

# People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 9th January, 2024

## 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 and Ó Néill.

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

### **Apologies**

An apology was reported from Councillor Verner.

### **Minutes**

The Committee was asked to note that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee of 5th December had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 8th January, subject to the amendment under the heading Proposal for Dual Language Street Signs, the Council agreed that the minute be amended to reflect that a Dual Language Street sign would be erected at Knock Eden Park and that a resurvey of the street would not be carried out.

The minutes of the meeting of 5th December were taken as read and signed as correct, subject to the amendment.

### **Declarations of Interest**

Councillors Canavan and M. Donnelly declared an interest in Agenda Item 3 (a) Correspondence from Belfast Advice Group in that they were associated with an organisation which was in receipt of funding and left the meeting whilst the item was under consideration.

### **Item Withdrawn from Agenda**

The Committee noted that agenda item 5 (a) Article 4 and 5 of Waste and Contamination Land (NI) Order had been withdrawn from the agenda.

## Presentation

### Presentation from A Playful City on its initiative Playful Streets

The Chairperson welcomed to Mr. A. Copeland and Ms. N. Ni Bhriain, representing A Playful City, to the meeting.

Mr. Copeland commenced by advising that A Playful City was a not-for-profit organisation focused on engaging communities to create more inclusive, healthy and playful public places. He stated that its aim was to focus on facilitating as many voices as possible through a phased process to design public space for local community. He highlighted that, as recently as one or two generations ago, it was part of the fabric of urban neighbourhoods to be playing in the street but, as dangers had increased, recent research demonstrated that a child's 'radius of activity' was usually quite close to parents or caregivers until the child was in the region of 9 years of age.

The representative advised that a Playful Street was a resident-led, low cost and easy way to create play spaces close to home by reducing or removing traffic temporarily. It was about opening streets for children to play out on their streets, whilst also giving the opportunity for neighbours to get to know each other through meeting on their streets. Its aim was to create a safe space for children to play outside their homes and for that community to come together.

The representative advised the Members that, in order to normalise street play for children, local authorities and public bodies needed to further explore how they could provide support to communities who wished to run Playful Streets and he specifically drew reference to the pilot run by Fingal County Council and the learning that could be taken from this pilot.

The representative concluded the presentation by sharing a drone shot of the Fingal pilot and also a video animation of the Playful Street Report, a copy of which was subsequently e-mailed to all Members of the Committee. More information on A Playful City was available via its website [here](#)

Several of the Members welcomed the informative presentation and stated that they would be keen to hear more about the Fingal pilot. It was acknowledged that Belfast City Council's situation was slightly different to Fingal County Council's in that Belfast did not have the powers to close streets as this was the responsibility of the Department for Infrastructure, however, Members were keen to explore the learning that could be taken from it and requested that Sustrans also be invited to attend.

The Committee noted the presentation and agreed to invite representatives from Fingal County Council and Sustrans to a future meeting to further explore the Playful City Street Initiative and to hear more about its pilot scheme.

### **Restricted Items**

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

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the press and public from the meeting during discussion of the following 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.

The Members were advised that content of ‘restricted’ reports and any discussion which takes place during closed session must be treated as ‘confidential information’ and no such information should be disclosed to the public as per Paragraph 4.15 of the Code of Conduct.

### **Correspondence from Belfast Advice Group**

The Committee considered a report which detailed that correspondence had been received from the Belfast Advice Group (BAG) seeking additional funding for generalist advice along with several other requests.

It was noted that officers would be undertaking a review of the funding request with a view to obtaining a more detailed breakdown.

The Committee agreed that it would be useful for BAG to attend the February meeting of Committee to provide an overview of its work and to consider further the request.

### **Crescent Park Gates**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 15th January 2023, the Members had heard deputations from representatives of the Friends of The Crescent (FoTC) and a delegation from those opposing the proposal to gate the park. At this stage, the Committee had agreed to defer the decision to enable wider consultation to be undertaken with the various stakeholders.

