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BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

SUMMONS TO ATTEND THE MONTHLY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

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

Notice is hereby given that the monthly meeting of the Council will be held in the Council Chamber, City Hall, Belfast on Tuesday, 7th May, 2024 at 6.00 pm, for the transaction of the following business:

1. Summons
2. Apologies
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Minutes of the Council (Pages 1 - 6)
5. Official Announcements
6. Change of Membership on Committees/Outside Bodies/Position of Responsibility
7. Minutes of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee (Pages 7 - 58)
8. Minutes of People and Communities Committee (Pages 59 - 80)
9. Minutes of City Growth and Regeneration Committee (Pages 81 - 98)
10. Minutes of Licensing Committee (Pages 99 - 108)
11. Minutes of Planning Committee (Pages 109 - 120)
12. Minutes of Climate and City Resilience Committee (Pages 121 - 132)
13. Minutes of Standards and Business Committee (Pages 133 - 134)
14. Motion
 - a) Agricultural Fines for Pollution (Pages 135 - 136)

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

John Walsh

Chief Executive

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Council

MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held in the Council Chamber, City Hall
on Monday, 8th April, 2024 at 6.00 p.m., pursuant to notice.

Members present: The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor (Councillor Murphy) (Chairperson);
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Groogan);
The High Sheriff (Councillor S. Douglas); and
Aldermen Lawlor, McCullough and
Rodgers; and
Councillors Anglin, Beattie, Bell, Black, Bower, Bradley, R. Brooks, T. Brooks, Bunting, Carson, Cobain, Collins, de Faoite, Doherty, M. Donnelly, P. Donnelly, R. M. Donnelly, Doran, D. Douglas, Ferguson, Flynn, Garrett, Hanvey, Kelly, Long, Lyons, Magee, Maghie, Maskey, F. McAteer, G. McAteer, McCabe, McCann, McCormick, McDonough-Brown, McDowell, McKay, McKeown, I. McLaughlin, R. McLaughlin, McMullan, 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 for Aldermen Copeland and McCoubrey and Councillors Canavan and Duffy.

Declarations of Interest

Alderman Rodgers and Councillor Ferguson declared an interest in relation to the item “Blanchflower Stadium – Preferential Use Agreement” within the People and Communities Committee minutes, in that they were shareholders of Glentoran Football Club.

The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Groogan), Alderman McCullough and Councillors Black, Carson, M. Donnelly, Maskey, McCabe, Ó Néill and Vernon declared an interest in relation to the item “Community Support Programme 2024/25” within the People and Communities Committee minutes, in that they were employed by organisations which were in receipt of revenue grants.

**Meeting of Council,
Monday, 8th April, 2024**

Minutes of the Council

Moved by the Lord Mayor (Councillor Murphy),
Seconded by Councillor R. McLaughlin,

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

Official Announcements

Condolences

The Lord Mayor paid tribute to Cindy Hanna, former City Hall Tour Guide, who had sadly passed away on 17th March, 2024 and he conveyed his condolences to Cindy's family.

Councillor Walsh offered his condolences to the family of Sean Magill, a community activist who contributed to the rebuilding of the Irish language community, on his recent passing.

Well Wishes

The Lord Mayor acknowledged Joan Devlin's recent retirement from Belfast Healthy Cities and wished her well for the future.

Alderman McCullough sent well wishes to Her Royal Highness, The Princess of Wales, on her recent diagnosis.

The Lord Mayor expressed solidarity with Takura Makoni, whose south Belfast house had been daubed with graffiti telling him he was not welcome in the area after he had spoken out against racism, and he stated that this behaviour was not reflective of the wider community.

Councillor P. Donnelly wished members of the local Muslim community a Happy Eid and he wished the East Belfast GAA the best of luck following the recent launch of its future plan.

Councillor S. Douglas praised the Walking and Cycling Index Report published by Sustrans, and encouraged Members read the report.

Congratulations

The Lord Mayor, Councillors S. Douglas, Smyth and Long congratulated Councillor Hanvey on his recent wedding.

The Lord Mayor acceded to a request from Councillor R. Brooks to write a letter of congratulations to Tori Watson, who, having lost her father Paisley to cancer, had run a half marathon every day for 22 days in order to raise over £5000 for Marie Curie Hospice.

**Meeting of Council,
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Councillor de Faoite congratulated the YMCA Youth in Government Programme graduation ceremony in City Hall and thanked the Lord Mayor for his attendance at the event.

Councillor de Faoite congratulated Breda GAA on the recent opening of its clubhouse, and those Council officers who had been involved in bringing the project to fruition.

Councilor D. Douglas paid tribute to the Powered by Poppy campaign which had completed its Walking on Sunshine event and encouraged all Members to share the campaign information to promote donations.

Councillor Maghie congratulated Our Lady and Saint Patrick's College, which won both the senior schools football club trophy and senior netball tournament.

