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BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

SUMMONS TO ATTEND THE MONTHLY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

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

Notice is hereby given that the monthly meeting of the Council will be held in the Council Chamber and via MS Teams on Wednesday, 1st November, 2023 at 6.00 p.m., for the transaction of the following business:

1. Summons
2. Apologies
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Minutes of Council Meeting (Pages 1 - 8)
5. Official Announcements
6. Request to Address the Council

To consider a request for a representative of Equity NI to address the Council in relation to the motion on Arts Cuts.

7. Minutes of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee (Pages 9 - 64)
8. Minutes of People and Communities Committee (Pages 65 - 102)
9. Minutes of City Growth and Regeneration Committee (Pages 103 - 124)
10. Minutes of Licensing Committee (Pages 125 - 136)
11. Minutes of Planning Committee (Pages 137 - 150)
12. Minutes of Climate and City Resilience Committee (Pages 151 - 158)
13. Minutes of Standards and Business Committee (Pages 159 - 162)
14. Motions
 - a) Arts Cuts (Pages 163 - 164)
 - b) Pay Awards for Health and Social Care Trust Staff (Pages 165 - 166)
 - c) Secure Needle/Drug Waste Bins (Pages 167 - 168)

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 Wednesday, 4th October, 2023 at 6.00 p.m., pursuant to notice.

Members present: The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor (Councillor Murphy) (Chairperson);
Aldermen Lawlor, McCoubrey, McCullough and Rodgers;
Councillors Anglin, Beattie, Bell, Black, Bower, Bradley, R. Brooks, T. Brooks, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, Collins, de Faoite, Doherty, M. Donnelly, P. Donnelly, R-M Donnelly, Doran, D. Douglas, S. Douglas, Duffy, Ferguson, Flynn, Garrett, Gormley, Hanvey, Kelly, Long, Lyons, Magee, Maghie, Maskey, F. McAteer, G. McAteer, McCabe, McCann, McCormick, McCusker, McDonough-Brown, McDowell, McKeown, I. McLaughlin, R. McLaughlin, Murray, Nelson, Nic Bhranair, Ó Néill, Smyth, Verner, Walsh and Whyte.

Summons

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Groogan), Alderman Copeland and Councillor McMullan.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Doherty declared an interest in the item “West Wellbeing Suicide Prevention” in the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that had formerly been a Board Member in that organisation. He also declared an interest in the item “Sustainable Period Product Scheme” within the People and Communities minutes, in that he had previously collaborated with the Council and the community at Foodstock in relation to period products.

Councillor Ferguson declared an interest in the item “Update on Area Working Groups” within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in so far as it related to the refurbishment of the Belfast Orange Hall under the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund, on the basis that he was a member of Duke of Schomberg LOL 486, which held meetings in the building. He also declared an interest in respect of the same item in that he was a shareholder in Glentoran Football Club and was a Committee Member of Nettlefield Multisports facility.

Councillor Doran declared an interest in the item “Update on Area Working Groups” within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in so far as it related to the refurbishment of the Belfast Orange Hall under the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund, and he was a Member of the Orange Lodge.

**Meeting of Council,
Wednesday, 4th October, 2023**

Minutes of the Council

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

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the monthly meeting of the Council of 4th September be taken as read and signed as correct.

Official Announcements

Congratulations

Alderman Lawlor congratulated Men's Minds Matter in Tullycarnet on its one year anniversary and highlighted the importance of encouraging anyone struggling with their mental health to reach out for help.

He also commended Tullycarnet Community Football Club on its 20th anniversary and paid tribute to the great work which it had carried out in the local community over that time.

Councillor Bell congratulated all those who had participated in and managed the 33rd Good Relations Week. At the request of the Member, the Lord Mayor agreed to send a letter of congratulations to those who had organised the series of events.

Councillor Ferguson commended the Council on having been nominated for an Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) Service award and, despite not winning, that it had been great to see the City hold such a successful conference and awards ceremony.

Councillor McCormick highlighted that World Mental Health Day would take place the following week.

Councillor G. McAteer thanked the Council for its agreement to light up City Hall, on Sunday, 8th October, for Dyslexia Awareness Day, which would bring Dyslexia Awareness Week to a close.

**Request to Host an Event for the U.S.
Special Envoy to Northern Ireland**

The Chief Executive advised the Council that he had received a request to host an event for Mr. Joseph P. Kennedy III, U.S. Special Envoy to Northern Ireland for Economic Affairs, on 24th October. He outlined that it would form part of his investor visit, for up to 250 people, and that the Party Group Leaders and the Committee Chairs would be invited to attend.

The Council acceded to the request, noting that it would be financed from within existing budgets.

**Meeting of Council,
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Request to Address the Council

The Chief Executive advised the Council that the item had been removed from the agenda.

Minutes of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Moved by Councillor Black
Seconded by R-M. Donnelly

That the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 22nd September, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Amendment

**Organisational Reviews - Democratic Services
and Equality and Diversity Units**

Moved by Councillor R. McLaughlin
Seconded by Councillor Beattie and

Resolved – that a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee outlining how the Council conducts organisational reviews, setting out a Terms of Reference, along with options for both an internal and an external review into the process.

Update on Area Working Groups - East

In response to a Member's query, the City Solicitor confirmed that there was no legal impediment regarding the £8,000 of funding to expedite the new toilet facilities at the Cregagh Wanderers container and that the refurbishment could proceed.

Update on Area Working Groups - North

Moved by Councillor Whyte,
Seconded by Councillor de Faoite

That the decision in respect of the Malgrove project be brought back to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in order to consider the reallocation of funding.

On a recorded vote, five Members voted for the proposal and fifty-one against and it was accordingly declared lost.

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For 5	Against 51
Councillors de Faoite, Doherty, Lyons, McKeown, and Whyte.	The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor (Councillor Murphy); Aldermen Lawlor, McCoubrey, McCullough and Rodgers; Councillors Anglin, Beattie, Bell, Black, Bower, Bradley, R. Brooks, T. Brooks, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, Collins, M. Donnelly, P. Donnelly, R-M Donnelly, Doran, D. Douglas, S. Douglas, Duffy, Ferguson, Flynn, Garrett, Gormley, Hanvey, Kelly, Long, Magee, Maghie, Maskey, F. McAteer, G. McAteer, McCabe, McCormick, McCusker, McDonough-Brown, McDowell, I. McLaughlin, R. McLaughlin, Murray, Nelson, Nic Bhranair, Ó Néill, Smyth, Verner and Walsh.

The Chief Executive agreed that a report would be submitted to a future meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee outlining the accounting treatment in relation to the allocation of funding for BIF.

Contracts Update - Retrospective Single Tender Actions

In response to a request from a Member, regarding the recent failure and subsequent replacement of boilers at two Council sites, the Chief Executive agreed that a report would be submitted to a future meeting in respect of a conditions survey of the Council's major pieces of equipment.

Contracts Update – Single Tender Actions

Moved by Councillor R. McLaughlin,
Seconded by Councillor Beattie and

Resolved – that, in the interest of full scrutiny, future reports on Single Tender Actions (STA) include more detail for the Committee to consider; and that the proposed STA relating to the “Supply, delivery and commissioning of replacement illuminate lighting fittings and ancillary equipment as part of the PPM maintenance programme”, of up to £60,000, be referred back to the Committee for further consideration.

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Motion – Save West Wellbeing Suicide Awareness

In response to a request from a Member, the Chief Executive agreed that a letter would be issued to West Wellbeing Suicide Awareness to clarify the Committee's decision in respect of potential future funding.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendments, the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 22nd September were approved and adopted.

Minutes of People and Communities Committee

Moved by Councillor Murray
Seconded by Councillor M. Donnelly

That the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 6th and 12th September, be approved and adopted.

Waste Update

In response to a Member's request, it was agreed that a list of the streets which officers had identified as the most affected would be circulated to the Members.

**Update on Local Government
Regional Resilience Function**

At the request of a Member, the Chief Executive agreed to consider whether the function would continue reporting through the People and Communities Committee or whether it would fall within the remit of the Climate and City Resilience Committee.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendments, the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 8th and 12th September were approved and adopted.

Minutes of City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Moved by Councillor Nic Bhranair
Seconded by Councillor R-M. Donnelly

That the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 13th September, be approved and adopted.

In response to a Member's query, the Chief Executive agreed to consider, in conjunction with the City Solicitor, any internal measures which could be taken in respect of Members posting restricted information on social media, particularly when there were commercial sensitivities.

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Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendments, the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 13th September, were approved and adopted.

Minutes of Licensing Committee

Moved by Councillor McKeown
Seconded by Councillor Smyth and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Licensing Committee of 20th September, 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 Garrett
Seconded by Councillor Carson and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee of 19th September, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Minutes of Climate and City Resilience Committee

Moved by Councillor R-M. Donnelly
Seconded by Councillor M. Donnelly and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Climate and City Resilience Committee of 14th September, be approved and adopted.

Minutes of Standards and Business Committee

Moved by Councillor McDonough-Brown
Seconded by Councillor McCormick and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Standards and Business Committee of 26th September, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Motions

Pavement Parking

In accordance with notice on the agenda, Councillor Tara Brooks proposed:

“That this Council notes that inconsiderate pavement parking affects everyone in Belfast, but disproportionately children, people with visual impairments,

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mobility aid users, neurodiverse people and people with prams or pushchairs; and therefore it is essential that the Council plays its full role in reinforcing the message that pavements are for people and it is never acceptable to park in a manner which forces people off a footway and into the road. This Council acknowledges the challenges in solving this issue but resolves to work towards stopping vehicles from blocking pavements through inconsiderate or dangerous parking, including by undertaking a public information campaign about the negative impacts of pavement parking in its forthcoming communications.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Nelson.

After discussion, the motion was put to the meeting and passed.

Right to Food Campaign

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

“This Council recognises the impact the scourge of food poverty is having on families right across our city, made worse by the cost-of-living emergency and recent price rises and gives its formal backing to the Right To Food campaign, joining cities like Liverpool and Manchester in becoming a Right To Food city.

We believe that the British Government and any restored Executive must prioritise food poverty, implementing a range of new measures including universal free school meals, support for community kitchens and enshrining the Right To Food for all through legislation.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor McCusker.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Flynn

Seconded by Councillor Smyth

To insert the following two paragraphs after the first paragraph:

“This Council also notes the School Holiday Food Grant was a crucial element of government support to tackle child food insecurity, targeted at those most in need, and helped struggling families cover the cost of food at times when their children did not have access to Free School Meals.

This Council will write to the Permanent Secretary at the Department of Education calling for the urgent restoration of the School Holiday Food Grant Scheme, and to request that the Department protect and prioritise the needs of the most disadvantaged children and young people when making decisions regarding the allocation of its resources.”

The Proposer of the motion agreed to the amendment.

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After discussion, the following motion, as amended below, was put to the meeting and passed:

“This Council recognises the impact the scourge of food poverty is having on families right across our city, made worse by the cost-of-living emergency and recent price rises and gives its formal backing to the Right To Food campaign, joining cities like Liverpool and Manchester in becoming a Right To Food city.

This Council also notes the School Holiday Food Grant was a crucial element of government support to tackle child food insecurity, targeted at those most in need, and helped struggling families cover the cost of food at times when their children did not have access to Free School Meals.

This Council will write to the Permanent Secretary at the Department of Education calling for the urgent restoration of the School Holiday Food Grant Scheme, and to request that the Department protect and prioritise the needs of the most disadvantaged children and young people when making decisions regarding the allocation of its resources.

We believe that the British Government and any restored Executive must prioritise food poverty, implementing a range of new measures including universal free school meals, support for community kitchens and enshrining the Right To Food for all through legislation.”

Lord Mayor
Chairperson

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 20th October, 2023

MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE LAVERY ROOM AND
REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Black (Chairperson);
Alderman McCoubrey; and
Councillors Beattie, Bunting, Cobain, de Faoite,
M. Donnelly, R.M. Donnelly, Ferguson, Garrett, Hanvey,
Long, Maghie, Maskey, I. McLaughlin, R. McLaughlin,
Nelson, Nic Bhranair and Whyte.

In attendance: Mr. J. Walsh, Chief Executive;
Ms. S. McNicholl, Deputy Chief Executive/Director of
Corporate Services;
Ms. N. Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and
Civic Services;
Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;
Mr. J. Greer, Director of Economic Development;
Ms. C. Matthews, Director of Resources and Fleet;
Ms. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and
Development;
Mr. D. Sales, Director of Neighbourhood Services;
Ms. C. Sheridan, Director of Human Resources;
Ms. S. Toland, Director of City Services;
Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy;
Mr. T. Wallace, Director of Finance;
Mr. K. Heaney, Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty;
Ms. S. Williams, Governance and Compliance Manager;
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer; and
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor Smyth.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 22nd September were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council, at its meeting on 4th October, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

Toilet Facilities - Cregagh Wanderers Container

Councillor Maghie stated that she had been made aware of a potential issue around the release of the funding for this project, which the Committee, at its meeting on 22nd September, had approved in adopting the minutes of the meeting of the East Belfast Area Working Group of 7th September.

The Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services confirmed that she would raise the issue with the relevant Council officer over the course of the meeting and provide a response in due course.

(Councillor Ferguson declared an interest as soon as this matter had been raised, due to his involvement with Nettlefield and Glentoran Football Clubs, both of which were included in the LIF project from which the funding was being provided and left the meeting for the duration of the discussion.)

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Beattie declared an interest in relation to agenda item 3g – Hardship Fund – Emerging Considerations, in that the organisation for which he worked delivered a number of programmes and left the meeting whilst it was under consideration.

Councillor Whyte declared an interest in relation to agenda item 3c – QUB Civic Commitment to the South Belfast University Area, on the basis that he was a part-time Teaching Assistant at Queen’s University’s School of Economics and Management and left the meeting whilst it was being considered.

Request to Present

**Conradh na Gaeilge/Committee
on the Administration of Justice**

The Committee acceded to a request from representatives of Conradh na Gaeilge and the Committee on the Administration of Justice to attend a future meeting to discuss their concerns in relation to the Council’s proposed language provision along the Springfield Dam section of the Forth Meadow Community Greenway and wider issues relating to the Equality Impact Assessment process and the Irish Language.

Restricted Items

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

Organisational Reviews - Democratic Services/Equality and Diversity Units

(The Senior Democratic Officer, Democratic Services Officer and Democratic Services Support Assistant left the meeting whilst this item was under consideration.)

The Committee was reminded that, following the creation in February, 2019 of the Legal and Civic Services Department, approval had been granted to undertake a review of the Democratic Services Unit, to ensure that it was fit for purpose in terms of delivering the Council's governance arrangements.

The Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services reported that the review had now been completed and drew the Committee's attention to a proposed staffing structure which would fulfil the aforementioned objective and provide those people currently employed within the Unit on a temporary basis with an opportunity to apply for permanent posts. She confirmed that extensive consultation had been undertaken with the Trades Unions, through the Departmental Trades Union Forum, and the staff affected and, accordingly, recommended that the Committee approve the new organisational structure for implementation.

The Committee adopted the recommendation and agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting providing information on the salary grade attributed to each post within the structure.

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 those two categories.

She reported that, as at 30th September, 205 staff had been filling posts on a temporary basis, 125 of whom had substantive Council posts to return to when no longer required. The other 80 were fixed term contract employees who did not have a substantive post to return to. Between 1st July and 30th September, 23 staff had joined the Council on a temporary contract, with 10 having a substantive post and 13 being on fixed term contracts.

She reported further that, as in the previous quarter, 259 agency assignees had been engaged by the Council at 30th September, 40 of whom were seasonal workers. She outlined the cost of employing agency assignees for the three-month period ending on 30th September and pointed out that this did not represent a financial burden, as it was met through vacant posts.

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The Director then stated that the Corporate Contract Manager, who had been in post since February, had established regular compliance and challenge meetings across Departments, with a view to driving down long-term agency usage and that data was being reviewed to assess the potential for creating some permanent flexible roles.

She went on to remind the Committee that the Commercial Team within the Commercial and Procurement Service was working with Corporate HR to provide a comprehensive overview of the 'status quo' in relation to the managed service in place for the provision of temporary agency workers for a diverse range of job roles. In addition, further research into in-house employment agencies which may be used in other organisations was ongoing and a report on the findings from this initial exercise would be included in the Quarter 3 update and in the quarterly reports thereafter. She concluded by making reference to the People Strategy which had just been launched and by outlining the measures which were in place to support those staff applying for permanent posts.

After discussion, the Committee noted the information which had been provided and agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting on the establishment of an apprenticeship scheme and on the number and Department of vacant permanent posts across the Council.

**QUB Civic Commitment to the
South Belfast University Area**

The Committee was reminded that Queen's University and the Ulster University were each playing an important role in bringing about positive behavioural change in the South Belfast University Area by engaging in the inter-agency steering group and supporting the development of a shared action plan to address priorities such as crime, antisocial behaviour, community cohesion and the wellbeing of residents.

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy reported that, as part of this work, Queen's University was committed to becoming a 'Civic University', as a way of improving employment opportunities, addressing skills need, driving economic growth, improving public health outcomes and strengthening communities. The university was of the view that its transition to a Civic University should occur on a phased basis, with an initial focus being placed on the South Belfast University area.

He went on to draw the Committee's attention to a draft Civic Commitment, which set out a number of commitments and actions from Queen's University to work with the Council, local communities and students to support those who regarded the university area of South Belfast as their home. A review of the draft document by Council officers had revealed no major areas of concern, other than the fact that any interventions or actions would be subject to resource availability and established processes. He added that the Ulster University was understood to be developing a similar charter and would be engaging with partners, including the Council, in the process.

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In response to a Member, the Director confirmed that the Council would discuss with the Community Planning Partnership, the universities and other agencies the potential for extending the initiative to other areas of the City, as a means of addressing antisocial behaviour and other issues.

The Committee granted approval for the Council to be a signatory to Queen's University's Civic Commitment for the South Belfast University Area.

**Review of Continuous Improvement
and how Reviews are Conducted**

The Committee was reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 4th October, had agreed that a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee outlining how organisational reviews were conducted and setting out a Terms of Reference, along with options for both an internal and an external review into the process.

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy informed the Committee that the Continuous Improvement Unit played a fundamental role in supporting the design and delivery of change and improvement programmes, project management and business-as-usual organisational development activities. He reported that Audit, Governance and Risk Services had, in February, completed an assurance review of the Unit and had made a number of recommendations around programme design, programme governance, programme management and project management/benefits realisation.

In response to those recommendations, quotations had, in August, been invited for external assistance to conduct a review of the Continuous Improvement Unit, in support of the continued evolution of the approach to organisational reviews and development, improvement and change. He provided details of the key deliverables which had been identified within the terms of reference for the review and confirmed that a contractor had now been appointed. A report on the outcome of the review would be presented to the Committee in due course.

After discussion, during which the Director of City and Organisational Strategy provided an assurance that the contractor would be engaging with Members and those staff across the Council whose review had either been completed or was underway, the Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Belfast Regional Innovation Hub Bid

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 26th June, it had approved the development of a £3.8m bid to the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology's Regional Innovation Hub competition.

The Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services reported that the Department was seeking to create a nationwide network of innovation hubs which would support industry, small and medium-sized enterprises and public agencies to fully exploit the commercial and innovation potential of 5G advanced wireless networks.

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Each successful local authority would receive capital funding to deliver a first programme between December, 2023 and March, 2025.

She stated that the Council's City Innovation Office had worked with the Belfast Region City Deal Partners to develop a bid, which had been submitted in September. She reviewed the main elements and structure of the Belfast Innovation Region's proposal and pointed out that the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology would be likely to make grant offers by mid-October, with the expectation that contracts would be signed and agreed by mid-November. It would then expect each local authority to be ready to agree a contract for funding and to commence programme delivery by the end of November.

In view of the very narrow timeframe, a programme board had already been established, being chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive, which would, in the event of Belfast's bid being successful, provide the Committee with updates on progress. Officers had, under the direction of the board, already commenced work with partners on the likely legal, procurement and contractual requirements. Should the Council be offered a contract in the coming weeks, the final terms of the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology's contract would also be presented to the Committee for approval.

After discussion, during which the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services confirmed that the Innovation Team would be working closely with the Economic Development Team to reach out to small and medium-sized enterprises, as part of the process, the Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Update on External Funding

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy submitted for the Committee's consideration a report providing an update on some emerging developments relating to major funding programmes, including PEACEPLUS, the Shared Island Initiative and Levelling Up and outlining proposals for continued engagement with Members in developing a pipeline of potential candidate projects for emerging funding opportunities.

After discussion, the Committee:

- i. noted that officers would be arranging a series of Party Group briefings to enable detailed discussions to take place in relation to possible funding opportunities and to inform the development of an agreed pipeline of corporate projects (funding priorities) which should be developed to an appropriate stage of maturity;
- ii. noted that the emerging pipeline of possible candidate funding projects would be presented to the Committee in November;
- iii. noted that the engagement with Members on a potential pipeline of project proposals would be a key element in developing a wider Funding Framework for the Council, cognisant of existing programmes, ensuring that projects were being proactively developed to bring forward for funding opportunities when

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announced, and that existing governance for these projects had already been established;

- iv. noted that a comprehensive report providing an update on the Council's application and involvement under the PEACEPLUS programme would be presented to the Committee in November;
- v. noted the plans to provide training and awareness sessions for Members and the intention to roll-out funding alerts to local partners using the Grantfinder system;
- vi. authorised officers to continue to share awareness raising events in relation to funding opportunities with all Members, to act as a conduit with local groups and ensure coverage across the City;
- vii. noted that Council officers were continuing to engage with the Shared Island Unit and others to address the issues alluded to within the report in relation to the Shared Island Initiative and identify emerging opportunities;
- viii. agreed that a letter be forwarded to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities expressing concern that Northern Ireland had not been included in the Long-term Plan for Towns Programme which had been announced on 1st October and pointing out that local councils had, in the absence of the Northern Ireland Executive, demonstrated their ability to deliver such programmes; and
- ix. agreed that there was a need for the Council to assist organisations in building the capacity required to avail of external funding opportunities.

Hardship Fund – Emerging Considerations

The Committee was reminded that it had, at a previous meeting, agreed to establish a Cost-of-Living Working Group to review previous hardship schemes and work to co-design an effective hardship scheme.

The Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty reported that the Working Group had met on two occasions and drew the Committee's attention to draft proposals in relation to the Hardship Fund for 2023/24, based upon its discussions and direct feedback from Members. The proposals covered three main areas, namely, Focus of Support (Cohorts), Design Principles and the Emerging Funding Model.

He pointed out that the funding being provided by the Department for Communities and the Council, through the hardship scheme and the underspend in the Covid Support Grant respectively, amounted to approximately £1,019,000, with the indicative budget allocation being as follows:

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Theme	Partner(s)	Funding Allocation (indicative)
1. Support to Children and Families	Schools via Education Authority	£250,000
	Sponsored/Community Day-Care (Children 0-10 years age / vulnerable children)	£24,000
	Save the Children	£100,000
	Family Support Hubs (network of 10)	£100,000
2. Support for Individuals and Families in Immediate (Emergency) Need	SVDP	£75,000
	Red Cross (55+ Age Group)	£75,000
	Generalist Advice Providers	£120,000
	Trussell Trust	£30,000
	Fareshare	£80,000
3. Enhance Capacity of Existing Structures and Programmes	Winter Wellbeing Community Programmes	£15,000
	Warm and Well Programme	£50,000
	Social Supermarkets	£100,000
	TOTAL	£1,019,000

The Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty then pointed out that, whilst the Department for Communities' Letter of Offer provided for a management fee for the delivery of the hardship fund, it was anticipated that this would apply to a minimal number of partners. There could also be other non-avoidable costs, relating to delivery infrastructure, for some delivery partners which would be kept to a minimum. Any such costs would, he confirmed, be inclusive of the overall funding allocations outlined above.

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He went on to state that discussions were ongoing with potential delivery partners in terms of the capacity to deliver the scale of support and funding in this financial year and there might, therefore, be a need to realign identified in-year underspends at very short notice. He added that the Cost-of-Living Working Group had highlighted the need for any emerging Hardship Scheme to be underpinned by an effective communications plan, setting out clear messages around the scope of the scheme, the support available and how it could be accessed and have clear referral pathways in place which were promoted across community partners. He concluded by recommending that the Committee:

- i. note the contents of the report, including the funding being made available to support the development and implementation of a Hardship Scheme for the 2023/24 financial year;
- ii. approve the proposed cohorts who should benefit from any such scheme, namely, children and young people (including those with special needs), families and/or individuals in emergency need, aging population and newcomer communities;
- iii. approve the proposed funding model as set out in the table above; and
- iv. delegate authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services and the Director of City and Organisational Strategy to realign in-year underspends within the overall funding framework.

The Committee adopted the recommendations, subject to the funding allocation for Generalist Advice Providers in the foregoing table being reduced by £100k to £20k and that for the Family Support Hubs and Social Supermarkets each being increased by £50k to £150k.

Update on Contracts

The Committee:

- approved the public advertisement of tenders, as per Standing Order 37a, as detailed in Table 1 below;
- approved the award of Single Tender Actions, in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions, as detailed in Table 2 below;
- approved the modification of the contract, as per Standing Order 37a, as detailed in Table 3 below; and
- noted the award of retrospective Single Tender Actions, in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions, as detailed in Table 4 below.

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Table 1: Competitive Tenders

Title of Tender	Proposed Contract Duration	Estimated Total Contract Value	SRO	Short Description of Goods / Services
App-based Carparking Management System	Up to 5 years	Up to £78,000	J. Tully	Council Staff App-based carparking management system.
Bulk LPG for Duncrue Estate	Up to 14 months	Up to £160,000	S. Grimes	LPG is used as a support fuel to the council's landfill gas extraction and flaring plant that services commercial and other premises situated within the Dargan Industrial Estate.
Percipio Skillsoft e-learning platform	Up to 3 years	Up to £44,973.36	T. Wallace	Percipio is an online learning platform that allows the user to watch, read or listen to content as well as practice learning in a secure lab environment. This resource is utilised by Digital Services staff to both maintain and stay up to date with current skills and IT knowledge as well gain and learn new IT and related skills that support the delivery of IT services to the Council.
Provision of Energy Audits for selected BCC buildings *Approved June 2023. Value reviewed and approved Aug 2023. Requesting duration additional 6 month up to 12 months.	Up to 12 months	Up to £85,000	J. Tully	Supplier required to complete energy audits of four high use Council buildings – City Hall, Cecil Ward, Adelaide and Duncrue. This SOC and spend has been approved through the Climate Plan Programme Board. Additional value is included to cover thermal heat modelling/digital twinning options and potential future works e.g., additional sites.

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Supply, delivery, installation, replacement and off-loading of litter bins	Up to 5 years	Up to £750,000	D. Sales	Continued supply of litter bins and support services including new wider scope for different types of bins and flexibility to procure any other bin types that may be required in future.
Crematorium and Cemetery Supplies	Up to 5 years	Up to £250,000	S. Toland	After an unsuccessful quotation exercise for urns, the service is looking to included other items i.e. memorial safety equipment, grave side utilities, grass mats, shoring equipment plus spare parts and maintenance of existing shoring, to achieve value for money.
Provision and installation of a system for side of vehicle advertising on refuse collection vehicles (RCV), including printing of the banner	Up to 2 years	Up to £80,000	D. Sales	The Council is to launch the Bin credible waste campaign in October, 2023. The proposed graphics would reflect the campaign's look and message and add weight and longevity to the campaign. The proposed system will ensure that any advertising can be easily changed with no damage to the vehicle to reflect any changes to the campaign message or future campaigns.
Procurement Framework for delivery of Employment Academies *Approved CMT 27/09/2023 £6m contract value now reviewed	Up to 4 years	Up to £9,000,000	J. Greer	The current Employment Academy Framework is ending in February, 2024. A successive framework must be established to ensure continued delivery of Employment Academies. Scope/ value extended to include other local NI council's use.
Provision of Building Management, Operation and Café Provision at 2 Royal Avenue, Belfast	Up to 10 months	£160,000	J. Greer	2 Royal Avenue has been operating since 2022 providing a non-commercial space in the heart of the city providing citizens and visitors with a

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				free and accessible place to relax, have a coffee and enjoy an arts and cultural offering. The building management contract will terminate on 31st December 2023.
Franchisee for the Bobbin Café in City Hall	Up to 5 years	Up to £2.5m (est. £500k revenue p.a. plus concession fee)		Provision of retail catering service at Bobbin Coffee Shop in City Hall including additional catering services required for Members/ Officers; meetings, trolley service. Tender will be a Reserved Contract for social enterprise sector. Contract value best estimate as incumbent Franchisee has not disclosed business financial information.
Toilet Hygiene Services	Up to 5 years	Up to £375,000	N. Largey	Supply, rental, installation and servicing of toilet hygiene equipment and floor mats for various Council properties. This service is required for all Council buildings where bathrooms are used by Council staff and members of the public to ensure cleanliness and the health and safety of all those using Council buildings and facilities.