The Members were advised that, following the last meeting, Council officers had met with the FoTC and a group called the Crescent Park Preservation Collective (CPPC). The Council had also liaised with the PSNI and sought its views on the proposal. The Neighbourhood Services Manager then drew the Members’ attention to written submissions that had been received from each of the stakeholders which had been attached as appendices to the report.

The Committee was advised that a late request had been made by representatives from the CPPC seeking to address tonight's meeting of the Committee to outline their opposition to the gating of the park. The Members declined to accede to the request, given that representations had already been made to the Committee in January 2023 and that the group, like the other stakeholders, had submitted a written submission which clearly outlined their position.

The Members were also informed of correspondence received earlier in the day in relation to a possible public right of way through this public space. The Members were informed that should they decide to agree the gating proposal that it would be subject to this matter being resolved.

The Committee noted the estimated financial cost to the Council for the erection of the gates would be in the region of £60,000 and that the FoTC were willing to contribute £25,000 to the total costs of design, production and installation. The Council would be required to contribute to the remainder of the installation costs, agree to adopt and maintain the gates and add the daily opening and closing of the gates to their existing schedule for other parks and open spaces in the same Council area.

Following consideration of the report it was:

Moved by Councillor Murray,  
Seconded by Councillor McAteer,

That given the amount of work undertaken to try and revitalise the area, the Committee agrees to proceed with the erection of gates at Crescent Park.

#### **Amendment**

Moved by Councillor Flynn,  
Seconded by Councillor de Faoite,

That the Committee agrees not to erect the gates at Crescent Park but instead to redirect the Council element of funding to animate and revitalise the area to help tackle the anti-social behaviour issues.

On a vote, 3 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 proceed with the erection gates at Crescent Park

On a vote, 15 Members voted for the amendment and 3 against and it was declared carried.

The Committee further agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting that would detail the position in relation to the 24-hour pilot schemes previously agreed by Committee to be undertaken at Ormeau, Falls and Woodvale Parks.

**Committee/Strategic Issues**

**Community Support Plan and Review of Funding**

The Committee considered the following report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues**

**1.1 The main purpose of this report is;**

- To seek approval for officers to produce a Council Community Support Plan (25/28) and commission external support to complete this.
- To seek approval for a review of the current community development large grants schemes and commission external support to complete this.

**2.0 Recommendation**

**2.1 Members are asked to:**

- Approve that officers produce a Council Community Support Plan (25/28) and commission necessary external support to complete this.
- Approve that officers undertake a review of current community development large grants schemes and commission necessary external support to complete this.

**3..0 Main Report**

**Background information**

**Community Support Plan**

**3.1 Members will recall that Council provides a range of community development grants and funding to support the community/voluntary sector across the city. This funding comes directly from Council and Department for Communities (DfC) via the Community Support Programme (CSP) which is provided to all council areas. This year, the CSP is contributing over £2.2m towards Advice Funding, Capacity Building, Revenue for Community Buildings, Social Supermarket and Summer Scheme funding programmes.**

**3.2 The CSP Letter of Offer includes a requirement for Council to provide DfC with a 3-Year Community Support Plan. This plan sets out how we promote community development and support service provision within communities. The plan must be aligned with the CSP outcomes and our Community Plan, the Belfast Agenda.**

**3.3 Council's last Community Support Plan was completed in 2014. Since the introduction of community planning, Council has used the Belfast Agenda to articulate its priorities and commitments in terms of community support and this approach has been followed by most other council areas. However, there are a number of factors which provide the rationale for developing a current Community Support Plan which further articulates detail on Council's priorities in terms of community support.**

**3.4 These factors include;**

- **Publication of refreshed Belfast Agenda which contains a number of high level commitments in relation Community and Neighbourhood Regeneration, Health Inequalities, Children and Young People and Older People.**
- **Impacts of both Covid and Cost of Living pressures which need to be considered and reflected in a detailed Community Support Plan.**
- **Need to review and articulate Council's position in terms of its community support priorities as these will inform resources required, including funding priorities and approaches.**
- **Ongoing DfC reviews of People and Place (Neighbourhood Renewal), Support for Community/Voluntary sector and Advice Services which are scheduled for implementation in 2025. It is likely that these will have a significant impact on the funding environment within Belfast and Council needs to consider its priorities in advance, so that it can respond to these changes and any requests for support that may emerge.**