Councillor Smyth congratulated Green Party NI Leader, Mal O'Hara on becoming a Senator in Seanad Éireann.

Minutes of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Moved by Councillor Black,
Seconded by Councillor R.M. Donnelly and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 22nd March, 2024, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be 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 12th March, be approved and adopted."

**XL Bully Restrictions announced by
DAERA Minister**

At the request of Councillor Flynn, the Council agreed to write to the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, to enquire as to what impact the legislation would have on local councils and animal welfare charities, and what resources would be allocated to deal with those impacts.

**Meeting of Council,
Monday, 8th April, 2024**

**Blanchflower Stadium –
Preferential Use Agreement**

Amendment 1

Moved by Councillor Lawlor,
Seconded by Councillor Bunting,

“That officers would look to work with local community-based football clubs and Glentoran Football Club to develop an allocation model, based on an assessment of need, so that they all get access to the pitch on Monday to Thursday evenings.”

On a vote by show of hands, eleven Members voted for the amendment and thirty-eight against and it was declared lost.

Amendment 2

Moved by Councillor Maghie,
Seconded by Councillor Murray and

Resolved - “That the Committee’s decision, that officers would look to work with local community-based football clubs to develop an allocation model which was fair and equitable for all users, to ensure that all clubs would get fair access to pitches throughout the week, would be brought back to the Committee for further consideration.”

Requests for Events in Parks

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Lyons,
Seconded by Councillor de Faoite,

“That the Committee’s decision to grant authority to the applicant for the proposed Finaghy Cultural Festival would be referred to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for reconsideration.”

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

For (39)	Against (14)
The Lord Mayor (Councillor Murphy); The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Groogan); and Councillors Anglin, Beattie, Bell, Black, Bower, Bradley, T. Brooks, Carson, Collins, de Faoite, Doherty, M. Donnelly, P. Donnelly, R. M. Donnelly, Flynn, Garrett, Hanvey, Long, Lyons, Magee, Maghie, Maskey, F. McAteer, G.	The High Sheriff (Councillor S. Douglas); Aldermen Lawlor, McCullough and Rodgers; and Councillors R. Brooks, Bunting, Cobain, Doran, D. Douglas, Ferguson, Kelly, McCormick, McDowell and Verner.

**Meeting of Council,
Monday, 8th April, 2024**

McAteer, McCabe, McCann, McDonough-Brown, McKay, McKeown, R. McLaughlin, Murray, Nelson, Nic Bhranair, O'Neill, Smyth, Walsh and Whyte.	
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**Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium
Working Group Update**

At the request of Councillor Lyons, the Council agreed to write to the Department for Communities to propose a policy framework with Historic Environment Division and the Council, that would consider funding, operational security and public access to historic cemeteries.

Adoption of Minutes

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

Minutes of City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Moved by Councillor Nic Bhranair,
Seconded by Councillor Walsh, and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 13th and 27th March, be approved and adopted.

Minutes of Licensing Committee

Moved by Councillor McKeown,
Seconded by Councillor McCabe, and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Licensing Committee of 20th March, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

**Meeting of Council,
Monday, 8th April, 2024**

Minutes of Planning Committee

Moved by Councillor Garrett,
Seconded by Councillor Maskey, and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee of 19th and 27th March, 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 R. McLaughlin, and

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

Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Committee

Moved by Councillor Bower,
Seconded by Councillor Ferguson, and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Committee of 11th March, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Minutes of Standards and Business Committee

Moved by Councillor McDonough-Brown,
Seconded by Councillor R. McLaughlin, and

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

Lord Mayor
Chairperson

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 19th April, 2024

MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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, Smyth 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. S. Grimes, Director of Property and Projects;
Mr. D. Martin, Strategic Director of Place and Economy;
Ms. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and Development;
Mr. D. Sales, Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services;
Ms. C. Sheridan, Director of Human Resources;
Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy;
Mr. T. Wallace, Director of Finance;
Mr. J. Hanna, Democratic Services and Governance Manager.

Also attended: Councillors Groogan and Lyons.

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 22nd March were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council, at its meeting on 8th April, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

Declarations of Interest

Councillors Beattie and M. Donnelly declared an interest in item 5(b) Social Supermarket Fund, in so far as they were employed by organisations which were recommended for funding and left the meeting whilst this item was being considered.

Restricted Items

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

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

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

Update 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 contacts 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 31st March, 2024, 211 staff had been filling posts on a temporary basis, 120 of whom had substantive Council posts to return to when no longer required. The other 91 were fixed term contract employees who did not have a substantive post to return to. Between 1st January and 31st March, 14 staff had joined the Council on a temporary contract, with 6 having a substantive post and 8 being on fixed term contracts.