Table 2: Single Tender Actions

Title	Duration	Total Value	SRO	Description	Supplier	STA Reason Code*
SAP Licences Support	Up to 1 year	Up to £50,500	P. Gribben	Licenses are obtained directly from SAP and are required one year as we transition to a	SAP UK Limited	3

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				new finance system.		
Oracle technical support and software license for use of systems with 1000 users	Up to 3 years	Up to £125,000	S. McNicholl	This is a proprietary license for use with Oracle based database systems.	Oracle Premier Support Digital Renewal Center	3
Festive Lighting Infrastructure	Up to 7 months	Up to £159,000	J. Greer	Acquisition of festive lighting infrastructure from BCCM, with additional management services for the erection of Belfast's festive lighting scheme.	BCCM	3
Masternaut – Fleet Tracking/Telematics	Up to 2 Years	Up to £120,000	S. McNicholl	GPS tracking system installed in council vehicles and the service can only be provided by Masternaut. Maintenance and support renewal for installed software. Continued use of system required until in-cab fleet system procured.	Masternaut Ltd	3
MTC Mechanical Services cover Nov-Dec	Up to 2 months	Up to £100,000	S. Grimes	As the current STA cover will end 31st October 2023, a new STA is required to ensure continuity of service until the re-tender evaluation process is completed.	WJM Building Services Ltd	11

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Deployment App with Route Optimization and Customer Updates	Up to 2 years	Up to £43,000	C. Matthews	Brisqq Ltd is the only supplier of this type of software that is able to comply with our requirement to have data stored in UK. Continued use of system required until in-cab fleet system procured.	Brisqq Ltd	3
Provision of an Environmental Health Officer (EHO) via temporary agency	Up to 6 months	Up to £45,000	S Toland	The role is required for 24hr shift rota cover for essential service delivery within the Port Health service. The incumbent temporary agency provider, Matrix SCM, have been unable to fulfil this role therefore STA is required. A new recruitment exercise is underway which could see the post filled by the end of December, 23.	MCS Group	11

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Table 3: Modification to Contract

Title of Contract	Duration	Modification	SRO	Description	Supplier
T1873 - Provision of Toilet Hygiene Services	Up to 5 years	Additional 4 months and £25,000	N. Largey	A contract modification is required to allow for a new tender process to be completed. Work is underway to review and update the current specification in line with Departmental requirements and advertise tender.	Concept Services (NI) Ltd
T1851 - Young tree maintenance, tree planting and minor horticultural works	Up to 5 years	Additional 4 months & £140,000	D. Sales	A contract modification is required to allow for a new tender process to be completed. Work is underway to review and update the current specification in line with Departmental requirements and advertise tender.	Clive Richardson Ltd.

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T2303 - Provision of building management, operation and café provision at 2 Royal Avenue	Up to 17 months	Additional 2 months and £26,596	J. Greer	A contract modification is required to allow for a new tender process to be completed. Work is underway to review and update the current specification in line with Departmental requirements and advertise tender.	MayWe
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Table 4: Retrospective Single Tender Actions

Title of Contract	Duration	Value	SRO	Description	Supplier	STA Reason Code*
MTC Mechanical services cover Sept-Oct	Up to 2 months	Up to £100,000	S Grimes	To ensure continuity of service until the re-tender evaluation process is completed. This will ensure the incumbent contractor can continue to carry out essential services including callouts, repairs and planned maintenance until the new contract is in place.	WJM Building Services Ltd	11

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*** STA/ Direct Award Reasons**

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

In addition, the Committee agreed that the quarterly finance report should, in future, include information on expenditure on Single Tender Actions and on the number and value of contracts under £30,000. The Committee also reiterated the point which had been made at previous meetings that the monthly report on contracts should provide as much information as possible on Single Tender Actions, in order to inform the decision-making process.

Single Tender Action - Supply, Delivery and Commissioning of Replacement Illuminate Lighting Fittings and Ancillary Equipment

The Committee considered further the above-mentioned minute of the meeting of 22nd September, which the Council, at its meeting on 4th October had referred back to the Committee to enable further information to be provided. An extract of the minute is set out below:

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Extract from minutes of:-

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Title	Duration	Total Value	SRO/ Delegated Officer	Description	Supplier
Supply, delivery and commissioning of replacement illuminate lighting fittings and ancillary equipment as part of the PPM maintenance programme	Up to 3 years	Up to £60,000	S. Grimes	The City Hall Illuminate system is wholly proprietary to Philips lighting. The system is installed throughout the City Hall utilising a specialist technology, that is a closed protocol, and will only operate with the family of Phillips products. Signify (Phillips) do not supply to clients direct, as they use approved wholesalers. Due to our partnership in the 2013 EU project, we have a wholesale account directly with them.	Signify Commercial Ireland Ltd.

The Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services drew the Members' attention to the additional information provided within the contracts report, following which the Committee agreed to affirm its decision of 22nd September to approve the award of the Single Tender Action, in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions.

Matters referred back from Council/Motions

Single Tender Action - Supply, Delivery and Commissioning of Replacement Illuminate Lighting Fittings and Ancillary Equipment

The Committee noted that this item had been dealt with earlier in the meeting, as part of the Update on Contracts report.

Quarterly Update on Motions

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 Committee on the progress of all motions for which Strategic Policy and Resources Committee is responsible.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is recommended to:

- i. note the updates to all motions for which it is responsible; and
- ii. agree to the closure of motions 7, 24, 25, 55, 73, 78, 93, 98, 108, 139, 163, 168, 169, 196, 198, 210, 213, 215, 237, 239, 247, 292, 295, 301 as referenced in paragraph 3.4 below.

3.0 Main Report

Background

3.1 At the Committee meeting on 25th October 2019, the following motion was agreed:

‘That this Council notes that other Councils produce a monthly status report in relation to motions; and agrees that Belfast City Council adopts a similar practice and produces a monthly update on motions which will be brought to each full Council meeting, detailing the following:

1. Date received;
2. Motion title
3. Submitted by which Councillor
4. Council meeting date
5. Committee motion is referred to
6. Outcome of Committee where motion will be debated
7. Month it will be reported back to Committee
8. Other action to be taken.’

3.2 Following a review exercise, a new database containing all motions and Issues Raised in Advance at Committee was created and quarterly reporting to Committee commenced in March 2021. The latest quarterly update showing all active

motions and Issues Raised in Advance which this Committee is responsible for has been circulated.

Closure of motions and Issues Raised in Advance

3.3 At the Committee meeting on 20th November 2020, it was agreed that motions could be closed for one of two reasons:

- those which contained an action(s) that has been completed; and
- those which have become Council policy.

3.4 The Committee is asked to agree that the following 24 motions are now closed:

Category 1 Recommended Closures:

- **Childcare Strategy (Ref no 7)** – This motion called for the Council to agree to investigate options to co-create a Childcare Strategy for the city. It was agreed that a childcare strategy that is for Belfast alone would not be operational and outside the remit of the Council. Council continues to engage with key central government departments and agencies through community planning and other structures to advocate the need to accelerate the finalisation and implementation of the regional strategy. Therefore, it is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Application to Ulster History Circle for a Blue Plaque (Ref 108)** – This motion called for an application to the Ulster History Circle for a blue plaque for Olaudah Equiano and to meet the costs for it's implementation. A letter was issued to the Secretary of the Ulster History Circle who advised that this application has been discussed and declined on the basis that Mr. Equiano did not meet the criteria for a blue plaque. Therefore, it is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Establishment of an External Independent Review of Educational Provision (Ref 139)** – This motion called for the Council to write to the NI Executive to show support for the very early implementation of the agreement to establish an external, independent review of educational provision and the prospect of moving towards a single education system and invite representation onto the Community Planning Partnership to ensure Belfast is equipped to ensure that education is inclusive for all. SP&R Committee agreed a

Council response on 18th November 2022 (endorsed by Full Council) to the Department of Education's consultation on its Corporate Plan which has been submitted. Council officers continue to work with colleagues from Dept of Education and the Education Authority in bringing forward the refreshed Belfast Agenda and focus for the next four years and it is recommended that this motion is now closed.

- **Application Fees in the Private Rental Sector (Ref 163)** – This motion called for the Council to write to the Minister for Communities and the Minister of Finance, outlining concerns about and pledging council's support for the regulation of the private rented sector. Letters were sent in March 2021 and the responses reported back to Committee in April 2021. It is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Legislation to Tackle the Third Party Sale of Pups (Ref 168)** – This motion called for the Council to write to the Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs with regard to measures to tackle the third party sale of pups. Letters were issued in April 2021 and a further motion on the Illegal Puppy Trade (Ref 221) was taken forward and completed in December 2021. It is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Mullaghglass Landfill Site – Legal action (Ref 169) –** This motion called on the Council to prepare legal action against the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and the site operator for their dereliction of duty in protecting the rights of citizens around the Mullaghglass landfill site. The outcome of the legal proceedings were notified to the People and Communities Committee at the September 2023 meeting. It is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Bonfire Procedures (Ref 198)** – This motion called for the Council to review bonfire procedures. A report was brought to Committee on 24 September 2021. A further report 'Review of Bonfire Procedure' was brought on 19 November 2021. The SP and R Committee agreed to endorse the proposed review process and noted that the Bonfire Panel would be reconvened to move that forward and address the issues which had been raised in relation to the decision to regulate illegal and toxic bonfires. It is recommended that this motion is now closed.

- **Community Sector Terms and Conditions (Ref 213)** – This motion called for the Council to write to the Minister for Communities to request that a review be undertaken and actions recommended, to support and strengthen the community sector, particularly in relation to terms and conditions and salaries. A letter was sent in November 2021. It is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Regulation of Air BnB's (Ref 215)** – This motion called on the Council to write to the NI Executive to undertake a review and propose recommendations with regard to concerns around the growing number of unregulated Air BnB's and similar types of short-term let arrangements. A letter was sent in November 2021. It is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service (Ref 237)** – This motion called on the Council to fund the Tribunal a sum of money, if necessary, to avert redundancies and maintain the level of service. The funding allocation was approved and it is therefore recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Mountainview Centre (Ref 239)** – This motion called on the Council to convene an urgent meeting with relevant partners to explore the possibility of keeping this service open. The Mountainview Centre has now closed with the staff and service users being absorbed elsewhere and therefore it is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Abortion Services (Ref 295)** – This motion called on the Council to write to the Northern Trust to encourage it to provide more information about early medical abortion on their website and write to Minister Swann to urge him to convene an emergency meeting of the Executive to officially commission abortion services. The Northern Trust have now commissioned abortion services and therefore it is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Dual Language Street Signage (Ref 301)** – This motion called for an update report to be brought to the next meeting of SP&R outlining the reasons for the delay in processing the backlog of applications. An update report was brought to Committee on 17 February 2023. It is recommended that this motion is now closed.

Category 2 Recommended Closures:

- **Webcasting of Committee Meetings (Refs 24 and 93)** – These motions called for the webcasting of committee meetings to become common practice after the pandemic. This has now been implemented so it is recommended that both motions be closed.
- **Abortion Imagery (Ref 25)** – This motion called on the Council to investigate whether the public display of graphic abortion imagery in the city centre can be regulated lawfully. The Council undertook initial engagement with the Department for Communities and obtained legal advice on the draft byelaws. On 26th June 2023 the SP and R Committee agreed that the draft bye laws be issued for formal public consultation commencing in September 2023. It is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Drug Risk Force (Ref 55)** – This motion called on the Council to write to the Ministers for Health, Justice and Communities to establish a drug task force, the primary role of which would be to co-ordinate and drive action to improve the health outcomes for people who use drugs, reducing the risk of harm and death. Letters were issued as requested on 20 Feb 2020 and this work is now being taken forward as part of the 'Complex Lives' initiative. It is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Race Equality Champion for Belfast City Council (Ref 73)** – This motion called on a report to be brought forward for Members to consider, outlining options to further promote the inclusion of BAME communities, their access to Council services and participation in civic life. The Director of City and Organisational Strategy is now the CMT nominated Executive Sponsor for Race and is overseeing the development of a Race Action Plan for 2023 – 2026. The Race Action Plan will be an additional strand to the Council's diversity action plans going forward. It is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Suicide Awareness Training (Ref 78)** – This motion called on the Council to resource further mental health and suicide awareness training for staff and appoint mental health champions in each department. A number of courses have been promoted to staff and Members

and are offered on a continual basis via the Council's health and well-being support page. In addition, the revised Health and Well-Being Strategy Action Plan includes the establishment of a network of health and wellbeing champions as a key action. It is recommended that this motion is now closed.

- **Procurement Policy – Living Wage (Ref 98)** – This motion called on the Council to promote a procurement policy that supports the principle of a Real Living Wage. The council's Social Value Procurement Policy is now implemented and includes support for the Real Living Wage and the Council has also been awarded accreditation from the Living Wage Foundation. It is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **A Changing Places Toilets Policy for Belfast City Council (Ref 196)** – This motion called on the Council to develop a Changing Places Toilet Facility Policy for Belfast City Council, with input from disabled people, older people and carers. An officer working group has now been established, who are working on a draft policy. This draft policy was presented to the Disability Working Group in October 2023 and therefore it is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Staff on Temporary Contracts (Ref no 210)** – This motion called on the Council to obtain legal opinion to establish whether anyone employed on a temporary contract for 12 continuous months can have that contract made permanent if the staff member wishes to do so. A report was presented to January's SP&R Committee on the legal opinion received and reports on the number of staff on temporary contracts and the use of agency assignees is presented to Committee on a quarterly basis. It is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **City of Sanctuary (Ref 247)** – This motion called on the Council to support the Council becoming a Council of Sanctuary and Belfast a City of Sanctuary and commit to the standards identified as part of this. The council has recently carried out research into the inequalities experienced by Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Traveller people residing in Belfast and work is on-going to ensure a co-ordinated approach to addressing the findings. In addition, initiatives are still on-going through the Good Relations Action Plan and Council has also been awarded £406 thousand pounds from the TEO's Dispersal Fund to assist with programmes to support asylum seekers until March 2024. Updates on

this on-going work are brought to Committee as required. Therefore, it is recommended that this motion is now closed.

- **Council to become an Autism Impact Champion (Ref 292)** – This motion called on the council to become an Autism Impact Champion, as defined by Autism NI. The Equality and Diversity Unit have included ‘becoming an Autism NI Impact Champion’ as an action measure in the new Disability Action Plan 2022-25. Therefore, it is recommended that this NOM is now closed.

3.5 Financial and Resource Implications

There are no additional financial implications required to implement these recommendations.

3.6 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

There are no equality, good relations or rural needs implications contained in this report.”

After discussion, the Committee noted the quarterly update on motions and granted approval to close those motions set out within paragraph 2.1 of the report, with the exception of the following two:

- **Childcare Strategy (Reference Number 7)**

The Committee agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting on how the Council could work with childcare providers and agencies to address the current crisis in the childcare sector.

- **Abortion Imagery (Reference Number 25)**

The Committee agreed that this motion should remain open, in the context of the consultation which was due to open shortly on the new draft bye laws for the good governance of Belfast City Centre.

In closing the motion on the provision of a Blue Plaque for Olaudah Equiano (Reference number 108), the Committee agreed that the matter be progressed via the motion calling for the erection of street signage in the City centre to mark the location of important historical events related to the 'Belfast Enlightenment' period, which had been passed by the City Growth and Regeneration Committee at its meeting on 10th November, 2021 and that consideration be given to making reference to Olaudah Equiano within the City Hall visitor exhibition.

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The Committee agreed also that a review be undertaken of the City Hall visitor exhibition, which had opened in 2017, with a view to refreshing its content.

Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues

UK Future Cities Commission

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 To update the Committee on the key recommendations emanating from the UK Future Cities Commission report and outline the Council’s current position in relation to the proposed recommendations.

2.1 Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is asked to note the UK Future Cities Commission report.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 The UK Urban Futures Commission is an ambitious enquiry established to unlock the potential of the UK’s cities. The Commission is led by the Royal Society of Arts in partnership with Core Cities UK and Lloyds Banking Group and aims to work with cities and citizens to develop a transformative national plan for their future.

3.2 The Commission has recently published a report ‘Unleashing the potential of the UK’s cities’ (see appendix 1) which was guided by three core questions:

- 1. What are cities and what role do they play in our social, economic and environmental systems? What are the biggest challenges and opportunities – both now and in the coming decades?;**
- 2. In light of those challenges, what do we want and need them to be?; and**
- 3. How do we reach our vision for cities? What steps can we take now to get there?**

3.3 The report produced a series of recommendations and actions for consideration of cities and national government, each of which are summarised in the tables below, alongside a brief

summary of the Council’s current position against those specifically related to cities.

3.4 **Recommendations for Cities to Consider**

<u>Recommendation 1: Cities need a plan to replenish and grow their natural, social and economic assets.</u>	
<i>Actions</i>	<i>BCC Position</i>
1a) <u>Form a City Coalition</u> , reflecting the plurality of leaders in a city, with actors from local government, business, anchor institutions, and the community.	The refreshed Belfast Agenda and the supporting city governance arrangements is the mechanism for achieving this coalition in Belfast. A review of the governance arrangements is currently taking place to ensure they remain fit for purpose. Likewise, the Belfast Region City Deal is a further established leadership space for the city driving game changing programmes of work for the city.
1b) <u>Develop a Local Prosperity Plan</u> . Cities should have a single long term strategic plan for delivering ‘prosperity’ – defined in social, economic and ecological terms - for their citizens and beyond, co-developed by the City Coalition	This description resonates with elements of the refreshed Belfast Agenda with themes focused on our People and Communities, Our Economy, Our Place, Our Planet and a Compassionate City.

<p>1c) <u>Strengthen Data and Modelling Capabilities</u>, with a view to better measurement of economic, social and natural value, and modelling of the interconnected effects of interventions across the three systems.</p>	<p>Lack of data is an ongoing issue for Belfast and NI (evidenced in the Future Cities report where a lot of the comparative tables do not cover Belfast due to a lack of available data). The Council would welcome the opportunity to explore the data and modelling capabilities with other Core Cities members. There have been recent discussions with NISRA to explore opportunities to jointly improve data modelling for Belfast and work continues with Queens University on GIS mapping. A Council data maturity assessment has been undertaken with a view of assessing how we can better use data.</p>
<p>1d) <u>Increase citizen participation through residents' councils and juries</u>. Ensuring the voices of different interests are heard is important for the legitimacy and durability of decision-making.</p>	<p>The Belfast Agenda refresh commits to enhanced citizen engagement. Work is currently being undertaken to develop a co-design framework for the Belfast Agenda that will be brought to SP and R Committee at a future date.</p>

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<u>Recommendation 2:</u> Cities need the powers and tools to execute the plan.	
<i>Actions</i>	<i>BCC Position</i>
2a) <u>Develop urban leadership schemes</u> , to build and retain the skills needed to transform our cities.	To be further explored as part of the People Strategy. Work is ongoing regarding managing in a political environment.
2b) <u>Co-fund the establishment of a Cities Investment Hub</u> , a central spine of specialist expertise available to all cities, delivering economies of scale to help develop Local Prosperity Plans and associated investment propositions.	Officers will consider further how this would work in a devolved environment.
2c) <u>Consider establishing an Urban Wealth Fund</u> to manage and increase local revenues from public sector assets.	Officers will consider further how this would work in a devolved environment. Ongoing work on Strategic Site Assessments will ensure that public assets are being utilised strategically.
2e) <u>Grant local authorities and mayoral combined authorities in England more streamlined, long-term and flexible funding</u> , putting an end to all	Whilst this specifically references England, it is recommended the Council strategically supports this recommendation as an

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<p>current competitive economic development funding pots, and rolling those that are delivered at a local authority level into an integrated revenue and capital allocation for ‘prosperity’ in the Local Government Finance Settlement, on a multi-year basis.</p>	<p>alternative to the levelling up fund approach.</p> <p>The Council has commissioned an analysis of regeneration funds that are currently available to local authorities in GB.</p>
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<p><u>Recommendation 3:</u> Cities need to secure investment to finance the Plan.</p>	
<p><i>Actions</i></p>	<p><i>BCC Position</i></p>
<p>3a) <u>Catalyse private investment through joint ventures and special purpose vehicles</u>, for projects linked to the Local Prosperity Plan.</p>	<p>The Council is currently exploring funding models for regeneration and climate related projects.</p>
<p>3b) <u>Set up publicly capitalised investment funds</u>, explicitly linked to social, economic and ecological objectives in the Local Prosperity Plan.</p>	<p>Work is ongoing regarding the development of a portfolio of projects which will be used to target funding and investment opportunities.</p>
<p>3c) <u>Join with senior representatives of financial institutions to commit to a Cities Investment Compact</u>, with a commitment of 5% of</p>	<p>It is recommended that the Council explores this recommendation further.</p>

<p>their assets directly contributing to filling the investment gap in the Core Cities by 2030.</p>	
<p>3d) <u>Host investment showcases</u> to advertise investable, regenerative programmes to both domestic and foreign investors.</p>	<p>Work is ongoing regarding the development of a portfolio of projects which will be used to target funding and investment opportunities.</p>

3.5 Recommendations for National Government to Consider

The Commission also provides a number of recommendations for national government that are required to support the work detailed in the report.

- Reinstate national industrial strategy with our largest cities at its heart. Mirroring Local Prosperity Plans, this should take account of outcomes across economic, social, and natural systems. It must also articulate cities' contribution, both individually and collectively.
- Introduce a new statutory purpose for city councils to generate prosperity in their place, defined by social and ecological as well as economic health. This new statutory purpose would place generating local prosperity on an equal footing to core services, providing the City Coalition with a strong mandate for action.
- Accelerate progress on the devolution of powers to local government in England, moving to the default presumption of powers and assets being devolved unless the UK Government can provide a strong rationale not to do so.
- Revise the remits of UK's major investment agencies to allow them to better support cities.
- Support responsible local borrowing for regenerative projects, deploying the Office for Local Government to offer better oversight and regulation and promoting investment in social and environmental capital through discounted interest rates.

- **Enhance fiscal devolution** through a target for HM Treasury to bring the share of taxes controlled locally to the OECD average by the end of the next Parliament.
 - **Rewire the UK's macroeconomic and fiscal framework**, shifting our fiscal rules from a focus on net debt to net wealth, broadening the definition of capital to include social and natural dimensions and correcting for limitations in the Green Book.
- 3.6 Following the launch of this report, the Council will consider the Commission's recommendations further and work with Core Cities and other associated partners to review how they can be applied. These recommendations will also be taken forward internally through discussions during the corporate planning process over the coming months.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.7 There are no financial or resource implications associated with this report at this stage.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.8 There are no Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment associated with this report at this stage.”

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

Consultation on Northern Ireland's Emissions Reduction Targets and Carbon Budgets and the UK Climate Change Committee's Advice Report

The Committee approved the Council's response (copy available [here](#)) to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs' consultation on emission targets, carbon budgets and the Climate Change Committee's Advice Report.

Visit Belfast - Management Agreement/Renewal of The Partnership Agreement with Translink and Visit Belfast

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Committee to provide a management agreement which gives Visit Belfast reassurance of the Council's commitment to continued support of the organisation as a strategic partner,

subject to an annual funding agreement, and to approve the renewal of the Partnership Agreement with Translink and Visit Belfast for the operation of a ticketing area at the Belfast Welcome Centre.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- i. approve the provision of an agreement that provides Visit Belfast with the reassurance that the City Council is committed to supporting the organisation up to 15th July 2033, albeit subject to an annual funding agreement from recurrent budget provision; and
- ii. approve the renewal of the Partnership Agreement with Translink and Visit Belfast for the operation of a ticketing area within Belfast Welcome Centre at 8-9 Donegall Square North, up to 31st March, 2026.

3.0 Main Report

- 3.1 Visit Belfast serves as the official DMO for Belfast, successfully promoting Belfast as a vibrant tourist destination to out of state, international & business tourism markets and managing various aspects of the tourism and visitor experience.
- 3.2 On 21st April 2023, the Committee approved the continued occupation of premises at 8-9 Donegall Square North by Visit Belfast to operate the Welcome Centre in the delivery of leisure marketing, business tourism and visitor servicing activity for Belfast and to extend the term of the existing Management Agreement for a period of 1 year from 16th July 2023 and year to year thereafter until a date no later than 15th July 2028, which is in line with the lease expiry held by the Council.
- 3.3 The Management Agreement is subject to an annual review of Visit Belfast's annual business plan and project plan and approval of funding by the City Growth and Regeneration Committee.
- 3.4 Visit Belfast has advised Council officers of unfortunate unintended negative consequences to business and planning challenges that the 5 year stop date on the current management agreement poses.
- 3.5 In order to continue to work with Visit Belfast as our strategic delivery partner, which will assist in achieving the outcomes of the Belfast Agenda; the provision of a ten year agreement for

the delivery of leisure marketing, business tourism and visitor servicing activity for Belfast and Belfast City Region creates greater confidence, stability and a level of security for staff retention and recruitment; generation of income from the private sector, other sources and from commercial activity; and reassurance to our wider tourism partners and industry.

Rationale for Extension:

- 3.6 **Positive Track Record:** Visit Belfast has a proven track record of effectively promoting Belfast as a tourist destination and managing critical functions such as marketing, visitor information, and event coordination.
- 3.7 **Consistency and Stability:** A 10-year long stop date will provide stability and consistency in planning and executing long-term tourism strategies, helping to maintain and enhance Belfast's reputation as a world-class destination.
- 3.8 **Long-Term Investment:** Encourage sustained investment in the city's tourism infrastructure, including the development of new attractions, improved visitor services, and enhanced marketing efforts.
- 3.9 **Economic Impact:** Tourism plays a significant role in Belfast's economy, and a long-term commitment to Visit Belfast will help ensure continued economic benefits, including job creation and revenue generation.
- 3.10 Based on the rationale and considerations outlined above, committee are asked to consider the recommendations to review and progress amending the existing management agreement for Visit Belfast from July 2028 to July 2033. The management agreement will remain subject to annual review against annual business and project plans
- 3.11 **Translink Sharing Agreement**
- (i) **Approval of renewal of the Sharing Agreement with Translink and Visit Belfast for the operation of a ticketing area within Belfast Welcome Centre at 8-9 Donegall Square North up to 31 March 2026.**
- 3.12 There has been a partnership agreement in place since 2017 with Translink and Visit Belfast to operate a ticketing area within Belfast Welcome Centre. The agreement is due for renewal for a further three years, the extension of which will ensure that there is continued ticketing services being

provided at this key location in Belfast and Translink has indicated it wishes to continue to provide that service.

- 3.13 Subject to the Committee's approval, officers will work to make the relevant changes to the current management agreement and any resultant modifications to the lease agreement if required; and the Sharing Agreement with Translink will be renewed.

Financial and Resources Implications

- 3.14 No financial implications – Visit Belfast funding is subject to an annual funding agreement from recurrent budget.