**3.5 Review of Capacity Building and Revenue Grants**

**Council provides funding to support the development of the community/voluntary sector in Belfast. The two large multi annual grants which support this activity are capacity and revenue (for community buildings).The objectives/outcomes and operation of these grants have not been reviewed since 2012 but recent analysis of grant applications shows a change in the types of organisations and activity which are seeking support. For example, applications would historically have come from neighbourhood/area-based community organisations but in 2023, more applications were received from organisations supporting specific 'communities of interest' and there was an increase in the level of support requested for running costs within capacity applications. In addition, as outlined in 3.4, DfC are undertaking a number of reviews on relevant funding programmes that will have an impact for the VCSE sector in Belfast. It is therefore timely that council undertake a review of**

our programmes to ensure that we are funding activity that meets priorities and outcomes that we want to support.

- 3.6 The current large grant programmes are supporting activity from April 23 – March 26. Council provided a significant increase in funding for these programmes in 2023. The total level of funding for both grants is £3,230,609 per annum, with £734,357 coming from the CSP and £2,496,252 from Council. A review would enable council to consider the outcomes which Council want to achieve through the level of investment it makes .
- 3.7 The next round of applications to the large grant programme will open in June 2025 and an extensive review needs to be completed in advance of this date to ensure adequate time is scheduled for the extensive consultation/engagement process and equality screening that will be required.
- 3.8 Officers are seeking approval to undertake both pieces of work as soon as possible so that final reports and associated actions can be agreed through Council before March 2025.

3.9 **Financial and Resource Implications**

Staff and financial resource to complete this work will be taken from existing budgets. In order to ensure an objective, independent exercise is undertaken, external consultant/s will be appointed to work with council officers to produce the reports.

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

Given the significant impact which any changes to the large grant funding programme will have on the VCSE sector and communities across the city, an equality screening and rural impact assessment will be undertaken on any resulting change in policy/programme.”

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

**Schools Air Quality Monitoring**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 **Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues**

- 1.1 The Committee will be aware that the Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026 contains an action proposed by Sustrans and the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) in respect of ‘School Streets’. A ‘School Street’ is a road or street outside of a school where a temporary restriction on motorised traffic is applied at am ‘drop-off’ and pm ‘pick-up’ times during the school day.

- 1.2 Ambient air quality monitoring in the vicinity of schools for typical road transport related pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub>) may provide health-based evidence and numerical data to help inform the identification and designation of School Streets by the Department for Infrastructure and Sustrans. Sustrans have indicated that gathering data from air quality monitors could help make the case stronger for where we need to tackle air pollution and target schools for interventions such as a School Streets pilot.
- 1.3 Accordingly, this report serves to provide a monitoring proposal for a range of Belfast primary schools in order to characterise local transport related ambient air pollution affecting school users. The monitoring data will be provided to DfI, Sustrans and where requested to the respective schools to help inform the identification and designation of School Streets.
- 2.0 **Recommendation**
- 2.1 The Committee is invited to note the contents of this School's Streets' Air Quality Monitoring Report and to agree that the council's ambient monitoring contribution to the Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026 School Streets project be implemented in the manner proposed.
- 3.0 **Main Report**
- 3.1 The Committee will be aware that the Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026 contains an action at measure 22, traffic management, proposed by Sustrans and the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) in respect of 'School Streets'. A School Street is a road or street outside of a school where a temporary restriction on motorised traffic is applied at am 'drop-off' and pm 'pick-up' times during the school day, resulting in a safer and environmentally improved local environment. The restriction is typically applied to both school and through traffic.
- 3.2 By way of example, it is noted that DfI, at the Ravenhill Road, in addition to having designated the Ravenhill Road as an urban clearway from 08:00 – 09:30 and 16:30 – 18:00 (Monday to Friday), have imposed a 20 mph signalised speed limit around a school entrance and have posted signs restricting stopping on the school's entrance markings from 08:30 – 09:15 and from 14:30 – 15:30 (Monday to Friday) in order to improve safety and the local environment.