She reported further that 261 agency assignees had been engaged by the Council as at 31st March, 34 of whom were seasonal workers. She outlined the cost of employing agency assignees for the three-month period ending on 31st March and pointed out that this did not represent a financial burden, as it was met through departmental underspends.

Following the General Operative recruitment, 51 appointments were in progress. Of those, 21 candidates had been appointed, two further candidates would be appointed this week and the remaining candidates were completing pre-employment checks. Of the 51 appointments, 23 were agency workers, 20 from General Operative roles and three from other agency roles. There were 152 candidates on the reserve list. Of those, 57 were agency workers, 51 from General Operative roles and six from other agency roles.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
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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.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

**Producer Responsibility Obligations
(Packaging and Packaging Waste)
Regulations 2024**

The Committee considered a report on discussions which had been held at a national level with regard to agreeing proposals across the four UK nations in respect of proposals/draft regulations for Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging scheme.

The Committee granted approval for SIB to recruit a shared waste specialist to deal with the implications of EPR, representing and assisting District Councils and NILGA on national forums with regard to policy development for EPR, a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) and Common Collections Guidance in consideration of meeting waste, circular economy and climate goals.

It agreed also to provide £5K per annum for 2-year period as the Council's contribution and noted that all other councils had been asked to make the same financial commitment, subject to further information being provided on why the post was being recruited by SIB and not the Councils.

City Centre Regeneration Scheme

(On the advice of the Chief Executive, Members of the Planning Committee, that is, Councillors Groogan, Hanvey, Ferguson, Garrett, Maskey and Whyte, left the meeting whilst this item was under discussion.)

The Committee considered a report which provided an update in relation to various matters associated with the Tribeca scheme, including the Assembly Rooms, following various Council decisions.

The Committee:

- i) noted the update in relation to various matters associated with the Tribeca Scheme;
- ii) noted that a further report will be brought back to Members in respect of the Assembly Rooms following the pending LPS inspection and valuation;
- iii) noted that further work is ongoing in respect of the previous Council decision on the possibility of vesting and/or acquisition of the Tribeca site by agreement, with a report to be brought back to Members;
- iv) agreed that a further invite be extended to Castlebrooke seeking a meeting with Members; and

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- v) agreed to the establishment of a Members' Working Group to provide focus and progress these issues.

Matters referred back from Council/Motions

Notices of Motion Quarterly Update

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Committee on the progress of all Notices of Motion for which SP&R Committee is responsible for.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- Note the updates to all Notices of Motion that SP&R Committee is responsible for and
- Agree to the closure of Notice of Motion 138 as referenced in Appendix 1 and paragraph 3.4 below.

3.0 Main report

Background

- 3.1 At SP&R Committee on 25th October 2019, the following Notice of Motion was agreed:

‘That this Council notes that other Councils produce a monthly status report in relation to Notices of Motion; and agrees Belfast City Council adopts a similar practice and produces a monthly Notice of Motion Update which will be brought to each full Council Meeting, detailing the following:

1. Date received
2. Notice of motion title
3. Submitted by which Councillor
4. Council meeting date
5. Committee motion is referred to
6. Outcome of committee where Notice of 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 Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance at Committee

was created and quarterly reporting to Committee commenced in March 2021. Appendix 1 is the latest quarterly update showing all active Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance which SP&R Committee is responsible for.

Closure of Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance

3.3 At Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 20th November 2020, it was agreed that Notices of Motion could be closed for one of two reasons:

1. Notices of Motion which contained an action(s) that has been completed; and
2. Notices of Motion have become Council policy.

3.4 SP&R Committee are asked to agree that the following Notice of Motion is now closed:

Category 2 Recommended Closure:

- World Environment Day (138) – This NOM called on the Council to support biodiversity and take positive actions towards tackling the climate emergency by working with partners in range of areas, including marking World Environment Day on June 5th and through the development of awareness raising content and development of a programme of digital or physical events to support our citizens in challenging climate change. The Climate Team is developing a calendar of key dates with Corporate Communications, ensuring appropriate messaging is developed in advance. The Communication Plan will be delivered through the BCC Climate Action Plan. 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.”

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 19th April, 2024**

The Committee:

- noted the updates to all Notices of Motion that the Committee was responsible for;
- agreed to the closure of Notice of Motion 138, that is, World Environment Day; and
- that a report be submitted to a future meeting on the Motion approved by the former Brexit Committee on the Commission of a report to examine the opportunities for economic development.

Response received from the Department for Communities Re Motion - Anti-Poverty Strategy

The Committee was reminded that, at the Council meeting held on 4th March, 2024, it was agreed to write to the Minister for Communities, Mr Gordon Lyons, advising him of the Motion in relation to Anti-Poverty Strategy.

The Committee was advised that a response has been received from Mr Carl Savage, Deputy Director Central Policy Division, Department for Communities.

