. This process sits outside the positions of responsibility process as the appointment is made by the Secretary of State.

Decision Required:

- Do we wish to use this process again from 2023?

7. Appointment to Outside Bodies

There are a number of appointments to Outside Bodies. In 2019, the Council decided to use the Sainte Lague method to make these appointments. A report on the appointments to be made would be presented to the first meeting of the new SP and R Committee in June.

Decision required:

- Do we wish to use this method again or the more common D'hondt method?

Financial and Resource Implications

None at this stage

3.10 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

None at this stage.”

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After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations, with the number of Members on the Planning Committee and the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee to be increased from fourteen to twenty.

Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues

(Mrs. D. Colville, City Innovation Manager, attended in connection with the following two items.)

Update on Belfast Smart District Programme

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with an update on the development of the Belfast Smart District programme, including the commencement of a first phase to leverage and maximise innovation opportunities for the city, communities and businesses building on the new Weavers Cross regeneration.**
- 1.2 The report seeks the Committee's approval for a number of the programme's first initiatives.**

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:**
- i note the rationale for an urban innovation accelerator at Weavers Cross, the four proposed objectives and the near term opportunities;**
 - ii approve a letter of support for the £10m Belfast bid to the UKRI Net Zero Mobility Hub for a Resilient Future;**
 - iii approve development work with Ulster University and others on a health innovation hub proposal at Weavers Cross;**
 - iv note the development of CODI and plans to develop a funding bid that may include Smart Dublin as a partner;**
 - v note the work on a potential £10 million bid to DSIT's Open Network Ecosystem competition. Members are asked to approve in advance Council's role in any bid, with details to be shared and approved at June Committee; and**

vi approve the proposed governance and resourcing arrangements for the Urban Innovation Accelerator.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 The Smart Belfast urban innovation framework (2022 to 2026) was approved by Committee in November 2022. The aim of the framework is to foster greater collaborative innovation between government (both local and regional), industry, SMEs, academia, and our communities. Smart Belfast is about encouraging these partners to work together to harness the power of digital technologies to develop policy solutions to urban challenges.

3.2 The agreed framework places great emphasis on the importance of ‘place’ for urban innovation and the role of the Belfast Smart District (an area that is geographically coterminous with the city centre). The Smart District is about grounding urban innovation initiatives in ‘real-world’ opportunities in which they can be developed, tested, and scaled.

3.3 A compelling opportunity that falls within the Smart District is the Weavers Cross regeneration. Cities across the world have used similar large-scale transport regeneration schemes as a catalyst for a wider urban innovation and economic growth (eg, London’s Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, King’s Cross, and Dublin’s Smart Docklands). A multi-partner innovation urban accelerator at Weavers Cross has the potential to radically accelerate Belfast’s Smart District ambitions. Such an urban innovation accelerator will leverage the planned investments by Translink and its partners to generate significant additionality for the wider city, communities, SMEs and both local universities.

3.4 Staff from the Council’s City Innovation Office have been developing a joint proposition with Translink, industry partners and our universities to map out what such an accelerator would look like; the immediate opportunities that it can bring to Belfast; and the steps required to deliver it. It is proposed that the Urban Accelerator would have four main objectives:

- i** Supporting urban place-making in our city centre;
- ii** Fostering inclusive innovation for communities;
- iii** Supporting economic growth through innovation; and
- iv** Encouraging next generation digital Infrastructure.

3.5 The proposition has proven immediately attractive to partners, funders, industry and researchers. There are already a number of immediate opportunities that have the potential of bringing substantial funding directly to the City:

(a) Net Zero Mobility Hub for a Resilient Future

3.6 Queen's University is working with city partners including the Council on a £10 million bid to URKI to establish a national Net Zero Mobility Hub at Weavers Cross. This would establish a UK research hub in our city centre to support collaborative innovation between the universities, industry and government. Members are asked to agree to our continuing involvement and to providing an letter of support for the bid from the Council.

(b) Health Innovation Health Hub

3.7 The City Innovation Office and Weavers Cross partners are working with Ulster University to develop a proposal that aims to accelerate innovation for the city's high growth medtech companies. The Weavers Cross location is an idea location, both in terms of easy access to travellers passing through the new station, and also its close links to inner city communities (Markets, Donegall Pass, Sandy Row, and Lower Falls). There is an opportunity to avail of a 'meanwhile use' location for healthcare professionals, SMEs and university researchers to trial innovative health care technologies with local communities and travellers. Ulster University are exploring funding opportunities and there is the potential to grow this to a multi-city, cross border proposition. Members are asked to approve work with Ulster on the development of this proposal.

(c) Citizens Opportunities for Digital Innovation (CODI)

3.8 CODI is a key strand of work in the new Smart Belfast framework. Successful urban collaborative innovation requires the direct involvement of 'end users' (ie, the individuals and communities that live and work in the city) in the development of new public services and programmes. CODI recognises that there are a core set of capabilities and resources that communities must have to order to collaborate meaningfully on such end-user co-design. The ambition is to work with our academic partners and others to create a shared resource that would be available to any city partner working with communities on innovation projects.

3.9 Weavers Cross presents an opportunity to develop CODI with local communities focused on local challenges particularly in relation to neighbourhood health and urban mobility.

- 3.10 Members are asked to note the City Innovation Office is currently developing a funding proposal to support this community programme and has been engaging extensively with partners including the potential of building shared resources with Smart Dublin which is developing a similar approach to working with communities in inner city Dublin.

(d) SME Mobility Innovation Zone

- 3.11 This zone would be a managed environment that allows SMEs to develop and trial innovative solutions with an initial focus on mobility and on health. Connected Places Catapult have developed a similar approach with Network Rail and University of Bristol at Bristol Temple Meads and there is strong evidence that it could be successfully replicated here in Belfast for our companies. The City Innovation Office is exploring opportunities to leverage Belfast Region City Deal funding to support SME involvement in such a zone.

(e) Open Network Ecosystem (ONE) Competition

- 3.12 On 27th March, DSIT opened a £80 million competition to deploy and trial Open RAN technologies in urban environments. The aim of the competition is to help diversify the UK's mobile equipment supplier base by inviting new vendors to run their technologies in the real world. This is an opportunity for Belfast to demonstrate that it is an ideal location for digital innovation, while at the same time deploying some of the most advanced wireless technologies in the world.
- 3.13 DSIT has indicated that they will make up to £10 million available per location and are particularly interested in demonstrators at high demand locations such as transport hubs. (Weavers Cross will deal with over 20 million passengers each year.)
- 3.14 The City Innovation Office has convened discussions with BT, Translink, Queen's University, and Digital Catapult UK. There is broad agreed that most of the elements for a strong Northern Ireland bid are present; however, any bid will be complex and the timeline for submission (24 May) is a challenging one. Members are asked to note that exploratory work will continue on this bid. Given that there is no SPR committee in May, Members are asked to approve in advance Council's role in any bid, with details to be shared and approved at the Committee meeting in June.

- 3.15 The City Innovation Office is exploring collaboration with industry and university partners on an 'urban data and AI lab' that would bring the latest in AI and data analytics to our city that would be accessible to SMEs, researchers, and public bodies. This would seek to manage and explore large quantities of urban data to support better decision-making and development of new innovative products and services for transport, climate programmes, etc. A proposal will be presented to the Committee meeting in June.

Making It Work

- 3.16 Members should note that if the projects described above were to proceed, the Weavers Cross urban innovation accelerator would attract over £25 million of urban innovation funding to the city. The approach will continue be driven by third-party funding opportunities and in-kind contributions with the expectation that there will be limited resources elsewhere. The Council's City Innovation Office will support the development and delivery of the Programme and draw upon the Smart District budget allocated previously agreed by Committee.
- 3.17 A group, jointly chaired by officers from the City Innovation Office, Belfast City Council and Translink and including a range of city partners, will act as a formal Urban Innovation Accelerator board to drive this work. The board would seek approval from each of its respective partner organisations on any new proposals and opportunities. Members are asked to approve the involvement of Belfast City Council officers on this board and note the role of the City Innovation Office in supporting its work.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.18 As noted in the body of the report individual initiatives will proceed based on a mix of funding and co-investment from partners.
- 3.19 Resourcing costs for programme development and delivery have been identified in the existing City Innovation team budget.
- 3.20 Resources for activities associated with the Belfast Region City Deal will be subject to business case development through the city deal process.

Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.21 A public consultation and Equality Screening was previously carried out as part of the full consultation process on the Smart Belfast Urban Innovation Framework.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

UK - Republic of Korea Innovation Twins Programme and Council of Global City Chief Innovation Officers Visit to Belfast

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

UK-Republic of Korea Innovation Twins Programme

- 1.1 To update the Committee on the UK and Republic of Korea Innovation Twins programme and plans for the next phase of the programme which includes:

- developing and implementing a roadmap to support collaboration on smart city initiatives, economic development and bi-lateral trade between Belfast and the city of Sejong;
- signing an MOU/friendly, cooperative agreement to support opportunities for city-to-city collaboration;
- an invitation to the City Innovation team to lead an Innovation Twinning Programme development visit to Sejong with costs covered by BEIS/Connected Places Catapult (CPC); and
- an invitation to host the Mayor, Choi Min-ho and a delegation from Sejong during their visit to Belfast in August 2023.

Council of Global City CIOs

- 1.2 To update Members on the Council of Global City Chief Innovation Officers visit to Belfast on 23rd May 2023.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:

UK-Republic of Korea Innovation Twins Programme

- (i) note the invitation for the City Innovation Office to lead on a visit to Sejong and support the further development of a roadmap to develop collaborative, co-investment opportunities;
- (ii) approve the request for a letter of invitation to the Mayor of Sejong to visit Belfast in August 2023; and
- (iii) approve the request for Lord Mayor to meet and host a reception for the Mayor of Sejong and the signing of an MOU in August 2023

Council of Global City CIOs

- (iv) note the CCGC event taking place on 23 May 2023;
- (v) note the attendance of the Lord Mayor at the event; and
- (vi) approve the Council's membership of the CGCC.

3.0 Main Report

UK-Republic of Korea Innovation Twins Programme

- 3.1 Members will be aware from previous update reports of the Council's participation in the '*UK-Republic of Korea Innovation Twins*' programme¹ which was set up by the Connected Places Catapult and funded by BEIS and UKRI.
- 3.2 The programme aims to build relationships between smart cities with high potential for accelerating long term R and I collaborations and generating opportunities for trade and FDI. Following Committee approval for participation in the programme in 2021, a Statement of Intent was agreed to promote collaboration on the first of the programme up to the end of March 2023.
- 3.3 While not legally binding, the Statement sets out areas of shared interest based on discussion with a range of city partners, to form the basis for cooperation between Sejong and Belfast. These include smart cities, medtech, cyber security, fintech, academic, educational and cultural cooperation,

¹ <https://cp.catapult.org.uk/project/uk-republic-of-korea-innovation-twins-programme>

economic development and opportunities for bilateral trade and investment.

- 3.4 During the initial phase of the programme, we received £100,000 funding which enabled eight local companies to avail of training and support to develop a range of products in areas such as virtual tourism, community rewards programmes, last mile delivery, safer cycling, recycling behaviour, fitness hubs and personal safety. They profiled their work during a virtual international showcase event and one company was successful in being selected for a follow up trade mission to South Korea.
- 3.5 Council staff also had opportunities to work with innovative companies to develop digital solutions and also benefitted from a bespoke innovative procurement training programme delivered via the Captapult.
- 3.6 In the next phase of the Innovation Twins programme, Connected Places Catapult (CPC), with funding from BEIS, will facilitate further engagement with key city partners on the development and implementation of a roadmap to consolidate areas of focus for both cities. The roadmap will set out key missions and priority areas for city to city civic, academic and business collaboration over the next two to three years. It will also detail governance structures and resources required. It is anticipated the roadmap will also help to unlock future funding opportunities from UK Government and attract South Korean investment.
- 3.7 Roadmap development will include the identification of one or more collaborative projects and will include outward visits to Sejong for Belfast companies as well as agreeing to host delegations here in Belfast. As part of this next phase the City Innovation team have been invited by Connected Places Catapult to lead a programme of meetings in Sejong to build on our innovation twinning relationship and agree a focus for collaborative innovation projects. CPC will provide funding of £32,500 to cover associated costs for the outward visit and resulting roadmap development. This will be made available following Committee approval for the signing of a grant agreement.
- 3.8 Invest NI has been a key partner in developing the relationship with Sejong and worked closely with us on shaping the Statement of Intent. They have now established an office in South Korea having extended their work into Sejong through the Innovation Twins programme. Their work programme for 2023 includes a Smart Cities cluster mission which is planned

to coincide with the Smart Cities Expo in Korea in September this year.

- 3.9 The Mayor of Sejong would like to visit Belfast and wishes to sign an MOU to replace the current Statement of Intent which ended on 31st March 2023. The Mayor of Sejong's office has requested a letter of invitation to bring a delegation of 10 people to include the Ambassador of International Relations (two team members), the Director of External Relations, a representative from the Culture and the Economy Department, and two people from Executive Secretary office. The visit will potentially take place 7 and 8 August 2023 and will provide an opportunity to promote collaboration on a range of areas such as Smart Cities, Digital Twins and cyber security among others, that will be confirmed during the roadmap development phase.
- 3.10 During the visit, we would like to host a meeting/reception with the Lord Mayor to facilitate the signing of the MOU, provide a lunch/dinner with key city stakeholders to promote areas of collaboration agreed in the roadmap and offer a tour of the city.
- 3.11 Invest NI are liaising with the Northern Ireland Office separately in relation to the programme for the Mayor's visit and will provide support for the visit.
- 3.12 Members should note that, in parallel, Invest NI hosted Steve Baker NI Minister of State, during a visit to South Korea. The Minister who was made aware of our programme, had the opportunity to meet with the Mayor of Sejong and invited him to come to Northern Ireland for further discussion on opportunities for bi-lateral trade and collaboration.

Council of Global City Chief Innovation Officers (CGCC)

- 3.13 The Council of Global City Chief Information Officers was set up in 2016 and brings together the leaders and commissioners for innovation and digital technologies from European cities. The aim of the Council, which is supported by Bloomberg Associates, is for cities to share best practice, practice and strategic advice on smart cities, digital technologies and urban innovation
- 3.14 CGCC originated in the US in 2016 and was led by chief technology officials in San Francisco and Washington DC with a focus on developing a model for smart cities; digital connectivity; and open source and code-sharing.

- 3.15 CGCC has been invited to Ireland on 22nd and 23rd May by the CEO of Dublin City Council for its bi-annual meeting. Invites have been issued to the CIOs of Amsterdam, Athens, Barcelona, Bratislava, Dublin, Helsinki, Karlsruhe, Kyiv, London, Milan, New York, Tallinn, The Hague and Zurich. The group have expressed an interest in visiting Belfast to find out about our urban innovation ambition.
- 3.16 A visit by these CIOs would allow us to showcase Belfast's digital innovation ambition to influential European partners and to explore collaborative economic and innovation opportunities. (Note: the City Innovation Manager has been invited by Bloomberg to become a member of the group to represent the Smart Belfast Innovation ambition.)
- 3.17 The CGCC will hear about the Smart Belfast programme, the Belfast Smart District and City Deal investments. There will be a focus on smart tourism and the local creative industries sector, highlighting our Augment the City initiative and Belfast Stories development, with a visit to Ulster University's Virtual Production Studio. Ormeau Baths will also present on its role in supporting Belfast's innovation ecosystem and highlight some of the SMEs located at its coworking space.
- 3.18 The Lord Mayor has been invited to attend the event and welcome the CGCC members to Belfast.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.19 **UK-Republic of Korea Innovation Twins Programme**
1. Overall Belfast visit programme schedule will be led and funded by Invest NI;
 2. Staff from the City Innovation Office will work with the Enterprise and Business Growth Unit to plan the hosting of the dinner for the Mayor of Sejong and his team - estimated at under £3,000;

The cost for hosting the dinner will come from existing Smart Cities Budget;
 3. Costs associated with roadmap development will be funded through BEIS/Connected Places Catapult
 4. Costs for the Sejong visit to develop the programme and area/s of interest will be met by BEIS/Connected Places Catapult

In TOTAL £32,500 funding from BEIS/CPC being received.

Council of Global City CIOs

3.20 £800 for catering for approx. 30 global leaders, including tea and coffee on arrival, and lunch. Final costs subject to confirmation of final attendee numbers.

- This will come from existing Smart Cities budget. NOTE: Ormeau Baths has agreed to provide its event space at no cost.

Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment

3.21 None.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

The Planting of Several Trees to Celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 To consider a request received from the UK’s Trees for Cities organisation, inviting the Council to take part in the planting of several young trees to mark the forthcoming Coronation of King Charles III, as part of a UK capital cities initiative.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is asked to approve the request from the Trees for Cities organisation to plant several young trees to mark the Coronation of King Charles III in May 2023, as part of a UK national capital city initiative.

3.0 Main Report

Key Issues

3.1 On 11th April 2023, the Council received a request from Trees for Cities inviting it to take part in the planting of several young trees to mark the forthcoming Coronation of King Charles III.

3.2 Trees for Cities is the only UK charity working at a national and international scale to improve lives by planting trees in cities. With over 25 years of experience in urban tree planting, Trees

for Cities has been constantly working to highlight the multiple benefits of urban trees to improve people's lives in towns and cities. They specifically work with local communities and local authorities to cultivate lasting change within their neighbourhoods.

- 3.3 Trees for Cities is currently in talks with the Duchy of Cornwall who is supportive of the project to see trees planted in each of the four UK national capitals to mark King Charles III coronation.
- 3.4 Trees for Cities has secured agreement to plant trees in Cardiff, Edinburgh and London and their hope is that Belfast, as the capital city of Northern Ireland would also agree to take part.
- 3.5 The Trees for Cities charity recognise that its request does require a quick turnaround in terms of a decision, organising a suitable planting location and sourcing trees in such short notice.
- 3.6 It would be our recommendation to plant three 'heavy standard' ornamental, containerised trees which would be at a height of approximately 10' to 12' and an ideal location for the tree planting, would be within the grounds of Barnett Demesne.
- 3.7 This small-scale tree planting proposal would still add a small contribution towards the Council's ongoing 'One Million Tree' planting initiative.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.8 Funding for the tree supply/planting will be included within the current CNS tree planting budget and would cost in the region of £1,245.00 in total, as these will be larger trees and it will be necessary to purchase 'containerised' trees – these are trees which have been grown in a large pot and will have an adequate root system to establish quickly. It may also be possible to secure some external funding for this and officers will engage in this regard.

Equality or Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessments

- 3.9 None.”

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

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Physical Programme and Asset Management

Update on Area Working Groups

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the East Belfast Area Working Group of 30th March and the North Belfast Area Working Group of 5th April, including the recommendations of the former to:

- i. reallocate an additional £215,000 to Bloomfield Community Association (BIF13); and
- ii. reallocate an additional £35,000 to provide additional storage facilities for sports clubs (Bredagh GAC, Cregagh Wanderers, Nettlefield Multi-Sports and Tullycarnet) (ELIF031).

Update on Physical Programme

The Committee noted the contents of a report providing an update on the Capital Programme and confirming that the following Capital letters of offer and amended letters of offer had been received for a number of projects where the Council was acting as the delivery agent:

Capital Letters of Offer 16th – 31st March, 2023

Project	Funder	Amount
<i>Marrowbone Sacred Heart (Amendment)</i>	DfC	£40,000
<i>BCC Public Realms Work Heritage Centre Roddy McCorley (Amendment)</i>	DfC	£250,000
Urban Villages Sandy Row Arts and Digital Hub	TEO	£706,856
Green & Blue Infrastructure Fund - Grey to Green – Blue / Green Projects	DfI	£400,000
Green & Blue Infrastructure Fund - Active Travel Enablers – Active Travel Project	DfI	£402,500
<i>SIF - Walkway Community Centre (Amendment)</i>	TEO	£1,695,229
<i>Covid-19 Letter of Variance No. 8 (Amendment)</i>	DfC	£4,039,000
<i>Black Mountain Shared Space – Phase 2 Finlay's Site (Amendment)</i>	IFI	£500,000
Lagan Gateway Greenway (Phase 2)	DfI	£714,326

Finance, Procurement and Performance

Update on Contracts

The Committee:

- approved the public advertisement of tenders as per Standing Order 37a, as detailed in Table 1 below;

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- approved the award of Single Tender Actions, in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions, as detailed in Table 2 below; and
- noted the award of retrospective Single Tender Actions, in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions, as detailed in Table 3 below.