- 3.3 Moreover, the Committee is advised that a 'Notice of Motion' in respect of School Streets was considered at the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee meeting of 20th January 2023, whereupon the Committee

*agreed, 'in the first instance, that the Council would write to the Department for Infrastructure requesting it to bring forward a School Streets pilot project in Belfast, with the response to be presented to the Committee for consideration and a decision to be taken on the way forward'.*

- 3.4 Furthermore, upon consideration of the minutes of the People and Communities Committee meeting of 13th June 2023 concerning the Air Quality Detailed Assessment report, at the full Council meeting of 3rd July 2023, Council agreed that a letter would be forwarded to the Department for Agriculture, Environment, and Rural Affairs (DAERA) seeking air quality monitoring stations to be erected around primary schools. A letter was sent to the DAERA Air and Environmental Quality Unit on 9th August 2023 by the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services, and a response was received from DAERA, dated 30th August 2023, indicating the Department's intention to support the purchase of two small sensor air quality monitoring units via the 2023-2024 local air quality management process, to be used in a School Streets monitoring project.

- 3.5 The Committee will be aware that the four Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) presently designated across the city have been declared for exceedances of the 40 mgm<sup>-3</sup> nitrogen dioxide annual mean air quality objective, associated principally with road transport emissions. It should be noted however that in accordance with the provisions of the Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) local air quality management guidance (LAQM.TG(22)), annual mean objectives apply only at the building façades of residential properties, schools, hospitals, care homes etc., where members of the public are regularly exposed over a substantial period of the objective. They do not apply at kerbside or other locations where public exposure is short-term. The 200 mgm<sup>-3</sup> 1-hour mean objective for nitrogen dioxide is therefore more correctly applied at kerbside locations and so it is considered that any ambient monitoring for nitrogen dioxide in the vicinity of schools should be on this basis. The Committee will be additionally aware that there is a 'drop off' in nitrogen dioxide concentrations with distance from the kerbside of a road and so the highest nitrogen dioxide concentrations are likely to be experienced by school users at kerbside locations along the most heavily trafficked nearby roads. Particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>) concentrations are assessed against annual mean objectives, with PM<sub>10</sub> also assessed against a 24-hour mean objective.

- 3.6 The Committee is advised that council Air Quality Officers have liaised with Sustrans in order to identify a selection of primary schools situated throughout the city where transport related ambient air quality monitoring in their localities might be undertaken. Selection criteria applied include; • Is there much traffic congestion at the school gates? • Does the infrastructure / road layout around the school seem suitable for a future intervention such as School Streets? • Is the school keen to increase active travel among pupils? • Is the school in the Active School Travel programme? Some of the primary schools identified are already engaged with Sustrans through their Active School Travel programme.
- 3.7 Schools under consideration for ambient air quality monitoring in their locality include' St. Joseph's Primary, Holland Drive, Ballyhackamore; Rosetta Primary School, Knockbreda Road; Belvoir Park Primary School, Belvoir Drive; Holy Rosary Primary School, Sunnyside Crescent; Holy Family Primary School, Newington Avenue; Cavehill Primary School, Upper Castle Park; Holy Evangelists' Primary School and Nursery Unit, Glasvey Drive, Dunmurry and; Holy Trinity Primary School, Monagh Drive.
- 3.8 Sustrans have subsequently indicated that as a consequence of their ongoing engagement with some of the abovementioned schools, they would inform them about the Council's plans to potentially locate air quality monitors in their localities. Sustrans have advised that the responses have been positive for those schools that they have been in contact with to date. Council officers will however have full regard for any school concerns expressed regarding the proposed monitoring activities.
- 3.9 There will be no impact on school operations or pupils as a consequence of the proposed ambient air quality monitoring and officers will not need to enter any school grounds, as all ambient monitoring will be planned and undertaken to target adjacent public roads and transport routes, to and from the schools.
- 3.10 It is therefore proposed to purchase two new solar powered small sensor indicative grade ambient air quality monitors for nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter and to deploy them, alongside two of the council's existing Zephyr small sensor air quality monitors, originally located to contribute additional background data for the detailed assessment project, to the School Streets project. An example of an existing Zephyr monitor installation is included in the Appendix (Section 4.0) of this report. It is further proposed that the monitors will be deployed from mid to late January 2024, subject to suitable lamppost / street furniture mounting locations in appropriate monitoring locations being identified and agreed with DfI, which owns the lampposts and street furniture. In addition, the