Equality and Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.15 None associated with this report.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Dual Language Street
Signs - Gaeltacht Quarter**

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 On 1st March 2023 the Council agreed, in principle, to progress with dual language street signage in the Gaeltacht Quarter en block as a cost saving measure, subject to equality screening and when finance becomes available, with a report to be submitted to Committee in due course.

- 1.2 This decision was called in and subject to a barrister's opinion which concluded that the call-in did not have merit. Party Group Leaders were advised of the barrister's opinion via email on 7th July 2023 and were advised that officers would implement the decision and a report will be brought to a subsequent meeting of the SP and R Committee in due course outlining the result of an equality screening, the financial implications and any other associated matters.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to consider the contents of the report and to:

- (a) Consider the option to proceed with the erection of Dual language Street signs in the Gaeltacht Quarter in line with the process outlined in this report.

If the Committee is minded to proceed with the process outlined in this report, then it is asked to:

- (b) Confirm the threshold for objections to this process which triggers the requirement for an application and engagement of the current full process for a specific street within the Gaeltacht Quarter;
- (c) Confirm if applications which are deemed subject to the full process due to the threshold of objections being met are dealt with after the existing applications received are processed;
- (d) Agree that this be added to the Capital Programme as a capital project; and
- (e) Confirm if those streets which form the boundary of the Gaeltacht Quarter will also be included as part of the area.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 In July 2022, the SP and R Committee agreed to adopt a new policy position in relation to Dual Language Street Signs taking into account the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. This provides for a single resident / elected Member / Developer being sufficient to trigger a street survey and the threshold for the percentage of residents required to respond positively being changed to 15%.
- 3.2 During the Committee's consideration of the draft policy, it was considered that separate arrangements would ultimately be developed with respect to streets within both the City Core and the Gaeltacht Quarter and that the Council would have the discretion to depart from the wider dual language street sign policy in respect of these two areas.
- 3.3 The Council agreed, in principle, on 1st March 2023 how applications for a second name plate in the City Core would be processed. It also agreed, in principle, to progress with dual language signage in the Gaeltacht Quarter en bloc as a cost saving measure, subject to equality screening and when finance becomes available.

The Gaeltacht Quarter

- 3.4 In 2010, Deloitte were commissioned by An Cheathru Ghealtachta Teo (ACGT) and the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure (DCAL) to prepare several documents including a plan for the development of Belfast's Gaeltacht Quarter and to further progress recommendations made in the 2004 Dutton report. This report developed the vision, objectives and principles for the Gaeltacht Quarter which built on the 2002 West Belfast and Greater Shankill Task Force recommendations, the 2004 Dutton report and the consultation exercise undertaken by Deloitte for the 2010 report.
- 3.5 The vision for An Cheathru Ghealtachta is:
- The development and sustenance of a vibrant and compelling quarter of the city where the unique selling point and the economic potential of the Irish Language and culture are exploited, developed and maximized so as to realise profit and benefit for the people of the area, the city and the region.
- 3.6 A map of the Gaeltacht Quarter boundary has been circulated with this report. This boundary will be used to identify the streets that are to be included in this proposal. The boundary shown is based upon the definition of the greater Gaeltacht Quarter boundary as outlined in the 2010 Deloitte report.
- 3.7 There are circa 417 streets in the Gaeltacht Quarter as established from the map prepared and some 108 streets have already had dual language street signage installed. Of the remaining 309 streets, approx. 48 have live applications under the current policy. Members are also asked to consider those streets that form the boundary line of the Gaeltacht Quarter and determine if these streets are to be included as part of the area.

The Proposed Approach

- 3.8 The Council has a discretionary power to erect dual language street signs under Article 11 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (NI) Order 1995 ('the 1995 Order'). Article 11(4) of the 1995 Order sets out the matters to which the Council should have regard in deciding whether to exercise that discretionary power. This includes a requirement 'to have regard to any views on the matter expressed by the occupiers of premises in that street'.

- 3.9 Whilst the views of the occupiers of the street must be taken into consideration, their views need not be determinative, and the Council may also take into account other considerations affecting its decision.

Consultation Letter

- 3.10 Under the current Policy, only those residents on the electoral register are surveyed. This involves officers attending the Electoral Office to identify those residents and then hand delivering surveys to their property. It is instead proposed that one letter per identified property, addressed to the 'occupier', will be posted out to all properties in the identified streets within the Gaeltacht Quarter. This will explain the en bloc approach and how residents can make their views known about their individual street and will give the opportunity generally to highlight any equality of opportunity and good relations issues as outlined in the equality and good relations section below. A newspaper advert will also be placed that will outline the approach and ways that objections can be registered to ensure coverage of the proposal.
- 3.11 If a resident is in favour of the proposal to erect the street signs en bloc, then there is no requirement for them to formally respond to the letter.
- 3.12 If a resident is not in favour of the proposal, they will be able to write / email / contact the Council to advise of this. Such an objection would be the trigger to require an application and engagement of the current full process for a specific street within the Gaeltacht Quarter. Members are asked to confirm the threshold for objections to this process which triggers the requirement. Members could determine a particular number of objections to the en bloc approach for a particular street would lead to the full process being followed. Alternatively, members could agree a percentage of objections required to trigger the full process.
- 3.13 Once the threshold is reached an application will be required under the current policy for their specific street and the application subject to the full process. The objector(s) would be required to confirm their name and address so these could be checked against the electoral office to confirm they are validated as occupiers of the street.
- 3.14 Where applications are required, these will be considered by the Building Control team, processed as normal and where appropriate residents will be issued with a street survey following the usual electoral register checks. Such

applications will be dealt with in the normal way and will require support from 15% of residents in order to be successful. In accordance with the current policy for processing applications in the order received these applications will go to the end of the queue unless members agree an alternative method of dealing with or ordering them.

- 3.15 If the Council does not receive any objection to the en bloc approach for a particular street in the Gaeltacht Quarter within 30 calendar days of issuing the letter, the Council will move to erect the second name plate(s) on that street and will arrange for them to be installed as part of a planned schedule within a capital project.

Committee

- 3.16 Once the timeframe for responses is reached, any correspondence received would be processed and a report brought to committee outlining:
- 3.17 (a) those streets with no objections or below the objection threshold agreed from residents and where signage would be erected, and
(b) those streets where objections have been received above the objection threshold agreed which requires the street to be subject to the full process
- 3.18 Committee agreement will be sought to undertake the resultant actions and agreed processes for streets identified in (a) and (b) above.

Potential Benefits and Costs of the Proposed Approach

- 3.19 There are benefits that will likely be achieved by applying a blanket approach to erecting Dual Language street signs in the Gaeltacht Quarter. This approach would be beneficial as the streets within the defined area of the Gaeltacht Quarter could proceed more efficiently by eliminating some of the stages of the established process. The scale of these benefits would be based upon the number of streets for which nameplates would be erected without having to progress through the full process i.e. without meeting the agreed threshold of objection.
- 3.20 For these streets, staff time and resources in Building Control would be less per street as there would be:
- No carrying out of surveys and less administrative burden
This activity includes the stationary costs and postage cost for surveys returned. Surveys are prepared in the

office and hand delivered to ensure that all local situations are covered. Returns are then collated for each street and prepared for the next appropriate committee. Communications posted to residents will be one per household instead of one per resident on the electoral register. This will remove the requirement for unique identifiers and the overall administrative burden for issuing the communication will be reduced. Also, there will be fewer staffing resources required to track and record every decision through the standard

- **No requirement for checks at the Electoral Office.**
This involves visiting the Electoral Office in person and reviewing the register for specific streets to verify the applicant and document the numbers of all residents on the electoral register for each dwelling.
- **No requirement to respond if in favour**
This will reduce the amount of responses being returned and significantly less analysis which is required in standard surveys is anticipated.
- **No initial assessment exercise.**
Currently the initial assessments are carried out in a workshop format including staff from the Building Control, Good Relations, and Equality Teams.
- **Fewer Committee reports:**
For each street where the normal process is not required, no further staff time is required to create committee reports and going through the standard approval process for these to be submitted.
- **The revised approach will come with up-front costs, not contained in the current budgets.** To use the blanket approach for GQ streets, rather than receiving applications through the normal process would involve erecting significantly more nameplates in a shorter space of time and would require additional up front financial resources.
- **With the current staffing resource within the Building Control Service, it would not be possible to facilitate both this project and the ongoing processing of live applications for dual language street signs at the same time.** The Service would have to process any surveys for Gaeltacht Quarter streets, where objections that meet the threshold to trigger the full process have been received, as part of the existing workloads.

- Therefore, if this approach is to be taken, it is proposed that the erection of the nameplates in the Gaeltacht Quarter (where the full dual language street sign process is not being followed) could be brought forward as part of the Capital Programme as a capital project.

3.21 The overall project would require:

- Final confirmation of the streets and properties to be written to, including commercial properties.
- Mail drop to all properties.
- Collation of feedback provided in responses from residents.
- Provision of Committee report to consider the actions discussed at paragraph 3.16 above.
- Identification of nameplates in the streets, engagement with homeowners where signs are on properties.
- provision of work requests to contractor; and
- Checks of nameplates once erected and payment of invoices.

Mail Drop

- 3.22** Addresses within the Gaeltacht Quarter have been identified using the Local Development Plan map and data on the area as outlined above. This uses and is based upon the accuracy of the Pointer addressing database. It is estimated that there are in the region of 9600 properties to be included. Each property will receive one letter addressed to the 'occupier'. Officers have obtained an estimate for outsourcing this element of the work shown below.

Signage Costs

- 3.23** The estimated cost of signage for the streets currently identified within the Gaeltacht Quarter is contained in the finance section below and in the region of **£135,000**. This is based on an analysis of applications received under the new policy, and the number and cost of signs erected. Costs will vary depending on the number of signs in a street, if those signs are on walls or posts, and the size of signs required for the specific street names. It should be noted that costs would still be incurred if applications for all streets within the GQ were received, processed and approved through the normal application process, but given the condensed nature of this proposal, this finance would be required over a shorter period of time as part of the defined project, spent in one project,

rather than over a number of years. To date, approximately 40 applications have been received for streets in the GQ.

3.24 Summary Costs

Signage	£135,000
Mail drop	£7,500
Public adverts	£7,152
TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS	£149,652

3.25 It should be noted that these costs are estimated, based upon the average of 48 signs in 17 streets approved under the new policy.

Translations

3.26 Queens University have confirmed that they now have additional staffing resources to assist with translations of the current applications being processed. However, further discussions would be needed to confirm their ability to facilitate translations on the scale of this approach.

Financial and Resource Implications

3.27 Capital costs for the project to be refined through the Capital Programme.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

3.28 A draft equality screening has been carried out on the decision to erect dual language street signs en bloc within the Gaeltacht Quarter. The decision has been screened out as having minor impacts, but with the additional consultation action as outlined below.

3.29 The screening finds that the measures proposed align closely with the Council's Language and Good Relations strategies. In general, this equality screening indicates that there are sufficient safeguards, within the new procedure, to ensure there are no adverse impacts in relation to equality of opportunity and good relations issues.

- 3.30** It is proposed as the next step in the development of the policy approach to dual language street signage in the Gaeltacht Quarter that there is targeted and focused consultation on the new procedure with those likely to be affected by the new procedure, i.e., the residents of the Gaeltacht Quarter. Households within the Gaeltacht Quarter will be written to, explaining the 'en bloc' approach and how each household can make their views known both about their individual street and given the opportunity generally to highlight any equality of opportunity and good relations issues.
- 3.31** Additionally, a public notice newspaper advert will be placed outlining the approach and ways that objections can be registered to ensure coverage of the proposal.
- 3.32** It is not considered that the initial Equality, Good Relations and Rural Needs assessment normally carried out for each street would be required in most streets within the Gaeltacht Quarter given that the area has designated status. However, with regards to interface areas or specific streets, there will always be an opportunity for residents and/or Members to raise objections and to engage the wider policy. It is proposed that Members would receive a notification of all streets within the GQ in advance of the letter being issued to residents, as is currently done in batches for standard applications.”

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Beattie,
Seconded by Councillor Nic Bhranair,

That the Committee agrees:

- i. to proceed with the erection of Dual language Street signs in the Gaeltacht Quarter, in line with the process outlined within the report;
- ii. that the threshold for objections to this process which would trigger the requirement for an application and engagement of the current full process for a specific street within the Gaeltacht Quarter be set at 15% of residents;
- iii. that applications which are deemed subject to the full process due to the threshold of objections being met be dealt with alongside existing applications;
- iv. that the project be added to the Capital Programme as a capital project and prioritised; and

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- v. that those streets which form the boundary of the Gaeltacht Quarter also be included as part of the area, with only that portion of the Donegall Road within the boundary of the Gaeltacht Quarter, as set out in the appendix to the report, to be included.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Long,
Seconded by Councillor Maghie,

That the Committee agrees that the threshold for objections to this process which would trigger the requirement for an application and engagement of the current full process for a specific street within the Gaeltacht Quarter be set at one resident.

On a vote, nine Members voted for the amendment and ten against and it was declared lost.

The original proposal from Councillor Beattie was thereupon put to the meeting and passed.

Dual-Language Street Signs

The Director of Planning and Building Control referred to the fact that a number of dual-language street signs which had erected recently by the Council had been incorrect. She confirmed that those had now been rectified, existing signs erected under the new policy had been inspected for accuracy and robust measures had been put in place to prevent a recurrence.

Physical Programme and Asset Management

Asset Management

The Gatehouse, Templemore Baths

The Committee approved the grant of a lease for office accommodation at The Gatehouse, Templemore Baths, Templemore Avenue, to Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) for a term of six years, at a rent of £10,000 per annum.

Belfast Stories Site, North Street/Union Street

The Committee approved the use of part of the vacant land on the Belfast Stories site by The Conservation Volunteers for meanwhile use, under a short-term agreement, with the terms to be determined by the Estates Management and Legal Services Units.

Parkgate Avenue Car Park

The Committee approved the renewal of the existing licence agreement with the Directors of Argento Contemporary Jewellery Ltd. for a right to pass/repass over the Parkgate Avenue car park, for a period of one year to 31st August, 2024, subject to the payment of a fee of £3,000 per annum.

Gasworks Estate

The Committee approved the Linen Quarter BID's request to initiate a tender process to design a public space intervention within the public amenity area at the Gasworks Estate, with details to be presented to a future meeting before any commitment was given to the project.

Update on Physical Programme

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The Council's Physical Programme currently includes over 400 capital projects via a range of internal and external funding streams, together with projects which the Council delivers on behalf of external agencies. The Council's Capital Programme forms part of the Physical Programme and is a rolling programme of investment which either improves existing Council facilities or provides new facilities. This report includes stage movement requests relating to the Capital Programme, an update on Peace IV capital projects and an update on letters of offer received.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is requested to consider the following items on the Capital Programme:

- **IT Programme – F5 Access Policy Manager Project / Web Application Firewall - Agree that this project is moved to *Stage 3 – Committed* and agree that the necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate 'framework' arrangements) be initiated with contract to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.**
- **HWRCs and Civic Amenity Sites - Containers – Agree that this project is moved to *Stage 3 – Committed* and**

agree that the necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate 'framework' arrangements) be initiated with contract to be awarded on the basis of the most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.

- **Update on PEACE IV Capital Projects** - Note the status of Black Mountain Shared Space Project and Shankill Shared Women's Centre and the challenging issues and risks presented in paragraph 3.5.
- **Externally Funded Projects** - Agree that necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate 'framework' arrangements) be initiated for any Physical Programme projects including externally funded projects as required, with contracts to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.

3.0 Main Report

Capital Programme

- 3.1 Members will be aware that the Council runs a substantial Physical Programme which includes the rolling Capital Programme – a multimillion regeneration programme of investment across the city which improves existing Council assets or provides new council facilities. The Council also delivers externally focused funding streams such as Belfast Investment Fund (BIF), Local Investment Fund (LIF), Social Outcomes Fund (SOF) and Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (NRF), as well as numerous capital programmes that we deliver for central government. Our funding partners include National Lottery Heritage Fund, SEUPB Peace IV, the Executive Office, DfC, DfI via the Blue Green Infrastructure Fund and Living with Water Programme, DAERA, Ulster Garden Villages, Levelling Up Fund (LUF) and others. When appropriate, the Physical Programmes Department is happy to arrange site visits to any projects that have been completed.
- 3.2 Members agreed that all capital projects must go through a three-stage process where decisions on which capital projects progress are taken by the Committee. This provides assurance as to the level of financial control and will allow Members to properly consider the opportunity costs of approving one capital project over another capital project. The Committee is asked to note the following activity on the Capital Programme:

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Project	Overview	Stage movement
IT Programme – F5 Access Policy Manager Project / Web Application Firewall	Procurement and commissioning of the F5 security suite consisting of Web Application Firewall and VPN modules. This protects our web applications and allows remote access for suppliers and some staff.	Move to Stage 3 - Committed
HWRC and CAS Containers	The project involves the replacement of containers (compactors and skips) at HWRCs and Civic Amenity sites in order to maintain service continuity and health and safety standards.	Move to Stage 3 – Committed

Proposed Stage Movement – F5 Access Policy Manager Project/ Web Application Firewall

- 3.3 Under the Council’s IT Programme, this project has been identified as being business critical which will replace existing but end of life devices and services. The project includes two modules of the F5 security suite, the F5 Access Policy Manager (APM) and the Web Application Firewall (WAF). The first module provides a VPN service for suppliers to work on network servers and for Council staff to access the network in the event of an issue with the Global Protect service. The second Web Application Firewall (WAF) module provides protection to the Council’s websites and online forms from attackers attacking the application. This project aims to continue provide remote connections to suppliers and for some applications, protect the Council against internet based cyber attacks and continue to host the digital certificates for the encryption of website traffic.

The Committee is asked to recommend that the F5 Access Policy Manager/ Web Application Firewall project now progresses to Stage 3 – Committed and that it is held at Tier 0 – Scheme at Risk pending further development of the project and a satisfactory tender return. An update will be brought back to the Committee at this stage along with the final budget allocation and confirmation that this is within the affordability limits of the Council. Members are asked to agree that necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate ‘framework’ arrangements) be initiated with contract to be awarded on the

basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.

Proposed stage movement – HWRC and Civic Amenity Sites - Containers (Compactors and Skips)

- 3.4 Members will recall that, in August 2023, this project was moved to *Stage 2 – Uncommitted* on the Capital Programme, with the requirement that an Outline Business Case will be worked up, with further detail to be brought back to Committee. Members are advised that the OBC has been completed and satisfactorily reviewed. The provision of Household Waste Recycling Centres/Civic Amenity sites is a statutory obligation on the Council, contained within article 25 of the Waste and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1997. The network of Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) and Civic Amenity Sites (CAS) is an essential business unit within the Resources & Fleet Service. Residents can deposit a significant range of large bulky items for re-use and/or recycling at the sites. The sites accept around 30,000 tonnes of waste per annum and account for almost 25% of the total tonnage of household recycling captured during the year. The provision of fit for purpose equipment (compactors & skips) will assist in achieving the key objectives, namely; maintaining efficient and effective site operations which meet strategic and statutory targets for landfill diversion and recycling; reduced Health and Safety risk associated with the sites and any potential liability arising from this equipment; maintaining customer service – recycling centre availability and capacity; and avoidance of additional costs in respect of the need to hire the containers.

The Committee is asked to recommend that the HWRC and CAS Containers project now progresses to Stage 3 – Committed and that it is held at Tier 0 – Scheme at Risk pending further development of the project and a satisfactory tender return. An update will be brought back to Committee at this stage along with the final budget allocation and confirmation that this is within the affordability limits of the Council. The Committee is asked to agree that necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate 'framework' arrangements) be initiated with contract to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.

PEACE IV Capital Projects

- 3.4 Members will recall that the Committee has expressed strong support for both Peace IV Capital Projects - Black Mountain Shared Space Project and Shankill Women's Centre - noting that this would constitute a potentially significant investment of up to €12.5m in the area which will build on the funding already secured under the Peace IV Local Action Plan for the Forth Meadow Community Greenway project and that it would also mark a significant further step towards the realisation of the 'Peace Corridor' stretching from Black Mountain to the city centre. On this basis the Council agreed to sign both letters of offer and progress with each project.

Black Mountain Shared Space Project – Phase 1

- 3.6 Members will be aware that as lead partner for the above project, the Council is effectively required to act as guarantor for the project including meeting any potential deficit in Capital Financing, as well as any ongoing revenue deficit. A potential funding deficit of £1,473,994 was reported to SP&R Committee in October 2022. The project timeframe has been extended out to December 2023 by SEUPB however this extension was within existing parameters and does not mitigate against delays caused by Covid 19, nor recent inflation rises. The capital build has always been programmed to complete in March 2024 and this remains the projection, with programming to be delivered afterwards as part of a 'grace period' requested by SEUPB. The Council has proposed this 'grace period' runs up until 28th June 2024 for completion of the physical build and associated monitoring. Officers have continued to explore any and all options possible with SEUPB to safeguard the Peace IV funding beyond the deadline date, including an extension to the claim deadline, a letter of guarantee, escrow and an advance payment bond. All these proposals were rejected by SEUPB in September 2023 due to Programme Rules. Officers will remain in contact with SEUPB to put forward any other potential solutions over the coming months.

Shankill Shared Women's Centre

- 3.7 The Committee is asked to note that the project is proceeding on site and has encountered significant cost increases directly related to inflationary pressures. This has been formally raised with SEUPB with a view to the funder meeting the additional costs. A response is awaited and the Committee will be updated accordingly.

The Committee is asked to note the status of Black Mountain Shared Space Project and Shankill Shared Women's Centre and the challenging issues and risks presented, with a further update to be brought back to Committee in due course.

Externally Funded Projects

- 3.8 The Committee is asked to note that capital project letters of offer and amended letters of offer have now been received for a number of projects where the Council is acting as the delivery agent. Amended letters of offer are commonly received to reflect minor adjustments required following tender returns. Several of these projects are match funded by the Council, either under the various funding streams i.e. LIF/BIF/SOF or through close alignment with ongoing Council initiatives. **The Committee is asked to agree that necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate 'framework' arrangements) be initiated for any Physical Programme projects including externally funded projects as required, with contracts to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.**

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.9 *Financial* – PEACEIV to be met within existing budgets and Council resources

Resources – Officer time to deliver as required

Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment

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

The Committee adopted the recommendations contained within the report and noted, in response to concerns which had been raised by Members around the challenging issues and risks associated with the Black Mountain Shared Space and the Shankill Shared Women's Centre projects highlighted therein, that the Chief Executive would keep the Party Group Leaders apprised of his ongoing discussions with the Special EU Programmes Body and would seek to hold a special meeting of the Committee/Council, should the need arise.

(Alderman McCoubrey and Councillor M. Donnelly declared an interest as soon as reference had been made to the Black Mountain Shared Space project, on the basis that they were on the Board of that organisation and left the meeting for the duration of the discussion.)

Finance, Procurement and Performance

Update on Contracts

The Committee noted that this report had been moved to Restricted Items and dealt with earlier in the meeting.

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 9th October, including the recommendations:

Belfast Stories

- to note the presentation from the Strategic Lead on the Belfast Stories project.

Membership of Shared City Partnership

- to note the update on the membership of the Partnership and agree that a temporary replacement be nominated for The Executive Office's current representative.

Good Relations Programme

- to note the quarterly update on the Good Relations Programme.

PEACE IV

- to note the update on the PEACE IV Programme.

PEACEPLUS

- to approve the PEACEPLUS Plan for submission to the Special EU Programmes Body and delegate authority to Council officers to make minor amendments to the Plan, where necessary, to ensure compliance with the assessment and funding requirements.

Operational Issues

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

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Party Group Leaders' Consultative Forum of 12th October.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 20th October, 2023**

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

The Committee adopted the recommendations in respect of those applications received up to 9th October, as set out below:

NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED	CIVIC HQ RECOMMEND
2023 EVENTS						
Queen University Student Law Society	15 December 2023	QUB Student Law Society 85th Anniversary Celebration- Drinks Reception, Dinner and entertainment. Numbers attending – 175	C & D	No Charge as charity as voluntary group	Yes, Wine Reception as significant anniversary	Approve No Charge Wine Reception <i>£500 given to their chosen caterer for wine on arrival</i>
2024 EVENTS						
OMNI (Organisation of Malayalees in Northern Ireland)	6 January 2024	PONNONAM 2023 - A Cultural dinner and entertainment programme to celebrate New Year. Numbers attending 400	D	No charge as community group	Yes, Soft drinks reception.	Approve No Charge Soft Drink Reception <i>£500 given to their chosen caterer.</i>
Confucius Institute at Ulster University	23 February 2024	Chinese Year celebration – Year of the Dragon – cultural event of speeches, prize giving and a range of musical / dance performances. Numbers attending - 200	B & C	Charge £300 as not charity or voluntary	No hospitality	Approve Charge £300 No hospitality
Lough View Integrated Primary School	19 April 2024	Celebrating 30 Years of Lough View IPS Drinks Reception, Dinner and entertainment. Numbers attending – 200	C & D	No charge as school	Yes, Wine Reception as significant anniversary	Approve No Charge Wine Reception <i>£500 given to their chosen caterer for wine on arrival</i>

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 20th October, 2023**

Electronic & Security Services Limited (ESS)	20 April 2024	ESS 50th Anniversary Celebrations- Drinks Reception, Dinner, and entertainment. Numbers attending – 120	C & D	Charge as £825 as commercial company	Yes, Wine Reception as significant anniversary	Approve Charge £825 Wine Reception <i>£500 given to their chosen caterer for wine on arrival</i>
Queens University	2 July 204	International Conference on Population Geographies Dinner Reception for guests attending their 3-day conference taking place in QUB Numbers attending – 160	A &B	No (Waiver as linked to Visit Belfast)	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality
2025 EVENTS						
Girls' Brigade Northern Ireland	16 May 2025	Queen's Award Presentation Ceremony to girls who've been actively involved in their communities and initiative in completing tasks and developing their educational skills. The Queen's Award is the highest award a girl can attain in Girls' Brigade. Numbers attending – 160	C & D	No charge as charity	Yes, Tea and coffee Reception as significant anniversary	Approve No Charge Tea and Coffee Reception <i>£500 given to their chosen caterer for wine on arrival</i>
The Royal College of Anaesthetists (RCoA)	21 May 2025	RCoA Annual Dinner Dinner and entertainment for guests attending their 3 day congress taking place in ICC Numbers attending - 100	A &B	No (Waiver as linked to Visit Belfast)	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 20th October, 2023**

The Committee approved an additional request for the use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality for an event on 19th November to mark the annual World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims.

**Minutes of the Meeting of the
Disability Working Group**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Disability Working Group of 10th October.

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

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the City Hall/City Hall Grounds Working Group of 11th October.

**Minutes of the Meeting of the
Cost of Living Working Group**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Cost of Living Working Group of 5th October.

Issues Raised in Advance by Members

Illumination of the City Hall

Councillor Bunting, on behalf of Alderman McCullough, proposed that the City Hall be illuminated in blue and white, in solidarity with the nation state of Israel and its people.

The proposal was seconded by Alderman McCoubrey.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Garrett,
Seconded by Councillor Beattie,

That we again endorse and repeat what we have already agreed by illuminating the building white as a strong symbol and call for peace in the Middle East.

Let us go beyond that again by publicly stating (publishing) that Belfast City Council condemns the killing of civilians which has taken place on all sides and calls for a full and immediate ceasefire, with international intervention and leadership brought to bear in securing a lasting peace.

At the request of Councillor Nelson, Councillor Garrett agreed to include within his amendment a call, firstly, for the establishment of a peace process, focusing upon democracy as a means for resolving conflict and underpinned by strong protections, in terms of human rights etc., and, secondly, for the release of all hostages.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 20th October, 2023**

On a vote, fourteen Members voted for the amendment, as revised, and five against and it was declared carried.