Table 1: Competitive Tenders

Title of Tender	Proposed Contract Duration	Estimated Total Contract Value	SRO	Short description of goods / services
Replacement media relations software	Up to 4 years	Up to £38,400	P. Gribben	Current contract is ending and needs to be renewed
Appoint an appropriately experienced contractor to develop and deliver Belfast PCSP's Young People Cyber Safety Project 2023 – 2026 (Fully Funded)	Up to 3 years and 4 months	Up to £85,000	D. Sales	PCSP funding is made available on an annual basis and the tender will be awarded with annual renewal, subject to adequate performance, PCSP approval and funding availability.
Appoint an appropriately experienced contractor to develop and deliver Belfast PCSP's Older Adults Cyber Safety Project 2023 – 2026 (Fully Funded)	Up to 3 years and 4 months	Up to £105,000	D Sales	PCSP funding is made available annually and the tender will be awarded with annual renewal, subject to adequate performance, PCSP approval and funding availability

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Asylum immigration advice project (Fully Funded)	Up to 9 months	Up to £72,000	D Sales	Council has received funding from the Executive Office to support asylum seeking communities. This proposal has been based on need identified through the Migrant Forum and Refugee and Asylum Forum
QRadar SIEM provision	Up to 3 years	Up to £106,573.98	T Wallace	A critical IT security device that can accept logs from many devices and alert/defend against Cyber Attack and Malware events in real time
Electrical vehicle fitted with power washer (Fully Funded)	One off Purchase	Up to £50,000	D Sales	DfC has provided £50k of funding to assist with the Cleansing Fleet Enhancement Project
Complex Lives Project Support (Partly funded)	Up	Up to £200,000	J Tully and D Sales	The provision of strategic advice, development and independent support to support

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				senior managers and staff with progressing this project.
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Table 2: Single Tender Actions

Title	Duration	Total Value	SRO	Description	Supplier
Requirement for Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) and Technical Support Officers (TSOs) are required for 24hr shift rota cover for essential service delivery within the Port Health service (Fully funded)	Up to 6 months	Up to £100,000	S Toland	The existing contracted provider for T1792 Provision of Temporary Agency Resources: Matrix SCM have confirmed it is unable to fulfil the required roles of Environmental Health Officer (Port Health) and Technical Support Officers within the contractually agreed time period.	MCS Group
Provision of kerbside collections and treatment services for recyclable materials	Up to 12 months	Up to £2.3m	C Matthews	Requirement for the current contract to be extended for up to 12 months to enable the findings of a feasibility study and Members' feedback to be considered in the subsequent procurement exercise. There is no service provider currently in the local market with the capacity or capability to tender for the	Bryson Recycling

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				<p>service on a short-term contract basis. This was confirmed recently (Oct/Nov 22) when Bryson was the only supplier to express an interest as part of a pre-market engagement exercise.</p>	
Catering service in Malone House	Up to 10 months	<p>£453,000 estimated annual revenue for service provider.</p> <p>5%/ £22k per annum estimated income for council</p>	J Greer	<p>Due to previous contractors withdrawing services and an increasing demand from residents and Members to open this facility there is an urgent need to appoint a provider as soon as possible. Undertaking a publicly advertised tender process would delay appointment of a catering provider resulting in reputational damage for the council and the loss of further business. The Council has struggled to secure and keep a catering service provider at this venue for a number of years despite several attempts via open tender competition.</p>	TBC at later date. Dept in negotiations with a number of suppliers to secure service provision asap.

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Table 3: Retrospective Single Tender Actions

Title of Contract	Duration	Total Value	SRO	Description	Supplier
Delivery of a feasibility study within the UKRI Pioneer Places funded Net Zero Belfast initiative (Fully funded)	Up to 3 months	Up to £59,915	J Tully	The funding award is to Belfast City Council so this will require a contract for the use of Energy Systems Catapult and allocation of external funding for that purpose	Energy Systems Catapult
Printer copy charges	Up to 1 year	Up to £100,000	P Gribben	Payment of copy charges for existing multi-function printers. The supplier has exclusive rights to these printers and the STA is required in the interim pending a full refresh of our printer estate	SCC
Complex Lives Project Support	8 months	£45,000	J Tully	The provision of strategic advice, development and independent support to support senior managers and staff with progressing this project (August 22 to March 23 spend)	Marsh Public Service Solutions

The Committee agreed to defer a request for the award of the Single Tender Action, in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions, as detailed below, to enable further information to be circulated to Members in advance of the Council meeting on 2nd May:

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Single Tender Action

Title	Duration	Total Value	SRO	Description	Supplier
The acquisition of a unique Giant Bubble Art Installation by Atelier Sisu	2 days	Up to £70,000	J Greer	The Festival Board decided that the unique design was best fitting to enhance the festival on an international setting with lots of social network opportunities to showcase Belfast's most iconic landmarks and enhance the ambience and curiosity around Belfast's Maritime Event offering	Atelier Sisu

Equality and Good Relations

Minutes of the Meeting of the Shared City Partnership

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Shared City Partnership of 27th March, including the recommendations:

PEACEPLUS

- to note the high-level feedback on the Peace Plus Programme, including an update on the Thematic Group Meeting 1 – 22nd March – St. Comgall's and further update on 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 delegate authority to the PEACE IV Programme Board to consider and agree the closure position of projects, with final agreement by the Director of Neighbourhood Services, until the reconvening of the Shared City Partnership following the Local Government Elections.

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CYP Theme

- to note the contents of the report and:
 - **CYP 1 – TECH CONNECTS, Belfast Metropolitan College (Digital Insights Programme)** – approve, in principle, the completion of the project at the level outlined and progress discussions with the Special European Union Programmes Body on any implications; and
 - **CYP5 NIHE** – note that the written return from the Special European Union Programmes Body had indicated that any additional request for mitigations to be applied to target hours had been declined.

SSS Theme

- to approve the revised narratives for the information panels in Sections 2 and 5, subject to a plain English review and creative input ,as detailed in appendix II of the minutes; and
- to note the suggested locations for panels and directional signage in Section 2 (Springvale) and Springfield Dam/Park, as detailed in appendix III of the minutes.

BPR Theme

- **BPR 1 – NIHE - Cross Community Area Networks** – to note that the Special European Union Programmes Body had responded in writing to a request for application of additional mitigations, stating that no further mitigations were permitted;
- **BPR2 – Creative Communities Project** – to agree, in principle, the level of achievement as 55% of participant targets; and
- **BPR6 St. Comgall's** – to note that the project is moving into the closure phase, with further evidence being submitted on completion of contact hours for six final adult participants, and delegate authority to the Thematic Chairs of the Programme Board to approve the final completer numbers for closure of the project.

GOOD RELATIONS

- to note the Quarter 4 report on the delivery of the Council's Good Relations Action Plan.

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Operational Issues

**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 3rd April, as set out below:

NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED	CIVIC HQ RECOMMEND
2023 EVENTS						
EMBRACE	19th October 2023	<p>20th Anniversary Celebration of Embrace - a group of Christians working together to promote response to people seeking asylum, refugees and migrant workers.</p> <p>Numbers attending 50</p>	C	No charge as charity	Yes, Drinks reception as anniversary	<p>Approve No Charge Drinks Reception</p> <p><i>£500 given to their chosen caterer.</i></p>

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2025 EVENTS						
Belfast Philharmonic Society	21st June 2025	Belfast Philharmonic Society 150th Anniversary Dinner - Drinks Reception, Awards, Dinner and entertainment. Numbers attending – 200	C	No Charge as charity	Yes, Wine Reception as significant anniversary	Approve No Charge Wine Reception <i>£500 given to their chosen caterer for wine on arrival</i>
C S Lewis Foundation	24th July 2025	Opening Reception for C S Lewis Summer Institute for guests attending their 7-day conference taking place in QUB. Numbers attending - 300	A & B	No (Waiver as linked to Visit Belfast)	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality

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

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Party Group Leaders' Consultative Forum of 17th April.

Chairperson

B4564

People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 4th April, 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,
Garrett, Magee, McAteer, McMullan, Newton and O'Hara.

In attendance: Mr. D. Sales, Director of Neighbourhood Services;
Mrs. S. Toland, Director of City Services; and
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were recorded from Councillor Maghie and Verner.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 7th and 22nd March, 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 3rd April.

Declarations of Interest

The following Councillors declared an interest in item 2 (b) Community Support Programme (CSP) as they either worked for or were associated with an organisation in receipt of funding and left the meeting whilst the item was under consideration:

- Councillor M. Donnelly – Upper Springfield Development Trust; and
- Councillor Canavan – Board of Springfield Charitable Association.

The Chairperson declared an interest in item 3 (c) Micro and Medium Grants 2023/23 as an organisation he worked for had applied for a grant, he left the meeting and the Chair whilst the item was being considered.

Councillor McAteer declared an interest in Agenda Item 5 (b) Requests for the use of Parks for 2023 as she had a relative who worked for the Belfast Mela and she took no part in the discussion.

Restricted

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 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.

TEO Asylum Dispersal Funding Reprofile Request

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the TEO Asylum Dispersal Funding Reprofile Request.

The Committee noted the contents of the report, including the receipt of the Memorandum of Understanding and the revised uplifted amount of £406,228, and agreed the approach for reprofiling the costs in relation to the Asylum Dispersal Fund, as outlined in the report.

Community Support Programme

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the Community Support Programme detailing the current budget limitations and the impact on the Council's grant allocations for 2023/24.

The Committee agreed to defer the report and refer it to the April meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration and that, in the interim, officers would obtain legal advice on the proposed DfC approach.

Micro and Medium Grants Scheme 2023/24

(Councillor Bunting in the Chair).

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the results of assessments of the micro and medium grant applications.

The Committee agreed to defer the report and refer it to the April meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration to be given as to whether money could be allocated from the reserves, given the funding demand and number of applications and the very small amount now available to allocate.

(Chairperson, Councillor Murray in the Chair).

**People and Communities Committee,
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Outstanding Accounts

The Director of City Services sought authority to write off an outstanding account. She advised the Committee that the department and Central Transactions Unit had made every effort to recoup the debt and the methods adopted had been in accordance with the Council's Accounting Manual procedures. The company had now entered compulsory liquidation.

The Committee granted authorisation for the outstanding account of £3,465 to be written off, in accordance with Section M12 of the Council's Financial Regulations

Matters referred back from the Council/Motions

**Response received from the Department of Agriculture,
Environment and Rural Affairs re Deposit Return Scheme**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 7th February, it had agreed to write to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs expressing concern at the delay in rolling out the Deposit Return Scheme (DRS).

In the response, the Permanent Secretary advised that the timescales had been informed by formal consultation on the most appropriate timeframe for delivery which had led to the decision that the DRS for England, Wales and Northern Ireland should commence from 1st October 2025.

Noted.

Committee/Strategic Issues

**Waste Collection Arrangements –
Easter Bank Holidays - (verbal update)**

The Director of City Services provided the Committee with an overview of the proposed waste collection arrangements for bin collections over the Easter holiday period.

Noted.

**GLL Community Engagement and
Underrepresented Target Groups Update**

The Director of Neighbourhood Services drew the Members' attention to the annual update on community engagement initiatives during 2022.

This included updates in relation to the following Programmes:

- Sport National Governing Body and Club;
- School and Youth;
- Community Outreach;
- Older Participant;

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- People with Disabilities;
- Woman and Girls; and
- Family Programming.

The Committee noted the update in relation underrepresented target groups and, at the request of a Member, agreed to include a more detailed breakdown of the data available in future reports, specifically in relation to Section 75 categories.

GLL service report for 2022

The Director of Neighbourhood Services drew the Members' attention to the annual GLL service report for 2022, as required within the terms of the leisure management contract and previously reported through the Active Belfast Limited Board.

The Members were advised that the document, which had been added as an appendix to the report, highlighted the key successes and challenges in 2022 with a focus on the four guiding principles at the heart of the business:

- Better People;
- Better Service;
- Better Communities; and
- Better Business.

The Committee noted the update.

**GLL current inclusivity programming
and future development plans**

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 To provide members with an update on current leisure centre inclusivity programming and future development/expansion plans including a specific update on engagement with Swimming Buddies.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is requested to:

- Consider and record receipt of the information update provided below.

3.0 Main report

Background

3.1 At the People and Communities committee on 6th December, Members requested that a report on inclusivity programming and future development initiatives be presented at its April meeting.

Members further requested on 2nd February 2023 that an update on the current relationship with 'Swimming Buddies' be brought back at a later date.

- 3.2 This report seeks to cover both updates and is based on management information provided by GLL.
- 3.3 GLL is a leading social enterprise. One of their core priorities is to ensure full access for all members of the community and to encourage more people to be more active, more often. CNS officers work closely with GLL to review provision and continue to improve facilities to ensure that our facilities and services are inclusive for all.
- 3.4 GLL is a leading social enterprise. One of the core priorities of GLL is to ensure full access for all members of the community and to encourage more people to be more active, more often. GLL continue to improve facilities and review programming to ensure our facilities and services are inclusive for all.

Outcomes and proposals

Memberships and customer initiatives

- 3.5 GLL offer an inclusive membership for people with a disability. The membership offers access to gyms, swimming pools and fitness classes at a discounted rate. There is currently 327 prepaid members accessing this option within Belfast.
- 3.6 BCC/GLL grant free of charge admission to centres for all carers when accompanying the person in their care. Carers can then support the person in their care in accessing the gym, pool or group exercise class.
- 3.7 GLL operates the JAM Card scheme which allows people with a hidden disability or communication barrier to tell others that they need a little extra time and understanding. The scheme was originally developed by and for those with learning difficulties and disabilities but has now expanded to include anyone with a hidden disability or communication barrier. GLL management and concierge staff are trained to operate the scheme within all Belfast centres.
- 3.8 Most of the new LTP leisure facilities include a 'Changing Places' facilities. These accessible changing/toilets were created to meet the needs of disabled children and adults with complex care needs who require carer support, specialist equipment and more space.

- 3.9 BCC centres currently provide 'Poolpods' in 8 pools across the city. These pool platform lifts have transformed pool access and are used by customers with a variety of mobility issues to safely access the water.
- 3.10 GLL in partnership with Belfast City Council provide services at our facilities to meet the physical and communications needs of people with disabilities, including those with impaired hearing.
- 3.11 GLL work with Technogym to provide accessible gym equipment. Machines such as arm bikes and cable crossovers can be utilised by participants with a variety of mobility and other physical disabilities.

Programming

- 3.12 Girdwood CH in partnership with Disability Sport NI provides a dedicated disability sports hub catering for a range of wheelchair-based sports and activities including Wheelchair Basketball, Powerchair Football, Boccia and New Age Curling.
- 3.13 Whiterock LC supports disability groups in Upper Springfield by offering sports and fun fitness sessions twice a week.
- 3.14 GLL supports the social enterprise 'NOW Group' in the delivery of a 'Let's Get Fit Now' programme in Falls LC. The programme offers participants with learning difficulties the opportunity to participate in tailored fitness classes and gym inductions.
- 3.15 GLL supports the Irish FA in the delivery of inclusive camps during holiday periods. These programmes have been delivered in Avoniel LC, Girdwood CH and Olympia LC. GLL will continue to work in partnership with the national governing body to support the ongoing development of these initiatives.
- 3.16 Ballysillan LC and Girdwood CH support the Northern Ireland Powerchair Squad in their preparation for participation in the 2023 World Cup in Australia. In January 2022, Ballysillan LC hosted the Irish FA Powerchair football All Ireland Championships with over 200 participants in attendance.
- 3.17 The swimming pool at Brook LC has been specifically designed to cater for those with sensory needs and those with wide range of disabilities. The programme includes specialist teaching sessions (delivered by GLL and independent user groups) alongside weekly 'quiet swims' currently attracting 20 to 30 participants in each session.

- 3.18 Brook LC also supports the delivery of 'Air Venture' inclusive sessions which are designed to meet the sensory requirements of participants. This provision has expanded to include a number of special needs schools and support their physical education delivery.
- 3.19 The Indoor Tennis Centre and Ozone Complex supports the delivery of wheelchair user sessions. This is delivered by a group called 'Spokes in Motion' and the centre team have established a long-term relationship with the programme. GLL staff have been trained to meet the specific needs of participants in this programme.
- 3.20 GLL lessons and courses are all inclusive with staff trained to be able to coach participants with both physical and learning disabilities. In cases of complex conditions participants are encouraged to avail of the one-to-one coaching support provided by GLL.
- 3.21 GLL's Healthwise team delivers chronic conditions (Cancer & Cardiac) and Musculo-skeletal rehabilitation programmes, whilst also supporting and hosting Diabetes and Strength & Balance programmes. Many of the referrals for these interventions are older people who often extend their initial intervention into ongoing continuation/retention programmes and ultimately on to full leisure centre memberships.
- 3.22 GLL deliver a number of active aging mornings across the city which include activities such as Danderball, Pickleball, Table Tennis, Boccia and Water Polo. These are being delivered at Avoniel LC, Falls LC, Girdwood CH, Lisnasharragh LC, Olympia LC and Shankill LC. GLL have plans in place to expand the programme in 2023.

Staff Training

- 3.23 Swimming Buddies have provided Autism Awareness training to the team at Brook LC to ensure they have the knowledge and understanding to deliver inclusive sessions in both the sensory pool and Air Venture environments.
- 3.24 GLL are considering a proposal from Swimming Buddies to deliver this CPD accredited training throughout the city. In addition, GLL are considering enrolling some of their swimming teachers onto the Swimming Buddies swimming teacher course with the view of establishing 'all abilities' specific swimming lessons within the current GLL Swim School programme. This could support the development of more

inclusive swimming lessons across the city at an affordable price.

- 3.25 All GLL staff will complete online Equality Diversity and Inclusion Awareness Training via the Flex Training portal. Centre management have been tasked with encouraging their teams to complete this training in 2023.

Swimming Buddies

- 3.26 Swimming Buddies is a commercial business that specialises in Autism friendly swimming lessons although this has now expanded to accommodate individuals with 'other abilities'. Sessions are currently being offered at Brook LC and the organisation is keen to expand into other areas of the city including other BCC pools. In addition to existing pool allocations at Brook LC, 30 additional lane hours have been offered at Falls LC, Olympia LC, Shankill LC, Whiterock LC and Templemore Baths. CNS and GLL senior officers are engaged in ongoing discussions with Swimming Buddies to explore opportunities to develop and expand services including, in addition to pool sessions, supported dry activities and staff training.

- 3.27 Andersonstown LC have also engaged with Swimming Buddies to explore opportunities for the delivery of inclusive waterslide sessions and will look to add these to the programme in 2023. This will include advice about how to deliver sessions and the delivery of CPD accredited training for GLL staff.

- 3.28 Pool programming is a challenging area of centre management. The service caters for many and varied pool user groups, often with competing demands and priorities. CNS works very closely with GLL to ensure that the principles set out in the Councils Aquatics Strategy are observed. Competing priorities include swim for all access (casual swimming), fitness lane swimming, competitive swim clubs, teaching lessons, schools swimming, specialist lessons for those with special needs, water polo, diving, aquarobics, canoeing, sub-aqua, triathlon, and many more.

Summary

- 3.29 Members are requested to consider and record receipt of the information update provided above.

Communications & Public Relations

- 3.30 None

Financial & Resource Implications

3.31 None

Equality or Good Relations Implications

3.32 None.”

During discussion, the Director provided the Members with a specific update on the Council’s engagement with Swimming Buddies. He advised that Council officers and GLL senior officers were continuing to engage with Swimming Buddies to explore opportunities to develop and expand services including, in addition to pool sessions, supported dry activities and staff training.

At the request of a Member, it was noted that, if operationally possible, every effort would be made to ensure that the three-hour session in the Brook Leisure Centre would continue.

The Committee noted the update provided and agreed that an update report on staff training, including timelines and allocated hours, would be submitted to a future meeting.

Public Access Defibrillator Programme Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 To update Members on changes to BCC’s list of defibrillators previously agreed through BCC’s Public Access Defibrillator Pilot Programme in 2016/2018 and a request for inclusion of two further locations on the list of priority sites for future provision.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the changes in regard to previously agreed defibrillator locations - the removal of the Woodlands Playing Fields and Ulidia Playing Fields defibrillator designations as ‘publicly accessible’, and the installation of Council’s device previously located at Ulidia Playing Fields to Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park.
- In response to a request from Edenderry Residents Association for Council to install and take on the management of an externally funded defibrillator device - to agree the inclusion of 2 further BCC sites on our ‘priority list for future public access defibrillator provision’

– Edenderry Village Playground and Hannahstown Village Playground given their unique status as rural villages within our Council boundary.

3.0 Main report

Background

3.1 Between 2016 and 2018 Council successfully implemented a Public Access Defibrillator Pilot Programme through three phases which saw the installation of a total of 22 defibrillators at 14 of our parks and playing field sites across the city. Although the first two phases were funded internally, its third phase of 8 devices was made possible thanks to an external donation received from the family of the late Mark Murphy.