lampposts or street furniture chosen must be able to safely support the small sensor monitors and solar panels throughout all weather conditions and so this will need to be confirmed by DfI. The monitors and solar panels will be marked as council air quality monitoring equipment and be located on lampposts or street furniture at an approximate 3m height. The monitors are virtually silent in operation and data collection and communication is via inbuilt 4G wireless data modem. It is proposed that the monitors will be installed for an approximate period of 3 months until around Easter 2024 in the locality of an initial four schools, subject to school engagement and agreement, whereupon they may be relocated to the remaining school areas. This approach will mean that ambient monitoring may continue until the conclusion of the Northern Ireland 2023-2024 school academic year on 1st July 2024.

3.11 The small sensor air quality monitors can generate indicative ambient monitoring data over typical 1-minute intervals and so provide suitable temporal data resolution for assessing compliance with annual, daily and hourly mean air quality objectives, as well as identifying and characterising daily diurnal trends such as any am or pm pollution peaks associated with school or road traffic. It is considered that a three-month monitoring duration will provide sufficient data to correctly characterise am or pm pollution peaks. Monitoring will be able to take account of school holidays, etc.

3.12 The transport related ambient monitoring data will be shared with Sustrans and DfI and be made available to the respective schools, upon their request. Where additionally requested, Council Air Quality Officers will engage with Sustrans, DfI and schools in order to assist in interpreting the air quality monitoring data generated, and in support of any subsequent engagement concerning the designation of School Streets.

3.13 Financial and Resource Implications

The purchase cost of the two small sensor air quality monitors is being provided at a 100% funding rate by DAERA through the 2023-2024 local air quality management grant process. Any additional funds required for delivery of this monitoring project will be provided from within existing Scientific Unit budget resources. The monitoring project will be delivered by council Air Quality Officers as an addition to their statutory local air quality management obligations.

3.14 Equality or Good Relations Implications/  
Rural Needs Assessment.

None.”

Following a query regarding the lack of inner-city schools included in the pilot, the Director of City Services advised that the schools had been selected in close liaison with Sustrans.

The Committee:

- noted the content of this School's Streets' Air Quality Monitoring Report and agreed the Council's ambient monitoring contribution to the Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026 School Streets project be implemented in the manner proposed;
- agreed to write to DAERA seeking additional funding to enable the extension of the monitoring programme to additional school streets; and
- agreed that, following this pilot, a report would be submitted to a future meeting to establish the parameters for the selection of additional schools should a future pilot be feasible.

### **Unadopted Alleyways Workshop**

The Committee was reminded that, at its November 2023 meeting, it had agreed that a special meeting of the Committee would be convened to consider the vesting of unadopted alleyways. Council officers had since met with the Chairperson and Councillor R. Brooks who had suggested the special meeting and it was now felt that, given the proposed number of outside stakeholders involved, a workshop would be a better, more informal approach at this stage.

The Members were then asked to consider and review the following list of proposed attendees:

- Department for Communities;
- Department for Infrastructure;
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive;
- Radius Housing;
- Choice Housing;
- Department for Justice; and
- Connswater Homes.

The Committee agreed that the proposed special Committee meeting be changed to a Workshop to be held on 26th February and agreed the proposed list of attendees as detailed.

### **Operational Issues**

#### **Request for Community Garden at Lower Botanic**

The Committee considered a report which sought approval for the use of part of Lower Botanic Gardens by Friends of the Field for a new agroecology community garden as part of the Horizon 2020 UPSURGE project.

The Members were advised that the UPSURGE Project was a Horizon 2020 research collaboration with Queen's University Belfast that involved five cities across Europe aiming to test nature-based solutions for climate action. The aim of the project, which would run until August 2025, was to develop a climate demonstrator site at Lower Botanic Gardens to test different nature-based solutions and support learning on how adaptive practices in the use and management of green spaces could support pollution alleviation, citizen health, and climate resilience. The project would help the Council to deliver on the Belfast Resilience Strategy which aimed to transition the city to an inclusive net-zero emissions, climate resilient economy in a generation.