In his response he advises that addressing poverty in all its forms was a key priority for Minister Lyons and he was committed to delivering long-term sustainable solutions to poverty in all its forms for our communities right across Northern Ireland.

He continues that poverty was a complex and multi-faceted issue, and the Minister was considering work to date and the next steps to be taken in relation to the development of the Executive's Anti-Poverty Strategy. He would be engaging with his Executive colleagues over the coming weeks and months to ensure that the Anti-Poverty Strategy was taken forward in the most effective way possible and that the actions in the Strategy are deliverable and can make a lasting difference.

As this was an Executive Strategy, they would be seeking input from all Ministers and their Departments.

The Committee noted receipt of the correspondence and agreed that letters be forwarded to the Minister for Communities, the First Minister and Deputy First Minister requesting that the Strategy be brought forward as soon as possible.

Response received from Department for Infrastructure re Living With Water (LWW)

The Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services reminded the Committee that, at its meeting held on 19th January, 2024, it was agreed to write to Dr. Denis McMahon, Permanent Secretary, Department for Infrastructure, inviting him to a future meeting of the Committee to discuss the review of the Strategic Drainage Infrastructure Plan for Belfast.

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The Committee was advised that a response has been received from the Permanent Secretary.

In his response he advises that Department officials were continuing to engage with stakeholders to gather views and comments which would inform the recommendations within the review report, and he understands Simon Richardson, Director of the Living with Water Programme, would be providing further presentations to a number of other Belfast City Council Committees. A major contributing factor to the review recommendations would be the outcome of the Utility Regulator's Mid-Term Review of NI Water's PC21 Business Plan. The publication of that had been delayed and was expected in June, so the LWW review would conclude after that.

At this stage there was no significant update that could be provided over and above the information provided at the January Committee meeting. Any further comments, to be considered as part of the LWW review, could be provided through the Belfast City Council representative on the LWW Board, and would be greatly welcomed.

He concluded by stating that, since the presentation at the Committee meeting on 19th January, Ministers had returned to the NI Executive and Mr John O'Dowd MLA had taken up the post of Minister for Infrastructure. The Minister would consider the recommendations within the LWW Review Report and decide on the most appropriate way forward.

Noted.

**Response received from Minister
of Finance re Setting Rates**

The Committee was advised that, at the Council meeting held on 1st February, 2024, it was agreed to write to the Minister of Finance to ask the Department to consider adopting the same model used by the Scottish Government of setting its own business rates to help pay for local services.

The Committee was informed that a response has been received from the Minister of Finance, Dr Caoimhe Archibald.

In her response she advises that her Department is currently engaging with the Ulster University on the potential for new research on the issue of rate poundage differentials across Council areas here, how this operates within the wider non-domestic rating system and any economic effects.

She points out though that any structural changes to the rate striking process for non-domestic rates would be a complex one. District Council rate setting sits outside her Ministerial portfolio, local government finance falls within the Minister for Communities' policy and legislative competency.

The Committee noted the response.

Finaghy Festival

The Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services submitted the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The Committee is asked to note that this event was approved at the People and Communities committee held on Tuesday 05th March however was deferred at the meeting of full Council on Monday 08th April pending exploration by Council officers into whether the event has been delivered in previous years without issue.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is asked to grant authority to the applicant for the proposed event on the dates noted and to delegate authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to ensure satisfactory terms and conditions of use via an appropriate legal agreement prepared by the City Solicitor, including managing final booking confirmation dates and flexibility around ‘set up’ & take down’ periods, and booking amendments, subject to:

- The organizers resolving any operational issues to the Council’s satisfaction.
- The organizers carrying out appropriate resident & community engagement.
- The organizers meeting all the statutory requirements of the Planning and Building Control Service including the terms and conditions of the Park’s Entertainment Licence.

2.2 Please note that the above recommendations are taken as a pre-policy position in advance of the Council agreeing a more structured framework and policy for ‘Events’, which is currently being taken forward in conjunction with the Councils Commercial team.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Key Issues

The event organisers are Finaghy Community Association. The group formed in 2020 in response to COVID and successfully operated a foodbank in the area supporting elderly and vulnerable people during difficult times. The group then started volunteering and organising events for the

community delivering their first festival event in 2021 and again in 2022.