3.2 Following the success of the programme, at March 2018 People and Communities Committee, Members agreed a further list of 8 priority park/playing fields sites (as well as 8 Community Centres) to be the focus of any future provision as money became available.

3.3 Given the resource implications associated, not only with the purchase of devices (circa £1,400 per unit), and with their long-term daily management and maintenance to ensure ‘emergency ready’ at all times – the focus of the programme has continued to on sites that contain recreational facilities, and have significant public access or high footfall; with final agreement for installation at the sites agreed also being subject to officer identification of a suitable location with an electrical supply; and confirmation with the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) that there are no other public access defibrillators in proximity.

3.4 Public Access Defibrillator Provision Programme (2018)

<u>Phases 1-3 Defibrillators Installed (BCC Parks /Playing Fields)</u>	<u>Agreed priority sites for future installation (BCC Parks/ Playing Fields)</u>	<u>Agreed priority sites for future installation (BCC Community Centres)</u>
-Victoria Park -Waterworks Park -Fullerton Park -Tullycarnet Park	-Dunville Park -Sally Gardens -Sir Thomas and Lady -Dixon Park	-Cregagh Community Centre -Dee Street Community Centre

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<p>-Boucher Road Playing Fields</p> <p>-Falls Park</p> <p>-Botanic Park</p> <p>-Grove Playing Fields</p> <p>-Cherryvale Playing Fields</p> <p>-Blanchflower Stadium</p> <p>-Wedderburn Playing Fields</p> <p>-Woodvale Playing Fields</p> <p>-Henry Jones Playing Fields</p> <p>-Woodlands Playing Fields*</p> <p>-City of Belfast Playing Fields</p> <p>-Ormeau Park</p> <p>-Orangefield Park</p> <p>-Shore Road Playing Fields</p> <p>-Suffolk Playing Fields</p> <p>-Strangford Playing Fields</p> <p>-Loughside Playing Fields</p> <p>-Musgrave Park</p> <p>-Ulidia Playing Fields*</p>	<p>-Blythefield</p> <p>-Dixon Playing Fields</p> <p>-Alderman Tommy Patton Park</p> <p>-Clarendon Playing Fields</p> <p>-Glenbank Park</p>	<p>-North Queen Street Community Centre</p> <p>-Ardoyne Community Centre</p> <p>-Hammer Community Centre</p> <p>-Highfield Community Centre</p> <p>-Morton Community Centre</p> <p>-Markets Community Centre</p>
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** Device no longer categorised as publicly accessible*

Removal of 'publicly accessible' designation for two Council defibrillators

- 3.5 Two of the previously installed defibrillators i.e., Ulidia Playing Fields and Woodlands Playing Fields, are no longer considered to be 'publicly accessible' given that site access is restricted to hours of bookings – and therefore we are now required to remove these sites from Council's list of 'publicly accessible defibrillators. Members should note that this will not impact the availability of devices at these locations as the intention is to retain the Woodlands Playing Fields in situ under continued Council management, and Rosario FC will continue to manage their own defibrillator onsite at Ulidia Playing Fields.

Relocation of Ulidia Playing Fields device to Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park

- 3.6 The surplus Ulidia Playing Fields defibrillator has provided an opportunity for installation at a new location from our list of priority park and playing field sites. Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park in south Belfast has been selected as this new location following requests from the community for a device to be placed there after a recent medical emergency within the park, as well as officer's confirmation of a suitable location by the café at the Stables building.

Proposed addition of two sites onto list for future public access defibrillator provision

- 3.7 Members are asked to agree the inclusion of two further Council sites on the list of priority Council park/playing fields sites identified for future public access defibrillator provision, on availability of funding – Edenderry Village Playground and Hannahstown Playground and the widening out of the focus of the programme to date (i.e. sites demonstrating significant public access or high footfall) to include these two rural villages in reflection of unique peripheral locations within our council boundary.
- 3.8 A proposal to include these sites follows a request for the installation of a defibrillator at Edenderry Village Playground, with the device itself to be made available from Edenderry Residents Association. As one of the city's only two villages the rationale for a publicly accessible device is the location's lack of proximity to other publicly accessible devices (closest device 2 miles away by car). In addition, high footfall on Lagan Valley Park walking trails in and around the village are demonstrated by

adjacent Giants Ring historical monument and Minnowburn each welcoming over 190,000 visitors in 2021.

Financial & Resource Implications

- 3.9** Should members agree to the inclusion of the two rural sites Edenderry Residents Association will provide the defibrillator device. All other costs associated with this proposal are included within existing revenue estimates.

Equality or Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessments

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

The Committee:

- noted the changes regarding previously agreed defibrillator locations, the removal of the Woodlands Playing Fields and Ulidia Playing Fields defibrillator designations as ‘publicly accessible’, and the installation of the Council’s device that was previously located at Ulidia Playing Fields to Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park;
- agreed the inclusion of two further Belfast City Council sites on the ‘priority list for future public access defibrillator provision’ – Edenderry Village Playground and Hannahstown Village Playground, given their unique status as rural villages within the Council’s boundary; and
- agreed to submit a report to a future meeting that would give consideration as to how the Council could liaise with other community groups and organisations to work together towards facilitating the provision of more publicly accessible defibrillators, both from a funding and location perspective.

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 Lake Glen Drive, Lagmore Dale, Iris Walk and Abyssinia Street the Committee approved the applications.

Events in Parks

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

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- Belfast Mela – Botanic Gardens – 26th and 27th August and the associated pre and post set-up dates, as per the report;
- Lantern parade – Alexandra Park – 27th and 28th October and the associated pre and post set-up dates, as per the report ;
- Chinese Language School – Ormeau Park – 4th June 9.00 a.m. – 7.00 p.m.; and
- Gospel Van Ministry – Ballysillan Park – 20th August – 3rd September, 7.00 p.m. – 9.00 p.m. daily.

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

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

The Committee further delegated authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to consider and approve any similar requests whilst the Council was in recess during the Local Government Elections. It was noted that, where necessary, the Director would liaise with the Chief Executive.

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

**Service Level agreement with Department of Justice
for Fireworks and MSER inspections by BCC officers**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 Service level agreements have existed for many years with the Department of Justice (DOJ) setting out arrangements for BCC employees who are authorised by DOJ to act as agents in carrying out inspections of premises storing items under the Manufacture and Storage of Explosives Regulations (NI) 2006**

(MSER). Such premises typically store fireworks or air bag components. The most recent version was signed by BCC following Committee approval in 2016.

- 1.2 The service level agreement has been amended to increase the fees payable to Councils by Department of Justice for inspections carried out for storage of fireworks and items being stored to which the MSER Regulations apply. No other significant changes have been made to the SLA.
- 1.3 The service level agreement is a common document which applies to all District Councils in Northern Ireland, and there is agreement across Councils at technical level via EHNI that Councils should seek approval to sign up the updated SLA to enable cost recovery via updated fee charges to the Department of Justice.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Agree that Council sign up to the revised service level agreement with the Department of Justice for Fireworks and MSER enforcement by BCC officers.

3.0 Main report

- 3.1 The service level agreement covers training, authorisation/warranting of Council employees to enforce the relevant fireworks and MSER legislation and the working procedures and arrangements between DOJ and BCC.
- 3.2 The SLA also covers the fees to be paid by DOJ to BCC for the service provided and the invoicing arrangements for recoupment of fees. As the previous SLA was agreed in 2016, the revised SLA has increased the fees payable to Councils by DOJ to address increased costs being incurred by Councils for carrying out this work.
- 3.3 In the Belfast City Council area, prior to the Covid Pandemic there were typically in the region of 20-25 Fireworks displays inspected per annum. This number has reduced slightly over the past 3 years, however could return to pre-covid levels in the future. There are 18 premises currently registered to store explosives such as fireworks and air bag components

Finance and Resource Implications

- 3.4 This work is carried out on a full cost recovery basis and is included in existing work programmes.

Asset and Other Implications

- 3.5 None

Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.6 None.”

The Committee adopted the recommendation as outlined at section 2 of the report.

Pre-loved Toys Scheme Christmas 2022

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Members on the outcomes from the pilot, pre-loved toys scheme operated at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) in the run up to Christmas 2022. The aim of the initiative was to ease the burden on families during the current cost of living crisis, increase reuse and reduce waste going to landfill during this period.

2.0 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- Note the outcomes from the pilot and the key lessons learned going forward
- Approve that the Christmas pre-loved toys scheme should continue as an annual event until further notice.

3.0 Main report

Background

- 3.1 Members will recall that in November 2022, delegated authority was granted to the Director of Resources & Fleet to operate a pre-loved toys scheme at the Council’s Household Waste Recycling Centres in the run-up to Christmas. This followed a Members motion previously raised on this matter.
- 3.2 The scheme was a clear example of a circular economy project, seeking to reduce waste while at the same time delivering social benefits to the local community. It was operated in 2022 as a trial

initiative with a view to assessing its value and learning lessons for future potential schemes. The evaluation report is included as Appendix 1.

- 3.3 Donations were accepted at the Council's four recycling centres from 9 November – 11 December and distributed back into the community through a range of charity partners. Some items were resold at affordable prices through charity shops but the majority were gifted free of charge to households in need. East Belfast Mission (EBM), the organisation which currently collects the majority of re-use materials from the Household Recycling Centres, operated as the lead partner and co-ordinated with other charities.
- 3.4 The appeal was supported by a communications campaign and attracted an overwhelming volume of donations. A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) paper was created for the Customer Hub and site staff to respond to any queries from members of the public.

Outcomes

- 3.5 Most of the items were processed by East Belfast Mission who provided the following feedback/ estimates:
- Thirteen van loads of toys were collected from the HWRCs
 - This translated to approximately 2,500 bags/boxes distributed by EBM (there was an unquantified but much lesser amount distributed through the other partners who had less capacity)
 - Around 700 families benefitted and over 2,000 individual children were given at least one full bag of toys which would have been valued at £40-50 if new
- 3.6 If each bag of toys weighed 3kg (conservative estimate), the items distributed through EBM alone equate to 7.5 tonnes of items reused and diverted from disposal.
- 3.7 While toys vary in their material construction, one study¹ showed that the carbon footprint for the lifecycle (from material extraction to eventual product disposal) of a typical plastic toy was 1.8kg CO₂ eq/ kg. On that basis and assuming that 50% of the donated toys were of plastic construction, this scheme has avoided around seven tonnes of CO₂eq compared to buying new.

Evaluation

¹ Robertson, Madeline R. and Klimas, Christie (2019) 'A Playful Life Cycle Assessment of the Environmental Impact of Children's Toys,' DePaul Discoveries: Vol. 8: Iss. 1, Article 7. Available at: <https://via.library.depaul.edu/depaul-disc/vol8/iss1/7>

- 3.8 The scheme attracted significant positive media attention and was an overwhelming success in terms of the public response and the number of local families and children who were helped.
- 3.9 The initiative also connected multiple Belfast organisations and businesses in formal and informal volunteering roles to benefit the local community. It would have been impossible to deliver the scheme without this network of help.
- 3.10 However, the short notice for planning the scheme, and the significant volume of donations, meant that a number of aspects were unforeseen which created challenges for all parties concerned. This can be mitigated by a suitable planning window to deliver this scheme and adopting the lessons learned in the evaluation report, subject to Members approval.

Financial & Resource Implications

- 3.11 It is envisaged that the minimal costs incurred through any future scheme can be met through existing resources.

Equality or Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessments

- 3.12 There are no Good Relations or Equality implications associated with this report.”

The Committee noted the update.

Update on Take 5 Benches

The Director of Neighbourhood Services reminded the Members that in June 2022, the Council had agreed the installation of sixteen ‘Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing’ benches across Belfast City Council Parks, with agreement that the locations would be identified in consultation with staff in Open Space and Streetscene (OSS) and Property Maintenance.

He advised that 16 existing benches in parks across the city had now been rebranded as ‘Take 5 benches’. They had been painted in bright colours and incorporated the ‘Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing’ messaging, along with a QR code linking to the PHA’s Minding Your Head website. Three of the benches could not be painted (as they were made of composite plastic and stainless steel), a plaque had been added to these benches which were located at Springfield Dam, Victoria Park, and Lagan Lands End.

The Committee noted that the benches were located in the following parks:

West Belfast	South Belfast
Dunville Park	Blythfield Play Park
Falls Park	Ormeau Park

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Springfield Dam	Botanic Gardens
Suffolk Play Park	Cherryvale Pitches

North Belfast	East Belfast
Glencairn Park	Lagans Land East
Ligoniel Park	Orangefield Park
Woodvale Park	Victoria Park
Waterworks	Belmont Park

The Committee noted the update and agreed that an additional bench be erected in Clement Wilson Park.

Chairperson

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City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 5th April, 2023

HYBRID MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Murphy (Chairperson);
Alderman Dorrian;
Councillors Bunting, Duffy, Ferguson,
Harvey, 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; and
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillors Beattie and Heading.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the 8th March were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 3rd April, subject to the request of Councillor Ferguson and with the permission of the Council, the Chairperson (Councillor Murphy) had agreed that the minute under the heading "Belfast Zoo - Fees and Charges" be taken back to the Committee for further consideration.

Declarations of Interest

In relation to item 4.d) Cultural Work Programme 23-24, Councillor McCabe declared an interest in that she was employed by Feile an Phobail, and left the meeting whilst the item was under discussion.

Correspondence received from Department of Health – GP Indemnity

The Committee was reminded that, at its Special meeting in February, it had received a presentation from the Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG) of the Department of Health (DoH) in relation to GP Services in Belfast. The Committee had agreed that it would write to the Permanent Secretary to request an update on the work being undertaken to resolve GP indemnity in Northern Ireland, together with the following questions which had been added by the Council at its meeting on 1st March:

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Wednesday, 5th April, 2023**

- 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?

Accordingly, Democratic Services wrote to the Permanent Secretary to request an update on the matter and a response had been received (copy available [here](#)) for consideration.

The response provided details of the Department of Health's review of the arrangements for clinical negligence indemnity cover for GPs in Northern Ireland, together with an update on the DoH "Attract, Recruit Retain scheme". which had been introduced by the SPPG to assist in increasing the numbers of GP Partners and salaried GPs remaining in Northern Ireland and joining practices across the region.

Noted.

Restricted Items

The information contained in the report associated with the following three items were 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 three 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.

Future City Centre Programme - Vacant to Vibrant

The Committee was provided with an update on the Vacant to Vibrant Grant Programme and further recommendations from the Vacant to Vibrant assessment panel for consideration.

The Committee:

- Noted the update in relation to the city centre Vacant to Vibrant pilot capital grant scheme; and
- Approved the recommendations of the Assessment Panel as outlined within Section 3.8 of the report.

City Centre Public Realm Catalyst Projects

The Committee was provided with an update on the status of the secured financial Developer Contributions aligned to public realm and pedestrian crossings, and recommendations to commit developer contributions associated with a range of planning applications.

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The Committee:

- Noted the update on the committed financial developer contributions secured to date and the status of the delivery of these;
- Noted that, subject to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee approval, it was intended to commit secured developer contributions amounting to a cumulative total of £1,298,000 to progress the Little Patrick Street and Little York Street Public Realm Improvement Works, and Lancaster Street Entrance Gateway upgrade;
- Noted that, subject to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee approval, it was intended to commit secured developer contributions amounting to a cumulative total of £612,800 to progress the Blackstaff Square Public Realm Improvement Works in conjunction with the Department for Communities; and
- Noted that a report on a review of the Developer Contribution Framework would be submitted to a future meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Matters referred back from Council
Belfast Zoo – Fees and Charges

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the item to allow a report to be submitted to the Committee in June to provide further financial information.

Positioning the City to Compete

Tourism Work and Events Work plan 23-24

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 an update for approval on the Year 2 Action Plan (2023 /2024) for Tourism Plan for Belfast - *Make Yourself at Home* and to provide an update on the Council annual events programme and bids for large-scale events.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- **Note the contents of this report and provide approval for Officers to progress with the Year 2 Action Plan, as detailed including the priorities as set out at Appendix 1 including associated budgets.**

- Note the outline plan for Lord Mayors Days
- Approve interim funding of £25,000 each to Fáilte Feirste Thiar and EastSide Tourism from existing organisational budgets.
- Approve the hosting of a EUROVISION viewing event in 2RA to be funded from existing budgets

3.0 Main report

The purpose of the *Make Yourself at Home* Tourism Plan is to:

- Deliver on the tourism priorities set out in the *Belfast Agenda* recognising the importance of tourism to *Growing the Economy* and *City Development*.
- Align to the ten-year cultural strategy, *A City Imagining*, in order to ensure that tourism development supports cultural development and is based upon an authentic and sustainable Belfast offer.
- Support economic and social recovery in the context of COVID-19 including stabilisation, recovery and growth with the opportunity to build back better.
- Provide strategic context to the Belfast Region City Deal that sets out wider city
- priorities to ensure Belfast's appeal internationally and ability to attract out of state visitors.

3.2 Tourism Growth

Despite significant growth and the success of flagship projects such as Titanic Belfast there is still a gap in scale and maturity of the local industry when compared with other regions. Notably, Northern Ireland lags behind UK regions and Republic of Ireland with respect to tourism as a driver for job growth. However, the positive trajectory in place before Covid-19 had identified tourism growth as both a feasible and a necessary part of inclusive economic growth. The challenge for any tourism development plan is to create a sustainable model that continues to support the growth that is essential for city success and the creation of jobs.

- 3.3 Belfast's tourism and hospitality sectors directly support 19,300 jobs, one third of the sector in Northern Ireland. Key tourism sectors such as Accommodation and Food Services, Arts, Entertainment and Recreation and finally Transportation.
- 3.4 The hospitality sector is an employment - intensive one, supporting a disproportionate number of jobs compared with the average sectoral GVA: jobs ratio. Between 2013 and 2019 employment in Accommodation and Food Services in Belfast

increased by 18.2 percent, compared with 8.5 percent growth in the city's total employment.

3.5 It was in this context that Tourism NI set the ambitious target of doubling the value of the tourism industry to £2 billion by 2030. A key element of this opportunity further reinforced by ambitions of the Belfast Region City Deal was getting a bigger share of the international visitors coming to the island of Ireland to travel to Belfast and the Belfast region.

3.6 The emerging 'Belfast Agenda' refresh (new tourism targets tbc) notes the importance of Belfast being a 'culturally vibrant' city which the Tourism Plan is a significant contributor to with cross cutting priorities of *Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty and Sustainable and Economic Growth*.

3.7 The Draft Economic Strategy for Belfast identifies an increase the value of Tourism in Belfast from £417 million in 2019 to £800 million by 2030. Belfast is the gateway to tourism in Northern Ireland and generates 40% of the region's tourism spend. The current challenge is the need to develop a greater range of quality tourism products that will attract more visitors and encourage them to stay for longer.

3.8 Tourism Recovery

As NI recovers from impact of Covid-19 on tourism with the aim to build back to pre-pandemic levels by 2024, Belfast as the regional driver will be hugely significant to this growth ambition, both in terms of visitor spend and the creation of new jobs. It is therefore imperative that our city break destination is developed in a strategic way which maximises the economic benefits that can be derived from tourism for local businesses and communities, as well as increasing visitor numbers and spend and improving overall satisfaction levels. While full year statistics for 2022 - 23 are not yet confirmed, 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.

3.9 10 - Year Plan

The *Make Yourself at Home* Tourism Plan 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
- Strengthening the city's position through marketing and communications

3.10 The approach

The past two decades have given rise to a number of trends within tourism development. This has included the popularity of approaches such as cultural tourism, green tourism or local tourism. What each of these approaches and associated models have in common is an increasing awareness that sustainable forms of tourism must respect the local context and support the economic, social, environmental and cultural values of a place.

3.11 In the context of Belfast, even before COVID-19, this is a complex proposition. The city requires further growth with a clear international agenda and need to continue to attract and grow out of state visitors. The Tourism Plan seeks to set out how this growth can be achieved in a responsible and inclusive way recognising that the city's greatest asset is its people.

3.12 The plan sets out a shared vision for tourism in the city and is supported by 4 strategic themes and three of catalyst projects. The strategic themes are:

- Grow Belfast
- Experience Belfast
- Position Belfast
- Sustainable Belfast

3.13 Strategic Themes

Strategic theme 1: Grow Belfast

Make Yourself at Home identifies the role of tourism in city recovery including the need for stabilisation of the tourism sector and the requirement for further growth in Belfast. This includes:

- Strategic context and evidence-based proposition that Belfast acts as a catalyst for the region.
- Measurement of the attractiveness of the city as a destination and how this plays a key role in maximising the economic impact of each visitor by increasing average length of stay and daily spending levels.

- Priority areas for investment e.g., catalyst projects.
- Introducing social, cultural and environmental measures to better understand and advocate for the true value of responsible tourism growth.