The amendment, as revised, was thereupon put to the Committee as the substantive motion and passed.

Toilet Facilities - Cregagh Wanderers Container

Prior to the conclusion of proceedings, the Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services informed the Committee that, in relation to the matter which had been raised by Councillor Maghie under the adoption of the minutes, it had been confirmed that there was no issue around the release of funding for the project.

Chairperson

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People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 10th October, 2023

HYBRID MEETING OF THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Murray (Chairperson);
Councillors Bell, Black, Bower, R. Brooks, Bunting,
Canavan, Cobain, de Faoite, Doherty, M. Donnelly,
R-M Donnelly, Flynn, Kelly, Magee, Maghie,
McAteer, McCusker, Ó Néill and Verner.

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

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 6th and 12th September, 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 4th October.

The Committee was advised that under the heading, Update on Local Government Regional Resilience Function, from the minutes of 12th September, the Chief Executive had confirmed that this function would continue reporting through the People and Communities Committee and not the Climate and City Resilience Committee as its work related to Emergency Planning and work with other agencies which was within the remit of the People and Communities Committee.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations were reported.

Item Withdrawn from Agenda

The Committee noted that agenda item 3 (e) Update on Alleygates Consultation had been withdrawn from the agenda.

Presentation

Causeway Coast Dog Rescue Limited

The Chairperson welcomed to the meeting Ms. M. Dimsdale-Bobby and Ms. T. Cunningham representing the Causeway Coast Dog Rescue Limited.

The representatives commenced by thanking the Committee for the opportunity to present on the work of the charity. Ms. Cunningham advised that the aim of the organisation was to ensure the advancement of animal welfare, focusing on dogs. Formed over 20 years ago, the organisation became a registered charity in 2015. She detailed that the organisation raised funds to provide rehoming services, where possible a suitable home was sourced to provide care to an animal that was either unwanted or had suffered through neglect.

The representative advised that the organisation worked with the local community to promote the understanding of people's responsibilities within legislation to reduce homelessness, whilst aiming to stop animal neglect and abuse. Additional information was provided to local and central government departments to help promote the advancement of animal welfare in Northern Ireland.

The representative provided detail of its work with other charities and agencies and highlighted the ongoing many and varied welfare issues that existed. She reiterated that the organisation's focus was that of animal welfare and increasing the quality of life for dogs which were neglected or abused.

All dogs surrendered to the charity were assessed, checked thoroughly by a vet, licenced and rehomed with an appropriate individual or family. The charity did not believe in destroying a healthy dog. In addition, the charity provided support to individuals who had concerns that they might have witnessed a case of abuse or neglect by signposting them to the correct authorities.

The presentation concluded with the representatives thanking the Committee for the opportunity to present and with them answering several queries from the Members.

The Committee noted the presentation.

Restricted

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

Assessment of Odour Nuisance

The Committee was provided with a comprehensive update in respect of an ongoing odour nuisance investigation. This included detail in respect of the Council's engagement with other agencies concerning odour complaints at the site which was situated adjacent to the Belfast City Council boundary but located within the Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council area.

The Members were advised that complaints had been received regarding odour emanating from the site since 2020. As a result, the Council was involved in extensive ongoing engagement with the Site Manager/Owner, DAERA and Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council Environmental Health.

The Director advised that the Council's Legal Services had confirmed that there was no legal basis for serving an abatement notice at this time, given that officers were of the view that a statutory nuisance did not presently exist. She reported that any consideration given to serving an abatement notice was likely to be unsustainable and subject to legal challenge.

A Member thanked the Director of City Services for the work done to date to try and control the problem.

The Committee noted the update provided.

Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Working Group Update

The Director of City Services provided the Members with an update in respect of the following matters:

- Update on the new Crematorium Development;
- Naming of the new Crematorium Chapels;
- Update on Bereavement Services Operations; and
- Future Burial Land.

Councillor Flynn welcomed the work to date by both the officers and the Members of the Working Group and he proposed that the two Chapels be named Hawthorn and Rowan. This was seconded by Councillor Ó Néill and unanimously agreed by the Committee.

The Committee agreed and adopted the minutes of the Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Working Group and furthermore:

- agreed to name the two chapels in the new City of Belfast Crematorium - Hawthorn and Rowan;
- approved the recommendation from the Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Working Group to increase the size of the Muslim burial ground at Roselawn; and
- approved the recommendation from the Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Working Group to add Troopers Lane to the shortlist of options for potential new burial Land.

**GLL Annual Leisure Services Customer Survey
Feedback and Outcomes**

The Director of Neighbourhood Services drew the Members' attention to the results of the online survey, which had been undertaken between 31st May and 10th July by the in-House GLL Customer Relationship Management Team, as required under Clause 38.3. He reported that the survey had been sent to all contactable Active Members via both email and push notifications. He advised that in total 2,399 had been received, this was up by 131% from 2022.

The need for the leisure transformation programme to commence at the Whiterock and Shankill Leisure Centres was highlighted, with the Members advising that both needed urgent refurbishment.

The Members noted receipt of the 2023 CSS as evidence of compliance with Contract Clause 38.3

**GLL Annual Schedule of Charges Proposal
for 2024/25**

The Director of Neighbourhood Services provided the Committee with an update on the proposed GLL pricing structure for the period 2024-25.

The Director reminded the Members that the proposed CPI/RPI price increases were a contractual entitlement and, as such, the Committee could articulate a view on the proposed price increases but did not have the authority to challenge the pricing review proposal.

A Member highlighted that she felt that the pricing structure for each centre should be reflective of the different standards across the centres, reiterating that some centres urgently required refurbishment whilst others had already undergone extensive programmes, however, the proposed price increase would be applied equally.

The Committee noted the proposed average 6% price increase in the scheduled of charges for 2024/25 and the rationale presented in support of the proposed price revisions.

Off Street Parking update

The Director of City Services reminded the Members that responsibility for Off Street Public Car Parking had transferred to Council from DRD Roads Service on the 1st April 2015. The operating arrangements for the car parks, including tariffs, had been set by the Department (DRD) within the OffStreet Parking Order (NI) 2000 and subsequent amendments. These arrangements had been reviewed taking cognisance of the Belfast Car Parking Strategy and Action Plan.

She explained that the purpose of this report was for the Members to consider and agree the draft Belfast Off Street Parking Order, the proposals set out within the report and the recommendation to proceed to public consultation.

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She asked the Members to consider the proposals and the progression to public consultation. The consultation would be conducted through YourSay, with notification of the consultation advertised in each car park and properties adjacent to those car parks being included notified by letter. She advised that the results of the public consultation would be reported back in due course, together with the final draft Off Street Parking Order for consideration and approval.

During discussion the Members raised a number of queries.

The Director of City Services undertook to liaise with officers from the Regeneration Team to discuss the addition of EV charging points, the implementation of an accreditation scheme and the benchmarking of Council car parks against other public and private car parks in terms of pricing. She also agreed to provide clarity regarding the schedule of rates, confirming that these had remained unchanged from the date of transfer from DRD Roads. She advised that the respective updates would be submitted to the relevant committee or Working Group in due course.

Following a query from a Member regarding the current status of the rolling out of the bike stands in Belfast, it was agreed that an officer would go back to the Member directly to provide an update.

A Member highlighted that she felt that the car parking tariffs in car parks needed to remain affordable otherwise people would revert to street parking which would exasperate the problems that already existing for residents in areas close to the city centre.

The Committee agreed the content of the draft Belfast Off Street Parking Order and the consultation process as outlined.

Capacity and Revenue Grant Aid

The Committee considered a report seeking an increase to the Capacity Building Grant Budget by £47,500 per annum for the financial years 2023-26 to provide a grant payment to TechDesk CIC (Community Interest Company).

The Members were advised that an application to the Capacity Building Grant by TechDesk CIC had been considered ineligible for the 2023-26 funding round and had not progressed to assessment. The eligibility status of the applicant had since been reviewed by Legal Services, and it had been recommended that the company should have progressed to assessment. The application had since been scored and it was now recommended for funding.

There was no current provision to allocate funding to TechDesk CIC from the existing Capacity Grant budget and therefore additional funds were being sought.

Following a query, the Director confirmed that a review of the guidance for this grant would be completed as part of the department's planned review of its large grant programmes in 2024-25.

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The Committee recommended to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that additional monies be made available to the Capacity Grant budget to allow payment of an annual award of £47,500 to TechDesk CIC for the three financial years 2023/2026.

**Potential use of smaller tonnage vehicles
for Waste Collection**

The Director of Resources and Fleet provided the Committee with a detailed update regarding the findings and recommendations of the consultancy report that had been commissioned to investigate the potential benefits of the introduction of smaller refuse collection vehicles to collect household waste from streets that had continued access problems.

She advised that officers were now in receipt of the final draft of the RPS report and drew the Members attention to the findings of the report, along with the preferred option, as detailed below:

- Select the 18 tonnes Dennis Elite as the most suitable vehicle;
- create two new additional collection crews to service the 248 named streets;
- to carry out a 'manual' desktop routing exercise to create routes based on post codes and current collection dates for each street by waste stream;
- add an additional two 18 tonnes Dennis Elite vehicles to the fleet;
- agreed that these vehicles be hired in the first instance for a period of twelve months in order to:
 - establish that the proposed solution was delivering tangible and expected results;
 - allow operations time to assess and review performance and adjust as necessary; and
 - to secure additional capital funding and allow time for the procurement of 2 additional vehicles (lead times of approximately 12 months from date of order) for the BCC Fleet.

The Committee was asked to note that, as Resources and Fleet currently did not have the financial approval to implement the findings and recommendations of the report, a growth proposal had been submitted for the 2024/25 financial year to be considered as part of the annual estimates processes. Should funding be agreed as part of the estimates and rate setting process, Resources and Fleet would look to operationalise the additional crews as soon as possible in the new financial year.

Following a query from a Member, the Committee was advised that a draft list of the named streets to be serviced would be circulated via e-mail to the Members who were welcome to liaise with the Director if they had any queries. In addition, the Director agreed to submit further information in due course on the potential of additional single collection points.

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The Committee noted the findings of the draft RPS report and welcomed the preferred option recommendation for the introduction of additional vehicles and crews and noted that a growth proposal had been submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for the proposal and required funding to be considered as part of the estimate and rate setting process.

Update on Social Supermarkets

The Director of Neighbourhood Services provided the Members with an update in respect of the operation of the Social Supermarket Fund, with the approach having been approved at the September 2023 meeting of Committee and subsequently ratified by the Council.

The Director reminded the Members that an element of this funding was directed towards the development of new projects and that officers had shared information on the process to access this funding via an email to all Members of the Committee on 25th September, in which the details of the requirements that new projects needed to be eligible to apply had been outlined.

The Director advised that organisations that had received an initial allocation had been asked to submit applications by the 28th September 2023. At that stage, the Greater Shankill Partnership had advised that they would not be in a position to coordinate this project and to apply for the allocation of £21,530 due to other work commitments. It had subsequently liaised with the Greater Shankill Community Council, who had delivered the Winter 2022 round of the Council Fuel Hardship scheme, and it was keen to be considered for delivery of this new tranche of money.

In terms of the proposed approach to the 2024/25 scheme. The Director reminded the Committee that it was likely that the Department for Communities (DfC) would make a further allocation to the Council through the Social Supermarket Fund in 2024/25, therefore, officers were currently exploring the options around the future delivery of the scheme, which would include an open call, although he stressed that Members should note that this option would be dependent on available resources for administration.

The Committee approved the reallocation of £21,530 to the Greater Shankill Community Council for delivery of activity in the Shankill area.

Animal Welfare Service – Update

The Director of City Services advised the Committee of a recent decision taken by DAERA to withdraw funding with immediate effect in respect of the Council's provision of Animal Welfare Services.

The Director reported that Councils in Northern Ireland currently enforced the requirements of the Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 for non-farmed animals. Since April 2012, a Northern Ireland wide Animal Welfare Service delivery model had been operating, with a five sub-regional model linking to the Regional Lead Council Fermanagh and Omagh District Council (FODC) and to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and

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Rural Affairs (DAERA). Staff were employed by the sub-regional lead Councils to operate across all regions with provision for 10 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Animal Welfare Officers (AWO), 2 of whom were based in Belfast City Council. There was currently only 7 FTE due to a pause in recruitment until funding issues had been resolved. This was putting significant strain on the 7 officers who were covering the whole of Northern Ireland.

The Director advised that, over the past 10 years, DAERA had funded the Councils' Animal Welfare Service with an allocation of £1.25m in the year 2022-23. The funding was made available to Councils to fulfil the statutory enforcement obligations arising from the Welfare of Animals (Northern Ireland) Act 2011 and FODC as Lead Council for Animal Welfare managed this resource funding. On 23rd August 2023, The Permanent Secretary, DAERA wrote to advise "*that the Department was unable to provide funding to support Councils in the delivery of their statutory responsibilities for non-farmed animal Welfare*".

The Director advised that there was obviously a considerable amount of uncertainty in relation to the operation of the Animal Welfare Service, therefore, it was imperative that Belfast City Council continued to work in collaboration with the other Councils to ensure that to the best of its ability the statutory requirements were met and the Committee was asked to agree to support the existing Council arrangements to ensure that the Animal Welfare Service continued until 31st March 2024. It was noted that, if the Committee agreed, this funding would come from the specified reserve established by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in June 2023 to deal with any potential Central Government Reductions.

The Committee was advised that the Animal Welfare Strategic Project Board, of which the Council was a member, was currently reviewing potential delivery models and associated costs for providing the Animal Welfare function from 1st April 2024 and it hoped to provide SOLACE with an update by December 2023. In addition, SOLACE was considering the local government position and taking legal advice via the Council.

It was estimated that it would cost the Council in the region of £153k annually to operate its own Animal Welfare Service. Officers were preparing a Growth Proposal for the rate setting process for consideration, however, this would be dependent on any formal action taken via SOLACE on the current DAERA position.

A Member noted the necessity for the Animal Welfare Service and expressed his concern at the withdrawal of this essential funding. He also highlighted that this was a worrying situation for staff who were faced with this uncertainty and welcomed the fact that the Council was continuing to support the arrangements whilst the current position adopted by DAERA was being further considered.

The Committee noted the update and agreed to support existing arrangements until 31st March 2024, to be funded from the specified reserve set up by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in June 2023 to deal with any potential Central Government Reductions.

Committee/Strategic Issues

People and Communities Committee Plan 2023/24

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 This report provides a draft People & Communities Committee Plan summarising the Committee’s key priorities for 2023-24.

The Committee is asked to consider further this report which was deferred from the People and Communities Committee meeting of 12 September 2023.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Approve the draft People and Communities Committee Plan priorities for 2023-24.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 The 2023-24 draft P&C Committee Plan has been developed in the context of the Council’s Corporate Plan and the Belfast Agenda and considering the Belfast Agenda Refresh. Consequently, the new Committee Plan contains the commitments within the Corporate Delivery Plan, which fall under the remit of this Committee, plus additional deliverables that have been agreed by the P&C Committee throughout 2022-23 and are relevant to the Standing Orders. The draft Plan sets out the main priorities and programmes of work that the Committee oversees to maximise the Council’s contribution the Belfast Agenda.

3.2 At the SP&R Committee on 18th August 2023 the Corporate Annual Delivery Plan 2023-24, setting out the in-year deliverables against the priorities, was agreed as part of the four-year corporate plan.

3.3 The structure of the delivery plan is themed under the following groupings:

- Our services
- Economic recovery
- Community recovery
- Environmental recovery
- Strategic Planning frameworks, and
- Organisational Foundations.

3.4 A series of priorities fall under each theme, each with a number of committed deliverables for 2023-24.

3.5 Members will recall that the People and Communities Committee is responsible for the development and implementation of strategies, policies, programmes and projects aimed at improving life at a local level in the context of the outcomes agreed in the community and corporate plans and other corporate strategy. This includes:

- Developing and delivering programmes, events and activities to promote health, safety and well-being at a local level**
- Administering and enforcing the Council's powers and duties under the Public Health Acts and all environmental health and building related legislation and regulations**
- Securing and providing adequate provision for the recycling, treatment and disposal of commercial and domestic waste including bulky waste and the collection and disposal of abandoned motor vehicles.**
- Exercising the Council's powers for improving local environmental quality in relation to housing legislation, managing controlled waste, emergency planning and community safety and anti-social behaviour, clean neighbourhoods and other environmental or regulatory issues not falling within the remit of any other Committee**
- Managing, maintaining and maximising the benefit of the Council's parks, pitches, playgrounds and other public spaces as well as community centres and other indoor facilities**
- Developing and implementing activities to ensure the delivery of corporate strategies and initiatives in respect of the promotion of health and physical activity, environmental protection, community safety and other such areas under the domain of this Committee**
- Overseeing the delivery of the Council's frontline services and associated community assets including: Environmental Services; Cleansing; Waste Management; Parks and Cemeteries service, Neighbourhood and Development Services; Community Services, Community Safety and Emergency Planning**

3.6 Summary of Committee Plan Priorities

The draft Committee Plan priorities have been summarised into a 'plan on page' (see Appendix 1) to identify key areas of focus for the Committee in 2023-24. The plan locates priorities within the

framework of the relevant Belfast Agenda themes (Our Services; Economic Recovery; Community Recovery; Environmental Recovery; Strategic Planning Frameworks; and Organisational Foundations) and the CNS Departmental key priority areas (Open Spaces & Streetscene; Community Provision; City Protection and Bereavement; and Resources & Fleet). The plan identifies the following key areas of focus:

- Neighbourhood working & regeneration
- Improve our open spaces
- Implementation of Biodiversity duty
- Improve our community provision
- Work in partnership to address health priorities
- Enhance the delivery of council's sport & leisure provision
- Supporting Children & Young People
- Good relations & Community Safety
- Enhance the management & utilisation of CNS assets
- Improve our City Protection services
- Improve urban air quality
- Port Health improvements
- Improve and extend recycling opportunities
- Improve our Resources & Fleet service

3.7 It is likely many of these areas of focus will take several years to deliver. The draft plan includes and outlines the key deliverables for 2023-24 that we are working towards achieving.

3.8 It is proposed that Committee receive a 6 monthly progress update regarding the priorities. This will be in addition to usual reports that will be brought to Committee regarding individual priorities & deliverables.

3.9 The departmental Business Plan on which the committee plan is based reflects that the department is continuing to focus on the delivery of business-as-usual services while progressing the transformation and improvement agenda.

3.10 Financial & Resource Implications

The Committee Plan and annual programme of work aligns with the budget agreed by Strategic Policy & Resources Committee on 20 January 2023, for 2023-24 for the People and Communities Committee, of £98.901m.

3.11 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

There are no implications directly relating to this report however individual strategies, programmes and actions will be subject to

the council's equality, good relations and rural needs requirements.”

The Committee approved the draft People and Communities Committee Plan priorities for 2023-24.

Physical Activity and Sports Development Strategy update

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 the development of a Belfast City Council Sports Development and Physical Activity Strategy (The Strategy) and the current timeline for the completion of the Strategy .

1.2 To provide a copy of the draft strategy which will be used for the public consultation.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to note:

- (i) The updated timeline for development of the Belfast Physical Activity and Sports Development Strategy
- (ii) The draft Physical Activity and Sports Development Strategy summary document attached
- (iii) The publication of the draft Physical Activity and Sports Development Strategy for public consultation over a period of 12 weeks from November 2023 - January 2024.

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

3.1 It was agreed by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 5th January 2018 that a Belfast City Council Sports Development Strategy and associated work plan would be developed. This Strategy was to provide a framework for future decision making on providing funding to National Governing Bodies of Sport delivering programmes in Belfast in support of existing funding streams and work programmes which enhance sporting opportunities for Belfast's sporting organisations and individuals.

3.2 The People and Communities Committee of 5th June 2018 agreed a proposed Terms of Reference and proposed timeline. Since that date the Departmental Change Programme has prompted

consideration of wider opportunities to clarify and align the links between sports development and Council's strategic funding and programming decisions in the areas of asset development, health improvement and community development.

3.3 At the People and Communities meeting of 10 November 2020 it was agreed that the Terms of Reference be extended to include the following;

- In line with the Belfast Agenda the outcomes are extended to 2035
- Physical activity programming is considered as part of the pathway into organised sport
- Considered and aligned with our Leisure Transformation Programme.
- Identification of alternative sources of financing/partner opportunities.
- Facility/asset utilisation and management is maximised through collaborative partnership approaches
- Facility/asset planning and development is considered taking account of local, citywide and regional need.
- Sport's contribution to improvement of whole health is considered in the context of partnership working through the work of the Belfast Community Planning Partnership and associated Boards – particularly the Living Here Board
- Sport's contribution to community development is considered in the context of City & Neighbourhood's Departmental approach to area working and neighbourhood regeneration
- The strategy 'working title' to be 'Belfast Physical Activity and Sports Development Strategy'

Due to Covid the development of this strategy was delayed.

3.4 In July 2022 following a quotation process Strategic Leisure were appointed to support council in the production of the Strategy.

3.5 Since the appointment of Strategic Leisure Council officers have been working directly with them. On the 27th September 2022 initial introduction meetings involving both Council Officers and a number of Key Delivery Partners took place. More than 50 individuals and groups have been listened to.

3.6 A total of 370 responses were also received via 'Your Say Belfast'.

3.7 Two workshops for elected members have also taken place.

3.8 Proposed Draft Timeline Subject to Committee approval

Background review of documentation policies and strategies	September 2022-Completed
Establish Board and structures for developing strategy	September 2022-October 2022 Completed
Initial face to face consultation with key stakeholders and schools	September 2022-October 2022 Completed
Review and Mapping	September 2022-October 2022 Completed
Focus groups established and face to face meetings to take place	October 2022 - December 2022 Completed
Wider public consultation to take place online using 'Your Say Belfast'	October 2022-December 2022 Completed
Analysis of key issues identified with a focus on internal consultation and external feedback	November 2022-January 2023 Completed
Interim Draft Report produced and presented to elected members for discussion	March 2023 Completed
Review Draft Strategy and produce draft report	September 2023 Completed
Draft Strategy to be released for public consultation	November 2023- January 2024

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Analyse feedback from consultation and amend/update strategy	February 2024- April 2024
Final Strategy to be presented to elected members	April 2024- June 2024
Strategy Launched	June 2024- July 2024

3.8 Financial Implications

Cost associated with the development of the new strategy and engagement of external partners will be met within existing departmental resources. Members are advised that no capital funding is currently in place and limited revenue funding is available to support a strategy action plan. This will need to be costed and resourced as the strategy is developed and needs become clearly identified.

3.9 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

The draft strategy will be equality screened in line with the Council's agreed process."

The Committee noted the updated timeline for development of the Belfast Physical Activity and Sports Development Strategy and the draft Physical Activity and Sports Development Strategy summary document and agreed its publication for public consultation over a period of 12 weeks from November 2023 - January 2024.

Youth Council Update

The Members were reminded that, at a previous meeting of the Committee, further information had been sought in relation to the operation of the Belfast City Youth Council (BCYC) and the recruitment exercise.

Following the appointment of the new Young People's Coordinator, Mr. S. Mulholland, in November 2022, the Terms of Reference of BCYC had been studied further. The Members were reminded that the Young People's Coordinator was the only dedicated officer to the BCYC.

The Director advised that discussions had taken place with the young people, officers and sessional contracted youth workers who helped with the work of the BCYC. He reported that these discussions had identified challenges in operating the Youth Council with its current membership numbers. It was therefore proposed to reduce the membership from the current quota of 40 to 30 members, as it was felt that this would help to improve the functioning of the BCYC. If accepted, this change would be reflected in a Revised Terms of Reference. The membership would continue to be drawn proportionately from each DEA (3 members from

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each DEA, rather than 4) and the membership of the Forum would seek to have a balance in terms of the background of the members that was reflective of the Make-up of the city.

The Members were advised that The Young People’s Coordinator was currently working with the Council’s Marketing and Corporate Communications team to finalise the marketing and communications plan that would underpin the recruitment and selection process. He had also been engaging with a wide range of youth organisations in advance of the recruitment phase.

The Director provided an overview of the rationale for this change and drew the Members’ attention to the proposed timeline for the recruitment exercise, as detailed below:

Month	Actions		
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial engagement and contact with a wide range of organisations to raise awareness of the BCYC and promote the recruitment and selection process. Primarily face to face meetings within neighbourhoods and with city-wide organisations. Direct engagement list includes the following organisations: <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Youth Work Alliance – Voluntary Sector Youth Providers – Street Beat – Community Restorative Justice – Shankill Alternatives – Common Youth – Transgender NI – ACT Initiative – Rainbow project </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – EA Youth Service – R City – NIYF – NICCY – Extern – Volunteer NOW – Cara Friend – Belfast Met – VOYPIC – Disability Action - Fóram nan Óg </td> </tr> </table> • Prepare content for all media and promotional materials. • Design website and social media • Set-up online application • Meet with Council’s Youth Champions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Youth Work Alliance – Voluntary Sector Youth Providers – Street Beat – Community Restorative Justice – Shankill Alternatives – Common Youth – Transgender NI – ACT Initiative – Rainbow project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – EA Youth Service – R City – NIYF – NICCY – Extern – Volunteer NOW – Cara Friend – Belfast Met – VOYPIC – Disability Action - Fóram nan Óg
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Youth Work Alliance – Voluntary Sector Youth Providers – Street Beat – Community Restorative Justice – Shankill Alternatives – Common Youth – Transgender NI – ACT Initiative – Rainbow project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – EA Youth Service – R City – NIYF – NICCY – Extern – Volunteer NOW – Cara Friend – Belfast Met – VOYPIC – Disability Action - Fóram nan Óg 		

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November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicity campaign and promotional events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Launch the Recruitment process – 2nd November. ○ Dedicated Webpage designed and promoted. ○ Social Media ○ Press releases. ○ Eshots ○ Advertising • Deliver 6 Area-based Roadshows between 6th to 24th November. • Deliver 3 Online information sessions between 6th -24th November. • Ongoing face to face contacts with organisations. • Online application process to open 2nd November. Provision for hardcopy applications to be made available at the engagement meetings and Roadshows if requested. • Application process to close - 30th November
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of applications - 1st - 5th December. • Interview Process – 6th - 20th December. • Belfast City Youth Council members selected and notified by 29th December.
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee Report – Update on outcome of Recruitment • Welcome event organised with the new BCYC members, parents, Lord Mayor/Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillors, and Officers – 10th January 2024

A Member raised a number of queries regarding the recruitment and retention of the previous cohort of members and the officer agreed to discuss these further with her directly.

The Committee also discussed the possible inclusion of young people with learning difficulties and the officer agreed to liaise with the Young People’s Coordinator to consider this suggestion from a safeguarding perspective.

The Committee agreed:

- to amend the membership numbers of the Belfast City Youth Council (BCYC) from 40 to 30 and noted the proposed recruitment exercise and timeline for the recruitment of the new members; and
- that, in light of the timeline, the joint BCC and BCYC meeting scheduled for 18th December be postponed until the recruitment exercise had been completed.

Reference Group on Older People

The Director of Neighbourhood Services advised that the recent meeting of the Reference Group on Older People had been a joint meeting with the Greater Belfast Seniors Forum (G6), held at the City Hall on 19th September.

At this meeting an update had been provided on the following areas of work:

- Smartpass 60+ Consultation;
- G6 - Action Plan;
- Age Friendly Belfast Plan; and
- Positive Ageing Month – more information available [here](#)

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes from the Reference Group on Older People held on 19th September 2023.

BCC Draft Consultation Response on the draft regulations for Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR packaging scheme)

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 To report to Committee on the draft Belfast City Council response to the Consultation on the draft Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging and Packaging Waste) Regulations [2024].

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 To agree the final Belfast City Council response to the Consultation on the draft Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging and Packaging Waste) Regulations [2024] as attached in Appendix 1

Note that the consultation closed on 9th October 2023, and that officers have submitted a draft response to DEFRA, noting that a final decision by members is required and DEFRA will be advised of the final decision.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Members may recall from the Committee meeting on 12th September 2023, that the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) recently launched a public consultation on draft regulations for Producer Responsibility Obligations.