- 3.2 Since forming back in 2020 the group have been building capacity to deliver a range of community-based support.
- 3.3 Council received this year's event booking form from the organisers in January 2024. Since receipt of the booking form the organisers have further submitted their event management plan.
- 3.4 The festival will take place over 3 days from Friday 16th August to Sunday 18th August. The event involves family fun entertainment during the day and live music at night. Other activity includes a history exhibition and walk, a seniors tea dance and a food tasting session.
- 3.5 The live music element will be serviced with a bar serving alcohol so a drinks license will be in place.
- 3.6 The group have applied to the Police Property Fund to help fund the event.
- 3.7 The entertainment license for the park will be transferred to the organisers via an appropriate site legal agreement.
- 3.8 Colleagues in building control are aware of the application made to City and Neighbourhood services and will be engaging with the event organiser to ensure the terms of the entertainment license are adhered to.
- 3.9 Building control have checked their previous files on this event for issues and have noted some noise disturbance at the 2021 event that was addressed and rectified for the 2022 event with no further issues or complaints received.
- 3.10 The PSNI have confirmed that they have no issues recorded specific to the running of the event in 2021 or 2022. The only note they have on record was the need for the entertainment license to be in place prior to them making a recommendation to the courts to grant the liquor license.
- 3.11 **Financial and Resource Implications**

There are no known financial or resource implications with these requests.

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

There are no known implications.”

After discussion, Committee granted authority to the applicant for the proposed event on the dates noted and delegated authority to the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services to ensure satisfactory terms and conditions of use via an appropriate legal agreement prepared by the City Solicitor, including managing final booking confirmation dates and flexibility around ‘set up’ and take down’ periods, and booking amendments, subject to:

- The organisers resolving any operational issues to the Council’s satisfaction.
- The organisers carrying out appropriate resident and community engagement.
- The organisers meeting all the statutory requirements of the Planning and Building Control Service including the terms and conditions of the Park’s Entertainment Licence.

**Response received from Linen Quarter Bid
re Trademark Belfast's request to take over
land at Bankmore Square**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting held on 15th December, 2023, it was agreed to write to the Linen Quarter BID to outline the Council's support in regard to Trademark Belfast's request to take over the short-term lease of a portion of land on Bankmore Square.

The Committee was advised that a response has been received from Mr Christopher McCracken, Managing Director, Linen Quarter Bid.

In his response he advises that he was delighted that the City Council had approved planning permission the previous night for two major developments on the Dublin Road, the Kainos Headquarters and the Queen’s University Belfast student accommodation. Those flagship developments were a vote of confidence in Belfast City Centre and will help kickstart wider regeneration on Dublin Road and southern Great Victoria Street. LQ BID are delighted to support both major anchor institutions as they develop those exciting schemes.

He continued that, unfortunately, that meant that the lease for Trade Market would expire as planned on 31 July 2024. LQ BID had actively supported Trade Market since inception, including providing a grant of £5,000 for a new mural, lending its professional PR support to secure positive press coverage, and running successful events within their space to boost footfall. However, he recognised the facility was always designated as a meanwhile use and stated that he was grateful to Kainos for generously enabling the use of their land in the first place.

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He added “As you are aware LQ BID has a short-term lease to operate the adjacent Bankmore Square as a public green space until March 2025. However, it was not permitted to transfer this lease, so any requests from third parties would initially be a matter between the landowner (the Department for Infrastructure) and the potential applicant. LQ BID would fully consider any request from the Department to surrender or modify our lease prior to its expiry, but to date no such request has been received.”

With the consent of the Chairperson, Councillor Murray addressed the Committee and asked the it consider agreeing to write to the Minister for Infrastructure to communicate the Council’s support for Trademarket moving to Bankmore Square as an important catalyst for local business activity and as a unique offering to tourists, and ask that the Department ask LQ BID to surrender their lease and award Trademarket the lease of Bankmore Square, with all the due diligence required, from July 2024 in order to protect jobs and reduce any disruption to their business and the dozens of small independent businesses which rely on Trademarket.

The Committee noted the receipt of the correspondence and acceded to the request.

Governance

**Local Government Ability to Hold
Remote Meetings - March 2024**

The Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services advised the Members that the Department for Communities had written to Council Chief Executives) advising that Minister Lyons was committed to giving councils the flexibility to hold meetings by remote/hybrid means and would be bringing forward regulations, as soon as possible, using the powers in the Local Government (Meetings and Performance) Act (NI) 2021. The Minister considered this to be more appropriate than continuing to use powers under the Coronavirus Act 2020, which was intended as emergency legislation, and would ensure that councils would have powers for remote/hybrid meetings but based upon more regularised legislation.

The Council had previously responded to a Call for Evidence from the Department for Communities back in early 2022 indicating that it supported proposals to have legislation put in place which would allow remote/hybrid meetings to be held on a permanent basis.

Accordingly she had responded to this most recent letter to indicate the Council support for the draft regulations.

She explained that it was officers’ understanding that the Minister intended to bring the regulations in as soon as possible so as to allow councils to reinstate remote meetings as soon as possible. The legislation was intended to be permissive, in other words it empowers councils to establish their own rule in relation to how and when meetings can be held remotely or in hybrid version. It was anticipated that the legislation would be in place in the coming months.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and agreed that the Minister be requested to bring forward the Regulations as quickly as possible.