3.14 As part of the Year 1 Action Plan for Make Yourself at Home, the following has been delivered against the theme of *Grow Belfast*:

- Management of Visit Belfast contract in respect of marketing, destination management and visitor servicing - to deliver on increased visitor numbers staying longer and spending more, thereby supporting tourism jobs in Belfast.
- Delivery of Conference Subvention Programme to assist in winning conferences and business events for Belfast.
- Delivery of an Accessible Tourism Programme to improve the visitor experience and value of the 'purple pound'. This focused on a programme of education and training including an engagement session with 40 businesses (Visit Belfast) members, a 'Living Library' training session for businesses to learn from people with disabilities and a series of 'Be Communication Confident' training videos for tourism / events organisations to access at own pace and in own time.
- Implementation of Food and Drink Tourism plan to increase associated spend and improve experience, while strengthening Belfast's position as a food and drink destination - therefore supporting the sector to be sustainable and economically viable. A Food and Drink Network Committee has been established including cross-sectoral representation within the city. The first year of the Action Plan has been delivered and has focused on 'Focus on Food' conference which attracted 260 delegates and included a producer zone, keynote speakers (including food columnist for The Guardian, Grace Dent), positioning exercise, audit of photography and finally an audit of Council assets with regard to public-facing Council-managed assets. Funding was also secured in-year from Tourism NI and DAERA to uplift Council budget and associated activity.
- Global Destination Sustainability Index (GDSI) application resulting in elevation of Belfast as a business events destination to 8th position in the world - ensuring Belfast is globally competitive in securing conferences and business events for Belfast,

resulting in associated economic benefit / sectoral support.

- Ongoing scoping of the Neighbourhood Tourism Investment Programme to support development of cultural tourism products, which promote enhanced visitor footfall, dwell time and spend across the city's neighbourhoods and extend tourism's economic benefits to communities throughout the city.

3.15 Strategic Theme 2: Position Belfast

Make Yourself at Home sets out a dynamic model for city positioning that strengthens Belfast's role as the gateway to the region in a way that responds to key markets including:

- Business Tourism and sub-sectors within this group.
- Leisure tourism target markets including - geographic considerations and the visitor journey.
- This theme also takes forward a new approach that pushes beyond traditional marketing methods towards enabling the people creating the Belfast experience to tell their story.

3.16 As part of the Year 1 Action Plan for Make Yourself at Home, the following has been delivered against the theme of *Position Belfast*:

- Ongoing work with Visit Belfast, Tourism NI and Tourism Ireland to ensure Belfast is positioned as a Gateway to Northern Ireland and a must-see urban destination on the island of Ireland by capturing GB and ROI city break market and attracting greater share of Out of State visitors to Ireland- primarily through contract management of Visit Belfast.
- Through Neighbourhood Tourism Investment Programme scoping activity - supporting the work of Belfast Stories in supporting organisations to tell the key stories.

3.17 Strategic theme 3: Experience

- *Make Yourself at Home* identifies the importance of experiential priorities including:
- Experiences that can be brought to life through the development of an optimal mix of 'anchor' and ancillary products that get people into an area and keep them there.
- Encouraging international visitors to immerse themselves actively in the locale, interacting with

people, engaging the senses and learning the history and stories of the places.

- prioritises delivering immersive moments that inspire tourists not only to share their experience with others but also make them want to return to the city.

3.18 As part of the Year 1 Action Plan for Make Yourself at Home, the following has been delivered against the theme of *Experience Belfast*.

- Working with the industry to encourage the development and delivery of quality visitor experiences including securing Tourism NI product development funding for new products such as Ceili at the Castle, Music Tours and music workshops.
- Ongoing scoping of Neighbourhood Tourism Programme - working towards aim of increased footfall, dwell time and spend in neighbourhoods with associated economic and employability benefits.
- Ongoing scoping of enhancement of the visitor experience at Council-owned assets including Belfast Zoo, Belfast Castle, Tropical Ravine, City Cemeteries, Malone House and City Hall to ensure an action plan is developed for future implementation which creates synergy with the city's 'Belfast brand' and Tourism NI 'Embrace A Giant Spirit' brand to deliver on experiential tourism.

The Tourism Plan identified the need for improvements in connectivity and accessibility through signage, wayfinding and interpretation which requires a scoping exercise to be undertaken, subject to budget approval in Year 2.

3.19 *Strategic theme 4: Sustain Belfast*

Members will be aware that Belfast signed up to this benchmarking following Committee approval in August 2020. The Global Destination Sustainability Index is the world's leading benchmarking and performance Index for cities, their events and their visitor economy. Its purpose is to engage, enable and inspire cities to become more sustainable places to visit, meet and thrive in. In addition to benchmarking a city's environmental strategy and social sustainability performance, the GDS-Index assess criteria that are industry specific: industry supplier support (restaurants, hotels, conference centres) and convention bureau strategy and initiatives.

3.20 Since 2019, over 60 cities have started the process of benchmarking and assessment. The goal is to have 300 cities

collaborating by 2023. The Index is based on 69 Indicators broken down into four categories:

- City Environmental Performance
- City Social Performance
- Supplier Performance
- Destination Management Performance

3.21 Belfast has now completed a third year of benchmarking resulting in significant improvement taking our place within top 20 cities. A series of related recommendations are included in *Make Yourself at Home*. A number of these relate to Visit Belfast's role as the Destination Management Organisation (DMO) and Visit Belfast have already made significant progress in implementing these as part of their current funding agreement with a commitment to build on this on a multi-annual basis.

3.22 As part of the Year 1 Action Plan for *Make Yourself at Home*, the following has been delivered against the theme of *Sustain Belfast*.

- Ongoing work with Visit Belfast on Global Sustainability Index and Tourism NI on regenerative tourism - improvement to 8th position in the world.
- Green Tourism Certification - working with the industry to increase their sustainability credentials which has resulted in 80% of hotel rooms in Belfast being accredited, ongoing work with a range of tourism providers to gain bronze or move upwards to silver certification and working on a cruise sustainability plan for Belfast.
- Working with key stakeholders such as Tourism NI and Visit Belfast to ensure that sustainability is embedded in tourism products and events across the city.
- Sustainability fully integrated in all tourism / event planning.

2.23 Catalyst Projects

All four of these strategic themes are underpinned by the need to support inclusive economic growth and to differentiate the Belfast offer in an increasingly competitive global marketplace. A fifth strand to the plan considers key strategic opportunities that could bolster investment in the sector in order to support recovery and future growth. These are catalyst or accelerator projects and are outlined below.

3.24 Catalyst Project 1: Our Place – support for local tourism

The Neighbourhood Tourism Framework is under-way and will be brought to Committee in June 2023 for approval. The Tourism Team also continue to work with colleagues across Council to ensure targeted investment in tourism through the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund.

3.25 Catalyst 2: Make Yourself at Home

Strategic and operational planning is ongoing for the delivery of the One Young World event in October 2023. Other major bid-for events have been progressed during the financial year 2022 / 2023 including the Fleadh Cheoil and the European Football Championships in 2028 with a decision due in September 2023). Work also continues across the tourism, culture and events team to prepare for Year of Culture in 2024. A detailed report will be brought to committee in June regarding 2024 and next steps and lessons learnt regarding our bid to host the Fleadh Cheoil.

3.26 Catalyst Project 3: Our Stories

The Tourism and Events Teams continue to work with colleagues in Belfast Stories to connect to local tourism product development and infrastructure through a hub and spoke model. Importantly the Hub will be an exemplar for responsible and sustainable tourism demonstrating the principles set out in the ten-year plan. Through the focus on Belfast Stories, the project will also be transformative for the positioning of the city. The development programme for this project as part of BRCD is fully aligned to this tourism plan with cross-cutting priorities and synergies.

3.27 Implementation

The ongoing success of the Tourism Plan requires ongoing review and delivery. To support this a number of key early actions have been identified for action in Year 2:

- Setting up of proposed governance and partnership model to drive the implementation of *Make Yourself at Home*.
- Scoping short and long-term investment priorities and financing strategy including tailored action plans to address areas of priority.

3.28 Appendix 1 sets out priority actions for Year 2 of the *Make Yourself at Home* Tourism Plan.

3.29 City Connections

In particular, Members will be aware that for the past number of years Council has supported two specific organisations (Fáilte Feirste Thiar in West Belfast and EastSide Tourism in East Belfast) to deliver a City Connections programme. It is proposed City Connections is replaced by the new Neighbourhood Tourism Investment Programme which will be open to organisations from across the city. In order to support transition and given that the new programme will not be operational until later in the year it is proposed that £25,000 each (50% of previous annual investment) is allocated to these organisations. If approved this will be sourced from existing organisational budgets.

3.30 City Events

Members will be aware that significant work has taken place in recent years to realign City Events with Council's wider cultural and tourism ambitions. This has included a renewed focus on working in partnership and developing programmes that support the local cultural sector and represent an authentic Belfast Experience.

3.31 Included in Appendix 1 are the proposed events for 2023/24. Further detail on approach and programmes will be presented to Committee at relevant points throughout the year. Members will note that there are currently no plans to deliver Halloween in 2023. It is proposed that this event is reviewed in line with the development work that has taken place on other events. This should include options for city events to represent greater cultural diversity within the city and how a partnership model could be developed. An update will be presented in due course.

3.32 In approving the 2023-2024 programme, including ad hoc events, Committee is also asked to approve officers to enter into any license agreements or SLAs required for the successful delivery of these events.

3.33 Eurovision

Members are asked to consider 2 Royal Avenue potentially hosting a ticketed live showing of the EUROVISION final. The event itself would feature compere / live performances, screens / PA, Stage and Lighting Contractor. The venue could

have an approximate capacity of 250-300 depending on final layout. It is expected that organising and hosting the event would come at a cost of approximately £7,500 which would be found from existing departmental budgets.

3.34 Lord Mayor's Day

Lord Mayor's Day will take place on Saturday 22 April 12-5pm in the grounds of Belfast City Hall, with satellite activity in 2 Royal Avenue. The free, all-ages event includes live music, dance, aerial circus and street theatre performances, have a go multi-sports activity, make your own multi-cultural arts and crafts, Carnival games stalls, drop-in circus workshops, creative writing activities, and Age Friendly Belfast activities. The theme for 2023 is 'Celebrating Belfast'. The event budget is £42k which is sourced from existing departmental budgets.

3.35 Financial & Resource Implications

There are currently no immediate new financial implications to this report. Appendix 1 sets out a breakdown of budget against programmes of work to be allocated from existing departmental budgets. Further detail on proposals for investment in local tourism will be presented to Committee in due course.

3.36 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

The cultural strategy, *A City Imagining* is subject to an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) and a Rural Needs Assessment (RNA). A specific screening has been carried out on this associated tourism plan and was included as part of the consultation exercise. Mitigating actions have been considered as part of the implementation plans. Catalyst projects such as Belfast Stories will be subject to a separate Equality Impact Assessment. It is also anticipated that should any investment programmes emerge from this plan these will be subject to further equality screening.”

During discussion, the Director of Economic Development, in response to a Member's question, advised that a report would be submitted to the Committee in June to provide an update on the development of Neighbourhood and Local Tourism across the city.

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After discussion, the Committee:

- Noted the contents of the report and approved the Year 2 Action Plan, as detailed, including the priorities as set out at Appendix 1 which included the associated budgets;
- Noted the outline plan for the Lord Mayors Days;
- Approved the interim funding of £25,000 each to Fáilte Feirste Thiar and Eastside Tourism from existing organisational budgets;
- Approved the hosting of a EUROVISION viewing event in 2 Royal Avenue to be funded from existing budgets; and
- Noted that a report would be submitted to the Committee in June to provide an update on the development of Neighbourhood/Local Tourism.

Update on Music Strategy

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 At a meeting of City Growth and Regeneration Committee in December 2022, members agreed the music strategy, ‘Music Matters: A Roadmap for Belfast’ including its corresponding priorities. The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on progress to date and seek approval to the allocation of funding to a number of important strands of the music strategy.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- **Note the contents of this report and the progress made against areas of the music strategy, ‘Music Matters: A Roadmap for Belfast’**
- **Approve the allocation of £20,000 towards the Pipeline Investment Fund for music venues**
- **Approve the allocation of £50,000 for the creation of a digital music support service and marketing channels**
- **Approve the allocation of £30,000 towards the development of the Music Industry Mentoring Programme for 2023/24.**

3.0 Main report

3.1 Members will be aware that at a meeting of City Growth and Regeneration Committee in December 2022, members agreed the final ‘Music Matters: A Roadmap for Belfast’. These

Mirroring the A City Imagining cultural strategy the music strategy has 4 strategic themes, each having 4 strategic priorities. There are a number of actions and recommendations given for each priority catering to many areas of need across the music sector.

- **Theme 1**: Place artists at the heart - Recognising the value of creators
- **Theme 2**: Nurture the sector - Strengthening the structures to support those who guide and invest in creators
- **Theme 3**: Ignite the live experience - Liberating the live music sector as a major catalyst for cultural and economic growth
- **Theme 4**: Unlock the unifying power of UNESCO - Sharing the gift of music with the people of Belfast

3.2 Update on Music Board

The Music Strategy sets out governance recommendations for Belfast Music, including the formation of a Belfast Region Music Board, comprising between 15 and 20 members, to bring to life the UNESCO City of Music designation.

The board will help to embed music in all communities across the city to make music a sustainable career option for creators and people who support them. Following agreement of the full Music Strategy in December 2022, an open call was launched for applications to join the Belfast Region Music Board with applications closing in February 2023.

A total of 60 applications were received from across a range of disciplines. After an extensive shortlisting and scoring process, 18 board members have been selected to participate on the board. After preliminary shortlisting by the Culture Team, with final selection was decided on with a wider panel including external moderation from key partners in the Music Strategy, namely the British Council NI and Thrive NI.

Following the appointment of a Chair and Vice Chair at the inaugural meeting in early April, the board will begin work to review and agree the remaining implementation plan for 23/24. This full implementation plan and corresponding budgets will be presented to members in June 2023.

3.3 Support for Venues

Theme 3 of the Music Strategy has a focus on supporting venues, with priority 9.5 including a commitment to review

current support for venues to upgrade the quality of their event spaces and equipment. As a key stakeholder in the strategy, officials from the Culture Team have been in discussions with the Music Venue Trust, a UK registered charity which acts to protect, secure and improve Grassroots Music Venues, to explore opportunities to enhance support for venues in Belfast.

In 2022, the Music Venue Trust established the Pipeline Investment Fund (PIF), a new grant-giving fund to support venues. PIF is open for small-scale grant applications (up to £5,000) from UK-based grassroots music venues to support two areas of work:

- Small-scale capital applications; including lights, sound, access, ventilation and minor building alterations
- Staff & training; diversifying your workforce, succession planning, skills development, and strengthening local community ties

The fund will prioritise support for organisations who may be excluded from other available funding and PIF is open to all venue operators and organisations that meet any of the three definitions of a Grassroots Music Space, namely Grassroots Music Pub (GMP), Grassroots Music & Arts Space (GMAS) and Grassroots Music Venues (GMVs).

- 3.4 To expand upon the scheme's success in England, it is proposed to allocate £20,000 and work in conjunction with the Music Venue Trust to run a programme specifically targeted at venues in Belfast. This funding, which will support a minimum of four venues, will be administered through the Music Venue Trust PIF process with scoring and final decisions made via a panel consisting of MVT staff and Belfast City Council. This initial pilot programme will be reviewed in-year to assess the impact of this programme, with a view to potentially expanding this work to support more venues.

3.5 Communications and website

The draft roadmap was published in the wake of Belfast being named a UNESCO City of Music, wherein six core commitments were set out for the City to deliver upon One of these – a local initiative – was the commitment to 'launch a dedicated music support service' providing professional development, networking and music entrepreneurship advice, reaching 1500+ musicians and music businesses annually

3.6 Theme one of the Music Strategy has a focus on exploring and developing professional development opportunities to educate and equip music creators with the critical knowledge, contacts, and tools for building a sustainable career within the sector. The Belfast music roadmap sets out a number of recommendations for action, several of which an online platform can help to deliver. These include:

- **2.1: Develop a Music Support Service (initially a digital space/website) which will act as a point of contact for all questions arising from within the music community (new, emerging and tipping point artists), deliver and promote educational and development opportunities, and facilitate connections amongst and beyond individuals and organisations working within the music sector.**
- **7.2: Create a one-stop-shop online Music Directory to promote and connect all facets of the music business and those working in it.**
- **14.1: Create a one-stop listing service for venues, organisations and the hospitality sector to promote their music activity to the city's locals and visitors**

3.7 It is envisaged that an online presence will

- **provide a wealth of information for creators and professionals, from membership associations and charities offering health support to the latest news, views and events relating to the development of NI's music sector.**
- **Hosts a Directory, allowing individuals and organisations to find each other for mutual support and engagement.**
- **Provide a monthly newsletter**
- **Become the go-to place for future consultations, charters, or Council resources, complementing and amplifying related information on the Council's website.**
- **Be used to host the toolkits outlined in recommendations 7.4 (sponsorship toolkit) and 12.2 (green toolkit).**

3.8 To begin the development of this online platform, it is proposed to allocate £50,000 toward the creation of a digital space, website and the continuation of a dedicated Belfast Music social media channels.

3.9 Music Industry Mentoring Programme

Point 6.1 within Theme One of the Music Matters strategy recommends investment in *'the delivery of a specially designed mentoring programme for individuals working in music, including continued professional development for senior or experienced individuals working in music'*

The public Consultation for the Music Matters roadmap stressed the importance of developing the infrastructure around the music creators of our city by addressing skill gaps and providing opportunities for knowledge and mentoring. It is proposed that a tender will be created to invite interested parties to design a short course of training and mentoring for individuals currently working or considering working in areas such as the following:

- Agents
- Managers
- Labels
- Marketing & PR

The course must be able to upskill participants to be able to provide greater support to the wider music community in these currently under-developed areas of the sector. It is proposed to allocate £30,000 towards the development of the Music Industry Mentoring Programme for 2023/24.

3.10 Output Conference Update

Established in 2016, Output Belfast has earned its reputation over the last 6 years as Ireland's biggest one-day music conference and live music showcase. Delivered as a key event within the City of Music programme, the conference will take place on 1st June 2023 and feature a full programme of panels, workshops and conferences, followed by an evening showcase of live music for free to the public. Activity includes music and creative digital showcasing and networking events, business development panels and workshops and meetings and networking with key international creative digital companies,

3.11 As part of our commitment to priority 2.5 within the music strategy, which reads 'Develop regular music business touchpoints throughout the year using existing conferences to offer more regular but bitesize opportunities for micro learning', we have increased elements of the Output Conference activities for 2023 to ensure that there is a day

taking place after the main conference that is focused on community engagement and networking. It will capture the incoming industry delegates the day following the conference for engagement in 1-1s / speed-networking while other activities will be planned throughout the day.

3.12 Update on City of Music Industry Sessions

Theme one of the Music Strategy focuses on the development of musicians, including action point 2.4 which seeks to 'provide opportunities via events and programmes to provide regular access to professional associations in music to deepen existing relationships and create new ones'.

To build towards this wider goal of increasing networking and knowledge of the local sector, officials have developed the City of Music Industry Sessions, a series of free monthly information sessions for the local music community. Hosted in 2 Royal Avenue, this series features panel discussions and advice from experts across a range of disciplines, preceded by networking opportunities and advice clinics hosted by the Culture Team. Each event will offer learning opportunities for both the music creators and music industry personnel to ensure development of both in tandem. The first event, which focused on how to get tracks played on radio as well as how to access careers in this field, took place on 21st March with 35 industry professionals in attendance to receive advice from featured experts from BBC Radio 1 and BBC Radio Ulster.

- 3.13** Six more sessions are planned for the coming months, including more informal networking sessions prior to the panel discussions. Officials are engaging with colleagues in Enterprise and Business Growth and other teams across Council to ensure alignment with other support packages provided across Council and explore opportunities to add further value to the industry sessions through advice clinics in relevant industry areas.

3.14 UNESCO City of Music Opportunities

Relationships with other cities within the UNESCO City of Music network continue to be developed through attendance at UCoM cluster meetings. Learning from strategies employed by these cities has allowed the Culture Team fresh insights into best use of the Music Matters roadmap as well as support on achieving UNESCO aims

Opportunities for the Belfast music community continue to be developed through the network. An agreement with the city of

Hannover, Germany, will see an exchange of music industry personnel between the cities to provide skill and network development for those involved. This exchange will begin in early June as representatives from Hannover come to Belfast to engage with the Belfast music community during the Output Conference, in which they will actively participate.