The link to the consultation is as follows:
<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/extended-producerresponsibility-team/consultation-on-the-draft-producer-responsibility/>

- 3.2 This consultation seeks views on how well the proposed 2024 Regulations reflect the Government Response to the proposals on the introduction of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging across the UK (generated by 2019 consultation on reforming the UK Packaging Producer Responsibility System and the 2021 Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging).
- 3.3 The Government Response was published in March 2022 can be found here:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1063588/epr-final-impact-assessment.pdf
- 3.4 Since the publication of the Government Response, the UK Government and the Devolved Administrations have been working closely to develop the draft Regulations which implement these reforms. The main objective has been to ensure that these reforms deliver sustained change.
- 3.5 Having reflected on industry feedback, the UK Government and the Devolved Administrations decided to defer EPR for packaging payments from October 2024 to October 2025. It is envisaged that a 12-month deferral to packaging payments will give:
- Industry additional time to prepare for the new requirements, which may include reviewing and improving current packaging use.
 - Industry and local authorities more opportunity to be involved in the design of the scheme.
 - Local authorities and waste management companies more time to adjust current services and to introduce new efficient and effective services for EPR.
- 3.6 This consultation on the 2024 regulations will apply UK wide. They will revoke and replace the 2023 Regulations as well as Producer Responsibility Obligations Regulations 2007.
- 3.7 The draft Regulations include provisions to:
- Enable the appointment of a Scheme Administrator.
 - Allow a Scheme Administrator to raise fees from obligated producers to cover local authority costs for the management of household and binned packaging waste, the costs of public information campaigns, and its operational costs.

- Set recycling targets on producers covering all types of packaging waste (i.e., primary, shipment, secondary, tertiary; household and non-household). • Require certain types of packaging to be labelled to indicate recyclability.
- Introduce a mandatory takeback and recycling requirement for fibre-based composite cups.
- Require all reprocessors and exporters of packaging waste to register with a regulator and to report data, and, for those that choose to, to become accredited and issue recycling evidence.
- Enable regulators to effectively monitor compliance and enforce the draft Regulations.

3.8 Belfast City Council's draft response is attached as Appendix 1. The consultation is technical in its nature and officers have taken on board views from other expert bodies, in particular the Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee (UK) (LARAC) and arc21. Officers are largely in agreement with arc21's response to the Consultation document. Where we have additional commentary or queries, this is incorporated into each individual response. Some questions (e.g. 19 and 21) are mainly focused on Producers and in these instances, industry is in a better position to respond.

3.9 As a local authority collector of household waste, the main issues expressed in our responses are:

- clarity on the definition of 'efficient and effective services' and how local authorities will be assessed on this in relation to allocation of funding.
- How circumstances such as geography will be considered (in the above assessments) and what criteria will be applied. Belfast is a city with a demographic with few comparators in its geographic location.
- The timing of the process and in particular, its interface with other Producer Responsibility Obligations such as the Deposit Return Scheme.
- The continued focus on weight-based targets and application of the Waste Hierarchy, rather than considering a new modelling approach, incorporating carbon measurements.
- The changing nature of packaging waste and how this could be affected by industry's response to the Obligations, as well as the future impact this might have on local authorities.

3.10 Following the Consultation period, DEFRA will review the responses received and make changes to the draft Regulations as appropriate. The draft Regulations will be made publicly available when they are notified to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and

the European Union (EU) in respect of Northern Ireland to comply with international obligations. During the notification period, Government intends to publish a high-level summary of the responses.

3.11 Financial and Resource Implications

None – in relation to responding to the consultation.

3.12 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

None – in relation to responding to the consultation.”

The Committee agreed the final Belfast City Council response to the Consultation on the draft Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging and Packaging Waste) Regulations [2024] available [here](#) and noted that a draft response had been submitted to DEFRA by the 9th October 2023 deadline, subject to Council ratification on 1st November.

DfC Rent Controls

The Committee was referred to an update report on the DfC response which had been presented to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee at its September meeting regarding rent control measures.

The Members were reminded that this matter had been discussed at the People and Communities meeting in January 2023, where it had been agreed that the Council would write to the Permanent Secretary in the Department for Communities in relation to the Department for Communities Private Tenancies Act (NI) 2022 – update on Powers for Council commencing April 2023. The Committee was asked to note that subsequently a report had been submitted to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee and the Members of the People and Communities Committee were being asked to note the response and this reporting line.

The Committee noted the response from the Department for Communities and the update report presented to City Growth and Regeneration Committee.

Invite to 2023 WHO European Healthy Cities Network Annual Business Meeting 2023

The Director of Neighbourhood Services advised that Belfast Healthy Cities had contacted the Council on 4th October seeking to extend an invitation for the Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson of the People and Communities Committee (or their nominee) to attend the 2023 WHO Healthy Cities Annual Business Meeting and Technical Conference.

He reported that this year marked the 35th anniversary of the movement. The Conference was being held from 21st to 23rd November in the historic city of Utrecht, with the theme “Health and well-being for all: celebrating 35 years of the Healthy Cities Movement”.

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Only one political representative from Belfast was asked to attend, three BHC staff and a BHC Board Member would also be in attendance. The cost of attendance per person was £900/£1,100, this included return flights to Utrecht, 4 nights' accommodation and subsistence.

The Committee was advised that the cost would have to be taken from Council Budgets as it was not allowed for within the existing departmental budgets.

The Committee agreed that the Chairperson would represent the Council at the WHO European Healthy Cities Network Annual Business Meeting and Technical Conference scheduled to be held from 21st – 23rd November 2023 in Utrecht, Netherlands at an approximate cost of £900.00/£1,100.00, with the cost being sourced from Council budgets.

Physical Programme and Asset Management

Páirc an Lonnáin

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 To provide a report as requested by Councillor Black at Council on 4 September 2023 in relation to the operation of the Páirc an Lonnáin and the reinstatement of the temporary facility management agreement that had previously been in place.**
- 1.2 To agree an approach to local management and programming of the facility.**

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Council enters into a five-year Agreement with Falls Residents Association to enable local operation of the site, to include keyholding, litter picking and community programming which will maximise the opportunities from the capital investment and minimise the negative impact which anti-social behaviour had on the area prior to the site development.**
- 2.2 That an annual programming budget of £15,000 is allocated for all new parks.**
- 2.3 Where Council approves management arrangements with a local organisation, this budget is made available to the Agreement holder, subject to officer approval of a planned programme and subsequent reporting.**
- 2.4 If People & Communities Committee are in agreement with the suggested approach of providing £15k pa funding for all new parks, then this matter should be referred to Strategic**

Policy & Resources Committee for consideration as part of the estimates process.

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

- 3.1** People and Communities Committee of 6 November 2018, within a report on asset acquisition, approved the establishment of a bespoke management arrangement at the Building Successful Communities regeneration project at Páirc an Lonnáin.
- 3.2** Officers worked with the local community organisation and developed a key holding agreement which supported access and activity at the site outside normal park opening hours. The group have been providing key holding for the site and continue to deliver a diverse range of programmes.
- 3.3** Whilst the Agreement holder is undertaking duties previously undertaken by Open Spaces and Street Scene operatives, the key holding Agreement does not include an annual amount which Council would provide to the Agreement holder. Following opening of the regenerated park, Council provided financial support of £15,000 for the initial year of operation for evidenced activity programming costs. Council provided further financial support of approximately £2,000 through Parks Outreach budgets for Halloween and Christmas activity in 2022. No further payments have been made to the group.
- 3.4** The work of this group at the site is saving Council revenue budget in terms of litter collection and maintenance, whilst their work in promoting positive animation at the site also safeguards against ASB behaviour and damage/repair costs which are high at nearby sites such as Dunville and Falls Parks. The group is currently receiving no funding from council and a revised Agreement would remedy this situation and ensure local supervision and community operation of the site.
- 3.5** Officers have recognised the need for significant growth in budgets to support operational and maintenance activity at all new parks. It is also important that specific budgets are in place to animate new spaces to ensure achievement of planned outcomes from capital investment.
- 3.6** Existing budgets within the Parks Events and Outreach team are stretched to support planned programming and development activity at current sites. Animation of new assets requires intensive delivery of programmes to kick start local activity which in some locations will move towards long term self-sufficient

programming. Currently there are seven new parks assets, recently operating or due to come into operation, which do not have specific animation budgets for early development of local community programming.

3.7 Financial & Human Resource Implications

This report will commit an amount of £15,000 per annum to support a revised Agreement at this site, this amount is not currently included in any revenue budgets. Consideration should be given to adopting this programming budget at all new parks.

3.8 Asset and Other Implications

This approach at Páirc an Lonnáin will ensure that the local community manage key holding of a Council asset and develop appropriate programming at the site for local community benefit. The availability of a programme budget at all new parks will help to ensure that positive animation is in place from the outset of the asset's life.

3.9 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

There are no known implications.”

The Committee adopted the recommendation at paragraph 2.0 of the report.

Operational Issues

Responsible Dog Ownership

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 To provide members of the People and Communities Committee with an update on the issues raised at the Council Meeting on Monday 4 September 2023 regarding the Responsible Dog Ownership – Update Report (dated 8 August 2023). The Council agreed that the minute be taken back to the Committee for further consideration, and to allow further information on the issue to be provided.

1.2 Members are reminded that at the Committee of 11th September 2023 the following decision was agreed:

- agreed to defer consideration of the minute to the October meeting, to enable the Director to prepare a report on the available options regarding fines;

- agreed to submit a report to a future meeting considering the Council undertaking a feasibility study on providing street bins in areas where fouling had been a persistent problem, including consideration of the erection of lamppost bins in certain hotspots areas; and
- requested an update on FIDO machines.

1.3 In addition to the noted actions, this report provides more detail about signage and Dog Enclosures in Parks.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the updates on the issues raised at Council on 4 September 2023 in relation to fines and signage;
- Note the update on New FIDO machines and
- note that a further report will be brought back on the other items in relation to a feasibility study on street bins;
- Update on dog enclosures in Clement Wilson Park, Falls Park and Orangefield Park will be provided at the next round of Area Working Groups.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 At the Council meeting on 4 September 2023 officers were asked if it would be possible to have an incremental increase for the Fixed Penalty Notice fines for repeat offenders. Officers have consulted with Legal Services and there is no provision within the legislation to allow for incremental increases to fines.

3.2 There is provision within the legislation to pursue a case in court, rather than giving the alleged offender the opportunity to accept and pay a Fixed Penalty Notice fine. The maximum fine in court is £1000. Officers will always have regard to the option of prosecuting any repeat offender identified as part of the graduated approach to enforcement.

Signage

3.3 There is a substantial number of signs for dog fouling throughout the City and they are concentrated in areas that have been identified as hotspots. Most signs also contain information about the Fixed Penalty Notice fine for other offences including littering.

3.4 For Members' information, if a change to the fine for the dog fouling Fixed Penalty Notice is introduced, Legal Services has confirmed there is no legislative requirement to amend all the signs immediately. A rolling programme would be sufficient and

would not impact on our ability to take formal action should an individual fail to pay the fine.

- 3.5 The City Services team are considering best way to review signage and consider a budget and program of work for this.
- 3.6 Whilst some existing signs could be replaced within the existing Enforcement and Dog Warden Service budget on a rolling program, we recognize that there is a need to explore options to future proof any new signs and consider the best messaging. They may not refer to the level of the fine or as in other district council areas, they could refer to the maximum court fine of £1000. Appendix 1 contains details of our current references to an £80 fine.

Provision of Street Bins

- 3.7 Officers are currently completing work on a new tender for the provision of street bins and this will be in place from the 1st January 2024. In the interim officers in City Neighbourhood Services are pulling together information from our Quality monitoring team along with information from the customer hub. A future report will be brought to committee that identifies dog fouling hot spot areas. This report will also explore the feasibility/suitability of street bins in these areas and will provide options with regard to the type of bins and information on the costs of providing and emptying any new bins. Members are also asked to note that a quotation is in place that will allow the department to replace some street bins across this city between now and the date when the new tender becomes active.

Dog Enclosures

- 3.8 At August committee members received an update on pilot Dog Enclosures in particular a previous decision by committee in 2019 to trial dog enclosures in Clement Wilson Park, Falls Park and Orangefield Park. Officers will update members on this further at the next round of Area Working groups.

FIDO Machines

- 3.9 CNS have ordered 4 new replacement FIDO machines and expects to take delivery of them in New Year. Each area manager will use information on dog fouling hot spots to inform the work programme for each vehicle.

Finance and Resource Implications

3.10 Costs to update / replace with newly designed signage will be factored into estimates process.

The cost of purchasing the new FIDO machines is included within current budget estimates.

There is currently no provision within existing estimates for the provision of dog enclosures in the three parks listed above.

The feasibility report on the provision of street bins will include the costs associated with the purchase, installation and emptying of the bins. This information will be presented to Committee at a later date.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

3.11 None.”

The Director of City Services provided the Members with a comprehensive update on the contents of the report.

A Member welcomed the update in respect of the Fido machines and stated that she would be keen to see them operational in the south of the city.

A further Member suggested it would be useful if the Members could link in with the Dog Wardens when they were on patrol to try and highlight the work that was ongoing in specific areas.

Following a query, the Director of Neighbourhood Services provided an update on the tender for the street bins.

The Director of City Services reminded the Members that the Committee also needed to consider the minute of the meeting of 8th August which had been referred back to the Committee by the Council at its meeting on 4th September. They were reminded that the extract of this minute had been tabled at the People and Communities Committee at its meeting on 12th September and that it had been agreed that the minute from the 8th August Committee be deferred to enable officers to prepare a report on the various options available regarding fixed penalty fines.

The Committee was subsequently asked to reconsider the following decision, as taken at the 8th August meeting:

- *to adopt Option 2 in respect of fixed penalty limits for dog fouling and dog fouling offences - to increase the fine to a maximum of £200, with a reduction of £100 if paid within 10 days as an incentive to pay the fixed penalty promptly;*
- *to not to apply any changes to littering offences at this time and noted that an update report would be submitted to committee in due course.*

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The 4 options, as tabled at the 8th August Committee were again presented to the Members for further consideration:

- Option 1 – no change;
- Option 2 – increase to a maximum of £200 with a reduction if paid within 10 days. Suggested reduction to £100 as an incentive to pay the fixed penalty promptly and avoid court action;
- Option 3 – increase but not to maximum with reduction if paid within 10 days. Could be anything from £90 - £190, with any level of reduction; and
- Option 4 – Consider applying any changes made to the fixed penalty limits for dog fouling offences to littering offences. The Council previously agreed to set the level of fixed penalty fine for littering at £80, reduced to £60 if paid within 10 days. There would be no additional signage costs as most signs include information about dog fouling and littering.

Following discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Flynn,
Seconded by Councillor de Faoite,

That the Committee agrees to adopt Option 2 and Option 4 in respect of fixed penalty limits for dog fouling and dog fouling offences, to increase the fine to a maximum of £200, with a reduction of £100 if paid within 10 days as an incentive to pay the fixed penalty promptly and to also apply any changes made to the fixed penalty limits for dog fouling offences to littering offences.

On a vote, 7 Members voted for the proposal and 13 against and it was declared lost.

Further Proposal

Moved by Councillor Flynn,
Seconded by Councillor de Faoite,

That the Committee agrees to adopt option 2.

AMENDMENT

Moved by Councillor M. Donnelly,
Seconded by Councillor R. Brooks,

That the Committee agrees to adopt option 1.

On a vote, 13 Members voted for the amendment and 7 against and it was declared carried.

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Accordingly, the amendment in the name of Councillor M. Donnelly was put to the Committee as the substantive motion and agreed.

The Committee:

- noted the update on the issues raised at Council on 4th September 2023 in relation to fines and signage and agreed to adopt Option 1 in respect of fixed penalty limits for dog fouling and dog fouling offences – to not increase the fines;
- noted the update on New FIDO machines;
- noted that a further report would be submitted in due course in relation to a feasibility study on street bins, the use of stencilling at schools (to include a list of schools) and the provision of a list of hot spot areas for dog fouling;
- noted that an update on dog enclosures in Clement Wilson Park, Falls Park and Orangefield Park would be provided at the next round of Area Working Groups Meetings; and
- noted that officers would liaise directly with a Member regarding a possible dog enclosure at Ormeau Park.

Proposal for Dual Language Street Signs

The Committee agreed to the erection of a second street nameplate in Irish at Cavanmore Gardens, Wolfhill Gardens, Wolfhill Link, Millview Court, Westrock Crescent Gransha Way and The Manor.

**Dual Language Street Sign Applications for
Cardigan Drive and Dunblane Avenue**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 To consider if a street survey of occupiers will be carried out for Cardigan Drive and Dunblane Avenue relating to the erection of dual language street signs where an objection has been received from an Elected Member representing the relevant District Electoral Area.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 Members are asked to consider the report and the objections raised in relation to applications for dual language street signs received for Cardigan Drive and Dunblane Avenue and either:

a) Agree that a survey of occupiers be carried out on the streets identified;

Or

b) Agree that no survey will be carried out on the grounds of the potential adverse impacts identified by the objections and close these applications

3.0 Main Report

Key Issues

- 3.1** The power for the Council to consider applications to erect a second street nameplate in a language other than English is contained in Article 11 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (NI) Order 1995.
- 3.2** The procedures developed under the revised Dual Language Street Sign Policy involves a notification of applications to Elected Members. The purpose of this notification is to allow members to identify those applications in their DEA or the city centre in respect of which it may be appropriate for the Council to exercise its residual discretion not to apply the Policy due to the local context.
- 3.3** In this regard objections have been received for the following applications: -

<u>Street</u>	<u>DEA</u>	<u>Member</u>
Dunblane Avenue	Oldpark	Cllr Jordan Doran
Cardigan Drive	Oldpark	Cllr Jordan Doran

- 3.4** Cllr Doran has provided the following statements in relation to these objections: -
- ‘Dunblane Avenue is a mixed and diverse community, and I have strong concerns that the proposal to add an Irish street name to Dunblane Avenue would have a strongly negative impact on community relations within the area’.
 - ‘Cardigan Drive has a mixed and diverse community in and around it, and I have reservations that the proposal to add an Irish street name to Cardigan Drive would have a negative impact on community relations within and surrounding the area’.
- 3.5** Members are also reminded that each application is subject to an initial assessment by officers for any potential adverse impacts on equality, good relations and rural needs. This assessment is carried out when the application is being processed and where any adverse impacts are identified that information will be brought to Committee.’

- 3.6 The initial assessments were carried out by officers for Dunblane Avenue and Cardigan Drive and no potential adverse impacts were identified through this process.
- 3.7 These applications are being brought to Committee to determine if a survey of residents of these streets will take place, considering this information and the objections received from Councillor Doran.

Financial & Resource Implications

- 3.8 If it is decided to carry out the survey, the resulting tasks are included within the normal resources for the process.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.9 Each application for a dual language street sign is subject to an initial assessment for any potential adverse impacts on equality, good relations and rural needs. No potential adverse impacts have been identified through this process.
- 3.10 Cllr Doran has raised potential for adverse impacts on good relations through an objection received during the Elected Member notification procedure.”

Following discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Ó Néill,
Seconded by Councillor R. M. Donnelly,

That the Committee agrees that a survey of occupiers be carried out on the streets at Cardigan Drive and Dunblane Avenue.

On a vote, 15 Members voted for the proposal and 5 against and it was declared carried.

**Dual Language Street Sign Application for
Wynchurch Avenue**

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 To consider the results of the resurvey of residents in Wynchurch Avenue relating to an application for the erection of dual language streets signs in Irish. Members are reminded that the decision to resurvey the occupiers of this street was approved at a Committee meeting on 13th June 2023 and subsequently ratified by full Council on 3rd July 2023.

2.0 **Recommendation**

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- consider the contents of this report and determine if a second street nameplate in Irish is to be erected at Wynchurch Avenue.

3.0 **Main Report**

Key Issues

3.1 The Council may erect a second street nameplate in a language other than English pursuant to Article 11 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (NI) Order 1995.

3.2 Members are asked to consider the following application to erect a second street nameplate showing the name of the street expressed in a language other than English. The second language is Irish.

3.3

<u>English Name</u>	<u>Non- English Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Persons surveyed</u>
Wynchurch Avenue, BT6 OJP	Ascaill Wynchurch	Off Rosetta Road, BT6	113

3.4 The translation was authenticated by Queens University, the approved translator for Belfast City Council.

3.5 At the meeting of the Council's People and Communities Committee on 13th June, the Elected Members considered the application from an occupier of Wynchurch Avenue to erect a street nameplate in Irish, in addition to the English name. The original survey of occupiers for this application took place between 9th March 2023 and 10th April 2023 and obtained the following results:

3.6 **Original Survey – 113 Occupiers Surveyed**

- 20 occupiers (17.70%) were in favour of the erection of a second street name plate.
- 30 occupiers (26.55%) were not in favour of the erection of a second street name plate.

- 4 occupiers (3.54%) had no preference either way.
 - 59 occupiers (52.21%) did not respond to the survey.
- 3.7 Exercising the residual discretion afforded to it, the Committee decided that a resurvey of the occupiers of the street should be carried out and this decision was ratified by full Council on 3rd July 2023.
- 3.8 A resurvey of Wynchurch Avenue took place between 8th August 2023 and 4th September 2023 and the outcome is reported below.
- 3.9 In accordance with the Council's policy for the erection of dual language street signs, surveys of all persons appearing on the electoral register plus owners or tenants in actual possession of commercial premises, on Wynchurch Avenue were carried out and the following responses were received.
- 3.10 **Re-survey – 113 Occupiers Surveyed**
- 17 occupiers (15.04%) were in favour of the erection of a second street name plate.
 - 32 occupiers (28.32%) were not in favour of the erection of a second street name plate.
 - 2 occupiers (1.77%) had no preference either way.
 - 62 occupiers (54.87%) did not respond to the survey.
- 3.11 One survey response which was not in favour of the erection of the dual language street sign was received after the survey closed on 4th September. This is not included in the figures above; however, it is a matter for members to determine whether they should take this representation into account and the weight to be attached to it.

Assessment against policy

- 3.12 The Council's policy on the erection of a second street nameplate requires that at least fifteen percent (15%) of the occupiers surveyed must be in favour of the proposal to erect a second street sign in a language other than English, to progress to Committee for consideration.
- 3.13 The re-survey for Wynchurch Avenue demonstrates compliance with the threshold contained within the Policy. However, the Committee is reminded that the Council retain a residual discretion under the Policy to decide to erect or not to erect a street sign in a language other than English in certain circumstances. This will be done on a case-by- case basis.

- 3.14 The Policy states that it may be appropriate to depart from the procedures in this Policy when there are clear reasons for doing so. This may include taking into account:
- (a) the views of the Occupiers of the street;
 - (b) the results of the initial assessment for the application, including any identified potential adverse impacts on equality, good relations and rural needs;
 - (c) consideration of the local context of the application;
 - (d) any other Council policies or strategies related to the application; and
 - (e) all material considerations relating to the application.

Financial & Resource Implications

- 3.15 There is a cost of approximately £570 to cover the cost of the manufacturing and erection of approximately 4 dual language street signs. The cost for these street signs has been allowed for in the current budget.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.16 Each application for a dual language street sign is subject to an initial assessment for any potential adverse impacts on equality, good relations and rural needs.
- 3.17 The initial assessment and elected member notification carried out for the Wynchurch Avenue application did not identify any potential adverse impacts to prevent the surveys being carried out.
- 3.18 One resident in favour of the dual language nameplates sent a letter raising concerns for the attention of the People and Communities Committee on 16th June 2023 following the Committee decision on 13th June to resurvey Wynchurch Avenue. They believed that a new cavass of residents would likely see more votes against bi-lingual signage, and it is profoundly undemocratic. They are of the opinion ‘that the practice of ‘recall’ votes initiated by Committee is likely to have a chilling effect on future applications for bilingual signage’.

They allege that ‘the committee believes the anti-Gaelic talking point that a supplementary sign is a sectarian marker rather than, as the rest of the world believes, evidence of tolerance and pluralism.’

The council received comments on three returned survey forms.

- 3.19 One resident who responded in favour of the dual language sign has stated 'please do not ignore our vote and make us do this a third time'.
- 3.20 Another resident from Wynchurch Avenue who is not in favour of the dual language name plate has concerns about the cost of the sign and feel that it is a waste of money. They are happy for a second sign as long as it's not public money and feel that those who really want it should pay for it.
- 3.21 A resident who is not in support of the dual language name plate said that this was an inclusive mixed area where both communities have coexisted beside each other. While they support the rights on those who use the Irish language, they do not see the benefit of the change, and feel it will add nothing except to single out the street.
- 3.22 Another resident provided a letter addressed to the Elected Members regarding this application. They raised concerns that the majority of voting residents do not want the signs erected, that people live in the street due to the fact that it is mixed, and that the erection of the signs would create an opportunity for a sense of unease in a street where people live in harmony.
- 3.23 They also raised concerns that the street could become a target for those who oppose the signs, that erecting signage reflecting one or other community is divisive and unnecessary, and that the money could be used much more effectively."

Following discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Murray,
Seconded by Councillor Maghie,

That the Committee agrees to defer consideration of the decision to erect a Dual Language Street Sign at Wynchurch Avenue until those applications already received to date had been processed.

AMENDMENT

Moved by Councillor Bunting,
Seconded by Councillor Kelly,

That the Committee agrees not to erect a Dual Language Street Sign at Wynchurch Avenue.

**People and Communities Committee,
Tuesday, 10th October, 2023**

On a vote, 5 Members voted for the amendment and 15 against and it was declared lost.

The Committee then voted on the original proposal, in the name of Councillor Murray, to defer consideration of the decision to erect a Dual Language Street Sign at Wynchurch Avenue until those applications already received to date had been processed.

On a vote, 15 Members voted for the amendment and 5 against and it was declared carried.

**Update on Christmas waste collections,
site visits and Waste Management information
sessions - Verbal**

The Director of Resources and Fleet provided the Members with a verbal update regarding the changes to bin and box collections over the Christmas and New Year holiday period. She reported that for collections carried out by Council – black, brown, blue bins, glass collection and wheelie box triple stack boxes, the revised collections would be as follows:

Normal collection date	Rescheduled collection date
Monday 25th December	Saturday 23rd December
Tuesday 26th December	Saturday 30th December
Friday 29th December	Friday 29th December
Monday 1st January	Saturday 6th January

She explained that the aim was to collect as many bins as possible on the rescheduled collection date, with bins having to be out by 7.00 a.m., should they not be emptied they should remain out for collection over each weekend.

For collections carried out by Bryson Recycling - two box kerbside sort scheme – revised collections would be as follows:

Normal collection date	Rescheduled collection date
Monday 25th December	Saturday 23rd December
Tuesday 26th December	Sunday 24th December
Monday 1st January	Saturday 30th December

The Director reported that all other collections over the holiday period would be unaffected and would be collected on the normal collection day. In addition, commercial customers would be advised separately of the changes to collections.

The Council's website, social media channels and Bin-Ovation app would be updated accordingly with more information, also available [here](#)

**People and Communities Committee,
Tuesday, 10th October, 2023**

The Director also advised a site visit and Waste Management information sessions were currently being scheduled for the Members, the details of which would be e-mailed in due course.

Noted.

Chairperson

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City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 11th October, 2023

HYBRID MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Nic Bhranair (Chairperson);
Alderman Lawlor;
Councillors Bunting, Canavan, Douglas,
Duffy, Flynn, Garrett, Gormley, Lyons,
Maskey, McAteer, McCabe, McCormick,
McDonough-Brown, McDowell, I. McLaughlin,
McMullan, Murray and Walsh.

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

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the 13th September were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 4th October, subject to the following addition: The Chief Executive agreed to consider, in conjunction with the City Solicitor, any internal measures which could be taken in respect of Members posting restricted information on social media, particularly when there were commercial sensitivities.