As part of the development of the demonstrator project, an agroecology community garden was being developed on site which would test, among other things, how community growing spaces were developed and contribute towards climate action. The Climate Team had been working with a range of stakeholders since 2022 to codesign the spaces and develop relationships with interested groups and organisations. As part of this, Friends of the Field and Friends of Belfast Botanic Gardens were two groups that had been engaging with the Council and helping shape the plans on site.

A request had been received from Friends of the Field to enter into an agreement with Belfast City Council for the establishment of the community garden at Lower Botanic to act as a hub for sustainable practices, innovative garden-based learning, environmental conservation and fostering community engagement.

The Committee was advised that Friends of the Field, as part of the project, would manage a volunteer-run community garden guided by the principles of permaculture and environmental sustainability. The garden would serve as a valuable resource for the community, promoting healthy eating habits, physical activity, and environmental stewardship.

The Members noted that the project aligned with the objectives of the EU funded UPSURGE project and that the community garden would serve three core purposes:

1. Growing, teaching and learning;
2. Enhancing community development and climate resilience; and
3. Improving the environment and biodiversity.

The group had committed to developing the gardens and believed it had the necessary experience in project management, horticulture and fundraising to ensure the garden's operational success.

The Members were advised that the area requested by Friends of the Field was an area of fenced ground to the northern end of the site, encompassing 1,626 m<sup>2</sup>. The group was requesting initially that the agreement would run for one year, with the option to renew. Friends of the Field had been successful in securing funding to run community gardening activities on the site, with the main infrastructure associated with the gardens funded via existing UPSURGE budget.

The Committee approved, in principle, the use of part of Lower Botanic Gardens as an agroecology community garden by Friends of the Field, in conjunction with the Horizon 2020 UPSURGE project. It was noted that this agreement was subject to a further report on the terms of the agreement being submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

### **Hubbub Recycling on the Go Pilot Update**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues**

**1.1 At its February 2023 meeting, Committee approved the request from Hubbub for Belfast to take part in a trial recycling on-the-go campaign and noted that a report would be taken back to committee following the pilot. This report provides members with an update on the pilot.**

#### **2.0 Recommendation**

**2.1 Members are asked to note the content of the report and the planned next steps.**

#### **3.0 Main Report**

##### **Campaign Overview**

**3.1 BCC worked with environmental charity Hubbub, funded by the Coca-Cola Foundation, to introduce effective recycling on-the-go in Belfast city centre. The campaign introduced 25 new dual litter and recycling bins to the city centre and to four parks in the different areas of the city Falls Park, Victoria Park, Waterworks and the Botanic Gardens. See Appendix one.**

**3.2 Based on Hubbub’s approach to recycling on-the-go the campaign focused on making the bins easier and simpler to use and collecting plastic bottles and cans as the primary target materials. The bins have just two options, one for litter and one for plastic bottles and cans. This is in contrast to the previous bins, which had four compartments (litter, plastic, paper and metal separately).**

##### **Activities and communications**

**3.3 The project launched on July 27th and was featured in the Belfast Telegraph, Belfast Live and Belfast Media. (See Appendix 2) On-the-ground promotion included:**

- In-person by the CNS Environmental Education and awareness team, who attended events during the summer to engage with the public**
- The Singing Street Sweepers’ were present in the city centre and sang recycling-inspired songs**

- The BIDs and other local business stakeholders were informed of the campaign.
- Additional vinyl stickers added to the lids of the bins to reinforce the target materials. (See Appendix 3)

Online and print promotion included:

- A feature in City Matters, with a question to engage residents on the specific issue that coffee cups cannot be recycled. This received over 400 entries.
- Hubbub led a targeted, paid, social media campaign
- An online quiz to educate the public about recycling with the opportunity to win a Belfast City gift card. The quiz was viewed 1,150 times, and completed by 252 people.
- The council promoted the campaign through their channels, with the most popular post being the Singing Street Sweepers, with content receiving 204 likes on Instagram and Facebook.
- In total, across the council and Hubbub activity, the social media posts reached 138,690 people, with engagement of 2064.