An exchange is being arranged with UCoM City London, Canada, that will begin in July 2023. This opportunity will allow for two folk-music artists to be provided with attendance at a song-writing camp, two pre-festival performances, one main-stage performance at Home County Music and Art Festival, as well as music industry 1-1 meetings across Ontario with agents, bookers and other personnel that will benefit the Belfast artists. Priority 2.2 within Theme 1 of the Music Matters strategy relates to sourcing performance opportunities for Belfast music creators to perform internationally and the UCoM Network will benefit the fulfilment of this goal.

3.15 Financial and Resource Implications

- Approve the allocation of £20,000 towards the Pipeline Investment Fund for music venues
- Approve the allocation of £50,000 for the creation of a digital music support service and marketing channels
- Approve the allocation of £30,000 towards the development of the Music Industry Mentoring Programme for 2023/24.

These costs are to be met from existing departmental budgets allocated to music development.

3.16 Equality & Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

This music strategy is part of the overarching cultural strategy for Belfast that has been subject to EQIA. An equality screening has been completed and mitigating actions will be considered as part of any initiatives.”

During discussion, the Director of Economic Development stated that the Belfast Region Music Board Members were currently being appointed and further details would be submitted to the Committee in due course.

The Committee:

- Noted the contents of the report and the progress made against areas of the music strategy, “Music Matters: A Roadmap for Belfast”;

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- Approved the allocation of £20,000 towards the Pipeline Investment Fund for music venues;
- Approved the allocation of £50,000 for the creation of a digital music support service and marketing channels; and
- Approved the allocation of £30,000 towards the development and delivery of the Music Industry Mentoring Programme for 2023/24.

Update on Dublin - Belfast Economic Corridor

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 11th August, 2022, it had received an update on the progress to support the development of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor (DBEC), including work on the strategy and action plan. Since that meeting, the strategy had now been completed and agreed by all of the DBEC partners. It articulated a vision to sustainable economic growth across the region, identifying areas of focus for the partnership to address future opportunities and seeking to address any gaps in existing provision.

The Director of Economic Development advised that the vision of the strategy was to become a leading economic corridor in Europe, achieving sustainable growth through collaborative Research and Development, a highly skilled workforce and enabling infrastructure. This included an ambition to be world renowned as a major international centre in growth sectors such as Professional Services, Advanced Manufacturing, ICT and Life and Health Sciences.

He highlighted that the strategy articulated a number of strategic objectives for the partnership, which included;

- Increased skills and training to meet the labour requirements of the region, building on and expanding the existing workforce;
- Advocated for cross-border infrastructure to strengthen connectivity and access to markets and labour;
- Enhanced cross-border collaboration in Research and Development and Innovation, targeting investment in high growth sectors and the green economy;
- Promoted sustainable and climate-conscious growth along the corridor, aligned with councils' development plans and wider policy objectives;
- Aligned with and supported economic development partners to increase trade and investment along the corridor; and
- Marketed the region and elevated the DBEC brand so that the region becomes globally renowned as an attractive place to live and do business.

He stated that the action plan outlined key pillars to support effective delivery, including ways of working, governance and resourcing, and communication and marketing. Priority actions identified across the short and medium term included:

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- Undertaking further stakeholder engagement and developing a coherent marketing and communications strategy in line with the strategic objectives;
- Progressing the Shared Island feasibility study around sectoral Innovation Hubs along the corridor, with the aim of preparing an application for external funding by Quarter 4 2023. In parallel with circular economy activities at Belfast City Council and Dublin City Council, gathering insights on circular economy initiatives along the corridor;
- Identification and preparatory scoping for relevant external funding opportunities, including Peace Plus and Shared Island;
- Undertaking research on existing skills strategies and enterprise plans and identifying key barriers to skills development with the aim of developing a clear skills policy and strategy; and
- Mapping of key assets along the corridor with development potential and highlighting infrastructure gaps.

He advised that, as part of the governance structure for the partnership, the DBEC political advisory group continued to meet. There were 24 councillors who made up a Political Advisory Group (3 nominees from each council area), with the Council nominees being Alderman Dorrian and Councillors Beattie and Hanvey.

Shared Island Fund

The Director of Economic Development reported that, in order to bring forward collaborative activities aligned with the strategic priorities set out in the plan, a number of applications for funding were submitted to the Irish Government's Shared Island Initiative in late 2022.

The DBEC partners were successful in attracting financial support of €150,000 to carry out a feasibility assessment on the development of a network of regional innovation hubs across the corridor region. These locations would support current or emerging business clusters in particular locations, to the benefit of the entire region. He advised that the project would look at pairing up locations based on sectoral strengths and clusters, such as Fintech in Dublin and Belfast.

The Director of Economic Development stated that the proposal also incorporated an ambition identified by the Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission to support growth sectors such as Fintech and capitalise on linkages with cities such as Dublin.

He highlighted that a procurement exercise was underway to secure external advisory support for this work. It was being led by Fingal County Council and Belfast City Council officers would participate in a project steering group. A preferred bidder had been selected and it was expected that this project would commence in the first week of March 2023.

He pointed out that, in addition, Dublin and Belfast City Council were awarded €250,000 to carry out major feasibility research on capital projects to support the circular economy. Opportunities to develop the sector within the context of the Dublin Belfast

Corridor would be considered as part of this work, although the primary focus was on the cities of Dublin and Belfast. There had been extensive work with colleagues from both councils preparing the terms of reference for technical support, with Dublin City Council as lead partner. This tender was issued through a procurement framework following guidance from the Office of Government Procurement in Dublin. The Tender was currently open and would close on 20 March 2023. The partners continued to monitor and review opportunities for further funding from the Shared Island Unit. Officials from the Unit made a presentation on live and pending opportunities to the Political Advisory Group meeting in January. The partnership was also monitoring relevant opportunities for funding under Peace Plus.

The Committee noted the contents of the report and the progress to date to develop the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor partnership.

Cultural Work Programme 23-24

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 the current status of the ten-year cultural strategy, *A City Imagining* and seek approval for key actions in 2023/24 aligned to the implementation of year 4 of the strategy.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the contents of this report and progress against the delivery of the cultural strategy priorities.**
- Agree the actions for 2023/24 as set out in the report and in appendix 1 including the budget implications at 3.19 to be met from existing departmental budgets.**

3.0 Main report

3.1 Members will be aware that at a meeting of City Growth and Regeneration Committee in August 2019 the final ten-year cultural strategy for Belfast *A City Imagining* was agreed. This included draft implementation plans for a three-year period to be reviewed and finalised on an annual basis.

3.2 Despite the challenges of Covid-19, significant progress has been made in delivery against strategic targets in the first three years of the strategy. In 2022/23 this work included:

- £3.08m funding through 117 awards via the following schemes:**

- **Cultural multi-annual funding including support for Arts/ Heritage organisations and Festivals/Events – 51 organisations supported**
- **Four Pathfinder awards for organisations not in receipt of core public sector support**
- **21 Community Festivals Fund in partnership with DfC**
- **22 organisations supported through Arts and Heritage small grants**
- **Five Access and Inclusion grants in partnership with DfC**
- **8 organisations supported through Artist Studios and Maker Spaces Organisational Grants**
- **19 individual artists supported through the Micro-Grant Programme for Creative Practitioners**
- **Creative Bursaries for 10 individuals**
- **6 partnerships with key sectoral organisations**
- **A partnership with Theatre and Dance NI, including funding for 7 recipients, across various disciplines of the theatre and dance sector, as part of the first ever INVEST programme**
- **Partnership with Craft NI to develop Craft NI Gallery including a programme of 8 craft exhibitions and 19 Belfast events for Craft Month**
- **A partnership with Thrive NI to continue the Audience Panel, representing 200 members, and provide tailored advice to embedding people-led approaches within cultural organisations**
- **A partnership with Ulster Architectural Heritage Society to deliver Open Heritage Belfast and other events, advocacy, advice & support.**
- **Investment and delivery against the Creative Communities programme as part of Peace IV.**
- **Delivery against the Extended Cultural Programme including creative commissions to four organisations**
- **Strategic Delivery Body for Festival 2022 including delivery of Our Place in Space and support for four additional projects**
- **Development, consultation and publication of the music strategy**
- **Delivery of the Belfast Canvass Project and city animation projects across 30 sites across the city**
- **Continue with support to increase participation and representation at cultural events by disabled people through initiatives such as the Gig Buddies programme and a new partnership with the University of Atypical**

Year 4 of the strategy will seek to combine cultural recovery with renewal in line with the commitments and priorities set out in *A City Imagining*.

3.3 Investing in the cultural sector

At a meeting of City Growth and Regeneration in February 2022 recommendations for core-multi annual funding were agreed providing support to 42 organisations for two years as well as continuation of four-year scheme that supports a further 13 organisations. This funding amounts to £2,430,010. A further £79,768 was agreed in relation to *Pathfinder* development funding for four organisations.

The Culture Team also runs a series of small grants (project funding) including the community festivals fund, including £133,244 for Arts and Heritage Projects and £69,000 (plus, DfC match funding) for Community Festivals.

3.4 Review of CMAG

Cultural multi-annual grants (CMAG) are now in the fourth and final year of its first cycle. During this time, the council administered two rounds of two-year funding (2019/20–20/21 and 2021/22–22/23) and one round of four-year funding (2019/20–22/23). As part of the evaluation framework for CMAG, it was agreed there should be a summative evaluation of both the monitoring and evaluation process and programme impact carried out by an independent evaluator. The first cycle of CMAG coincided with a period of unprecedented change in the operating environment, including the Covid-19 pandemic, which seriously limited the ability of festivals, events and cultural sectors to deliver activities and outcomes that would contribute to the overall impact of CMAG and the Investment Programme.

3.5 Due to the challenges of the past four years, it is recommended that the evaluation focuses primarily on a process review, exploring what worked well and what could be improved. This review will be completed by May 2023, with a report and recommendations on the future of CMAG presented to Committee in June 2023.

3.6 Artist Studio and Creative Workspaces

In addition to these established funding schemes, the cultural strategy committed to a broader investment model that considered the diversity of the city's cultural landscape.

In response to detailed consultation with the sector, Committee agreed in February 2022 to bring forward a specific funding programme for studios and artist-led organisations. Following an extensive grants process, 8 organisations received combined support of £100,000 through the Artist Studios and Maker Spaces Organisational Grants 2022/23. This support contributed to a range of organisational needs, including research work to locate/secure long-term accessible accommodation, infrastructural improvements, the development of new organisational strategies, development training and audience development. To respond to the continued need within the sector, it is proposed to continue this funding in 23/24 through a similar grant process starting in April, with final allocations presented to members in June 2023.

- 3.7 In addition to the funding for artist studios, members agreed a strategic review of artist studios and maker-spaces in Belfast. This research study, which will explore the current and future requirements of artist workspaces in Belfast, is led by Turley Communications and will involve extensive consultation with the sector, benchmarking and policy recommendations. To ensure alignment with other statutory partners, council officials have been working closely with the Arts Council NI in the development of this review. It is envisaged that the scope of this work will inform a set of robust action focused recommendations that could be implemented on a phased basis. The final report and recommendations will be brought to Committee in June 2023.

3.8 **Sectoral Development and Partnerships**

In addition to funding, Belfast City Council fulfils an important role in leading and supporting sectoral development initiatives. In 2022/23, this included a range of strategic partnerships with Arts and Business, Craft NI, Theatre and Dance NI, Thrive NI, the Ulster Architectural and Heritage Society and the University of Atypical.

- 3.9 Through the partnership with Arts and Business, Belfast City Council supports Blueprint for the Future – a financial resilience programme which supports a network of arts and cultural organisations to encourage income growth and long-term financial stability. Belfast City Council has engaged with partners throughout the development phase and significant progress has been made in securing additional resource to grow the programme. In March 23, it was announced that 17 Northern Ireland arts organisations will receive over £765,000 over the next two years from both public and private

fundings. Council support is £30,000 per year amounting to 10% of total project costs and it is recommended that this level of funding is maintained in year three of the programme.

- 3.10 In response to the needs of the theatre and dance sector, Council developed a partnership with Theatre and Dance NI to launch the first ever Invest Programme throughout 2022. This programme included bursaries for seven recipients across various disciplines of the theatre and dance sector and is designed to support, upskill and help create the next generation of inclusive artists to lead Northern Ireland's theatre and dance sectors. It is proposed to continue this programme for a second year.
- 3.11 Through its partnership with Craft NI, support from Belfast City Council resulted in 20 events as part of August Craft Month. Craft NI have continued to expand their Craft Gallery based in Royal Avenue, with council support including a programme of 8 craft exhibitions and 52 makers. It is proposed to continue this work to develop the Gallery to enable more Belfast makers to sell their products in Belfast city centre.
- 3.12 Through a partnership with Ulster Architectural and Heritage Society, support resulted in the delivery of Open Heritage Belfast and other advice & support to the heritage sector. It is proposed to continue this work. With a view to developing a heritage plan, officials conducted a quotation process to commission a Heritage Audit and Roadmap for Development in January 2023. However, no suppliers reached the required threshold to begin this work and a new enhanced quotation will be issued in April 2023. A report and recommendations presented to the Committee in Autumn 2023.
- 3.13 Further wraparound support programmes
- In addition to these bespoke programmes, Council officers will continue to engage with the sector and respond to challenges and opportunities throughout the year. This wraparound support will be provided to all organisations in receipt of funding. In addition, leadership mentoring will be offered working with external specialists. Advice, training and capacity building will also be provided to organisations who have been unsuccessful in securing Council funding.
- 3.14 Through its sector support programme, Council operates a number of sectoral Forums, namely Belfast Festivals Forum and Belfast Visual Arts Forum. Priority 15 of *A City Imagining* has an emphasis on encouraging environmental

responsibility and the role of culture in changing behaviours. To help build towards this goal, foster greater collaboration and encourage best practice in the sector, its proposed to establish a Green Arts Forum, in partnership with other statutory and community stakeholders, to promote and develop sustainability practice in the cultural sector.

3.15 Cultural Participation and Engagement

The cultural strategy made a commitment to publishing an annual report in order to demonstrate the impact of cultural development on the city's wider agenda. Officials are engaging with the culture department within Queen's University, Belfast to explore partnership working in evaluating the 10-year cultural strategy including investment programmes and impact. Officials are also currently reviewing best practice from other cities to assess the impact of appropriate measurements and data. An update and recommendations will be presented to members in Autumn 2023.

3.16 As well as sectoral support for culture, arts, heritage and events, Council also delivers initiatives designed to increase accessibility and cultural participation. Members will be aware the Council has commissioned a report regarding LGBTQIA+ visibility and representation in Belfast's Culture, Arts and Heritage. Officials have received a draft copy of the report and recommendations and the proposed action plan will be presented to members in June 2023. A similar report on minority ethnic representation has been issued to market, with a report and recommendations to be presented to Committee in Autumn 2023.

3.17 The Cultural Strategy also contained a commitment to complete an accessibility audit of cultural venues to publish accurate access information on an online platform. Through its partnership with the University of Atypical, social narrative videos have been produced for seven key venues in the city to provide key information for audiences with a disability. In addition, University of Atypical delivered training for twenty disability champions and supported organisations to enhance their Equality, Access and Inclusion offer to d/Deaf, disabled and neurodiverse audience members. It is recommended to continue this partnership, supporting eight new venues, creating an additional 20 disability champions and increase the number of organisations who can access this support.

3.18 In addition, it is proposed to progress the development of an equality, access and inclusion 'kitemark' accreditation for arts

events taking place during Belfast 2024. This accreditation could apply to events taking place in non-arts venues and would demonstrate that the events have been independently assessed as achieving a good standard of equality, access and inclusion. UofA plan to develop the 'EASIMark' accreditation process starting from March 2023, field test this in from August 2023 onwards, and with the scheme being fully operational from January 2024 to coincide with the launch of Belfast 2024.

3.19 Financial & Resource Implications

There are no new financial implications. The activities outlined in this report will be resourced from the 2023/24 budget for the Culture and Tourism section of the Economic Development division of the Place and Economy Departmental budget in line with existing approvals. A breakdown of specific areas of spend are included in Appendix 1.

3.20 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

The cultural strategy, *A City Imagining* has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) and a Rural Needs Assessment (RNA). Specific initiatives as required will be subject to a further equality screening.”

The Committee:

- Noted the contents of this report and progress against the delivery of the cultural strategy priorities; and
- Agreed the actions for 2023/24 as set out in the report and appendix 1 (copy available [here](#)) including the budget implications at 3.19 to be met from existing departmental budgets.

Strategic and Operational Issues

Committee Plan 2023-24 and End of Year Report 2022-23

The Committee was provided with an end of year progress update ([Appendix 1](#)) on the key actions contained in the 2022-23 Committee Plan, as agreed by the Committee in June 2021, together with the draft Committee Plan for 2023-24 ([Appendix 2](#)).

The Director of City Regeneration and Development advised that the 2022-23 Committee Plan End of Year Report (EOYR) and the draft Plan for 2023-24 were both developed in the context of the Council's Corporate Plan and the Belfast Agenda, in particular taking into account the emerging work underway with the Belfast Agenda Refresh. Consequently, the new Committee Plan contained the commitments within the

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Corporate Delivery Plan, which fell under the remit of this Committee, plus additional deliverables that had been agreed by the Committee throughout the 22/23 period and were relevant to the Standing Orders. She reported that the Plan outlined the main priorities and programmes of work that the Committee was overseeing to maximise the Council's contribution to the Belfast Agenda.

Committee Plan 2022-23 End of Year Report

The Director of City Regeneration and Development pointed out that, while the Committee had received regular updates on progress for specific programmes and initiatives, Appendix 1 set out an overview of progress against the main commitments in the Committee Plan 2022-2023. She explained that the End of Year Report focussed on the second half of the financial year as members had already received a six-monthly update at December 2022's committee.

She informed the Committee that highlights from the EOYR included:

- The Council had improved its Global Destination Sustainability Index rating to 8th out of 65 other cities across the world. 80% of Belfast Hotel Rooms were now Green Tourism Certified;
- Belfast was named the world's best conference destination for a 2nd consecutive year;
- £17m had been secured for an 11-council Entrepreneurship Support Service;
- The Council had engaged with 755 individuals, supporting them to progress to start a business;
- 60 Social Enterprises and Co-operatives had received one-to-one mentoring, advice and guidance; four were new co-operatives; and 25 events/ workshops were delivered with over 300 attendees;
- The £50,000 Social Economy Incentive Fund was launched in September 2022 to support social economy businesses business growth plans;
- The Council had won 'Council of the Year' at the Social Enterprise Northern Ireland Awards in October 2022;
- The Belfast-Dublin strategy and action plan had been finalised. This helped 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;
- By the end of Quarter 3 the zoo had welcomed 184k visitors. This was 14k higher than the five year average;
- The assembly of the two remaining properties, for Belfast Stories, had been completed. The Council was in ownership of all properties at the site and the project was currently out to procurement for the Integrated Design Team;
- Since September, the GCSE support programme had engaged 281 young people. The Council were also supporting 170 young people through our Youth Support Programme. So far, 87 had completed accredited training and 65 were undertaking essential skills qualifications;

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- Since April 2022, the Council had had over 700 places on Employment Academies. On average, 93% of those who started an Employment Academy successfully completed, and for those, achieved an into-work rate of 75%;
- The Vacant-to-Vibrant Pilot Grant scheme was launched. To date, 32 applications had been supported by officers to develop their applications, with 6 of those already approved and a further two recommendations for approval at this Committee meeting;
- The emerging draft Bolder Vision Strategy had been approved by the Committee in August 2022 with work ongoing to finalise the Strategy and Action Plan with the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) and the Department for Communities (DfC) and bring it forward.
- The Renewed Ambition Programme of work, to promote Belfast, was completed with local partners;
- The Council established new City Centre Governance structures including a Members City Centre Area Working Group to help to progress priorities and address issues;
- The Council commenced delivery of Public Realm Catalyst projects aligned to Developer Contributions including Great Victoria Street/Shafsbury Square area and Little York Street / Little Patrick Street.
- The Council delivered the majority of the £4.039m of the DfC Covid Revitalisation Programme with work ongoing to deliver the final two projects;
- DfI had provided the Council with a Letter of Offer to fund the “Grey to Green” programme in March 2023 (subject to capital approvals);
- The Southwest Quarter Revitalisation proposal had received a letter of offer of £250k from DfC;
- The Council had progressed its plans to improve active travel options for the city including Active Travel Enablers / covered cycle stores; secured cycle parking at Castle Court, the Active Travel Hub at QUB, the Cathedral Quarter Active Travel Hub, and three new Belfast Bikes stations;
- The Council finalised a number of Pre-Applications Discussions on the emerging Housing Led Regeneration sites, progressed Memorandum’s of Understanding with other public landowners, completed concept regeneration plans and had opened an Expression of Interest process to engage the investment and development market to bring these regeneration opportunities forward at scale; and
- The Council had completed the City Centre Living Vision with key findings and recommendations to be brought back to Members.