Declarations of Interest

The Chairperson declared an interest regarding item 3.a) Major Events Update, in that she was a Board Member of An tOireachtas and left the meeting whilst the item was being considered.

In relation to item 5.a) Employability and Skills Workplan, Councillor Duffy declared an interest, in that he worked for an organisation that was represented on the Labour Market Partnership and was also associated with the Employment Academies and left the room whilst the item was being considered.

Councillor Flynn also declared an item in item 5.a) Employability and Skills Workplan, in that he worked for All-State but confirmed his interest was non-pecuniary.

Matters Referred Back from Council/ Motions

Street Art Walls

The Committee was advised that the Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 29th August, had referred the following motion which had been proposed by Councillor McKeown and seconded by Councillor Doherty to the Committee for consideration:

“The Council recognises the transformative benefits that street art can have on communities and welcomes the enhancement of spaces across the city through the creation of public artwork, such as in entries in Belfast City Centre, across the Holylands, and on utility boxes through the Belfast Canvas project. In many places, works have become tourist attractions and are creating a real sense of civic pride. However, the Council also acknowledges the concern and frustration that particular types of graffiti such as tagging can cause to communities, and the cost of its removal.

To encourage a vibrant street art culture in this city and help people to develop the skills required to realise this, the Council believes that it is important to facilitate the creation of such art in a safe, legal and positive way, enabling creative expression through this medium and reducing the proliferation of antisocial graffiti.

This Council will therefore work with the street art community to support the continuing development of a positive street art culture in this city and, in particular, will provide ‘street art walls’ which will allow people to create artwork legally. In addition to identifying Belfast City Council property to facilitate this, the Council will also work with public, private and third sector partners to identify locations across the city which can be used freely by people for ad hoc street art and collaborative projects.

The Council will also work with street artists and groups, youth providers and other partners to engage with people who could benefit from getting involved in street art and support mentoring and skills development to empower them to express themselves through this route. It will also consult and work with artists and groups to develop a better and evolving understanding of how it can support street art.

Taking this approach, the Council aims to support the vibrant street art scene in Belfast and help develop the next generation of street artists to enable it to continue to flourish, while reducing the impact and cost of negative graffiti by encouraging a positive alternative.”

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Wednesday, 11th October, 2023**

During discussion Members raised the importance of maintenance, assurance and process in the development of further street art, consultation with businesses and engagement of communities, together with the tangible benefits of street art.

Accordingly, the Committee adopted the Motion and agreed that a report on how this would be facilitated, resourced and managed would be submitted to the Committee for consideration, to include best practice examples, consultation with businesses and community engagement.

Restricted Items

The information contained in the report associated with the following two 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 two 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.

(Councillor Duffy in the Chair.)

Major Events Update

The Committee was provided with an update on the Major Events Programme.

The Director of Economic Development pointed out that, since the report had been published, the UK and Ireland's bid to host the tournament in five years' time had been formally approved by UEFA.

During discussion, the Director of Economic Development explained further the bidding process for the Oireachtas na Samhna Festival.

Proposal

Proposed by Councillor McCormick,
Seconded by Councillor I. McLaughlin,

That the Committee agrees not to proceed with the Oireachtas na Samhna Bid or consider the allocation of the required financial commitment as part of the 2024/25 rate setting process and that a report be submitted to a future meeting in relation to the tangible economic benefits the Festival would bring to the Council and its ratepayers.

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

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee,
Wednesday, 11th October, 2023**

Accordingly, the Committee agreed to adopt the recommendations contained within the report:

- Approved the request to proceed with the Oireachtas na Samhna Bid and consider the allocation of the required financial commitment as part of the 2024/25 rate setting process;
- Noted the update on One Young World;
- Noted the update on Christmas 2023 planning; and
- Noted the update regarding the UK and Ireland bid to host the European Football Championships in 2028.

(Councillor Nic Bhranair in the Chair.)

**Embracing the Belfast Waterfront –
Belfast Waterfront Framework**

The Director of City Regeneration and Development introduced a report on the emerging Belfast Waterfront Framework as developed by the Waterfront Task Group.

The Senior Development Manager presented an overview of the Promenade Framework Update.

During discussion, in response to a Member's question regarding community representation on the Taskforce, the officers advised that this would be considered as part of the next stage of the process.

After discussion, the Committee:

- Approved the Belfast Waterfront Framework as developed by the Waterfront Task Group and noted the information provided in the presentation on the Framework;
- Noted the ongoing work on project prioritisation and development currently underway by a number of stakeholders within the Waterfront Task Group, recognising that this would remain an iterative process as other opportunities and projects came forward;
- Noted the update on the Cork Belfast Shared Island Development Fund proposal as agreed by Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in August 2023; and
- Agreed to the attendance of the Chairperson at the launch of the Waterfront Framework.

Regenerating Places and Improving Infrastructure

Eastern Transport Plan Consultation Response

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update on the Eastern Transport Plan (ETP) 2035 and to agree a draft Council response to the current public engagement exercise that commenced with the launch of the Plan on 4th September 2023.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the update on the ETP 2035; and
- Agree the proposed Council response to the initial public engagement exercise that is currently underway.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 As members will be aware the Department for Infrastructure (Dfi) is developing the Eastern Transport Plan 2035 (previously known as the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP) for the city and four of the surrounding local authorities with the consultants Atkins assisting in the detailed work on what will be the statutory Transport Plan for the city.

Plan renaming

3.2 Following consideration of stakeholder feedback and acknowledgement that the new Transport Plan will cover a greater geographical area than that of the previous 2004 version, the Dfi Permanent Secretary took the decision to change the name of the Plan from the BMTP to the Eastern Transport Plan (ETP) 2035. The Council is disappointed that it was not consulted on this change nor was the Project Board on which the Council is represented. The Department is hoping that this renaming will result in increased levels of community engagement across the Plan Area.

3.3 The Committee received a presentation on the ETP from Mr A. Rafferty (Dfi) and Mr D. Murray (Atkins) on 28th June 2023 which set out the background to the Plan; an overview of the approach; delivery timescales and phasing; and details of

the draft Vision, Objectives and General Principles. Mr Rafferty agreed to receive further technical questions from the Committee to which DfI would provide a response. A letter was sent to Mr Rafferty from Democratic Services on 21st September 2023 which set out the queries raised at the Committee together with other technical questions concerning the relationship between the ETP and the Belfast Local Development Plan (see [Appendix 1](#)).

ETP launch and public engagement exercise

- 3.4 On 4th September 2023 the Department publicly announced its intention to prepare the ETP, a *'new transport plan that will set the framework for making transport policy and investment decisions up until 2035'* and *'aims to ensure that the transport network meets the needs of the people and businesses living, working and visiting the ETP area, both now and into the future'*. An 8-week public engagement exercise commenced with this announcement and seeks views of individuals and organisations on the draft Vision and Objectives for the Plan. This initial consultation exercise closes on 30th October 2023.
- 3.5 At this early stage of the Plan's development the Department is seeking to ascertain people's views on:
- The problems we need to solve (Challenges);
 - The end goal we want to achieve (Our Vision); and
 - How we will get there (Our Objectives and Guiding Principles)

An online [Engagement Survey](#) has been published by the Department and is primarily targeted at individuals although organisations are able to participate. The questions are typically generic and high-level reflecting the aspirational elements of the Plan and as such, understandably, there is a lack of operational detail on specific policies, proposals and initiatives that will be brought forward as the Plan develops. The survey questions are included at [Appendix 2](#) for information. There will be further opportunities for the Council and the public to provide formal responses to these issues as the preparation of the ETP progresses e.g. at the Draft Plan stage.

Council response

- 3.6 Internal consultation on the engagement survey has been undertaken with a range of sections and services within the Council – Climate, Economic Development, City Regeneration & Development, Neighbourhood Services and Estates. There

is broad support for the approach taken and direction of travel the Department is proposing however it has been reiterated that there will need to be more detailed consideration of the specific policies, proposals and initiatives that emerge as the Plan develops and in particular how these might impact upon schemes currently in development.

3.7 Council support for the ETP will in part be influenced by the Department's response to the queries raised in the letter of 21st September 2023 (Appendix 1). Given that the engagement survey is primarily targeted at individuals it is suggested that rather than completing the survey the Council submits a written response outlining any issues arising from this initial consultation and the approach proposed (see [Appendix 3](#)).

3.8 **Financial and Resource Implications**

None associated with this report.

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

None associated with this report."

The Committee agreed to adopt the recommendations contained within the report.

Correspondence from the Department for Infrastructure

The Committee was informed that correspondence had been received from the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) in relation to matters which had been raised by the Council, including the provision of a controlled crossing at Knockbreda Road and the creation of Rosetta Way Quietway; and a letter from the DfI Deputy Secretary (Transport and Road Asset Management) which provided context in advance of the planned Divisional Road Managers Autumn Update to the Council.

The Committee:

- Noted the responses which had been received from the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) in relation to a Motion from the Council;
- Noted the draft Council response to the Eastern Transport Plan that had been presented to the Committee and the correlation it had with the Motion, and agreed to close the Motion; and
- Noted the correspondence from DfI in advance of the DfI Roads presentation of the Autumn Statement.

**Correspondence received from the
Department for Communities**

The Committee noted the correspondence which had been received from the Department for Communities, in response to its concerns in relation to the Access and Inclusion Fund timeframe (copy available [here](#)).

Growing Business and the Economy

Employability and Skills Workplan - mid-year update

The Committee considered the undernoted report and associated appendices:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise members of a range of activity undertaken in since April 2023 to support skills development, economic engagement and job outcomes for key target groups.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the work undertaken in the financial year to date and the positive employability and jobs outcomes associated with this work
- Approve the allocation of Labour Market Partnership (LMP) resources for Bridges to Progression and note the proposals to seek proposals from delivery partners to provide targeted support that can improve outcomes for participants.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Employment Academies

Members will be aware that Employment Academies are one of the key instruments that the Council’s Employability and Skills team utilises to support residents to secure a new job or a better job. While the content of Employment Academies varies from programme to programme, there are a number of consistent components, namely:

- Pre-academy matching and selection to ensure all individuals who participate have a meaningful chance of securing employment after successful completion

- Employer-led vocational skills, qualifications, licences and training related to the specific job role
- In-situ work sampling/work placements
- Provision of additional supports to undergo and complete the academy, from equipment and clothing through to childcare, travel and subsistence
- Employability support particularly focused on the final employment interview (all candidates are guaranteed a job interview).

3.2 Given the volatility in the labour market – and the limited financial resources available to undertake the work – our work plan is driven by a range of factors including:

- The opportunity presented by a number of growth sectors to support participants into roles with higher earning potential. In recognition of the additional skills support work required, these interventions tend to have a higher per capita cost but offer a positive return on investment in terms of salary levels for those successful in finding work following programme completion
- Ongoing need to work with employers to convince them of the value of alternative approaches to finding talent other than pre-existing qualifications and/or experience. This is particularly the case for our work in new sectors – specifically those that have tended to think ‘degree first’ and have not considered alternative routes
- Employers with entry level and lower paid jobs – particularly in sectors such as hospitality and social care – continue to experience significant challenges in finding workers. Officers are working with these employers to consider issues such as terms and conditions and payment of the real living wage in order to attract and retain talent, aligned with the implementation of the Belfast Business Promise
- Opportunities to support existing employees who are in low-paid work and/or underemployed through upskilling interventions – and thereby embedding a skills escalator by creating additional entry-level roles.

3.3 In the course of this financial year, we expect that the Employment Academies will engage around 500 participants with at least 70% expected to gain employment/self-employment across a range of sectors – see additional details below:

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<u>Employment Academy</u>	<u>Participants started up to mid-Sept 23</u>	<u>Places to allocate Oct 23-Mar 24</u>
Working at Sea	10	40
Tech	24	11
Business Services	23	-
Fibre	-	12
Transport	110	12
Health & Social Care/Working with Children	21	69
Working with Children – Irish Medium	12	28
Health & Social Care/Working with Children Upskilling	86	94
Construction	12	12
TOTALS	298	278

3.4 Key insights on the relevant academies identified include:

- **Transport**: Over 250 people expressed an interest in participating and 140 made it through following the relevant eligibility checks, information days and preliminary interviews and from this 110 people have been offered a place on a Transport Employment Academy. Given that the average timescale to fully complete the Transport Academy can be up to nine months, we expect that most participants will be ready for employment by early Spring. As this is the fifth year of the Transport Academy work, we are building strong working partnerships with employers that have repeatedly recruited previous programme participants. At a recent information day, employers updated on live opportunities including starting salaries with Category C Licence of £40k plus per annum, moving to £50k plus after upskilling to Category C+E licence (which are mainly resourced by the employer). We are working closely with Transport Academy employers as well as Logistics UK and the Road Haulage Authority (RHA) to conduct a survey of employers in order to build a profile of future employment opportunities

- **Fibre Optics Academy**: this has been another very popular initiative, with delivery planned in late 2023 and more than 100 people have already expressed an interest in engaging. This sector offers great earning potential: one recent participant moved from unemployment to a Fibre Technician role then Project Manager within nine months, now earning over £50k per annum
- **Tech and Digital Academy**: Two academies are completing with 12 in each which takes the form of a 16-week bootcamp at the end of September 2023. One cohort undertook a pathway in Product Management and the other in Cyber Security. There are a number of employer sponsors engaged including Allstate and Belfast City Council where three of the pilot cohort (from 2022/23) are now working in Digital Services. Subject to employer support, we plan to run a further Tech Academy later in 2023. Running alongside employer engagement, we have been in liaison with a number of the representative bodies including the Software Alliance and the Cyber Security Forum. Our Academies have been promoted extensively amongst their members and employers as we seek to build a sustainable pipeline of demand for subsequent cohorts
- **Business Services Academy**: we are working with Queen's University to deliver bespoke Employment Academies for administration. Following the first programme, 12 people have been offered employment. In addition to the offer of a job, Queen's have committed to providing a Level 2 qualification once they are in post. We are working closely with the university to build the evidence for how a major employer can adapt their recruitment processes and remove qualification criteria as a means of creating a more diverse and inclusive workforce
- **Health and Social Care Academy**: We have responded to changes within the sector by developing a number of new employment academies and upskilling programmes. These include the Classroom Assistant Employment Academy with a Level 3 qualification in Special Educational Needs, Level 3 and Level 5 Classroom Assistant Diplomas in Irish Medium, delivered by Gaelchursaí, and the Level 4 Classroom Assistant qualification delivered in partnership with Stranmillis University College. We will continue to work with key employers including Belfast Health & Social Care Trust, Triangle Housing, Inspire Wellbeing, Sure Start, Sleepy Hollow and a wide variety of educational settings including primary, secondary, grammar,

Special Educational Needs and Irish Medium Schools. Offering the Upskilling Academies is a huge benefit to the sector as it encourages new entrants and helps to sustain and develop a highly skilled workforce while increasing capacity to support the most vulnerable in our society.

3.5 Improving employability outcomes for young people

While a significant proportion of activity has focused on those already in the labour market or trying to find a job or move to a better job, we are delivering a number of smaller interventions for young people with a focus has been on improving educational attainment and helping young people at risk to find positive employment and training outcomes.

3.6 As members are aware, we have undertaken a review of our delivery within this workstream and, while the outcomes from our interventions in this space have been positive, there are a number of factors at play in recommending a reduced level of activity going forward, not least being the dynamic policy environment in this space. The Fair Start and Reducing Education Disadvantage (RED) policy initiatives led by Department for Education are progressing, with new interventions currently being developed. We are working closely with both EA and DE to share the learning from our successful pilot activity with the expectation that Council delivery can be 'lifted and shifted' within the context of these new initiatives.

3.7 As agreed, our work in this space is prioritised on two key areas, namely:

- Continued support for the GCSE Support Programme for a final interim year, using this time to work with the Area Partnership Boards (who deliver this programme) as well as the Education Inequalities sub-group under the Jobs, Skills & Education Board to secure a longer-term future within the context of Community Planning and Fair Start/Reducing Educational Disadvantage policy initiatives. Between September 2022 and June 2023, 434 young people were engaged, against a target of 365. These young people have been identified as being unlikely to achieve at least Grade C in GCSE English and Maths, without the additional support of the programme.**
- Continuing the 'Bridges to Progression' programme within the Labour Market Partnership as outlined below, providing tailored wrap around support for**

those young people at risk of disengaging from the mainstream Skills for Life & Work programmes.

3.8 Labour Market Partnership

Members will be aware that the Labour Market Partnership is an intervention supported by DfC within all 11 council areas. Resources from the Labour Market Partnership enable the Council to increase the range and scope of employability and skills activity. The LMP also provides a platform for engagement with government departments, community partners and business organisations as a means of refocusing regional programmes more effectively within the Belfast area. The LMP action plan recognises that, while there are gaps that have been identified that will necessitate the creation of new interventions, not all activity need be new 'provision' or 'programmes'; sometimes it is equally important to profile and/or promote existing interventions.

3.9 In addition to the extra support for Employment Academy places, the headline programme of work within the action plan includes the following:

- **Gateway to Choices Service**: a key issue that emerged in our engagement with the LMP partners was the need for independent advice and guidance for those who are out of work and non-job ready outside of mainstream JBO support. Partners considered that these groups (mainly long-term unemployed and economically inactive) required enhanced support to navigate the existing provision and identify the right support, at the right time, to help move them towards positive job, skills and qualification outcomes. So far this year, over 400 people have received support through Gateway to Choices. We are beginning to build good insights into participants' 'back stories' of how and why they are accessing the support; what type of support they need; what the key support resources are and where there may be gaps in the system. This presents critical learning for all advice and guidance partners and will be shared with relevant partners as the insights become more detailed
- **Digital badges**: one of the most significant skills-related challenges is the relatively high proportion of Belfast residents that have low qualifications (below level 2). We have been working alongside the RSA Cities of Learning initiative to explore how a Digital Badge could help recognise the non-accredited skills

of these individuals. All Employment Academies are now digitally badged as an alternative validation of achievement, with over 1000 badges issued to participants. In addition to this, the Council has offered 24 organisations in the city access to Digital Badging for their own participants/employees

- **Belfast Jobs Fair**: The Belfast Jobs Fair has attracted considerable interest with 70 exhibitors anticipated to exhibit on October 10th. More than 65 employers will be present and, collectively, there will be more than 1800 job available for those seeking work or a better job. The event is taking place in St George's Market
- **Inclusive Employment conference**: given the commitments identified through the Belfast Agenda to promote inclusive employment practices, officers are currently working on a large scale conference to share learning and encourage additional partner engagement in this work. To date, we have secured a number of keynote speakers for the event which is scheduled to take place in Ulster University's Belfast campus on 22 January 2024. Additional information on the event will be brought back to the committee and shared with all elected members in advance.

3.10 **Bridges to Progression**

Bridges to Progression is an intervention to support young people aged 16-17 years who are at risk of disengaging from Skills for Life & Work due to their personal circumstances. Participants can access intensive personal support to help them progress in and complete their formal training, with the ambition of improving the levels of progression into employment or further training. Previous analysis had flagged a very high level of drop out from these programmes, particularly in Belfast. It showed that the reasons behind participants no longer engaging with the programme related to wider social challenges – rather than the programme content itself.

- 3.11 At the October 2022 meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, it was agreed that officers would seek expressions of interest from organisations delivering these programmes, outlining how they would use resources to add value to the core activity with the objective of improving outcomes for participants. It was also agreed that officers would undertake assessment of the applications for funding in line with the approach detailed in this report. As reported in March 2023 update, a number of organisations were

awarded support, with a cumulative target of 120 young people to be engaged and 16 employers to be supported. Since that time 193 young people have been engaged and 173 completed the Bridges to Progression intervention. We also engaged with 29 employers over this period. Direct feedback and outcomes have demonstrated the impact this investment had on these individuals. Participants on the programme reported on the following outcomes:

<u>Destination</u>	<u>% of those completing</u>
Into employment	45%
Into further training/ education	31%
Progressed within SfL&W	18%
Unsure of next step	6%

3.12 Feedback from participants about the support offered through the Bridges to Progression included:

- Helped deal with past issues and stress
- Confidence to achieve qualification and interview
- Importance of having someone to turn to for support
- Importance of self-care – looking after mental health
- See the value of positive thinking instead of negative thinking
- Having someone to talk to was amazing and helped a lot.

3.13 The average financial allocation provided for the support services offered to programme participants is around £750 per person. While this is not an expensive cost per head, it does appear to have a very positive impact on participant outcomes. Previously, only 3% of those starting the programme had a positive destination after the two years. Evidence from the pilot suggests that, for the first year at least, the positive outcome rates on the programme have significantly increased as you see above with 75% progressing onto employment or training/education and 18% progressing within the programme. Based on these positive outcomes, it is proposed that we re-run this intervention for another round of funding (note – this funding has already been approved by the Labour Market Partnership). Officers will seek applications from SfL&W providers and review these against agreed criteria. Officers are also engaging with the Department for the Economy to seek to incorporate the flexibility offered within Bridges to Progression with future

iterations of Skills for Life & Work with the aim of improving employability outcomes.

- 3.14 The LMP action plans are submitted on an annual basis at this point (due to the annual budget settlements in the government departments). However, as part of the strategic assessment that underpins the plan, officers have identified a number of developmental areas where we consider that there is a need to undertake additional scoping work in order to understand the issues at play and consider whether the council might play an active delivery role in the future, or lobby government partners to do more in this space in order to improve outcomes for Belfast residents. Two of these areas relate to place-based and people-based targeted interventions, with a focus on how these might improve outcomes for participants and what approaches are most appropriate for this. We are also proposing to undertake further engagement work with partners to understand how we can connect our employer-facing services more effectively, in order to make it easier for businesses to understand the support available and access it. Updates on these development pieces will be brought back to future meetings of the committee.
- 3.15 Collaboration with the Employability and Skills Providers
The employability ecosystem is complex and, with the end of ESF funding in March 2023, there have been significant changes across the network. Given that our model is based on building strong partnerships across delivery partners and support organisations, the council engages on a regular basis with the provider network and links into existing networks to ensure that we are reaching specific target groups and geographical parts of the city. We have recently engaged the projects that have been successful in attracting Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) resources. We have also established a partnership with the Institute of Employability Professionals (IEP), facilitating continuous improvement and raising standards through activities such as shared learning and benchmarking and the delivery of vocationally specific employability training for those working in the sector.
- 3.16 Partnership, policy influence and guidance
In addition to direct delivery, officers will also continue to work with internal and external partners to use all tools at our disposal to address the key employability and skills challenges, focusing on the council's inclusive growth ambitions. There are a number of key mechanisms through which this can be achieved:

- **Social Value:** officers are working closely with the Corporate Procurement Service to support the implementation of the policy, focusing on the employability and skills measures. This includes working with council contracts – as well as contractors across the city where Social Value applies – to achieve their Social Value requirements in a meaningful way. Officers have organised a number of workshops for VCSE providers – with 60 people attending – to build capacity in tendering for council contracts. We are also organising a ‘Meet the Broker’ workshop for contractors in the city to gain access to E&S provision across the city
- **Peace Plus funding:** we are currently engaging with partner organisations to develop project concepts for the Peace Plus 1.1 Local Action Plan. Ideas under development include ‘Language Up’: a project that will deliver community-based language classes for migrants and those from minority ethnic communities. This has been repeatedly identified as a barrier to engagement among those groups.

3.17 Finance and Resource Implications

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

3.18 Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment

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

During discussion, the Employability and Skills Manager explained further the employment rates and retention of participants of the schemes and highlighted that the assessment of where interventions were needed continued throughout the year. She highlighted that there were more than 1,000 visitors at the recent Belfast Jobs Fair which had taken place in St. George’s Market.

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After discussion, the Committee:

- Noted the work which had been undertaken in the financial year to date and the positive employability and jobs outcomes associated with the work; and
- Approved the allocation of the Labour Market Partnership (LMP) resources for Bridges to Progression and noted the proposals to seek proposals from delivery partners to provide targeted support that could improve outcomes for participants.

**Social Enterprise Call for Evidence –
draft Belfast City Council response**

The Director of Economic Development reported that a consultation exercise had recently been launched by the Department for the Economy (DfE) regarding support for the social enterprise sector.

He advised that Members would be aware that, similar to enterprise support, the policy responsibility for social enterprise remained with the DfE. Delivery responsibility for social enterprise support transferred to local authorities in 2015 as part of the wider transfer of entrepreneurship support. Since then, councils had supported social enterprises to start and grow both through the Go for It programme and through various ERDF-funded business growth programmes at an individual council level.

He explained that the new Northern Ireland Enterprise Support Service (NISS) included a target of 10 per cent of businesses engaged or supported to be social enterprises. As a result, delivery partners were developing a programme of targeted support to increase the number of social enterprises accessing support.

He pointed out that, outside of council-funded activity, there had been very limited direct support provided to social enterprises from other government departments. DfE currently funded Social Enterprise NI (SENI) to undertake a range of networking and good practice support. He informed the Committee that the financial allocation to this work was very limited in scope and had not increased since LGR. He highlighted that SENI performed an important network and engagement function but it did not have the capacity for significant service delivery and relied on councils to play that role. He advised that their current three-year work programme would come to an end in March 2024.

The Director of Economic Development reported that, in early September 2023, DfE had issued a call for evidence and was seeking responses to a draft one-year action plan, which was to go live from April 2024. This action plan included a greater focus on the outcomes that the Department would like to see, particularly those aligned to the 10X economic vision. The deadline for responses was 31st October, 2023. The department had indicated that it then planned to commission the delivery of many of the services outlined in the consultation in November 2023.

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He outlined that the proposed workplan included four themes:

- Theme one: Promotion of social enterprises to promote individual business growth;
- Theme two: Strategic sector growth;
- Theme three: Cooperation and coordination; and
- Theme four: Research.

He pointed out that an initial review of the work plan ([Appendix 1](#)) suggested significant overlap with the work planned as part of the Northern Ireland Enterprise Support Service.

The consultation was focused around four key questions, namely:

1. What are your views on the overall approach of the work programme – connecting a smaller number of objectives to the activities required and the outcomes that would demonstrate success?
2. What are your views on the four proposed objectives?
3. Do you have any comments on any of the objectives in the proposed work programme?
4. Are there other measures of success you would like to propose for any of the activities?

The Director of Economic Development advised that a draft Council response was attached at [Appendix 2](#). The response was structured along the lines of the four questions set out above. The key points, in summary, included:

- Opportunity for greater alignment with NIESS work – with a proposal for additional engagement to consider how this could work more effectively, including an opportunity for DfE to provide additional resources to councils to carry out this work;
- Agreement around scope and focus of the social enterprise work – and the potential to give this greater visibility through a joint work plan; and
- Potential to take a more coherent approach to considering how social enterprises were supported across government (for example social value in procurement; increasing social enterprises in the supply chain).

He highlighted that the Council had, for many years, delivered a dedicated programme of work to support social enterprises. This work was led by Work West. In the last financial year, 27 workshops and outreach sessions had been delivered for the

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sector, attracting more than 320 attendees. 45 people had received one to one mentoring support totalling more than 1500 hours. He advised that the Council had also supported the creation of 93 jobs in both social enterprises and cooperatives. He highlighted that the Council had won the “council of the year” award at the Social Enterprise NI Awards in 2022 and was in the running for the same award this year.

After discussion, the Committee:

- Agreed to submit a response to the Department for Economy on its call for evidence on social enterprise; and
- Noted and approved the draft response attached as [Appendix 2](#) of the report.

Strategic and Operational Issues

Proposed Committee Workshops

The Director of City Regeneration and Development provided an overview of forthcoming Committee Workshops:

NIHE Workshop

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) presented an Annual Update on the Housing Investment Plan to a Special meeting of the People and Communities Committee on 6th September, 2023, at which the Committee had agreed that a Workshop would be convened with the NIHE to specifically discuss Housing Need and Demand. Given the synergy of this across to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee priorities and the Committee plan in relation to maximising housing development and regeneration opportunities, the Committee were asked to consider attendance at this forthcoming workshop.