**Appointment of Members to the Board
of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 To consider the process to be used to identify between 10 and 12 elected Members to be considered under a public appointment’s process to fill 4 places on the Board of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is recommended to employ a one-off proportionality exercise, using the Sainte Lague method, for the purpose of identifying the political nomination of between 10 and 12 members for consideration for appointment to the Board of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 The Committee will recall that, at its meeting on 23 February, it had considered correspondence dated 30 January from the Public Appointments Unit regarding the submission of Council nominees to be considered by the Permanent Secretary for the Department for appointment to the Board of the Belfast Harbor Commissioners.

3.2 The letter had indicated that there were currently three Councillors in post with one vacancy. One Councillor had served two terms of appointment and cannot be reappointed after 31 March 2024. The remaining two Councillors were due to complete their first term on 31 March 2024 and the DfI Permanent Secretary had decided that he was minded reappointing them for a further term to ensure continuity on the Board. If both eligible Councillors accepted the reappointments, then the DfI would be recruiting for two vacancies with the terms due to commence from 1 April 2024.

3.3 Accordingly, the Council has been asked to nominate at least six Councillors for appointment for the remaining two places.

3.4 In discussing the matter, the Committee was of the view that this was a step change from previous years when Councillors currently serving on the Board had to submit an application and be subject to an open and transparent recruitment process.

- 3.5 Accordingly, the Committee agreed to defer consideration of the matter on the appointment of Members to the Board of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners and requested that a letter be forwarded to the Minister stating that it was the Council's view that all 4 positions on the Board should be subject to an open recruitment/selection process as in previous years.
- 3.6 Further correspondence has now been received from the Public Appointments Unit which states the following: *'When I first wrote to the Council on 30 January 2024, it was on the basis that, in the absence of Ministers, the Department had taken decisions under powers provided by the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation etc) Act 2022 to temporarily set aside the previous Ministerial decision that required all public appointments made by DfI to be via open competition (as opposed to renewing appointments for second terms without a competition). This was in the context of the Department facing an unprecedented resource budget position with difficult decisions required on how best to prioritise available funding.*
- 3.7 *However, since then, we have seen the return of Ministers and John O'Dowd MLA, Minister for Infrastructure, has recently reviewed this decision and decided that all public appointments made by the Department should revert to open competition to attract a wider pool of candidates and improve diversity. In light of this, and in recognition of the Council's concerns, the Minister has confirmed that he is content that all four Councillor positions be appointed via open competition. The two Councillors that were scheduled to be reappointed have been informed of this decision. I would therefore be grateful if you could provide me with 10-12 nominees to be considered for the four Councillor positions. This will help ensure a choice of nominees, as required by the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland. Please note that the process remains as set out in my letter of 30 January 2024, with the only exception being that the Minister will decide who to appoint, not the Permanent Secretary. Can you please provide the Council nominees by 12 noon on Friday 3 May 2024'*
- 3.8 In November 2019 in considering the appointment of Members to the Board, the Council agreed to a one-off selection process using the Sainte Lague system.

3.9 In keeping with that principle, the Sainte Lague system would provide the following result:

1	SF
2	DUP
3	ALL
4	SF
5	SDLP
6	DUP
7	SF
8	ALL
9	SF
10	Green
11	DUP
12	SF

Financial and Resource Implications

3.10 There are not any financial implications for the Council associated with this report.

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

3.11 The suggested approach to be employed to select Members for consideration for appointment to the Board of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners is in keeping with the principles of proportionality established in the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014. Therefore, there are not any equality or good relations considerations associated with this report.”

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Moved by Councillor de Faoite,
Seconded by Councillor Whyte,

That the Committee agrees to employ a one-off proportionality exercise, using the Sainte Lague method, for the purpose of identifying the political nomination of ten members for consideration for appointment to the Board of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners.

On a vote by show of hands, seven Members voted for the proposal and twelve against and it was accordingly declared lost.

Accordingly, the Committee agreed that up to twelve names be submitted, that is, Sinn Fein 5, DUP 3, Alliance 2, SDLP 1 and Green Party 1.

Corporate Seal S76 agreements

The Interim City Solicitor/Director Civic and Legal Services advised the Members that the Council routinely entered into planning agreements (“Section 76 Agreements”) with landowners pursuant to Section 76 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (the “2011 Act”). Those Section 76 Agreements were used where it was considered that a development would have a significant impact on the local area that cannot be moderated by a condition contained in the planning permission.

Whilst most of the Section 76 Agreements were subject to Committee scrutiny and were sealed by the Chief Executive and the Lord Mayor with the corporate seal when complete, there were occasions when such agreements were entered into on foot of planning decisions which were delegated to officers pursuant to the Council’s Scheme of Delegation. She explained that, pursuant to Section 31 of the 2011 Act, the Council operated a planning scheme of delegation.