Draft Committee Plan 2023-24

The Director of City Regeneration and Development stated that the draft Committee Plan for 2023-24 (Appendix 2) followed a similar structure to the Corporate

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Delivery Plan, plus additional deliverables that had been agreed by the Committee and that were relevant to the Standing Orders of the Committee.

She pointed out that highlights within the plan included:

- Further development of the Neighbourhood Tourism Investment Programme;
- Delivering the Music Strategy and Belfast 2024;
- Delivering a programme of City Events;
- Introducing the new Entrepreneurship Support Service (ESS) in September 2023;
- Finalising the refreshed Social Economy Action Plan and introducing a new incentive to improve the financial management skills of new and growing social enterprises;
- Undertaking a development and investment plan to support the sustainability of St. George's market;
- Completing Belfast Stories Audit and commence RIBA 2 design consultation;
- Working with the Partnership Boards and the Education Inequalities sub-group to secure longer-term options to support young people;
- Delivery of Employment Academies in priority areas;
- Progressing the Belfast Labour Market Partnership including extending the Digital Badging initiative and progressing the Bridges to Progression service to support 180 young people;
- Finalising A Bolder Vision Strategy and Action Plan taking a civic lead on delivering a significant transformation of the city centre streets and places;
- Advancing Public Realm Catalyst Schemes aligned to the Developer Contributions, including the 5Cs, Little York/Little Patrick Street, Blackstaff Square and Great Victoria Street;
- Providing input and strategic direction to major regeneration and development projects, including maximising regeneration impact of the Belfast Stories;
- Leading the Community Planning Partnership's City Development Board on the identified priorities of housing-led regeneration; connectivity, active and sustainable travel; Future City Centre; and citywide regeneration and investment;
- Working with partners to maximise residential development opportunities and jointly working to overcome obstacles to increasing residential development including city centre living;
- Producing a lobby position paper to advocate for devolution to Council of enhanced regeneration powers and associated funding;
- Taking forward a Regeneration Framework and Project Prioritisation process together with associated feasibility studies and business case development to attract the necessary investment for city-wide regeneration priorities;

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- Finalise a Competitive Dialogue process to attract investment at scale for the delivery of housing-led regeneration;
- Concluding the Development Brief process for the INW Northern Cluster;
- Continuing working through the City Development Board (Housing Led Regeneration Group) to analyse public sector land ownership in a city-wide context identified through the Urban Capacity Study and Housing Monitor to identify opportunities for housing together with other privately owned land;
- Progressing next steps for development of identified sites under the citywide strategic sites assessment process, including Member engagement; planning and site appraisals and feasibility studies;
- Continue to work through the City Development Board (and Housing Led Regeneration Group) to identify inhibitors to delivering housing opportunities progressing and to identify mechanisms to unlock these challenges;
- Working with partners to promote and develop regeneration opportunities within the Innovation District;
- Delivering remaining projects under DfC's Covid Recovery Revitalisation Programme;
- Delivering Tranche 3 of the Business Cluster and Community Grants;
- Delivering the Vacant-to-Vibrant Capital Grant scheme;
- Progressing the future-use options and attracting funding for 2 Royal Avenue; and promoting the Sixth investment and development opportunity; and
- Delivering the Tactical Regeneration projects, including Grey to Green, Active Travel Enablers, 5C's Revitalisation Programme, and Entries Phase 2 programme physical projects.

Progress Reports

The Director of City Regeneration and Development advised that, following agreement on the draft Committee Plan, officers would bring a six-monthly progress report against all commitments in the Committee Plan in October 2023 and a further end of year report in April 2024.

During discussion, the Director of City Regeneration and Development highlighted that, in relation to 'Working with partners to promote and develop regeneration opportunities within the Innovation District' outlined in the report, whilst this had been previously brought via the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, it was noted that work was to be commissioned via the Innovation City Belfast Partnership (including Belfast City Council as a partner) to undertake a spatial plan to consider the emerging Innovation District in more detail, and that a future report would be brought to the Committee and included as part of the 2023 / 2024 City Growth and Regeneration Committee Plan.

She also confirmed that, in relation to the refresh of the Car Parking Strategy being deferred pending the finalisation of the Local Development Plan and Belfast Metropolitan

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Transport Plan (BMTP), officers had met with DfI recently and they had noted that progress was underway, in particular, in how the BMTP related to the Climate Action Plan. She advised that the Committee would be kept up to date with the progress of the BMTP.

After discussion, the Committee:

- Noted the contents of the end of year report; and
- Approved the City Growth and Regeneration Committee Plan for 2023-24.

Chairperson

Licensing Committee

Wednesday, 12th April, 2023

MEETING OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE LAVERY ROOM AND
REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Matt Collins (Chairperson);
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor M. Kelly) and
Councillors Bradley, Bunting, Canavan, Gormley,
Hutchinson, T. Kelly, Magee, McAteer, McCann,
McKeown, Murray, Nelson and Smyth.

In attendance: Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;
Ms. N. Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and
Civic Services;
Mr. S. Hewitt, Building Control Manager;
Ms. L. Hillis, Principal Building Control Surveyor;
Mr. J. Cunningham, Senior Licensing Officer;
Mr. D. McCamphill, Lead Building Control Surveyor;
Ms. V. Donnelly, City Protection Manager;
Ms. C. Naylor, Assistant Manager NIHMO Unit; and
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported on behalf of Councillors Doran and Howard.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 15th March were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 3rd April, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor T. Kelly declared an interest in relation to agenda items 2b and 2c – Applications for a New Licence to Operate a House in Multiple Occupation – Flats 1 and 2, 6 Sandhurst Road, on the basis that she had been liaising with residents in that area and left the meeting for the duration of those items.

Delegated Matters

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

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**Houses in Multiple Occupation Licences
Issued Under Delegated Authority**

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

**Applications for a New Licence to Operate a House in
Multiple Occupation - Flats 1 and 2, 6 Sandhurst Road**

The Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services informed the Members that a legal representative who had only recently been appointed to represent the owner of the properties had requested additional time to consider the Committee reports and take instruction from their client.

Accordingly, the Committee agreed to defer consideration of the applications until a future meeting.

Applications approved under Delegated Authority

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

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

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

(The Committee agreed to consider these two items simultaneously.)

(Mr. S. Dolan, Senior Development Manager, City Regeneration and Development Unit, attended in connection with these items.)

The Committee was reminded that, at its meetings on 16th November and 14th December, it had considered a request from DfI Roads Service for the removal or relocation of two Temporary Pavement Cafés situated in the middle of Fountain Street, close to its junction with Castle Street, being operated as part of the City Picnic and Voodoo businesses. The request had been made with the aim of facilitating the safe movement of vehicular traffic in the street, following its reopening after the Primark fire. The Committee had agreed to defer the request to enable further information to be obtained from the Department for Infrastructure on its plans for the development of the City centre, for Council officers to determine Translink's intentions for the area and for new applications to relocate to adjacent locations to be determined.

The Building Control Manager reported that a pavement café licence had since been granted under delegated authority to the owner of City Picnic for the remaining closed portion between the junction of Fountain Street and Castle Junction and to the owner of Voodoo for another location in Fountain Street, beside Norwich Union House. No objections had been received from DfI Roads or the Police Service of Northern Ireland

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or through the public notice process for either application and the licences had been issued.

He went on to point out that matters relating to transport planning and policy in the City were dealt with by the Council's City Regeneration Team, via the City Growth and Regeneration Committee. He explained that the Department for Infrastructure was currently developing the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan, in line with the Northern Ireland Executive's commitments under the Climate Action Plan. The initial stage would focus upon the City centre and strategic public transportation connections and involve a modelling exercise to identify options for shaping the Department's future plans for the City centre in terms of transportation requirements. It would, in due course, present its findings to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee.

He added that Translink was also due to attend a future meeting of the aforementioned Committee to outline its transportation plans for the City. However, this would also be dependent on the outworking's of the Transport Plan modelling exercise and subsequent recommendations. It would, he suggested, be beneficial for the Members of the Licensing Committee to attend the meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee at which the Department for Infrastructure and Translink would be making their presentations.

The Building Control Manager concluded by recommending that the Committee consider the request from DfI Roads Service to revoke the Temporary Pavement Café Licences in Fountain Street which had been granted originally to City Picnic and Voodoo. Should the Committee accede to that request, the Council would be required to inform each licensee of the grounds for revoking their licence and provide them with at least twenty-one days from the date of notification in which to make representation. There was also scope within the legislation for the Council to revoke a licence without providing notification. The Committee could, based upon the representations made by DfI Roads Service, consider if it was in the public interest to do so without giving twenty-one days' notice.

It was reported that Mr. A. McAnerney, the owner of City Picnic, was again in attendance and the Committee agreed that it would be beneficial to seek his views on the Department's request to revoke his original pavement café licence and on his current location.

Mr. McAnerney stated that it was his understanding that Castle Street would re-open to through traffic in the medium term and that he had received no assurances to the contrary. He pointed out that City Picnic and Voodoo had worked together to create a unique pavement café offering at their original locations in Fountain Street and confirmed that, given the uncertainty around the future of Castle Street, he remained opposed to the revocation of that licence.

Mr. D. McFarlane, who was attending on behalf of the Department for Infrastructure, referred to a number of initiatives being undertaken currently to enhance the City centre, including A Bolder Vision, Belfast Streets Ahead and the 5Cs Public Realm Project. He referred also to the overriding Belfast Metropolitan Transportation Plan which, in order to achieve its objectives, could see a radical change in coming years to

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roads/streets in the City centre in order to make cycling, walking and public transport more accessible. He added that the plans for Castle Street and Castle Place were as yet unclear in the context of the overall Transportation Plan.

The Senior Development Manager reiterated the points which had been made by the Building Control Manager and Mr. McFarlane around the various initiatives being undertaken to enhance the City centre. He confirmed that Council officers would be meeting with their counterparts in other agencies as that work developed and that Members would be informed of any relevant presentations to be made by the Department for Infrastructure and Translink to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee.

In response to issues which had been raised by a number of Members around any measures which could be put in place to ensure the safety of pedestrians in Fountain Street, Mr. McFarlane confirmed this could only be achieved by closing it to all traffic, which would create significant difficulties for those trying to service local businesses. He added that the street had been designed to facilitate the circular movement of traffic, thereby eliminating the need to undertake turning manoeuvres and to be pedestrianised during those set times when deliveries were not being made.

The Chairperson thanked Mr. McAnerney and Mr. McFarlane for their contribution.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to again defer consideration of the request from the Department for Infrastructure to revoke the original Temporary Pavement Cafés for City Picnic and Voodoo to enable the incoming Committee to undertake a site visit to the Castle Street/Fountain Street area to familiarise itself with all of the relevant issues. It agreed also that the owners of those businesses and representatives of the Department for Infrastructure be invited to attend.

Non-Delegated Matters

Motion – Industry Led Initiatives to Tackle Sexual Harassment within our Night-time Economy

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 To provide the Committee with an update on a motion on industry led initiatives to tackle sexual harassment within our night-time economy.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is requested to consider the representation from Hospitality Ulster and the information provided in this report and note the initiatives that are in place or being developed to help tackle sexual harassment within our night-time economy.

3.0 Background

3.1 At the meeting on 12th December 2018, the Committee considered a motion which had been brought by former Councillor McReynolds to the Council meeting on 3rd December. The Committee agreed to amend the wording to read as follows:

3.2 *This Council is concerned at the number of people in Belfast that feel they have been the victim of sexual harassment. Accordingly, the Council will undertake to meet with our universities, hospitality sector and the PSNI to explore any industry led initiatives that we can support, to tackle sexual harassment within our night-time economy, keeping in mind that this is a global societal issue that needs tackled.*

3.3 After discussion, it was agreed that the Building Control Manager would undertake research and would bring a report back to the Committee and invite Hospitality Ulster and any other organisations who may have an interest in an industry led initiative to deter sexual harassment to the meeting.

**Summary Position following the
December 2018 Committee Meeting**

3.4 Due to resource constraints in the Service, work on this did not commence until January 2020. Meetings were then held with Councillor McReynolds, QUB and Hospitality Ulster to explore what initiatives were in progress.

3.5 With the onset of the pandemic and hospitality venues closed, no further progress was possible in 2020. Thereafter, whilst hospitality was no longer under the same restrictions because of covid the cost-of-living crisis was, and still is, having a significant impact on the sector and this led to further delays in progressing the motion.

3.6 More recently, meetings have taken place with Hospitality Ulster, QUB and the PSNI to explore initiatives aimed at creating a safer and more inclusive night-time economy and these are outlined below.

4.0 Key Issues

Police Service of Northern Ireland Initiatives

4.1 The PSNI has joined with licensed venues and security staff across Northern Ireland to help keep people safe while enjoying a night out.

- 4.2 The safety initiative 'Ask for Angela' was launched in Northern Ireland in December 2022 and, since then, local bars, clubs and other licensed venues have been encouraged to sign up to the scheme.
- 4.3 Anyone who is feeling unsafe, vulnerable or threatened can discreetly seek help by approaching venue staff and asking them for 'Angela'. This code-phrase will indicate to staff they require help, and a trained member of staff will then look to support and assist them. This might be through reuniting them with a friend, seeing them to a taxi, or by calling venue security and/or Police.
- 4.4 Venues that support 'Ask for Angela' have been given access to a training package, giving their staff the ability to help customers who may be in a situation that makes them feel vulnerable or unsafe.
- 4.5 The training explores what vulnerability is, how to identify it and appropriate interventions to take. A range of online assets and further information is available from <https://www.psni.police.uk/AskForAngela>.
- 4.6 A toolkit has been developed, with key messages and graphics, to promote the scheme to local venues and the wider public on social media and beyond has been circulated.
- 4.7 A representative of the PSNI will be attending the Committee meeting to provide further details of its work in this area.

Hospitality Ulster Initiatives

- 4.8 Hospitality Ulster (HU) and the PSNI worked jointly to launch the 'Ask for Angela' initiative in N. Ireland and are working with TEO on a task force tackling sexual violence against women.
- 4.9 Ask for Angela is a support mechanism aimed at informing and educating hospitality industry staff about customer welfare and vulnerability. Through a code phrase that can be used by customers to discreetly seek help, 'Ask for Angela' reassures customers that support is available. The code phrase is pointless without proper and straightforward training for staff and HU have provided guidance on this to their members.
- 4.10 HU has a variety of Safer Socialising Resources to assist their members including the planned Women's Night Safety Charter, Spiking Guidance and guidance on preventing sexual

harassment which all links to the N. Ireland Ask for Angela initiative.

- 4.11 It also provides the secretariat for the Independent Panel that oversees the Joint Industry Code for the Responsible Retailing of Alcohol which, if sold irresponsibly, can lead to antisocial behaviour including sexual harassment.

Women's Night Safe Charter

- 4.12 As part of its safer socialising initiative, Hospitality Ulster is planning to rollout the Women's Night Safety Charter, which is identical to the London Mayor's charter, and invites key stakeholder organisations and hospitality businesses to sign up to the charter and related actions. HU has just begun inviting key stakeholder organisations to sign the charter.
- 4.13 For the hospitality industry, the charter will be supported by Listen, Learn, Lead training provided by the charity White Ribbon.
- 4.14 White Ribbon NI was launched in Northern Ireland in November 2021. Through awareness raising and education, White Ribbon NI seeks to end violence against women in all its forms. White Ribbon believes that giving everyone the information they need to challenge the ideas and attitudes which have perpetuated violence against women and girls is a step we can all take towards being part of the solution.
- 4.15 As part of this initiative, HU plans to establish a steering group with senior management representation from key stakeholder organisations including TEO, PSNI, Local Authorities, Translink, TNI, etc. The steering group would meet two or three times a year to review the effectiveness of current initiatives, review emerging issues and if needed develop new initiatives to address Women's Safety at night. But to avoid duplication, HU are also exploring if there is an existing group that could fulfil this role.
- 4.16 Colin Neill, Chief Executive, Hospitality Ulster will be available to provide Members with further background information on the industry led initiatives aimed at tackling sexual harassment within our night-time economy.

TEO Initiatives

- 4.17 The Northern Ireland Executive has directed that a Strategy to End Violence Against Women and Girls be developed and the Executive Office is leading this work across departments.
- 4.18 A programme of engagement and research is underway to inform the co-design process, with the aim of having a draft framework for the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy ready for consultation in early 2023.
- 4.19 The Strategy to End Violence Against Women and Girls; the Equally Safe Strategy will identify actions to tackle all kinds of offences, ranging from micro-aggressions and misogyny, through to violent and abusive behaviour directed at women and girls precisely because they are women and girls. This includes crimes and unwanted behaviour in the physical and online world.

Summary of Initiatives by QUB

- 4.20 QUB has a zero-tolerance policy and any form of sexual misconduct is regarded as completely unacceptable and taken very seriously by the University. A variety of guidance and support options are available to students.
- 4.21 QUB representative Brian Horgan (Head of Campus Food and Drink; Student Plus Directorate) and QUB colleagues have provided an overview of the strategies implemented by the institution. Key aspects include:
- The University Conduct Regulations are published on student guidance services and clearly define to students what behaviours are deemed inappropriate and what will be considered as sexual misconduct;
 - Report and Support – mechanisms have been established for students to report matters of concern, such matters inclusive of sexual harassment. Additionally, the Student Wellbeing Service is positioned to provide a wide range of support services to students; and
 - Importantly, the University recognise many of their students work in bars & nightclubs; they are seeking to inform such individuals on matters related to Zero tolerance and therefore deliver change beyond their own premises.

5.0 Financial and Resource Implications

5.1 None.

6.0 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

6.1 None.”

The Committee was informed that Mr. C. Neill and Detective Superintendent L. Fisher, representing Hospitality Ulster and the Police Service of Northern Ireland respectively, were in attendance to provide further information on the initiatives referred to within the report and they were welcomed by the Chairperson.

Mr. Neill explained that Hospitality Ulster was a not-for profit organisation which had, since 1872, focused on providing vital representation and dedicated industry support for its members’ businesses. The organisation was administered by a voluntary board of local hospitality business owners, representing the various business types within the industry and from across Northern Ireland. Industry support was provided in areas such as health and safety, health and welfare, training and development, employment resources, business resources, licensing and trends and data.

He went on to state that Hospitality Ulster was working in partnership with key stakeholders, including the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the Executive Office, the White Ribbon charity and local councils to ensure safer socialising in public space and hospitality venues. He highlighted, in particular, the innovative ‘Ask for Angela’ initiative, which provided a mechanism for anyone feeling unsafe, vulnerable or threatened to discreetly seek help by approaching staff. Guidance was also provided on dealing with drugs and sharps on premises, drink spiking and identifying risks. In addition, key stakeholder organisations and hospitality businesses would be invited to sign up to a Women’s Night Safety Charter, which was currently being developed, and to related actions.

In response to issues which had been raised by Members around safety on late night public transport, Detective Superintendent Fisher pointed out that the Police Service of Northern Ireland recognised that engagement with organisations/agencies such as Translink, through its Safer Transport Team, was necessary. The Police Service was in early discussions with Translink to identify how initiatives such as ‘Ask for Angela’ would work on its networks and training requirements.

The Chairperson thanked Mr. Neill and Detective Superintendent Fisher for their contribution, following which the Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Chairperson

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Planning Committee

Tuesday, 18th April, 2023

HYBRID MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Whyte (Chairperson);
Alderman Rodgers;
Councillors Bower, Carson, Matt Collins,
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);
Ms. C. Reville, Principal Planning Officer;
Ms. U. Caddell, Senior Planning Officer;
Ms. M. Quinn, Environmental Health Officer; and
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

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

Minutes

The minutes of the Predetermination Hearing and meeting of 14th and 16th March were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council, at its meeting on 3rd April, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Hutchinson declared an interest in relation to item 5i, **LA04/2023/2665/F** - Replacement of existing all weather playing pitch with 3G pitch, new fencing, floodlights and dugouts. Loughside Recreation Centre, Shore Road, on the agenda, in that he had a relationship with Crusaders Football Club, and left the meeting while the item was being considered.

Councillor Spratt declared an interest in relation to item 5k, **LA04/2022/1499/F** - Construction of new community wellbeing centre and cafe incorporating refurbishment and change of use of existing house, with a new adjacent community garden and men's shed facility. The Lockhouse 13 River Terrace, on the agenda, in that he was a Member of the South Belfast Area Based Working Group, and left the meeting while the item was under consideration.

**Meeting of Planning Committee,
Tuesday, 18th April, 2023**

Withdrawn Items

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

- **LA04/2023/2688/F** - Application to vary condition 36 of LA04/2022/0293/F. Lands directly south of Titanic Belfast and north-west of Hamilton Dock located off Queens Road, Belfast; and
- **LA04/2021/1317/F & LA04/1318/DCA** - Demolition of existing dwellings and erection of two new dwellings and associated site works. Nos. 450 and 448 Lisburn Road Belfast BT9 7GX.