Challenges and opportunities to regeneration and development workshop

A joint City Growth and Regeneration Committee and Planning Committee Workshop was proposed to ensure alignment and consider challenges and opportunities from a development, planning and regeneration perspective that would ultimately benefit the city and its communities.

Corporate Plan 2024 – 2028 Committee Workshop

Following agreement by the Committee, at its meeting September 2023, to hold a Committee Workshop as part of the development of a new Corporate Plan, the Director of City Regeneration and Development advised that this had been schedule for 25th October and was intended to be an in-person workshop with further details to follow.

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The Committee:

- Noted the agreement of the People and Communities Committee to hold a workshop with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive on housing need and demand, and City Growth and Regeneration Committee attendance at this;
- Agreed to hold a joint Committee workshop with the Planning Committee, with a focus on challenges and opportunities in relation to the regeneration and development of the city, date to be agreed; and
- Noted the proposed Committee Workshop scheduled for Wednesday, 25th October in relation to the new Corporate Plan.

Notice of Motion Quarterly Update

The Committee was provided with a quarterly update on the Notices of Motion that it was responsible for and considered the information which had been reported.

During discussion, in relation to Motion 289 - *Translink - Night-time provision of services*, one Member suggested the need to progress the issue and invite representatives from Translink to attend a future Committee to discuss the issue.

During further discussion, in response to a Member's request for an update on Motion 217 - *Tourism Street Signage*, the Director of Economic Development advised that the research was ongoing and a report would be submitted to the Committee in January for consideration.

After discussion, the Committee:

- Noted the updates to all the Motions that the Committee was responsible for as referenced in [Appendix 1](#);
- Agreed to the closure of 2 Motions, as referenced in Appendix 1 and noted in paragraph 3.4 of the report; and
- Agreed to invite Translink to attend a future Committee to discuss its night-time provision of services, in relation to Motion 289.

Issues Raised in Advance by Members

Late Night Public Transport (Councillor Murray to raise)

Councillor Murray outlined his concerns in relation to the potential for night-time public transport services to be cancelled over the Christmas period.

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Accordingly, the Committee agreed to write to Translink to encourage the night-time provision of services over the Christmas Period and to clarify its plans on for the Winter months.

Chairperson

Licensing Committee

Wednesday, 18th October, 2023

MEETING OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE LAVERY ROOM AND
REMOТЕLY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor McKeown (Chairperson);
Aldermen McCullough, McCoubrey and Rodgers;
Councillors Bradley, Collins, P. Donnelly, Doran,
D. Douglas, Gormley, Lyons, Murray, F. McAteer,
McCabe, McCann, McCusker, McMullan and Ó Néill.

In attendance: Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;
Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and
Civic Services;
Mr. S. Hewitt, Building Control Manager; and
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillors Anglin and Smyth.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 20th September were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council, at its meeting on 4th October, 2023, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Delegated Matters

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

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

The Committee noted a list of applications which had been approved under the Council's Scheme of Delegation during September 2023.

Licences Issued Under Delegated Authority

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

**Final decision on competing Stationary
Street Trading Licence applications for
Donegall Square East**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 16th August, 2023, it had agreed that it was minded to grant Mr McCafferty a Stationary Street Trading Licence to sell hot food and non-alcoholic beverages from a trailer from Monday to Sunday, 10.00p.m. to 3.00 a.m.

The result of that decision meant that the single Designated Street Trading Site was taken and, as such, there was no suitable location for the other applicant. As a consequence, the Committee agreed that it was minded to refuse the application which had been submitted by Mr. Hamill. That decision was on the grounds set out in Sections 9(1) (a) (i) and (iv) of the Street Trading Act (Northern Ireland) 2001, namely, that the location at which the applicant wished to trade as a stationary trader was unsuitable by virtue of the fact that there was only one designated site available and there were sufficient traders trading in the street, or at premises adjoining it, in the articles, things or services in which the applicant wished to trade.

The Building Control Manager outlined that, as required under the Act, when the Council was minded to refuse a licence application, the applicant must be informed that they were permitted to make representation regarding the refusal of the Council, with such representations to be made not less than 21 days from the date of notice.

He confirmed that Mr. Hamill had subsequently emailed the Service stating that he would not appeal against the decision and did not wish to avail of the opportunity to make representation to the Committee.

The Committee agreed to uphold its decision of the 16th August, 2023, granting the licence to Mr. McCafferty and refusing the application from Mr. Hamill on the aforementioned grounds.

Non-Delegated Matters

**Proposed response to the DfC questionnaire
on Pavement Café Licensing**

The Building Control Manager explained that the Licensing of Pavement Cafés Act (NI) 2014 ("the Act") came into operation on 1st October, 2016. It made provision for the regulation by district councils of the placing in public areas of furniture for use for the consumption of food or drink.

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The Department for Communities (DfC), when introducing the Act, stated that its aim was to create 'light touch' legislation aimed at encouraging the creation of a café culture. It had been introduced to facilitate the controlled expansion of suitable premises, such as cafes, restaurants and pubs, in support of a vibrant daytime and evening economy and for the general well-being of communities.

The Building Control Manager outlined that the Council, along with a number of other councils, had not implemented the legislation at that time as the Department for Infrastructure Roads had not, and still had not, issued their technical guidance for Councils in support of the Act.

However, the Council, in June 2020, had introduced a temporary process for considering pavement café applications to assist the hospitality sector during the recovery following the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown.

The Committee was provided with a draft response to the DfC questionnaire, which was aimed at evaluating the broad level of stakeholder awareness of the statutory licensing scheme for the regulation of Pavement Cafés by councils, and how successful the legislation which established the scheme had been in delivering its original policy objectives.

The Members were advised that the closing date for the questionnaire was 29th September. However, officers had been in contact with the DfC and it had agreed that it would accept the Council's response after it had been considered by the Committee.

The Committee agreed the submission of the response to the questionnaire as detailed in [Appendix 1 on mod.gov](#).

(At the request of a Member, the Committee adjourned for 20 minutes at this point in proceedings, to allow some Members to attend a protest in the City Centre.)

**Request by a Cinema Licensee in relation to
the Film Classification for 'Five Nights at Freddy's' film**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 To consider a request from a cinema operator to create a new classification rating of '15A' for broadcast of the 'Five Nights at Freddy's' film in cinemas within the Belfast City Council area.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is requested, having considered representations, to decide whether to:

- a) Depart from Standard Licence Condition 2 (b) which states that 'No persons under the age of fifteen years shall be admitted to any Exhibition when a '15' film is in the programme' and to permit cinema operators to impose a rating of '15A' for the Belfast City Council area in respect of the 'Five Nights at Freddy's' film which would mean that patrons under the age of 15 would be permitted entrance to view the film when accompanied by an adult.

OR

- b) Refuse the request to depart from the Standard Licence Condition and require the cinema operator to comply with the rating determined by the BBFC.

OR

- c) Defer consideration of the matter to allow Members to view the film and make a decision thereafter.

2.2 Whilst there is a general provision for appeals in relation to the conditions placed on Cinema Licences, there is no right of appeal in respect of this decision.

2.3 Members are advised that the Licensing Committee does not have delegated powers in relation to policy and legislation concerning licensing matters and as such your recommendation will be subject to ratification by Council.

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

Council powers and the role of the BBFC

3.1 Councils' licence cinemas and other venues under the Cinemas (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 for the exhibition of films. In general, the legislation relates to technical matters such as structural stability and fire safety and, as such, the powers to issue licences are delegated to the Director of Planning and Building Control.

3.2 Unlike other Licencing schemes, there is no public notification and representation process for Cinema Licence applications hence there is normally no involvement of the Committee with Cinema Licensing.

- 3.3 Belfast City Council has established conditions of licence regarding the general running and administration of the premises. One such condition is that only films which have been classified with a certificate issued by the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) may be shown. These Conditions are attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.4 The BBFC is an independent body which classifies all films on behalf of local authorities, and they have strict guidelines and criteria in awarding films a classification. The BBFC Classification Guidelines are attached at Appendix 2.
- 3.5 The BBFC system is used by all authorities within the United Kingdom and all commercial films will be classified through this process. The Council has adopted the BBFC classifications within the licence conditions on all cinema licences granted in Belfast.
- 3.6 Article 3 (3) (a) of the Cinemas (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 states that it shall be the duty of a district council, in granting a licence under this Article as respects any premises to:
- ‘impose conditions or restrictions prohibiting the admission of children to film exhibitions involving the showing of works designated, by the council or by such other body as may be specified in the licence, as works unsuitable for children’.
- 3.7 Paragraph 2 (b) of the Council’s Standard Licence conditions states that:
- ‘No persons under the age of fifteen years shall be admitted to any Exhibition when a ‘15’ film is in the programme.
- 3.8 However, Paragraph 3 of those conditions goes on to provide that:
- ‘Notwithstanding the conditions hereinbefore contained, a film may be exhibited, or children, or any class of children, may be admitted thereto, or admitted unaccompanied, if permission of the Council is first obtained and any conditions of such permission are complied with.’

Request relating to ‘Five Nights at Freddy’s’

- 3.9 A request has very recently been received from the licensee of the Movie House at Cityside (Yorkgate) that the Committee

consider the creation of a new age rating of '15A' for a forthcoming film, 'Five Nights at Freddy's', which is due for release on 27 October 2023. A rationale has been provided by the applicant in support of a '15A' rating and is attached at Appendix 3.

- 3.10 Presently such a classification does not exist in the BBFC ratings. The nearest equivalent is a '12A' which permits children under 12 to view such a film if accompanied by an adult. The proposal of the applicant in relation to 'Five Nights at Freddy's' would be to permit children under the age of 15 into the film if accompanied by an adult.
- 3.11 The film has only recently been classified by the BBFC as '15' hence the lateness of the request to bring this matter to your attention. The classification means that no one younger than 15 years of age may watch the film in a cinema. In their assessment of the film, the BBFC provide the following narrative: *'A man with a traumatic past takes a night security job at a shut down diner in this US horror thriller. Scenes of strong, sustained threat and violence accompany an unsettling theme of child abduction.'*
- 3.12 The film has been classified as PG-13 'for strong violent content, bloody images, and language' in the US.
- 3.13 The Irish Film Certificate Office has rated the film as '15A' on the basis of their assessment metric of strong violence, mild drugs and mild language along with the following narrative: *'Supernatural horror with jump scares and some scenes of bloody violence. Injury detail depicted. Theme of child abduction'*.
- 3.14 Mr McAdam has advised in recent years there has been a significant shift in the way families consume film and parents prefer to be the decision makers. Parents find it hard to understand why they have the power to choose a 12A film for their children but not a 15 rated film. This can cause frustration and embarrassment for those who arrive at the cinema and are then prevented from seeing the film.
- 3.15 He has also stated that Five Nights at Freddy's is based on a video game which uses a different rating system called PEGI. This game has a PEGI age rating of 12 so part of the fanbase will be early teens who will want to see this movie.
- 3.16 Members will recall that in February 2022 you considered a similar request from Mr McAdam in relation to 'The Batman' and after consideration refused the request to create a 15A

film classification for the film, thereby requiring cinema operators to comply with the rating determined by the British Board of Film Classification.

- 3.17 Subsequently however the Council, at its meeting of 1 March 2022, overturned your decision and agreed to depart from Standard Licence Condition 2(b) which stated that, 'No persons under the age of fifteen years shall be admitted to any Exhibition when a '15' film is in the programme' and to permit cinema operators to impose a rating of '15A' for the Belfast City Council area in respect of 'The Batman' film, which would allow patrons under the age of 15 entrance to view the film, when accompanied by an adult.

Departure from the rating determined by the British Board of Film Classification

- 3.18 From a legal perspective the Council may depart from a BBFC classification should it wish to do so.
- 3.19 There are however significant practical concerns which Members may wish to consider in so doing.
- 3.20 BBFC classification is imposed by the statutory body with the requisite expertise in this matter who are entrusted to provide guidance about whether a film is suitable for children to view.
- 3.21 All classification decisions are based on the BBFC's published and regularly updated Guidelines. The Guidelines are the product of extensive public consultation, research and the accumulated experience of the BBFC over many years.
- 3.22 Films for cinema release are usually seen by at least two BBFC Compliance Officers, and in most cases, their age rating recommendation is approved by the Compliance Manager or the Head of Compliance.
- 3.23 Compliance Officers look at issues such as bad language, dangerous behaviour, discrimination, drugs, horror, nudity, sex, violence and sexual violence, when making recommendations.
- 3.24 As Members will appreciate, the Council has no such internal expertise or processes in place to impose its own ratings. It is difficult to identify any other external agency with sufficient expertise in child protection in this area other than BBFC.

- 3.25 Ultimately, the purpose of BBFC classifications is to protect children from viewing material which, in the view of those with established expertise in this field, is not suitable for them.
- 3.26 There may therefore be reputational issues for the Council in applying a lesser classification to a film which it has not seen in advance, particularly bearing in mind the reasons for a '15' classification.
- 3.27 If the Committee were minded to depart from Paragraph 2 (b) of the Standard Licence Conditions, Committee is asked to consider imposing the following additional special conditions upon any cinema operator who wishes to show the Five Nights at Freddy's film as a 15A:
- I. Any cinema operator who wishes to show the Five Nights at Freddy's film as a 15A must notify the Council in advance.
 - II. The cinema operator must clearly indicate the nature of any certificate received from the BBFC in any advertisement of the film displayed at the premises, as well as the fact that the Council has agreed that accompanied children under 15 may be permitted entrance.
 - III. The cinema operator must provide appropriate advice in respect of '15A' films to enable an accompanying adult to decide upon the suitability of the film for children under the age of fifteen years.
- 3.28 Alternatively, the Committee may wish to consider seeking the opportunity to view the film, in advance of its release, to form their own opinion about the appropriateness of determining a rating other than that set by the BBFC.
- 3.29 A representative from the BBFC and Mr McAdam have been invited to attend Committee and will be available to answer any questions Members may have in relation to the film.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.30 None.

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

- 3.31 There are no issues associated with this report."

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The Chairperson advised the Committee that Mr M. McAdam, Managing Director of Movie House Cinemas, and Mr. E. Lamberti, Policy Manager at British Board of Film Classification (BBFC), were both in attendance.

After discussion the Committee agreed to hear from both speakers.

Mr. McAdam advised the Committee that:

- certain films being given a certificate of “15” by BBFC caused problems for cinema operators when those films typically attracted a younger audience;
- the film in question was based on a video game and that video games were rated under a different system, namely Pan European Game Information (PEGI), and that the game was rated “12”;
- he reminded the Committee that it had previously allowed cinemas to permit those under the age of 15 to view “The Batman” film, which had been released in early 2022, as long as they were accompanied by an adult;
- while he respected the BBFC advisory rating, families would sometimes become frustrated and obstructive with cinema staff during the mandatory ticket age check, particularly when the tickets had been purchased online;
- he believed that parents should have the right to take their children aged under 15 to the film if they thought it was suitable;
- the film would be available on a streaming service a few weeks after it had been released in cinemas and that those under the age of 15 could watch it within their homes; and
- the film was classified as a “15A” in the Republic of Ireland.

The Chairperson then welcomed Mr. E. Lamberti, to the meeting.

Mr. Lamberti advised the Committee that:

- all of the age ratings provided by the BBFC were in accordance with public opinion;
- 10,000 members of the public were consulted in respect of the guidelines every four to five years and that consultation was ongoing at present;
- one of the main roles of BBFC was to protect children from viewing harmful content and to help audiences choose what films to watch in cinemas and via streaming services;
- BBFC was an independent and not-for-profit organisation;
- BBFC always classified content at the lowest possible age rating under its guidelines and that it wanted films to be available to the widest possible audiences;
- BBFC had an advisory panel on children’s viewing, comprising experts in child welfare and child development, children’s charities and licensing authorities, OFCOM and international regulators; and

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- the Committee should be mindful of the responsibilities which it would take on if it were to lower the age rating of any film which had been classified at a higher age rating by the BBFC.

In response to a question from a Member, Mr Lamberti advised the Committee that there had never been a major call for a rating of “15A” within the UK. He explained that, however, it was something which it was consulting on within the BBFC public consultation which was currently underway and that the results would be available within a few months.

In response to a further question in respect of home streaming services, he outlined that, despite there being no legislation in respect of children viewing certain content within the home, over thirty streaming services used BBFC classifications within the UK for their content, as they recognised the importance of the ratings for audiences choosing what to watch.

Mr. Lamberti further advised the Committee that watching a film in the cinema and watching it at home were very different experiences, pointing out that certain measures could be taken to lessen the impact in the home, such as pausing it, skipping a scene or turning on the lights.

In respect of different countries having different age ratings for films, Mr. Lamberti advised the Committee that each country had certain cultural standards and that UK audiences were content with the BBFC age rating guidelines.

During discussion, a number of Members stated that, while they appreciated the consideration that BBFC had paid in determining the age rating for the film, they felt that children developed at different rates and that parents should be able to make a choice as to whether the film was suitable for their children to watch.

A Member stated that it would not necessarily always be a parent who would be accompanying a child under 15 and that it could be an older sibling or a cousin.

A further Member stated that the Council should be cautious in setting a precedent in reclassifying films against the advice of the BBFC.

In response to a Member’s query, Mr. Lamberti advised the Committee that some older films had been reclassified as audience expectations and standards had changed.

The City Solicitor advised the Committee that it must apply the BBFC age rating for a film unless it had reasons why it would choose to depart from it and that it had a legal obligation to consider any such request from an operator on a case by case basis. She also reminded the Committee that it did not have delegated authority in respect of such a policy decision and that such a decision would therefore be subject to Council ratification on 1st November, and that it would also be subject to Call-in.

In response to a Member’s query, the Building Control Manager advised the Committee that, if it was to grant the film a “15A” rating, officers were suggesting that a

**Licensing Committee,
Wednesday, 18th October, 2023**

condition be imposed requiring any cinema within the Council area which wished to adopt that rating would be required to notify the Council of its intention to do so in advance.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Ó Néill,
Seconded by Councillor McCann,

That the Committee agrees to depart from Standard Licence Condition 2 (b) which states that “No persons under the age of fifteen years shall be admitted to any Exhibition when a ‘15’ film is in the programme” and to permit cinema operators to impose a rating of ‘15A’ for the Belfast City Council area in respect of the ‘Five Nights at Freddy’s’ film, meaning that patrons under the age of 15 would be permitted entrance to view the film when accompanied by an adult;

that the Committee agrees the following additional special conditions for any cinema operator who wishes to show the “Five Nights at Freddy’s film” as a 15A:

- I. Any cinema operator who wishes to show the Five Nights at Freddy’s film as a 15A must notify the Council in advance;
- II. The cinema operator must clearly indicate the nature of any certificate received from the BBFC in any advertisement of the film displayed at the premises, as well as the fact that the Council has agreed that accompanied children under 15 may be permitted entrance; and
- III. The cinema operator must provide appropriate advice in respect of ‘15A’ films to enable an accompanying adult to decide upon the suitability of the film for children under the age of fifteen years.

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

The Committee noted that, as the decision was not a delegated matter, it would be subject to Council ratification at its meeting on 1st November, 2023, and that it would also be subject to Call-in.

After further discussion the Committee also agreed that a letter would be sent to the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) to request that it would consider formally adopting a new classification of “15A” for films, as part of its ongoing public consultation.

Chairperson

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Planning Committee

Tuesday, 17th October, 2023

HYBRID MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Garrett (Chairperson);
Aldermen Lawlor, McCullough and Rodgers;
Councillors Anglin, Bell, Bradley,
Carson, Doherty, P. Donnelly, S. Douglas
Doran, Ferguson, Groogan, Hanvey, Maskey,
McCann, Nic Bhranair and Whyte.

In attendance: Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;
Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor;
Mr. K. McDonnell, Solicitor (Regulatory and Planning)
Mr. E. Baker, Planning Manager (Development Management);
Mr. K. Sutherland, Planning Manager (Plans and Policy);
Ms. C. Reville, Principal Planning Officer;
Mr. N. Hasson, Senior Planning Officer; and
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies for inability to attend were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 19th September, 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 4th October, 2023, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

Declarations of Interest

Alderman Lawlor declared an interest in relation to item 8a on the agenda, LA04/2022/0118/F - The proposed erection of 46No.apartment units over three story's, with associated car parking site and landscaping works and the alteration of an existing vehicular access. 146 Parkgate Avenue, Strandtown, in that he was employed by Mr. Gavin Robinson MP, who had provided a letter of support for the application and left the meeting while the item was being discussed.

Councillor Garrett (Chairperson), Alderman Lawlor and Councillors Maskey and Nic Bhranair declared an interest in relation to item 9j on the agenda, LA04/2023/3822/F - Belfast Stories - Site 10 78-90 Union Street and 14-20 Kent Street, Smithfield and Union, Belfast, BT1 2JATemporary permission for two years for community facility containing green and grow space to include raised beds, pollinator towers, rainwater harvesting containers, compost bins, solar panels, seating and toilets. Space to be partly covered by a stretch tent and proposed shipping container to provide ancillary office space, in that they were Members

**Meeting of Planning Committee,
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of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee which had oversight of the funding of the Belfast Stories project and left the meeting while the item was being discussed.

Committee Site Visit

The Committee noted the Committee site visits.

Provision/Removal of Accessible Parking Bay

The Committee noted the notice of removal for 13 Haywood Avenue and the notices of provision of accessible parking bays at the following locations:

- 12 Riverview Street;
- 27 Edenvale Crescent;
- 34 Lothair Avenue;
- 46 Stranmillis Gardens;
- 101 Wallasey Park;
- Appt 1-3, 100 Cliftonville Road;
- 147 York Road; and
- 83 Clonduff Drive.

**Notification of listed buildings –
Chapel Lane and 137 Cavehill Road**

The Committee noted the confirmation of the addition of the undernoted buildings to the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest in the Belfast City Council area:

- 137 Cavehill Road, Belfast, BT15 5BL; and,
- Belfast Electric Light Station, 6 Chapel Lane (and 9-13 Marquis Street) Belfast, BT1 1HH in August 2023.

Planning Appeals Notified

The Committee noted the appeals decisions.

Planning Decisions Issued

The Committee noted the planning decisions issued in September, 2023.

Miscellaneous Reports

**Update on new contract for publishing notice
of planning applications in the press**

The Planning Manager provided the Committee with an update on the new contract for the publication of planning notices.

The Committee noted the update.

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Tuesday, 17th October, 2023**

**Update on application LA04/2023/3787/LBC -
Proposed demolition of lean-to external
store. 2 Royal Avenue, Belfast, BT1 1DA**

The Planning Manager provided the Committee with an explanation as to why the decision for the application had been issued in advance of the Committee's consideration of the proposal at its meeting in September, 2023.

He reported that the application had been assessed as a delegated application and passed to the senior officer who had realised the error and aborted the authorisation, however, the system had generated an auto-task that had been sent directly to the administrative team for issue.

He explained that a number of unique circumstances had led to the decision having been issued in error, some human error and some due to the configuration of the electronic system and that a number of controls had been put in place to ensure that the error does not occur again.

The Committee noted the update.

NILGA Training

The Director of Planning and Building Control outlined NILGA's 2023-24 Planning Training Programme for Elected Members.

The Committee noted the Planning Training Programme schedule and approved the attendance of the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and one other Member of the Committee or their nominees, to participate in the programme.

Committee Workshops

The Director of Planning and Building Control provided the Committee with an updated schedule of Planning Committee Workshops.

The Committee agreed the updated Schedule of Planning Committee Workshops for the period October 2023 to September 2024, and that specific topics might be brought forward on the schedule, as required.

**Delegation of Local applications with
NIW objections**

The Committee agreed to delegate authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control, those Local planning applications to which NI Water had objected.

**Meeting of Planning Committee,
Tuesday, 17th October, 2023**

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

Planning Applications previously deferred

(Alderman Lawlor, having declared an interest in the following application, left the meeting while the item was being considered.)

LA04/2022/0118/F - The proposed erection of 46No. apartment units over three story's, with associated car parking site and landscaping works and the alteration of an existing vehicular access. 146 Parkgate Avenue, Strandtown.

The Planning Manager reported that the application had previously been before the Committee in June, 2023, however, the Committee had deferred consideration of the application in order for further engagement between officers and the applicant to be undertaken in an attempt to resolve issues of concern and for the Members to undertake a site visit.

He explained that two further sets of plans had been submitted following engagement with officers and that a Committee site visit had taken place on 3rd October, 2023.

He informed the Committee that concerns related to impact of residential amenity had been resolved and that no additional objections had been received.

He presented the amended design and layout to the Committee with a series of aerial and street view photographs, plans and elevations.

He stated that the amended design and layout, together with additional information, was, on balance, acceptable and the application was recommended for approval with conditions, subject to a Section 76 agreement.

Proposal

Moved by Alderman McCullough,
Seconded by Councillor McCann and

Resolved – That the Committee grants planning permission, subject to conditions, and delegates authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and the Section 76 agreement, and to deal with any other matters that arise prior to the issue of the decision, provided that they are not substantive.

(Alderman Lawlor returned to the meeting.)

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Tuesday, 17th October, 2023**

**LA04/2022/1861/F, LA04/2022/1867/DCA and
LA04/2022/1860/A - Replacement facade to
active facade to facilitate the display of internally
illuminated moving images (Temporary
Permission for 5 years) 1- 3 Arthur Street**

The Planning Manager provided the Committee with an overview of the applications and pointed out that, since the Committee had deferred consideration of the application at its meeting in August, the applicant had amended the proposal to remove the proposed LED signage along the Castle Lane elevation.

He reported that the DfC Historic Environment Division had responded to the amended plans and maintained its advice that the proposal would be harmful to the setting of Listed Buildings, contrary to the SPPS and Policy BH1 of the Plan Strategy.

He explained that, whilst the Castle Lane signage had been removed from the proposal and no longer affected the west east vista along Castle Lane towards Arthur Square, internal conservation advice was that the proposals remained inappropriate and harmful to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

He concluded by stating that the proposal was contrary to the Policies BH1, BH2 and the SPPS and that it was recommended that the applications be refused by the Committee.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. J. Stevenson, the proposed operator, Mr. A. Carlton, Alterity investments, and Mr. M. Worthington, the agent, to the meeting, in support of the application.

Mr. Worthington explained that following discussions with the Planning team, the scheme had been reduced by 50 percent which further reduced the impact on the conservation area and Listed Buildings. He pointed out that a temporary permission was being sought for a period of five years which provided greater control to the Council in the future.

Mr. Carlton stated that the proposal would provide a range of benefits to Belfast, in that there would be rates payable, a free advertising contract would be available to the Council to promote its own events and that free digital content would be offered to increase the knowledge and understanding of the adjacent Listed Buildings. He explained that 50 percent of the profits gained would be donated to the LFT Charitable Trust which allocated funding to local charities.

Mr. Stevenson explained that Liverpool had one of the biggest digital screens in Europe and it was situated next to St George's Hall, a grade 1 Listed Building and it was not perceived to have had a negative impact. He added that Open Media had planned to look at this proposal as one of its first builds that would be 90 percent recyclable from manufacture to its end. He reported that every media agency that Open Media engaged with wished to connect with Belfast but have not been able to do so due to a lack of digital signage provision.

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Proposal

Moved by Alderman McCullough,
Seconded by Alderman Lawlor,

“That the Committee approves temporary planning permission, Conservation Area Consent and Advertisement Consent, for a period of five years and delegates authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions.”

Alderman McCullough accepted an addition to his proposal from Councillor Carson, to include that the permission would be reviewed in year three of the temporary five-year period.

The proposal, as amended, therefore read:

“That the Committee approves temporary planning permission, Conservation Area Consent and Advertisement Consent, for a period of five years, to be reviewed in year three, and delegates authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions.”