In those instances where, pursuant to the scheme of delegation, Section 76 Agreements were not brought through the Committee scrutiny process, it was therefore recommended that formal authority be delegated to the Planning Committee to authorise the Director of Planning and Building Control to present agreements to the Lord Mayor and Chief Executive to affix the corporate seal.

The relevant pieces of legislation relating to the corporate seal were as follows:

- Section 100 of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 1972 (the “1972 Act) provides that a seal must be attached to any document which is a deed or a contract that has a value of over £30,000.
- Section 120 of the 1972 Act provides that instruments executed by a council under its seal if otherwise valid shall have full force and effect notwithstanding that Council authority has not been given or that the use of the seal is not in accordance with standing orders.
- Section 76(10) of the 2011 Act provides that planning agreements may not be entered into except by an instrument under seal.

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In addition, the Council's Standing Order 52(b) states in summary that anything requires the corporate seal has to be subject to Council approval by way of a resolution.

The Committee agreed to delegate authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to affix the corporate seal to Section 76 Planning Agreements that are entered into under delegated authority by the Planning Service.

It was agreed also the monthly report to Planning Committee providing an update on Section 76 Agreements also be submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for information.

Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues

City Development and Regeneration

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 To provide Members with an update on the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Development Tracker, capturing regeneration and development activity which took place in the City Centre during 2023, as aligned to the eight core policies of the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (BCCRIS). The detail of this report will be provided by way of a presentation at Committee. This also follows the agreement at the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee in February 2024 that a regular update on city centre developments be included on the SPR agenda.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 Members are asked to:

- i) Note the overview of city centre development and regeneration activity during 2023 as provided within the attached Regeneration Tracker (Appendix 1). The tracker is aligned to the eight core principles set out in the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy - the regeneration policy for the city centre. This follows a presentation of the Regeneration Tracker made to the City Growth & Regeneration Committee in April and the agreement at the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee in February 2024 that a regular update on city centre developments be included on the SPR agenda. A brief overview of the Regeneration Tracker presentation will be provided at SPR Committee.**

- ii) Note that this presentation provides a high-level overview of some of the challenges and proposed next steps to help unlock the next stage of the delivery of the Regeneration & Investment Strategy priorities. Further reports will be brought back on a number of these issues including proposals for a reframed City Centre Investment Fund, the Place Based Growth Proposition, the Regeneration Framework, A Bolder Vision and updates on the outworking's of the All-Party Roundtable on housing led regeneration.
- iii) Note that, as agreed at the February meeting of the SP&R Committee, a special meeting will be held to consider the Regeneration Framework, city centre development and heritage assets.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 At the February meeting of the SP&R Committee it was agreed that a regular update on city centre developments would be included on the SPR agenda. Regular reports are brought to the CGR Committee on the Future City Centre Programme, the Regeneration & Development Tracker and other workstreams including the Housing Led Regeneration Programme, Bolder Vision and the Place Based Growth Proposition. However, given the role that the City Centre plays at a regional and local level in terms of job creation, economic impact opportunity and rates income, regular updates on these issues will also be brought to the SP&R Committee which will help inform the Council's position in terms of policy, corporate priorities and investment decisions. This is particularly relevant as the Council moves towards agreeing a new Corporate Plan and Medium-Term Financial Plan and in light of the Belfast Agenda Refresh.

3.2 The city centre provides an important role for Belfast, the Council and the wider region given Belfast's role as the regional driver and the critical role the city centre in particular plays in terms of employment, investment, tourism, education and a place to live and to visit. The city centre makes up 2.6% of Belfast's spatial area but represents the largest employment base employing over 86,000 workers across the various sectors, representing c37% of Belfast's workforce. Approx 80% of the Councils income comes from the district rate, with the city centre accounting for 42% of Belfast's non-domestic rates income equating to 27% of the Councils total rates income. The sectors contributing greatest to city centre rates are the office sector (60% of city centre non-domestic rate or 16% of Councils total rate income) and retail (22.5% of city centre non-domestic rate or 6% of Councils total rate income).

From 2020/21 to 2022/23 the city centre non-domestic rate has increased year on year going from £42.19m to £46.52m over this 3-year period.

3.3 The Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (BCCRIS) sets out our collective ambition for the continued growth and regeneration of the city core and its surrounding areas for the period 2015 to 2030. It contains a road map of policies to guide city centre decision-making and key projects that translate those policies into action, aligned to our overarching ambitions outlined within the Belfast Agenda. BCCRIS seeks to address the universal elements of a thriving city centre as well as challenges and conditions that are unique to Belfast and is underpinned by the following eight core principles:

- Increase the Employment Population;
- Increase the Residential Population;
- Manage the Retail Offer;
- Maximise the Tourism Opportunity;
- Create Regional Learning and Innovation Centres;
- Create a Green, Walkable, Cyclable Centre;
- Connect to the City Around, and
- Shared space and social impact.