Planning Appeals Notified

The Committee noted the Appeals Decisions.

Planning Decisions Issued

The Committee noted the Planning decisions issued between 1st and 31st March, 2023.

Miscellaneous Items

Implementation of the Belfast Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy

The Planning Manager explained that the Belfast Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy would be adopted on 2nd May, 2023 and, having regard to Section 6(4) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, which stated that, in making any determinations under the Act, regard was to be given to the local development plan, unless material considerations indicated otherwise, that the Council would need to reassess all applications which had previously been considered by the Committee, but had not yet had a decision issued at the point of adoption.

He informed the Committee that major applications, which had been previously decided by the Committee, but remained undetermined at the point of adoption, would be returned to the Committee for reconsideration in light of the new policies, as legislation dictated that major development must be determined by the Committee.

He reported that it was being proposed that reassessment of undetermined local applications which had previously been decided by the Committee would be delegated to the Director of Planning and Building Control, with the exception of the following:

- Those made by elected members of the Council;
- Those made by Council staff at senior management grade (PO12) or above and all staff in Place and Economy Department and Legal Services;
- Those made by the Council; and
- Those in which the Council has an estate.

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Tuesday, 18th April, 2023**

The Committee noted the report and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to reassess and determine Local applications that the Committee had previously decided, but which had not had a decision issued by 2nd May 2023, in the context of the new Belfast LDP Plan Strategy. This included the additional application 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 (approved by the Planning Committee at its meeting of 14 March 2023).

Development Management - Update on Lean Systems Experimentation

The Planning Manager provided the Committee with an update on the ongoing experimental procedure of processing planning applications following lean systems principles.

He pointed out that, due to issues encountered with the implementation and extraction of accurate information from the new Planning Portal, it had not been possible to provide an illustrative overview of the current performance of the service and that officers were considering how to best present this information to the Committee.

He highlighted key learnings to the Committee, outlined the next steps and stated that the Planning Service would continue to advocate the lean systems methodology to the Department for Infrastructure and new Interim Regional Planning Commission.

The Committee noted the report.

Planning Appeals Commission - Appeal Decision on the proposed Centralised Anaerobic Digester Facility and North Foreshore (LA04/2019/1540/F)

The Planning Manager provided the Committee with an overview of the Planning Appeals Commission's appeal decision in respect of the Council's decision to refuse planning permission for a Centralised Anaerobic Digestion (CAD) facility at the North Foreshore.

The Committee noted the report.

Delegation of Local Applications with NI Water Objections

The Principal Planning Officer drew the Committee's attention to a list of Local planning applications to which NI Water had submitted an objection to.

She explained that NI Water had lodged objections to Local applications for one or both of the following reasons:

- There was insufficient capacity at the local Waste Water Treatment Plant to support the proposed development; and/or
- There was insufficient network capacity within existing Combined Storm Overflows to support the development.

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She stated that, despite requests, NI Water had not provided robust evidence to support individual objections and that, were the Council 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 an applicant had appealed a decision, therefore, in the absence of robust evidence, it would be unreasonable to refuse planning permission.

She reported that delegated authority was being sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to determine only those applications which would have been dealt with under the Scheme of Delegation, were it not for an objection from NI Water.

The Committee delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control, those local Planning Applications to which NI Water had objected.

Inflationary Uplift of Planning and Regional Property Certificate Fees

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

1.1 To advise the Committee that the Department for Infrastructure has introduced an inflationary uplift of planning fees as of 06 April 2023. SOLACE has also agreed to an increase in fees for Regional Property Certificates.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 That the Committee notes the report.

3.0 Main Report

Background

3.1 The Planning Fees (Amendment) Regulations (NI) stipulate the fees required for submission of a planning application. These are set centrally by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI). DfI last implemented an inflationary uplift to planning fees in 2019.

3.2 The NI Audit Office and Public Accounts Committee reviews of the NI planning system in 2022 both make recommendations to improve the financial sustainability of the system.

3.3 The NI Audit Office recommendation is: ‘...that the Department and councils work in partnership to ensure that the planning system is financially sustainable in the longer term.’

3.4 Similarly, Recommendation 11 of the Public Accounts Committee report recommends that: ‘The planning system must be financially sustainable and this requires an appropriate, long-term funding

model. The Committee recommends that all those involved in delivering planning work together to achieve this. In the short term the Department should take the lead on bringing forward legislation on planning fees as a matter of urgency.'

- 3.5 Officers are very clear that the new inflationary uplift of planning fees does not address either of these recommendations, including the requirement to address the long-term financial sustainability of the NI planning system. A much more thorough review is required with collaboration between DfI, councils, customers and industry. In the shorter term, and as a minimum, there should be consideration of the introduction of fees for current non-chargeable applications such as Proposal of Application Notices (PANs), Discharge of Conditions, Non-Material Changes etc.
- 3.6 DfI's current work programme for reform of the NI planning system does not address either of the NI Audit Office or Public Accounts Committee recommendations in respect of financial sustainability of the system. However, DfI has verbally recognised this and the Council continues to lobby the Department on this point.

Inflationary Uplift

- 3.7 The Planning (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2023 came into effect on 06 April 2023 and applies a one-year inflationary uplift of 12.3% (based on RPI as at August 2022) across all existing fee categories. For example, this means that:
- an extension, improvement or alteration of a dwellinghouse has increased from £291 to £327;
 - the erection of a single dwellinghouse has risen from £868 to £965; and
 - the erection of 50 dwellings has increased from £18,492 to £20,777.
- 3.8 A copy of the amended fee regulations is provided at Appendix 1.

Increase to Regional Property Certificate Fees

- 3.9 SOLACE has agreed to a 20% uplift in fees for Regional Property Certificates. A 15% uplift came into effect on 06 April 2023 and the 20% uplift will be implemented mid-May 2023.

4.0 Financial & Resource Implications

- 4.1 The increase in planning fees set by DfI is welcomed as the Council's planning income continues to significantly fall short of overall costs to provide the service (both Planning Policy and Development Management functions). In 2022/23, planning fee

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income was £496k down on projected income due to the impact of COVID-19 (for example, the Council continues to receive less applications for Grade A offices as more people work from home). The turbulent global economy has also impacted on investment and planning activity.

4.2 Notwithstanding, the inflationary uplift of planning fees does not address the financial sustainability of the NI planning system and further reform is required. This will require collaboration between DfI, councils, customers and industry.

5.0 Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment

5.1 No adverse impacts identified.”

The Committee noted the report.

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)

LA04/2022/1280/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. Former Kennedy Enterprise Centre (north of Westwood Shopping Centre) Blackstaff Road Belfast (139 no. units in total)

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

- The principle of the proposed residential use at this location;
- Loss of employment land last used as industrial;
- Loss of retail land within the designated Westwood District Centre;
- Compatibility of housing with adjacent uses;
- Design and layout;
- Housing need;
- Access, parking and traffic management; and
- Other environmental considerations – Drainage, Contamination, Noise, Impact on Designated Sites/Natural Heritage Assets.

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He explained that the application site was located in an industrial/employment and commercial area, adjacent to two shopping centres and the surrounding lands were all in non-residential use. He stated that officers considered that the introduction of a residential development in the area would not be compatible with the existing surroundings and that the development could adversely impact the existing businesses in the area which would benefit from permitted development rights to expand or change their current Use Class.

He pointed out that the site was zoned as a Major Area of exiting Employment/Industry in the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (dBMAP) (v2004) and in dBMAP (v2014) it had been designated as part of the Westwood District Centre following an extension to the Westwood Centre and, whilst the zoning of the site had changed between the draft plans, a residential use on the site would not comply with either version of dBMAP.

The Planning Manager informed the Committee that the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) had confirmed that there was a need for affordable housing in the area which was a material consideration, however, officers did not consider the housing need sufficient to override the serious concerns about the appropriateness of the site for housing, and that the Senior Urban Design Officer had raised concern with regard to the suitability of the proposal, that included the outlook from the proposed units, pedestrian routes through the site and linear parking areas.

He highlighted that NI Water had objected to the application on grounds of insufficient wastewater treatment capacity and foul sewage network capacity issues and that the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) had concerns regarding foul sewage arrangements.

He reported that, having had regard to the development plan, relevant policy context and other material considerations, the proposed development was not considered to be acceptable and it was recommended that full planning permission be refused for the following reasons:

- The proposed development was located within a designated District Centre as identified in the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014). The proposal would reduce the land available within the District Centre to deliver retail and other appropriate commercial uses and would fail to retain and consolidate the District Centre as a focus for local everyday shopping. The proposal was contrary to paragraph 6.276 of the SPPS and Designation BT010/5 – Westwood Centre of the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014);
- The application site was surrounded by existing commercial uses and businesses, many of which are not subject to restrictions on hours of operation or other controls. The proposed housing would be a poor-quality living environment for residents who would be subject to unacceptable noise and environmental impacts, both from within the houses/apartments and the outdoor amenity space/open space. The application fails to demonstrate that the noise levels would be satisfactory. The site was not considered suitable for any form of housing and the proposal was contrary to paragraphs 4.11, 4.25-27

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and 4.34 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement, Policy PED 8 of Planning Policy Statement 4, and criteria (a) and (h) of Policy QD 1 of Planning Policy Statement 7 – Quality Residential Environments;

- The application site was surrounded by existing commercial uses and businesses, many of which were not subject to restrictions on hours of operation or other controls. The proposed development had the potential to adversely affect the operations and viability of existing surrounding commercial uses and businesses and generally compromise the ability of the industrial estate to provide employment and economic growth. The proposal was contrary to paragraphs 4.20 – 4.21 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement and Policy PED 8 of Planning Policy Statement 4;
- The proposed development would be located on an existing commercial/industrial park, resulting in poor place making and an unsuitable residential living environment. Specifically, access to the development would be through an incongruous industrial estate/commercial park. Secondly, the proposed development would provide a poor quality residential environment for prospective occupants by reason of poor outlook from Blocks A, B, C and D onto the existing commercial and industrial/employment area. Thirdly, the overbearing impact of the retaining wall and embankment onto the dwellings and rear gardens numbered 77-83 and 86 on Drawing No. 04A – Site Layout. Fourthly, the overbearing nature of the Westwood Shopping Centre/ASDA on apartments within Block A and the dwellings and rear gardens numbered 70-76 on Drawing No. 4A – Site Layout. The proposal was contrary to paragraphs 4.12, 4.25-27 and 4.34 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement and criteria (a) and (h) of Policy QD1 of Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 7 – Quality Residential Environments . and Policy PED 8 of Planning Policy Statement 4, and unacceptable;
- The proposal failed to provide adequate connectivity to surrounding amenities and would result in an isolated housing development within an existing commercial and industrial/employment area and encourage use of an unsafe informal link to the Kennedy Centre. The proposal was contrary to paragraphs 4.12 and 4.24-27 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement and criteria (e) of Policy QD 1 of Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 7 – Quality Residential Environments; and
- The application was not accompanied by a Section 76 planning agreement to secure the Green Travel Measures (Travel Plan, Travel Cards for each unit for a 3 year period, Discounted Membership of a Car Club), Employability and Skills interventions, long term management and maintenance of private communal and public open space areas which would be required to manage and mitigate the development. The proposal was contrary to paragraph 5.69 of the

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SPPS, Policy AMP 7 of Planning Policy Statement 3, Policy OS 2 of Planning Policy Statement 8 and Chapter 9 of the Developer Contributions Framework.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. P. Stinson, Turley, Mr. H. McConnell, RRP Architects, and Mr. J. Mangan, RSK Group, representing the applicant, and Ms. F. McGrath, representing the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) to the meeting.

Mr. Stinson explained to the Committee that the NIHE consultation response confirmed that there was a live and pressing need of 899 social homes in the site area up to 2026, despite recent permissions granted of around 800 social homes at the former Visteon site and Glenmona.

He informed the Members that the applicant had been in discussions with four housing associations and that securing planning permission would ensure confirmation of an association to deliver the homes.

He highlighted that, whilst a retail permission exists for the site for the reconfiguration and extension of the Westwood Centre, the previous employment use of the land had been lost and that conditions considered necessary to control the noise environment for the proposed homes would be met in the event that planning permission would be granted. He stated that the ability of existing business to evolve was limited and that the Council had significant control over future land use changes at the site.

He stated that future applications would be considered in light of prevailing circumstances and that, whilst changes could occur to operating hours of existing business, consideration should be given to how likely that would be, in light of the established nature of the businesses.

He pointed out that just one objection had been received to the planning application and that one person had attended a consultation webinar and that this demonstrated, given the number of businesses surrounding the site, a lack of significant evidence of incompatibility.

Mr. Stinson outlined the layout, outlook, parking, road safety, access and landscaping design aspects of the application and stated that the applicant was willing to enter a Section 76 agreement that would include green travel measures, a landscape management plan and securement of the housing tenure.

He concluded by informing the Committee that the application would bring much needed social housing to an area with significant housing stress and a continuing level of need and that the development would meet criteria 8 and 9 of Policy QD1.

In response to a question from a Member with regard to the composition of the proposal of 80% social housing, and what the remaining 20% would account for, Mr. Stinson explained that it would be a development of social and private homes and would be determined by the final social housing requirement.

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Ms. M. Quinn, Environmental Health Officer, answered questions from the Members with regard to smell, noise, emissions and the vermin impact of the surrounding businesses and she explained that a recommendation of upgrading glazing had been recommended to deal with potential 24-hour operations of adjacent businesses and low frequency noise levels which had been identified but that uncertainty remained as to whether glazing manufacturers could provide the required glazing. She added that Environmental Health did not have any concerns with regard to the impact of smell or odour around the site, and she added that all surrounding business premises were required to have pest control contracts in place and therefore would have been raised as a significant issue by environmental health. Mr. J. Mangan also addressed the Committee in response to the aforementioned concerns and stated that a series of noise surveys had been undertaken on the site to quantify the baseline noise levels which had highlighted some noise levels of concern and had set a performance requirement for the internal façade of the proposed units to ensure that internal noise levels would be appropriate.

In response to a question from a Member, Ms. F McGrath stated that the NIHE was in favour a mix of social and private tenure on the proposed site and supported the application.

Following further discussion, it was:

Moved by Councillor Garrett,
Seconded by Councillor Maskey,

"That the Committee agrees to approve the application as it supports the aspirations of this Council through the adoption of the Local Development Plan (LDP) to increase the level of housing, including social and affordable housing in the City.

The application has gone some way to mitigate and address other material considerations relating to compatibility of housing with adjacent uses, design and layout, and Housing need;

Therefore, on balance this application is considered acceptable and shall be approved with delegated authority given to officers to negotiate a suitable section 76 agreement."

Councillor Garrett, the proposer, accepted a suggestion from the Director of Planning and Building Control to include in his proposal - that the approval would be subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement to secure the necessary planning obligations; and include the requirement that the development consists of at least 80% social housing; and to delegate authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and Section 76 planning agreement, as well as resolve the technical highways issue which had been raised by DFI Roads.

The proposal, as amended, was put the Committee and on a vote, nine Members voted for the proposal and four against and it was declared carried.

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LA04/2022/1479/F - 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 Senior Planning Officer outlined the history of the application to the Committee and pointed out that, following the meeting of the Committee held in March, Members had raised concern that the proposed development could have an, in principle, environmental impact on a live planning application for a proposed residential development for social housing on an adjacent site.

She informed the Committee that officers had sought the view of Environmental Health and further information had been provided by the applicant to clarify the frequency of night-time activities and odour. She stated that Environmental Health had advised that the approval of the proposed NI Water development would not have an adverse impact on the proposed housing development and that the need for out of hours access would be intermittent and the levels of activity on the site during nighttime hours would not give cause for noise impact concern.

She reported that the RPS Odour Impact Assessment had concluded a low level impact and the odour source was not part of the proposed development and was situated outside of the application site.

She stated that officers were satisfied that the proposed development would not give rise to unacceptable impacts and that the previous recommendation to approve the application remained unchanged.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. P Brow, Head of Living with Water Programme, NI Water, Mr. D. McLaughlin, Resolve Planning, and Mr. P Alcorn and Mr. B. Kane, McAdam Design, to the meeting.

Mr. Brow explained how approval of the application would help protect, enhance and grow the entire city and how the increased wastewater capacity would facilitate economic growth.

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

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LA04/2022/1962/F - Proposed Change of Use to Retail Use to Allow for the Sale of Mixed Convenience and Comparison Goods. Minor Amendments to Elevations, Car Parking and Services and General Site Works. No 8-10 Boucher Road, Boucher Plaza, Belfast.

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

- The principle of the proposed use at this location;
- Retail Impact of the proposal;
- Impact on the character and appearance of the area;
- Compatibility with adjacent uses;
- Access, parking and traffic management; and
- Environmental Considerations – Drainage, Contamination, Noise, Impact on Designated Sites/Natural Heritage Assets.

She explained that the Planning Service Plans and Policy Team had reviewed the application and had no objection to the proposed uses and considered that there were no sequentially preferable sites in the proposal's whole catchment when considered against the criteria of suitability, availability and viability.

She stated that all consultees were content with the proposed development to conditions and that no third-party objections had been received.

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

**LA04/2022/1861/F, LA04/2022/1869/DCA, LA04/2022/1860/A
(Dealt with under a single report) - Replacement facade to active facade to facilitate the display of internally illuminated moving images. 1-3 Arthur Street, Belfast, BT1 4GA**

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

LA04/2021/0691/F & LA04/2021/0915/DCA - Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of a new detached dwelling and associated siteworks. 1D Malone Park. 1D Malone Park Belfast BT9 6NH

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

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LA04/2022/1831/F - Change of use from residential to short term stay accommodation. 258 Limestone Road, Belfast, BT15 3AR

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the item in order that officers explore the availability of additional evidence with regard to the environmental impacts of short-term holiday lets.

LA04/2023/2665/F - Replacement of existing all weather playing pitch with 3G pitch, new fencing, floodlights and dugouts. Loughside Recreation Centre Shore Road, Belfast, BT15 4HP

The Principal Planning Officer outlined the application to the Committee and highlighted the following key issues for consideration:

- Principle of development at this location;
- Impact on the character and appearance of the area;
- Impact on residential amenity; and
- Infrastructure capacity.

She pointed out that no objections had been received from consultees or those neighbouring the application site and that, having regard to the development plan, relevant planning policies and other material considerations, it had been considered by officers that the proposal be approved.

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

LA04/2023/2362/F - Proposed 30m (length) x 11m (height) ball stop fencing, including perimeter and spectator fencing, with a pathway surrounding the existing pitch, and associated site works. (amended plans). Cherryvale Playing Fields, Ravenhill Road, Belfast, BT6 8EE

The Planning Manager provided the Committee with an overview of the application and outlined the impact on amenity and on the character and appearance of the area.

He explained that the use of the land for sports pitches, some of which already contained floodlighting and nets, meant that the proposal would have no impact on the Local Landscape Policy Area, and that no objections had been received from consultees.

He pointed out that seventeen objections had been received and referred the Members to the Case Officers Responses which addressed the concerns which had been raised.

He reported that, since publication of the report, the Council's Tree officer had indicated that he was content, subject to conditions, the Environmental Health Officer had no objection to the proposal, subject to a planning condition that would require full construction details of all perimeter and ball stop fencing in the interest of minimising noise impact. He added that

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no further representations had been received in response to the re-consultation on the removal of the perimeter fence and correction of the description.

The Committee approved the application and gave delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to resolve, where appropriate, any further representations received during the remainder of the consultation period.

LA04/2022/1499/F - Construction of new community wellbeing centre and cafe incorporating refurbishment and change of use of existing house, with a new adjacent community garden and men's shed facility. The Lockhouse 13 River Terrace Belfast BT7 2EN

The Principal Planning Officer outlined the application to the Committee and highlighted the following key issues:

- The principle of development;
- Impact on the character and appearance of the area;
- Impact on the setting of Listed monument;
- Impact on amenity;
- Access and parking; and
- Environmental Considerations - Drainage, Waste-water infrastructure and Ecology.

She reported that NI Water had objected to the application on the grounds of a lack of wastewater capacity, which had been considered to be acceptable and that no other consultees and offered any objections. Furthermore, she informed the Committee that no third party representations had been received.

She informed the Committee that, having regard to the Development Plan and relevant material considerations, the proposal had been considered to be acceptable.

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

LA04/2023/2701/F -Erection of life size bronze sculpture of Frederick Douglass. Existing Planter located approximately 2.5m east of No.10-20 Lombard Street

The Principal Planning Officer presented the Committee with an overview of the application for a sculpture, using an existing planter base on Lombard Street and highlighted the following key issues for consideration:

- Impact on amenity and general characteristics of the area;
- Impact on setting of the listed building and conservation area;
and
- Impact on public safety.