#### Campaign Impact

3.4 The campaign was assessed by collecting public feedback, feedback from the street cleansing teams, and an external waste audit. The post-campaign survey is ongoing but early results have recorded that:

- 47.8% of people had seen the new bins
- 63% of people agreeing that 'it's clear what can be recycled in them'
- 78% of people agreeing they are more noticeable than the old bins.
- 58.7% satisfied or very satisfied with recycling on street in Belfast

3.5 A number of people left comments expressing their interest in seeing more recycling bins in Belfast. In person surveying led by the engagement team found that:

- People seemed to like the bins and really liked the yellow colour.
- They also thought the messaging was really clear in terms of what can go into each side.
- Most people say that they recycle at home but really good to see option of doing it on the street/in town.

- 3.6 An external consultancy was recruited to undertake a five-day waste composition analysis of the bins from all 25 bins across Belfast. They looked at both compartments of the bins, with bags taken from the general waste side and recycling side. The recycling survey's timing coincided with a week of poor weather. This meant footfall levels were lower, and in previous Hubbub campaigns poor weather has been shown to increase levels of contamination. Whilst ideally, data would be collected over a longer period, taking into account people's behaviour at different times of the year and weather, it does offer an insight into a potential baseline, giving some sense of the performance of the bins under less-than-ideal conditions.
- 3.7 The audit showed that, an overwhelming majority of people were successfully placing the plastic bottles and cans in the recycling. Given the relative lightness of a plastic bottle and can in comparison to other items, analysing by weight, the standard measure for waste and recycling, does not always clearly demonstrate the composition accurately. For example, one small glass bottle weighs around 200 grams, in comparison to a plastic bottle or can could weigh 10-15 grams.
- 3.8 Therefore, an item count was undertaken for key categories to establish a capture rate. This is defined as how much targeted recyclable material is found in the recycling as opposed to the general waste stream.
- 3.9 From the bags sampled, the capture rate by count of the target materials was:
- 731 plastic bottles out of 862 (84.9%) were found in recycling, with 131 plastic bottles ending up in the general waste
  - 721 out of 885 aluminium cans (81.5%) were counted in recycling, with 164 ending up in the general waste.
- 3.10 This demonstrates that target materials were ending up in the right place and across these five days 1452 items were collected for recycling. Across a year, you might expect to see around 70,000 items collected. This does not take into account the behaviour on periods of good weather when footfall is higher in the parks and city centre.
- 3.11 When the audit looked at the average composition of both the general waste and recycling side of each bin, it found that by weight:
- In the general waste bin, 4.4% of the material collected was plastic bottles and cans



- Whilst the recycling, 29.8% of the material collected was plastic bottles and cans, rising to 43.8% when you include plastic bottles that still contain liquid.

3.12 The table below represents the composition, by weight, of the recycling.

Category	Detail	Percentage
Recycling-on-the-go target materials*	Plastic bottles (empty and full) and drinks cans	43.8%
Recyclable at the kerbside (excl. target)	Recyclable at the kerbside but not targeted (recyclable paper & card, drink & food cartons, other plastic packaging, plastic cups, cup lids, glass bottles & jars and other recyclables	12.4%
Not recyclable at the kerbside	Residual waste material, disposable vapes, coffee cups, soft drinks cups, compostable packaging, loose liquid, recyclable paper & card contaminated and other plastic packaging contaminated	34.5%
Loose liquid	From open containers and incoming rain	9.3%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>

\* Plastic bottles that contained liquid, which often may not be recycled as they are deemed too heavy by the automated sorting process but are commonly believed to be recyclable.

3.13 Despite the successful capturing of the correct target materials there were still some issues with contamination. One item in particular that was binned incorrectly was coffee cups. However, the capture rate for this ending up in the recycling (incorrectly) was just 17.2%, showing that in most cases people were correctly disposing of these in the general waste. In the parks, some residual waste included a pair of football boots and other non-recyclable waste.