The Planning Manager advised the Committee that, a three-year permission would be a more appropriate term from an officer perspective as a five-year consent would be tantamount to a semi-permanent permission and three years would normally be the review period for temporary permissions.

The proposal, as amended, was put the Committee and on a vote, 12 Members voted for the proposal and five against and it was declared carried.

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

The Committee deferred consideration of the application in order to clarify procedural query with the applicant.

New Planning Applications

LA04/2022/2060/F - Replacement of fire damaged storage and distribution warehouse on same building footprint (Retrospective), 122-126 Duncrue Street

The Principal Planning Officer provided the Committee with an overview of the application and highlighted the following key issues:

- Principle of development;
- Demolition;
- Design;
- Climate change;

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Tuesday, 17th October, 2023**

- Access and parking;
- Drainage and Waste-Water Infrastructure;
- Noise, odour and other environmental impacts; and
- Trees and landscaping.

She reported that it was recommended that the application was approved, subject to conditions.

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions, and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and deal with any other matters that arise prior to issuing the decision, provided that they are not substantive.

LA04/2022/2103/F - Proposed change of use and redevelopment of the existing waste management facility and adjoining plant hire business to create a new waste disposal installation for the incineration of healthcare and hazardous waste streams and associated works, 1 and 2 Duncrue Pass, Belfast.

The Committee deferred consideration of the application in order that Members could undertake a site visit and that the issues raised by Shared Environmental Services (SES) in their consultation response could be resolved. SES and DAERA are to be invited to attend the Planning Committee when the application is reconsidered.

LA04/2023/2850/F- Change of use from Parish Hall to licensed Social Club. Renewal of previous application LA04/2018/2081/F, 146 Andersonstown Road, Andersonstown, Belfast

The Planning Manager outlined the application to the Committee and explained that the building was set back from the main Andersonstown Road, behind a commercial frontage, and that the rear of residential properties were situated to the west and south, with Andersonstown Leisure centre situated to the east.

He highlighted the following key issues:

- Principle of development;
- Impact on amenity;
- Impact on character and appearance;
- Odour and other environmental impacts; and
- Access and parking.

He referred to the decision of the Planning Appeals Commission to allow an appeal against the original application for change of use of the property to a social club, appended to the Committee report.

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He advised the Committee that the substantive planning issues and policy considerations remained the same, notwithstanding the adoption of the Belfast Local Development Plan: Plan Strategy.

He reported that Environmental Health had offered no objection to the application, subject to conditions and that it was recommended that the application would be approved.

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and deal with any other matters that arise prior to issuing the decision, provided that they are not substantive.

LA04/2022/1203/F - Relocation of 5 No. allotments approved under LA04/2020/0042/F. Introduction of an additional No. 8 allotments, a sensory garden and support hub building for day care of young adults (Amended application site boundary, proposal description and drawings). Glenriver Lands adjacent to 78 Cloona Park Belfast

The Committee deferred consideration of the application in order that Members could undertake a site visit.

LA04/2023/2324/F- Proposed development comprising demolition of an extant building and development of two apartment blocks (12 units, category 1 over 55s tenure) and change of use/alterations of existing retail unit to apartments (8 units private tenure), community amenity, parking, site access alterations, landscaping and ancillary works, Mountainview Centre, Norglen Gardens

The Principal Planning Officer provided the Committee with an overview of the application and highlighted the following key issues:

- Principle of development;
- Design, scale, layout and impact upon the character and appearance of the area;
- Impact on amenity;
- Affordable housing and housing mix;
- Accessible and adaptable accommodation;
- Climate change;
- Drainage;
- Traffic, movement and parking;
- Waste-water infrastructure; and
- Noise, odour and other environmental impacts including contamination.

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She explained that, having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal was considered, on balance, to be acceptable and that it was recommended that planning permission was granted, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement.

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement, to secure affordable housing, and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the conditions, Section 76 planning agreement, and deal with any other matters that arise prior to issuing the decision, provided they are not substantive.

(The Committee considered the following two items together.)

LA04/2023/3494/F- Application under Section 54 of the planning (NI) Act 2011 to vary/remove condition 4 of planning permission LA04/2021/2144/F which reads "There shall be no servicing (including those for water supply, drainage, heating, and gas supplies) affixed to the exterior of the buildings hereby approved, unless specifically shown on the approved plans." It is proposed to remove condition 4 to regularise downpipes and gas pipes affixed to the exterior of the building in order to comply with statutory health and safety requirements, 150 Knock Road, Belfast; and

LA04/2023/3114/F- Section 54 application to vary condition no. 21 of planning permission LA04/2021/2144/F relating to alterations to the site's acoustic fence, 150 Knock Road, Belfast.

The Principal Planning Officer explained the proposals were for the same location, to remove condition No. 4 of planning permission LA04/2021/2144/F to regularise downpipes and gas pipes affixed to the exterior of the building, and to vary condition 21, to amend the extent of the acoustic fence for the site from the entire perimeter of the site to the southern, western and eastern boundaries, therefore omitting the northern boundary.

She reported that Environmental Health had offered no objections to the changes to the perimeter fencing which was being altered due to the local topography and that there would be no adverse visual impact from the addition of piping on the buildings. She added that a letter of support had been received from the adjacent Shandon Golf Club.

The Committee granted planning permission for application LA04/2023/3494/F, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement, and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and Section

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76 planning agreement, and deal with any other matters that arise prior to issuing the decision, provided that they are not substantive.

The Committee granted planning permission for application LA04/2023/3114/F, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement, and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and Section 76 planning agreement, and deal with any other matters that arise prior to issuing the decision, provided that they are not substantive.

LA04/2023/2338/F - Full application for a proposed new single story building adjacent the new 'Peace IV Blackmountain Shared Space Project'. It comprises 8 office spaces with each space having an accessible WC and kitchenette facility. Offices will provide rental income to facilitate the long term sustainability of the adjacent building. (amended site location), site of the former Finlay's Factory south east of Ballygomartin Road, north of Moyard Crescent, northwest of Springfield Heights and Springfield Park, Belfast

The Principal Planning Officer provided the Committee with an overview of the application and highlighted the following key issues for consideration:

- Principle of offices at this location;
- Scale, height, massing, design and layout;
- Community cohesion and good relations;
- Climate change;
- Drainage and flooding;
- Traffic, movement and parking;
- Waste-water infrastructure;
- Noise, odour and other environmental impacts including contamination; and
- Natural heritage.

She reported that, having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal was considered, on balance, to be acceptable and that it was recommended that planning permission was granted, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement.

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and to deal with any other matters that might arise prior to issuing the decision, provided that they are not substantive.

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LA04/2023/3194/F - Proposed change of use and renovation of an existing office/ community building into a ground floor 'Good Relations' Community Hub and 6no. studio apartments on the first/ second floor. These will be for short term accommodation for those in housing need while they are waiting to find permanent housing. 240 Newtownards Road

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

- Principle of development;
- Design and layout;
- The impact of the proposal on amenity;
- Impact on the character and appearance of the area;
- Climate change;
- Noise, odour and other environmental impacts; and
- Access and parking.

She explained that, having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal was considered acceptable and that it had been recommended that planning permission was granted, subject to conditions.

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions, and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and deal with any other matters that arise prior to issuing the decision, provided that they are not substantive.

(Councillor Garrett (Chairperson), Alderman Lawlor and Councillors Maskey and Nic Bhranair, having declared an interest, left the meeting while the following item was considered.)

(Councillor Whyte (Deputy Chairperson) in the Chair.)

LA04/2023/3822/F - Belfast Stories - Site 10 78-90 Union Street and 14-20 Kent Street, Smithfield and Union, Belfast, BT1 2JA Temporary permission for two years for community facility containing green and grow space to include raised beds, pollinator towers, rainwater harvesting containers, compost bins, solar panels, seating and toilets. Space to be partly covered by a stretch tent and proposed shipping container to provide ancillary office space.

The Principal Planning Officer provided the Committee with an overview of the application and highlighted the following key issues for consideration:

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- Principle of the temporary use;
- Impact on the setting of a Listed Building;
- Impact on neighbouring amenity; and
- Environmental policies.

She explained that the proposal site was located in an area of vacant land which would bring regeneration benefits and was considered a complementary use within the city centre that would support the evening and nighttime economy, as well as the community.

She stated that, having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal was considered acceptable, and it was recommended that planning permission would be granted for a period of two years.

The Committee granted temporary planning permission for a period of two years, subject to conditions, and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and deal with any other matters that might arise prior to issuing the decision, provided that they are not substantive.

(Councillor Garrett (Chairperson), Alderman Lawlor and Councillors Maskey and Nic Bhranair, having declared an interest, left the meeting while the following item was discussed.)

LA04/2023/3460/F - Single storey rear and side extension, roofspace conversion to include front and rear dormers, covered garden storage to rear, 93 Somerton Road

The Principal Planning Officer explained that the application had been brought before the Committee as it had been submitted by a staff member of the Council.

She stated that it had been recommended that full planning permission would be granted, subject to conditions.

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions, and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and to deal with any other matters that arise prior to issuing the decision, provided that they are not substantive.

Restricted Item

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

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the Press and public from the meeting during discussion of the following item as, due to the nature of the 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.

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**Update on the Regional Planning Improvement
Programme**

The Director of provided the Committee with an update on the work which had been undertaken as part of the Regional Planning Improvement Programme, that included the joint work programme agreed between SOLACE and the Department for Infrastructure, and the work of the Interim Regional Commission.

The Committee noted the update and endorsed a draft letter to the Interim Regional Commission.

Chairperson

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Climate and City Resilience Committee

Thursday, 12th October, 2023

MEETING OF THE CLIMATE AND CITY RESILIENCE COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE LAVERY ROOM AND
REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor R-M Donnelly (Chairperson); and
Councillors Anglin, Bell, Bower, R. Brooks,
Collins, Doherty, M. Donnelly, D. Douglas,
S. Douglas, Kelly, McAteer, McCabe, McKeown,
Smyth and Walsh.

In attendance: Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy;
Mrs. C. Reynolds, Director (Operational) City Region and
Development;
Ms. D. Caldwell, Climate Commissioner;
Mrs. L. Toland, Senior Manager- Economy;
Ms. C. Shortt, Monitoring, Learning and Reporting Officer;
Ms. M. Quigley, Adaptation and Resilience Advisor;
Ms. C. Persic, Development Manager, City Centre
Regeneration; and
Mr. G. Graham, Democratic Services Assistant.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillors T. Brooks and Carson.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 14th September, 2023 were taken as read and signed as correct.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were recorded.

Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel Update

The Director of City Region and Development and the Development Manager provided the Committee with an update on the Eastern Transport Plan, including a Bolder Vision for Belfast and the ongoing work being undertaken across the Council in conjunction with stakeholders and Members in relation to connectivity, including active and sustainable travel. The Director highlighted the fact that in 2020, the Zero-Net Carbon Roadmap had identified that transport was responsible for twenty per cent of the City's carbon emissions.

The Director provided the Members with an overview of the Eastern Transport Plan (ETP) and its aim to provide a transport vision for the city and the wider local authority area.

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She highlighted the importance of the ETP in the support of decision making with regard to major capital investment within the metropolitan area, and how it could assist the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) to deliver on its climate obligations contained within the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022.

The Committee was provided with an overview of key aspects contained with the Bolder Vision for Belfast and of the need to adapt to changing demands from city centre occupants and to the provision of better place-based infrastructure to support city centre living. The Director referred to four key elements contained within the Bolder Vision, namely:

1. Creation of a Civic Spine with a focus on People;
2. Reimagining the Inner Ring and ending Car Dominance;
3. The promotion of City Centre Living; and
4. Embracing the River Lagan and the Waterfront.

The Senior Manager stated that a final draft of the Bolder Vision had been provided to the August 2022 meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee (CG&R) and was subject to DfI and DfC ministerial sign-off.

In terms of Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel (CAST), the Members were informed that a cross-sector stakeholder sub-group, co-chaired by Sustrans and Translink, had been formed to develop a CAST action plan included as part of the Belfast Agenda consultation process. The Committee was informed of the many positive attributes associated with the delivery of active and sustainable travel, including access to employment, education and tackling climate change. The Members were informed that the Council had been successful in securing funding from DfI's Blue and Green Infrastructure Fund for the delivery of covered cycle stands, a further step in encouraging the public to consider alternative forms of sustainable transport.

The Members were informed that an all-party round table on CAST had taken place on 30th August 2023, providing Members with the opportunity to engage with the work undertaken under that programme and highlighting the connections to the Council's strategic priorities and governance structures. It was reported that the round table meeting had provided an opportunity for elected members and other participants to discuss and consider the potential impact of the Eastern Transport Plan on a range of strategic and physical regeneration projects.

In response to concerns by the Committee about the dangers of cycling in the city and the need to separate cycling lanes from both pedestrians and vehicular traffic, the Director stated that DfI would be attending a future meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee and that Members would be given the opportunity to address their concerns to the department directly.

A Member requested that Translink might wish to consider extending their service to facilitate the night-time economy and was informed that Translink would also be making

**Climate and City Resilience Committee,
Thursday, 12th October, 2023**

representation to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee on their proposed extended service arrangements and that the Members would be provided with the opportunity to raise their concerns with Translink directly.

Noted.

**Consultation Response to Northern Ireland's
Emission Reduction Targets and Carbon Budgets
the UKCCC'S Advice Report**

The Monitoring, Learning and Reporting Officer provided the Committee with an update on the consultation response to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) on emissions targets, carbon budgets and the Climate Change Committee's (CCC) advice.

She reminded the Members that a climate emergency had been declared by the Northern Ireland Assembly in February 2022, culminating in the Climate Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. The Committee was informed that the Climate Act set the framework for tackling climate change and a reduction in emissions to achieve net zero by 2050. The Monitoring, Learning and Reporting Officer referred to the work undertaken by DAERA in leading the development of Northern Ireland's five-year climate action plan as required by the Climate Act.

The Members were informed that the main aim of the consultation process was to seek views on the proposed 2030 and 2040 emissions targets for Northern Ireland, including the proposed carbon budgets for the periods 2023-27, 2028-2032 and 2022-2037. The Committee was advised that DAERA was using the consultation process to seek the views of the public on the Climate Change Committee's Advice Report.

The Monitoring, Learning and Reporting Officer stated that the Council was in broad agreement with both the targets and budgets contained within the consultation document. The Council had agreed also to keep the 2030 emissions reduction target of at least forty-eight per cent emissions reduction compared to the baseline, and a 2040 emissions target of at least seventy-seven per cent. The Committee was informed also that a reduction in the carbon budget should be set at thirty-three per cent average annual reduction in emissions, a second reduction of forty-eight per cent reduction followed by a sixty-two per cent reduction in emissions compared to the baseline figure.

The Members were informed of some of the work which was ongoing in the city to reduce carbon emissions, including the support for small and medium enterprises to assist with reducing their carbon output. The Committee was informed also of the need to coordinate and improve action in terms of energy from waste infrastructure in Northern Ireland which had historically been under-developed.

Noted.

Amazon Web Services - Climate Data Platform Challenge

The Monitoring, Learning and Reporting Officer provided the Committee with an update on the work with Amazon Web Services (AWS). She reported that, in February 2020, a climate emergency had been declared by the Northern Ireland Assembly, setting out Northern Ireland’s framework for tackling climate change and reducing carbon emissions. The Members were informed that the Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) was taking a lead on the development of Northern Ireland’s first five-year climate action plan and the important role of public bodies in tackling climate change was highlighted and recognised by the Act. To that end, and with new reporting mechanisms required, the Monitoring, Learning and Reporting Officer stated that the Council was required to have an accessible platform for climate related data. It was reported that the climate team had been working with Amazon Web Services (AWS), and other council departments, to establish what the data needs were, across the Council, in relation to climate and other work areas.

The Members were informed that the opportunity to avail of AWS originated with the Cloud Innovation Centre, based at Arizona State University. The Committee was informed that the objective of the engagement with AWS was to assist in the construction of a visual representation, via wireframe, displaying what the platform would look like with a build time completion of the platform estimated to be approximately eight weeks.

The Monitoring, Learning and Reporting Officer reported that a further update report on progress on the wireframe build programme would be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

Noted.

Update on One Million Trees

The Adaptation and Resilience Advisor submitted the undernoted report providing an update on the launch of the one million trees project.

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on Belfast City Council’s One Million Trees initiative.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

i) note the contents of the report.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Background:

Belfast City Council’s One Million Trees initiative was launched in November 2020 and is committed to supporting the planting of one million trees, within Belfast, by 2035.

- 3.2 The initiative is delivered through the Climate Team and engages with partners from the private, community/voluntary, and statutory sectors and maintains internal partnerships within Belfast City Council, to support the objectives of the initiative. The objectives of One Million Trees Initiative are to:**
- 1. Create an inclusive structure and processes which enable tree planting and the growth of green infrastructure and biodiversity in Belfast;**
 - 2. Plant at least one million trees within the next 15 years – delivering a step change in our approach to climate adaptation and environmental improvements; and**
 - 3. Protect the city and the people of the city by increasing carbon capture, reducing harm from air pollution, weather impact and loss of nature and improving health and well-being.**
- 3.3 The core funding for the programme is through the Woodland Trust’s Emergency Tree Fund (details below), which is due to end May 2024. A key priority for the Climate Team is to secure additional funds to support both Council’s ongoing commitment to deliver by 2035, and the excellent work of our delivery partners, primarily The Woodland Trust, and Belfast Hills Partnership.**
- 3.4 The Million Trees Partnership is made up of 21 partners who will be brought together in October/November to review progress to date and to identify the key priorities for the next phase of the programme so that funding can be sought and secured.**
- 3.5 The funding has supported the delivery of the iTree Eco Report, as well as the Belfast Tree Strategy (recently delivered by City and Neighbourhood Services). It has also allowed for the delivery of volunteer coordination, community outreach and support for PR and communication, working with the Belfast Hills Partnership since the last planting season and will continue up to May 2024. Whilst also coordinating physical planting of trees and hedgerows, Belfast Hills delivers school engagements, across the city, to educate and introduce young people to the benefits of trees and also introduce the conversation around climate change and city resilience.**
- 3.6 In the 2023/2024 financial year, Belfast Hills will:**
- engage with 8 primary schools, where trees and hedgerows will be planted by pupils;**
 - deliver 10 Woodland Workshops, to educate and inform residents, in such things as; seed collection hedgerow**

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laying, foraging, badger surveying and storytelling, amongst other topics;

- engage and work with 6 Youth Centres, in partnership with the Education Authority, to allow young adults to engage in the climate conversation, through the installation of the ‘Forest in a Box’ project, which will be used to create nature spaces for the benefit of users;
- coordinate 6 woodland walks across the city, to again educate around woodland preservation and environmental impacts on precious natural resource; and
- BHP will also coordinate a number of volunteer activities, which will include maintenance and management of existing sites and also the planting of new sites.

3.7 These activities delivered within the upcoming planting season will cumulatively plant 5,700 trees across Belfast.

3.8 One Million Trees reports quarterly to the Woodland Trust on progress, both on financial and physical activity. The Emergency Tree Fund is currently in the second quarter of it’s last year of funding the Million Trees Programme.

3.9 Reporting for the last financial year includes tree numbers from all our statutory, private and internal partners, which culminated in 28,813 trees being planted in the 2022/2023 season (Oct-April) to include hedgerow planting.

Partner	Number Trees	Number hedgerow	Date range	New/ Existing site	Million Trees Funding Y/N	Other Funding
DFC	3728	3827	Oct-Apr	E	N	Self
NIE	0	0				
NIHE			Oct-Apr	E	N	Self
NIHE N&W	557	2257				
NIHE S&E	3171	1530				
National Trust	353	0	Oct-Apr	E	N	Self
Belfast Hills Partnership	6028	6192	Oct-Apr	N	Y	
BCC	1170	0				
Total	15,007	13,806				28,813

3.10 In total 92,313 trees have been planted in Belfast through this project. In the upcoming planting season, it is estimated that there is potential to plant between 80,000 and 100,000 trees, however some of these sites are still to be confirmed and the

new Belfast Tree Strategy should provide the basis for these to come forward in the coming planting seasons. To achieve this goal, it will however require continued positive working both internally and externally with other partners and a secure tree supply to be confirmed.

4.0 Financial and Resource Implications

4.1 None.

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

5.1 There are no Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment requirements.”

The Members noted the information provided and recognised the valuable societal contribution associated with the one million tree project and the benefits of community engagement, including schools and youth and community organisations in that programme.

Belfast Dublin Economic Corridor Update

The Senior Manager provided an update on the progress of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor, including the draft action plan for the second half of the current financial year. She reminded the Members that the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor had been formed in 2021, comprising eight councils along its boundaries and including two partner universities, namely, Dublin City University and Ulster University.

The Committee was informed that the current secretariat of the partnership was managed by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and that the governance structure of the partnership comprised twenty-four elected representatives, three from each of the local authorities, who constituted a political advisory group. The Senior Manager stated that the political representatives provided an advisory and consultative forum, supporting both the Directors Group and Chief Executive Officer in the governance of the partnership.

The Committee was informed that new political representation had been sought from Belfast City Council following the local government elections, in May 2023, and that the next meeting of the partnership was scheduled to take place at the Belfast campus of the Ulster University in December 2023.

The Senior Manager informed the Members that the strategy around the creation of the corridor was based around an ambition of creating a leading axis of development and the achievement of sustainable growth through collaborative research and development, supported by a highly skilled workforce and enabling infrastructure. She highlighted the ambition to be recognised globally as a major international centre in growth sectors such as professional services, advance manufacturing, ICT and health sciences.

The Senior Manager highlighted the priorities with the action plan for the current year, including a review of existing skills strategies and the identification of gaps and barriers

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to learning. She referred to a feasibility study on Regional Innovation Hubs, supported through the Shared Island Unit Fund, including an additional feasibility study on a connected circular economy due to be completed by November 2023.

The Members were informed that engagement with the Shared Island Unit was continuing to explore additional funding opportunities and that additional sources of funding were being explored with SEUPB to access additional funding through Peace Plus. The Senior Manager stated that additional funding would be explored to develop area-based skills initiatives in addition to funding the ongoing operations of the corridor team.

The Committee was informed that regular meetings of the partnership governance structure had been agreed up to the summer of 2024, including meetings at Director level and quarterly meetings for elected representatives. She stated also that a draft partnership agreement had been prepared to clarify areas of co-operation and partnership working.

In terms of communication, the Committee was informed that a coherent marketing and communications strategy was being prepared and that as part of that work partners were exploring the potential to hold an economic conference in early 2024.

Noted.

Issues Raised in Advance by Members

Irish Passport Design

The Committee agreed to forward a letter to the Department of Foreign Affairs in Dublin, requesting that they include depictions/landmarks of Northern Ireland in any new proposed Irish passport design.

Agreed.

Chairperson

Standards and Business Committee

Tuesday, 24th October, 2023

MEETING OF THE STANDARDS AND BUSINESS COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE LAVERY ROOM AND
REMOТЕLY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor McDonough-Brown (Chairperson);
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Groogan);
Aldermen Lawlor, McCullough and Rodgers; and
Councillors Bradley, M. Donnelly, P. Donnelly, D. Douglas,
Duffy, Kelly, Long, Lyons, Magee, F. McAteer, G. McAteer,
McCormick, McDowell and McMullan.

In attendance: Ms. N. Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal
and Civic Services;
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer; and
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor R. McLaughlin.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 26th September were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 4th October.

Declarations of Interest

The Chairperson, Councillor McDonough-Brown, and Councillor G. McAteer declared an interest in agenda item 2 (a) Notice of Motion – Arts Cuts, in that they had family members who either worked for the Arts Council or worked with organisations that received funding from the Arts Council and both left the meeting whilst the motion was being considered.

Councillors Long, McCormick and McMullan declared an interest in agenda item 2 (d) Notice of Motion – Pay Awards for Health and Social Care Trust Staff, in that they either worked for or had family members who worked for the Health Service and left the meeting whilst the motion was being considered.

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Motions

The Committee considered the following six motions which had been received in advance of the Council meeting on 1st November:

Arts Cuts

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Lyons,
Seconded by The Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor Groogan,

That the motion be referred to Council for debate, with no restriction on the number of speakers.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor T. Kelly,
Seconded by Alderman Lawlor,

That the motion be adopted.

On a vote, seven Members voted for the amendment and ten against and it was declared lost.

Accordingly, the original proposal standing in the name of Councillor Lyons was put to the Committee and agreed.

Childcare Provision

The Committee agreed that the motion be referred, in the first instance, to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Mental Health Accessibility Audit

The Committee agreed that the motion be referred, in the first instance, to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Pay Awards for Health and Social Care Trust Staff

The Committee agreed that the motion be referred to the Council for debate, with no restriction on the number of speakers.

Rugby World Cup

The Committee agreed that the motion be referred, in the first instance, to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

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Secure Needle Drug Waste Bins

The Committee agreed that the motion be referred to the Council for debate, with no restriction on the number of speakers.

Chairperson

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Arts Cuts

“Belfast City Council:

- i. is alarmed at the proposed 5% cut in funding to arts organisations funded by the Department for Communities through the Arts Council NI;
- ii. commends Equity NI, the arts community, its supporters, and the community at large for resisting these proposed cuts, including over 12,500 individuals signing Equity’s petition which asked for more investment in the arts, not less;
- iii. notes that Arts Council NI funding has decreased, in real terms, by 30% over the last decade, despite evidence that investment in the arts has a real terms economic benefit for the City and the North as a whole;
- iv. further notes that the Department for Communities has indicated that it may implement further cuts in arts funding in the financial year 2024/25;
- v. recognises that Stormont Permanent Secretaries are being forced to take, without mandate, difficult decisions that should be taken by locally elected Ministers and a devolved Executive and Assembly;
- vi. further recognises that, too often, the Council is forced to step in and financially support arts and cultural organisations which have lost funding from Stormont Departments, putting pressure on our ability to deliver existing arts and cultural schemes;
- vii. calls for a reversal in cuts to the arts and agrees to join as a signatory to Equity NI’s latest open letter to the Permanent Secretary of the Department for Communities; and
- viii. further calls for the restoration of a reformed Executive and Assembly to take decisions which can future-proof the arts sector and protect funding in the future.”

Proposer: Councillor de Faoite

Seconder: Councillor Lyons

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Pay Awards for Health and Social Care Trust Staff

“Belfast City Council:

- i. notes with concern the recent letter from the Chief Executives of the six Health and Social Care Trusts to the Secretary of State to emphasise in the strongest possible terms the need for concrete action on pay awards for HSC staff;
- ii. expresses frustration that a pay offer for HSC staff has not yet been tabled for the financial year 2023/24;
- iii. recognises the toll on HSC staff by severe pressures on services and significant issues with recruitment and retention;
- iv. condemns the refusal by the DUP to participate in the reform and reformation of the Executive, which would allow for local decisions on HSC pay to be taken with haste; and
- v. calls for a fair pay offer for HSC staff to be tabled immediately.”

Proposer: Councillor Doherty

Seconder: Councillor de Faoite

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Secure Needle/Drug Waste Bins

“This Council notes with concern the rising number of needles being discarded and drug paraphernalia waste in Belfast city centre from intravenous drug use. Since the City has come out of the pandemic, it has seen an increase in the number of vulnerable people suffering from addiction issues in the City centre. With this increase, it has seen that needles and syringes are not only being discarded in public places but also in some standard public waste bins in the City Centre, potentially putting the public and Council staff at increased risk of a sharp’s injury.

It notes also that Glasgow has recently installed a new secure disposal bin to reduce drug-related litter and for service users to positively discard needles after they have finished injecting and improve collective community safety in its City centre.

This Council will, therefore, commit to working with relevant partners, including the Public Health Agency, Government Departments, PSNI, BIDs, businesses and organisations supporting the vulnerable in the City centre core, towards the installation of specific needle/drug waste bins in key locations that are known to have high incidences of needle finds.”

Proposer: Councillor Smyth

Seconder: Councillor McCusker

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