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She provided the Committee with a visual representation of the proposed sculpture and reported that the proposal would be assessed against the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS), Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 (BUAP) and the Draft Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (BMAP), PPS6: Planning, Archaeology and the Built Environment and all other relevant material planning considerations.

She informed the Committee that a late anonymous representation had been received and she explained and addressed the concerns which had been raised.

She stated that the application complied with the Development Plan, regional planning policy and all other material considerations and asked the Committee to delegate authority to determine the application, upon receipt of any additional representations, the Historic Environment Division's consultation response and to apply any proposed conditions.

The Committee agreed to delegate authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to determine the application upon receipt of the consultation responses.

Chairperson

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Planning Committee

Thursday, 20th April, 2023

HYBRID MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Whyte (Chairperson);
Alderman Rodgers;
Councillors Bower, Carson,
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. K. Sutherland, Planning Manager; and
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies for inability to attend were reported.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

**Pre-emptive site visit requested for applications LA04/2021/1317/F
And LA04/1318/DCA Demolition of existing dwellings and erection
of two new dwellings and associated site works. Nos. 450 and
448 Lisburn Road Belfast BT9 7GX (site immediately adjacent
application LA04/2021/0691F Demolition of existing dwelling
and erection of new detached dwelling at 1D Malone Park,
which the Committee agreed to undertake a site visit for at its
meeting on 18 April 2023)**

The Committee agreed to hold a pre-emptive site visit for the above applications.

Request for additional meeting of the Planning Committee

The Committee agreed to hold an additional meeting of the Committee in June, 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

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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.

**Local Development Plan (LDP)
Plan Strategy Adoption**

The Planning Manager provided the Committee with an update on the steps to adopt the Plan Strategy of the Local Development Plan and supporting documentation.

The Committee noted the update and the ongoing work towards formal adoption of the LDP Plan Strategy on 2nd May 2023.

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

The Planning Manager provided the Committee with an update on the preparation of the Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG).

He referred the Members to recent correspondence which had been received and highlighted concerns with regard to the Affordable Housing SPG and a detailed response which had been prepared by officers.

The Committee

- Noted the detailed response provided to Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations (IFHA) with regard to issues raised concerning the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance;
- Noted the publication of the Intermediate Rent Policy by the Department for Communities; and
- Endorsed the Supplementary Planning Guidance to support the implementation of the final Plan Strategy.

Chairperson

Climate and City Resilience Committee

Thursday, 6th April, 2023

MEETING OF THE CLIMATE AND CITY RESILIENCE COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE LAVERY ROOM AND
REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Walsh (Chairperson);
Councillors Bower, Donnelly,
Haire, McCabe, McKeown,
McLaughlin, Newton, Spratt

In attendance: Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy;
Ms. D. Caldwell, Commissioner for Climate and City Resilience;
Mrs. L. Toland, Senior Manager – Economy
Ms. A. Diver, Climate Programme Manager
Ms. M. Quigley, Adaptation and Resilience Advisor;
Mr. J. McKearney, Project Support Assistant;
Mr. R. McLernon, Climate Programme Manager;
Ms. L. Holmes, Corporate Communications; and
Mrs. G. Boyd, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for an inability to attend the Committee meeting were noted from Alderman Sandford and Councillors Doran, Gormley, Maghie, Murray, Smyth and Thompson.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 9th March, 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 April.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were declared.

Presentation of the RSUA Climate Action Report by Alan Ritchie, Chair of the RSUA Climate Emergency Committee

Mr Ritchie was unable to attend the Committee meeting due to a family emergency and had sent his apologies. Mr Ritchie would be invited to attend a future meeting of the Committee.

Update on the activities of the retrofit hub

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 about the Belfast Retrofit Hub, which was established in September 2022 with the aim of engaging relevant stakeholders and developing a programme of activity which will support preparation for a rollout of retrofit in Belfast.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Members of the Committee are asked to:

- i Note that Belfast City Council convened the Belfast Retrofit Hub following analysis within the Belfast Net Zero Carbon Roadmap which indicated that residential, public and commercial buildings are the major source of emissions in the city, alongside transport.**
- ii Note that a programme of activity is currently being drafted and will be presented to Belfast Retrofit Hub for consideration on the 17th May 2023.**
- iii Agree that regular updates will be brought forward to Committee at key points as the retrofit programme develops.**

3.0 Main report

3.1 Background

3.2 Belfast Retrofit Hub met for the first time in September 2022, bringing together NIHE, business leaders, key organisations and the Council to catalyse retrofit activity relating to all public and private buildings in Belfast.

3.3 The Hub’s work is informed by the National Retrofit Strategy (see appendix one) which was produced by the Construction Leadership Council and seeks to ensure that eight interlocking elements are advanced together:

- 1. Leadership and communications**
- 2. Supporting learning and innovation culture focussed on just transition**
- 3. Performance standards**

4. Finance and grants
5. Training and accreditation
6. Materials and equipment
7. Creating customer demand
8. Compliance and quality regime

3.4 The agreed purpose of Belfast Retrofit Hub as set out in the terms of reference is:

- To identify opportunities for retrofit across the city and to bring together the partners who can realise those opportunities
- To identify and endorse the required standards of building performance that retrofit in Belfast needs to achieve
- To identify ways of supporting the economic activity, skills and jobs that achieving those standards require
- To draw together partners to source and release funding
- To promote a collaborative, solutions approach sharing knowledge across ownership and tenure
- To ensure engagement with stakeholders across the city, and to support and promote complementary initiatives
- To report on progress, initially to the Resilience and Sustainability Board

3.5 The Hub was established following the findings of the Belfast Net Zero Carbon Roadmap that buildings and transport are the two highest carbon emitting sectors in Belfast and subsequent Housing Readiness Assessment, which provided areas on which to focus such as the upgrade of building regulations, energy efficiency programmes, and regional policy.

3.6 To date there have been three meetings of the Belfast Retrofit Hub, which meets quarterly, and a series of roundtable discussions focused on specific themes, the outcome of which will inform the draft retrofit work programme. These discussions have allowed engagement with a range of stakeholders beyond the core Hub membership for example with private rental landlords and the Consumer Council. The sessions have been themed on the following topics:

- i Supply Chain - 'Under what circumstances would every building firm working on repair or renovation add energy efficiency measures into their work?' and 'What would it take for construction workers from NI to work on projects at home?' Key points included:

- a. The rising cost of materials makes retrofit of existing homes challenging.
 - b. New buyers however are starting to seek out energy efficient homes, ultimately, builders build what customers want.
 - c. a pipeline of retrofit activity is required to develop capacity and motivation for local building firms to include energy efficiency measures in their work.
 - d. Customer demand will drive the programme but in order to generate that demand, finance is required through grants or low-cost finance options.
 - e. The public sector could help to develop the retrofit programme by coordinating plans to retrofit the public sector estate, building on the work that NIHE have undertaken on some of their housing stock.
- ii Standards - Under what conditions would Europe-leading energy efficiency standards be implemented in Belfast? Key points included:
- a. There is potential to adopt standards such as PAS2035 with the potential introduction of housing passports or logbooks which would identify works undertaken and recommended.
 - b. The role of design and specification in ensuring right products are installed with building regulations as a minimum and client specification as a key determinant of uptake of improved energy efficiency measures with the importance of not underestimating the 'hand print' of the design phase.
- iii Skills - 'Under what conditions can retrofit-relevant training reach into all parts of the construction industry serving housing beyond social housing?' Key points included:
- a. training available through the Belfast Retrofit Academy, led by Belfast City Council and training provided by South Eastern Regional College (SERC) and Ulster University, also the potential for on site learning. Subsequent discussions with Council have seen SERC indicate a focus on trade while Belfast Metropolitan College may supply training around retrofit design and coordination, as part of a coordinated approach to skills development in the sector;
 - b. training / capability goes beyond technical knowhow to include communication, project management, and understanding the building;

- c. there is a challenge in upskilling the workforce without losing significant numbers (who may not be motivated to upskill) with a need to develop skills 'uplift' training for trades people who already have significant skills and expertise. This would build on the upskilling experience from when gas heating was rolled out;
 - d. there is an opportunity to use retrofit to improve cross-trade communications – so the works of one trade doesn't undermine another and compromise thermal efficiency and the whole house approach; and
 - e. the need for a different retrofit approach to public and commercial buildings – recognising that opportunities for fabric interventions may be limited, focus instead on lighting, glazing, ventilation and solar PV – likely to be expensive, possibly cheaper for schools and health centres.

- iv Awareness - What could be done to increase the understanding of retrofit amongst householders in Belfast. Key points included:
 - a. the lack of awareness and information for householders was acknowledged, which the development of a One Stop Shop may help to address. This links to the proposed DFE One Stop Shop on Energy;
 - b. grants and finance options would be required to accelerate retrofit implementation in the city;
 - c. those involved in the discussion were also keen to explore co-benefits such as improved health for those living in poor housing conditions and affected by fuel poverty and the impact of the cost-of-living crisis; and
 - d. key barriers for consumers include a lack of information on installers, technologies and benefits; disruption during installation; and uncertainty of what grants might be made available.

- v. Learning - How we undertake effective action learning, involving industry. Key points included:
 - a. the need to undertake retrofit at scale and the potential role of the public sector in supporting the roll out of retrofit, which would in turn stimulate learning and development within the construction sector;
 - b. there is a lot of learning from good practice and where there have been issues in the past and a lot of learning is going on within the industry already;
 - c. key role for public bodies like NIHE as a first mover at scale in retrofit for disseminating lessons and best practice;

- d. procurement will drive some of the required skills and standards for those who wish to undertake retrofit contracts;
 - e. the UK can become a world leader in retrofit (at scale – recognising that it is already ahead in energy efficiency in terms of quality);
 - f. there are things that can be done now based on what is already done well (insulation and building envelope as low hanging fruit with solar PV and battery storage close behind), we don't need to wait for the perfect solution everywhere (and the policy landscape around new heating technologies is likely to keep evolving which creates uncertainty); and
 - g. an immediate priority is to enable a large scale insulation programme (training / marketing / awareness) – size of industry is small but others will join if there's a pipeline – however, insulation is the beginning of a longer term plan/programme, not the end of the story.
- vi. Skills follow up - Consider a skills/knowledge 'road map' or similar, covering all relevant roles, with different routes depending on different starting points, capacity, and needs. This roundtable focused on the industry expectations in relation to skills. Key points included:
- a. demand for retrofit will drive training and reskilling of existing tradespeople.
 - b. there is a gap in relation to sales and awareness raising training, which links to previous points on the One Stop Shop approach, whole house assessment and understanding the wide ranging benefits of retrofit.
- vii. Place based approach - How would we actually start some place-based pathfinders in Belfast? Key points included:
- a. there was agreement to work to identify potential pilot areas, with mixed tenure, and at a scale of 500 to 1000 houses, looking at a range of criteria including poor health outcomes, areas of deprivation, and so on, to examine the costs, issues involved and potential models for implementation;
 - b. it was agreed that we can learn from the approach taken by NIHE and their future plans, also from programmes undertaken in the South of Ireland, with potential for learning exchanges with Dublin City Council;
 - c. a neighbourhood approach (crowding in householders to create a 2 year pipeline of work) offers opportunities in terms of cost effectiveness – would need to be across all

- tenures to be fair - it could be the way to learn-by-doing for whole house plans etc.; and
- d. an opportunity for aggregated learning and potential to link to the Living Lab work.
- viii. **Whole house working - How would we encourage and ensure whole house working in Belfast? Key points included:**
- a. the need to review and scale up existing energy efficiency grant schemes to allow measures to be implemented more widely;
 - b. the role of Building Control in relation to retrofit and whether EPCs are the most appropriate way to measure the carbon and energy performance of a house;
 - c. assessments could be useful if helping households to decide what to do first;
 - d. a free, full house energy assessment leading to a plan that can last over time (possibly accompanied by a building passport / logbook) has many benefits – while not underestimating the difficulty of rolling this out (would need a cohort of assessors for 4-5 neighbourhood); and
 - e. important that assessors are independent of installers.
- ix. **Private rental sector - Retrofit of private rented homes in Belfast. This roundtable included input from a number of private rental sector landlords who emphasised they were keen to upgrade and are doing that at present where it is affordable. Key points included:**
- a. the absence of grants and finance is a key barrier, and also information and assessment gaps which would assist with understanding the correct measures to take, and the relative impact of various measures, which would help with sequencing retrofit works.
- x. **Finance – a finance group was convened to review the work of the Retrofit Hub and link to other programmes being undertaken. The group will retain an advisory role in relation to the Belfast retrofit work programme. The 3Ci (Cities Climate Investment Commission) approach was discussed, as Belfast is a member, and their work at neighbourhood level is being supported by ARUP. Key points included:**
- a. the potential of offsetting, and Belfast City Council’s current work to examine the potential of the carbon offset market to support local initiatives;
 - b. the potential learning from Better Homes Leeds which Council agreed to follow up on;

- c. the opportunity to link funding to certification and a key role for green mortgages in driving retrofit at the point of sale (mortgage sector is already mapping its loan books as will be held to account for emissions on their mortgage books but some loan products are greenwashing); and
 - d. a potential role for developer finance to nudge projects towards higher building performance.
- 3.7 The outcome of these sessions and the discussions within the Retrofit Hub are currently informing a draft programme of work which will look at a range of activity with the aim of preparing Belfast for a retrofit programme through existing workstreams and potential funding should it become available.
- 3.8 To ensure alignment with regional plans we have involved the Department for Communities and the Department of the Economy who both have responsibility for retrofit at the regional level, DFC having responsibility for residential retrofit, and DFE for commercial and public buildings. In addition, we are engaged with the Department of Finance around Building Regulations and retrofit plans for the public sector estate. This will support our ambitions to develop place-based pathfinders and to upscale energy efficiency programmes in Belfast. We have also identified the creation of a One Stop Shop for both consumer information and retrofit good practice for the construction sector and key partners. This links to the DFE action to create a One Stop Shop on energy, and to emerging plans from Belfast Metropolitan College and NIHE to develop centres of retrofit good practice.
- 3.9 Council, in a coordinating role, is liaising with a range of training providers including South Eastern Regional College (SERC), and Belfast Metropolitan College, as well as Ulster University and QUB, following the funding of the Belfast Retrofit Academy through Community Renewal Funding which was led by Belfast City Council, working closely with colleagues in NIHE and training provider organisations.
- 3.10 Members will be aware of ongoing discussions around the development of a Belfast Net Zero Project pipeline and the financial models which might support this, through ongoing discussions with the Cities Climate Investment Commission (3CI) and others. The retrofit programme is part of these conversations and the programme itself, in particular the place-based pathfinders will be developed in a form that allows funding to be assigned should it become available, either from private sources, or from government. This work will be aligned with the wider development of a project pipeline by the Council.

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- 3.11 In addition, Council is facilitating conversations with other cities who have developed retrofit programmes, such as Dublin City Council, with a potential learning visit in September 2023, and through the Place Based Climate Action Network and Core Cities. We are fortunate to have the support of Dr Alice Owen of the University of Leeds in facilitating many of the workshop conversations mentioned above, and in having Dr Peter Roberts Chair the Belfast Retrofit Hub.**
- 3.12 Members will be provided with regular updates as the programme progresses.**
- 4.0 Financial & Resource Implications**
- 4.1 None at present.**
- 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 programme of work.”**

A Member asked the Commissioner for Climate and City Resilience if there had been any discussion with the Building Control section in relation to the update of Building Regulations and how they could work together.

Proposed by Councillor Spratt.
Seconded by Councillor McCabe and

Resolved - that the Council produced a step by step guide with the support of Building Control to better inform the public on their choice of home insulation.

The Commissioner for Climate and City Resilience invited the Member to attend the next meeting of the Retro Fit Hub. The Chairperson asked the Commissioner for Climate and City Resilience if there was funding available for these schemes. The Commissioner for Climate and City Resilience said that the Council had written to SOLACE who were writing to the Head of the Civil Service to ask how Councils could access funding in the absence of a functioning Executive.

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

Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor

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 the Committee with a progress update on the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor (DBEC) and the draft action plan for the partnership.**

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the contents of this report and progress to date to develop the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor partnership.

3.0 Main report

3.1 At its meeting on 11 August 2022, members received an update on progress to support the development of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor including work on the strategy and action plan. Since that meeting, the strategy has now been completed and agreed by all DBEC partners. It articulates a vision to sustainable economic growth across the region, identifying areas of focus for the partnership to address future opportunities and seeking to address any gaps in existing provision.

3.2 The vision of the strategy is to become a leading economic corridor in Europe, achieving sustainable growth through collaborative R&D, a highly skilled workforce and enabling infrastructure. This includes an ambition to be world renowned as a major international centre in growth sectors such as Professional Services, Advanced Manufacturing, ICT and Life and Health Sciences.

3.3 The strategy articulates a number of strategic objectives for the partnership, including;

- Increase skills and training to meet the labour requirements of the region, building on and expanding the existing workforce
- Advocate for cross-border infrastructure to strengthen connectivity and access to markets and labour
- Enhance cross-border collaboration in R&D and Innovation, targeting investment in high growth sectors and the green economy
- Promote sustainable and climate-conscious growth along the corridor, aligned with councils' development plans and wider policy objectives
- Align with and support economic development partners to increase trade and investment along corridor
- Market the region and elevate the DBEC brand so that the region becomes globally renowned as an attractive place to live and do business.

3.4 The strategy identified the need for dedicated resources to bring forward the key actions. As a result, recruitment is under way for

two staff members. These positions were advertised internally across all partner councils for a period of two years. The recruitment process is led by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council who currently act as secretariat.

3.5 The action plan outlined key pillars to support effective delivery, including ways of working, governance and resourcing, and communication and marketing. Priority actions identified across the short and medium term include:

- Undertaking further stakeholder engagement and developing a coherent marketing and communications strategy in line with the strategic objectives
- Progressing the Shared Island feasibility study (see below) around sectoral Innovation Hubs along the corridor, with the aim of preparing an application for external funding by Q4 2023. In parallel with circular economy activities at Belfast City Council and Dublin City Council, gathering insights on circular economy initiatives along the corridor
- Identification and preparatory scoping for relevant external funding opportunities, including Peace Plus and Shared Island
- Undertaking research on existing skills strategies and enterprise plans and identifying key barriers to skills development with the aim of developing a clear skills policy and strategy
- Mapping of key assets along the corridor with development potential and highlighting infrastructure gaps.

3.6 As part of the governance structure for the partnership, the DBEC political advisory group continues to meet. There are 24 councillors who make up a Political Advisory Group (3 nominees from each council area). The Belfast City Council nominees are Cllr Ciaran Beattie Alderman George Dorrian and Cllr Eric Hanvey. The last meeting of the group took place in January 2023. Members were presented with a summary of the action plan and briefings from other cross border initiatives. The next meeting of the group is expected to take place in June/July 2023.

3.7 **Shared Island Fund**

In order to bring forward collaborative activities aligned with the strategic priorities set out in the plan, a number of applications for funding were submitted to the Irish Government's Shared Island Initiative in late 2022.

3.8 The DBEC partners were successful in attracting financial support of €150,000 to carry out a feasibility assessment on the development of a network of regional innovation hubs across the

corridor region. These locations would support current or emerging business clusters in particular locations, to the benefit of the entire region. The project will look at pairing up locations based on sectoral strengths and clusters, such as Fintech in Dublin and Belfast. The proposal also incorporates an ambition identified by the Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission to support growth sectors such as Fintech and capitalise on linkages with cities such as Dublin.

3.9 A procurement exercise is underway to secure external advisory support for this work. It is being led by Fingal County Council and Belfast City Council officers will participate in a project steering group. A preferred bidder has been selected and it is expected that this project will commence first week of March 2023.

3.10 In addition, Dublin and Belfast City Council were awarded €250,000 to carry out major feasibility research on capital projects to support the circular economy. Opportunities to develop the sector within the context of the Dublin Belfast Corridor will be considered as part of this work, although the primary focus is on the cities of Dublin and Belfast. There has been extensive work with colleagues from both councils preparing the terms of reference for technical support, with Dublin City Council as lead partner. This tender was issued through a procurement framework following guidance from the Office of Government Procurement in Dublin. The Tender is currently open and will close on 20 March 2023. The partners continue to monitor and review opportunities for further funding from the Shared Island Unit. Officials from the Unit made a presentation on live and pending opportunities to the Political Advisory Group meeting in January. The partnership is also monitoring relevant opportunities for funding under Peace Plus.

3.11 Financial & Resource Implications

The activities outlined within this report are being resourced from the 2022/23 Enterprise and Business Growth budget.

3.12 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

Given the nature of this initiative as a multiparty, cross border partnership equality and good relations impacts will be assessed throughout delivery within the overall governance framework.”

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

Chairperson