3.14 More generally, and most importantly, the contamination levels were low enough that the recycling could be sent for further processing.

What's next

3.15 Members should note that additional monies have been identified through the climate fund to support the rollout of these bins into the four quadrants of the city. A report will be taken to

the climate board at the end of January and following that plans will be made to purchase and install the bins. It is proposed the bins will retain the same branding and stickers etc. Any rollout will include a communication and awareness raising plan. This plan will also target reducing contamination in order to maximise the quality of collected recycling from these bins.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

- 3.16 The costs of the pilot were met by Hubbub with no additional OSS costs incurred. Members should note there is £45,000 secured from the climate fund for the purchase and installation of the bins for the next phase. The Council's Open Space and Streetscene service is currently considering how the collection and servicing of the new bins will be carried out long-term and the cost implications of this.

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

- 3.17 None.”

The Committee noted the content of the report and the planned next steps.

**Bird Strike Management at George Best Belfast City Airport**

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

The Committee was reminded that, at its December 2022 meeting, permission had been granted for a similar request. The GBBCA had subsequently reported that the rook management undertaken during January 2023 had shown a further reduction in nesting rooks the following spring.

The Members were advised that the airport had again identified the need to continue the current management to reduce and discourage rooks from re-laying in the areas used in the previous year. The proposed works would include the removal of old rook nests and any necessary structural pruning of preferred nesting trees, along with the reduction of shelter provided by ivy. As in previous years, GBBCA would appoint a suitable contractor with experience to carry out the required work.

A Member noted the need for the required works from a health and safety perspective but requested that the Council write to the GBBCA to seek clarity as to whether it sought to reduce and manage the rooks at Victoria Park or to totally eradicate them, as he would be uncomfortable if this was their long-term intent.

The Committee:

- agreed to the request from George Best Belfast City Airport to permit access under licence to Victoria Park to facilitate rookery management, in particular, the removal of old rook nests and nest site discouragement during January 2024;
- noted that any decision to grant permission was subject to a legal agreement that would be developed by the Council's Legal Services Department which would ensure that any works were permissible, and the required NIEA licence and consents were in place;
- agreed that, as the works need to be completed by the end of January, any licence would be progressed under the Strategic Director's delegated authority. If agreed, the licence would permit works to commence in mid-January and end on the 31st of January 2024 (subject to the terms and conditions); and
- the Committee agreed to write to George Belfast City Airport asking it to clarify if it was seeking to reduce and manage the number of rooks at Victoria Park or to ultimately eradicate them from the area.

### **HS Partnership Liaison Role**

The Committee considered a report which sought the continued support from Belfast City Council for a 2-year extension to the current contract for the Health and Safety Partnership Liaison Officer (PLO) post, until the end of the 2025/2026 financial year.

The Director of City Services explained that the role had originally been created in 2010 and continued to be hosted by Lisburn and Castlereagh Borough Council. The aim of the role was to ensure the effective partnership working relationships and operational delivery of the joint Health and Safety strategy between the local authorities across Northern Ireland and the HSENI.

In order to ensure continuity of the post beyond March 2024, and to facilitate retention of the current postholder, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council had asked the other funding partners to confirm their ongoing support. The Members were advised that Belfast City Council's contribution to the funding of this post would be approximately £6,000 per annum and the Director confirmed that that had been included within the budget allocation.

The Committee approved the continued contribution to the joint partner funding for the Health and Safety Partner liaison Officer post until the end of the 2025/2026 financial year.

### **Dual Language Street Signage**

The Committee agreed to the erection of a second street nameplate in Irish at, Mount Eagles Glen, Emersons Lane, Dunblane Avenue, Floral Gardens, Cardigan Drive, Thornberry Road and Mill Valley Road.

**Proposal to Name New Street and  
Install Dual Language Street Signs**

The Committee approved the applications for the naming of three new streets in the city, namely:

<b>Proposed Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Applicant</b>
Black Ridge Gardens	Off Monagh By Pass, BT11	Apex Housing Association
Black Ridge Way	Off Monagh By Pass, BT11	Apex Housing Association
Black Ridge Heights	Off Monagh By Pass, BT11	Apex Housing Association

Chairperson