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

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

3.5 The purpose of the annual Regeneration & Development Tracker (Appendix 1) is to provide an overview of regeneration and development activity which has taken place in Belfast City Centre and Titanic Quarter during 2023 (1st January – 31st December), aligned to the eight core policies outlined within the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy. An overview of the Future City Centre Performance Dashboard (as reported to the City Centre All Party Working Group and CGR) is also included, providing an overview of footfall, jobs, vacancy, and cleanliness and safety among other indicators to provide a health check overview of the performance of the city centre.

- 3.6 A number of the core principles and projects and developments identified within BCCRIS have progressed well since 2015 to date, including during 2023 which is the focus of the attached Regeneration Tracker presentation. This has included significant office development, hotel and tourism, purpose-built student accommodation and major developments identified in BCCRIS such as the relocation of the University Ulster, progression of the new Transport Hub and Weavers Cross development, progression of City Deal projects including the Belfast Stories tourist attraction, waterfront development etc. Whilst retail across the UK has remained challenging, previous reports to the CGR Committee have highlighted that footfall figures have recovered well in the city centre, and that primary retail core ground floor vacancy levels have decreased from 23% to 21% with a number of new first to Belfast /first to market brands and the Vacant to Vibrant scheme assisting in this transition.
- 3.7 It is however recognised that challenges remain around city centre living, place-shaping and public realm, dereliction, and infrastructure investment. As reported to CGR and SP&R in February 2024 the lack of regeneration related funding for Belfast (and the wider region) as compared to other UK city regions has put Belfast at a distinct disadvantage in terms of city competitiveness and addressing issues of viability, place making and progressing development and regeneration including housing and increased city centre living. As highlighted to Committee there are a number of funding streams available in other UK cities that have helped accelerate development inc the Brownfield Infrastructure and Land Fund, Future High Streets Fund, Transforming Cities Fund etc. The experience from other cities has shown that these have been critical in order to realise the full regeneration potential of their city centres and to meet wider city region requirements.
- 3.8 Notwithstanding the lack of this external funding, the Regeneration Tracker presentation highlights positive development activity during the 2023 period across the private and public sectors. In order to deliver the growth ambitions as set out in the Belfast Agenda to 2035 it has been estimated that this will require c £5.5bn investment and clearly the role of the private sector is critical in this. The Regeneration Tracker details the extensive private sector development delivered in 2023 along with highlighting a number of projects and initiatives where Belfast City Council are leading on the delivery of and addressing some of our key sectors for growth and aligning to our corporate priorities. This includes the Housing Led Regeneration Programme, the Bolder Vision, Strategic Property Acquisitions, Belfast Region City Deal

Projects inc Belfast Stories, Cathedral Gardens redevelopment, 2 Royal Avenue, the Vacant to Vibrant Programme, Belfast 2024 cultural activities etc.

- 3.9 An update on these various areas of work have been brought previously to both CGR and SP&R Committees. In terms of city centre living specifically it is worth highlighting the update brought to the March CGR Committee in relation to the housing led regeneration programme. This included an update on the Development Partner process where Members had been advised of the progress on the competitive dialogue process with 3 bidders for a significant multi-site, residential led mixed use regeneration development opportunity (c £630m GDV). This followed the development of a number of Concept Regeneration Plans for Council and wider public and private sector lands and PADS for a number of cluster sites, and represents a significant decision by the Council in terms of utilising public sector assets across a number of sites to bring forward a long-term partner to fund, develop and where appropriate own and manage assets through the partnership to deliver residential-led mixed-use regeneration across the city. Members were also updated on the reframed Inner North-West Development Brief which has been forwarded to Housing Associations, following the previous pause at the request of Members and liaison with DfC as landowners and in conjunction with NIHE. An update was also provided in relation to the city-wide Strategic Site Assessments where planning appraisals and feasibility studies are being completed, with updates to be brought initially to the Area Working Groups from May onwards.
- 3.10 It is worth highlighting that there are a significant number of consented residential units / schemes that have come through the planning system in the city centre particularly, and that many of these have not progressed for various reasons including issues around viability, policy, supporting infrastructure etc, most of which are outside Council's responsibility. Notwithstanding this however it is worth noting that there are currently over 1,000 homes under construction across 6 city centre sites, and over 1,550 social homes under construction across the city. As agreed by Members at CGR in March it is also intended to hold an All-Party Roundtable with Party Group leaders or their nominees on Housing Regeneration to consider the various housing regeneration issues in more detail.

Opportunities & Challenges and Future Priorities /Next Steps

3.11 The Regeneration Tracker presentation also provides a brief overview (final slide) on some of the challenges and proposed next steps to unlocking the next stage of the delivery of the Regeneration & Investment Strategy for discussion and future consideration with Members. Updates have been provided to both the SPR and CGR Committees on some of these issues including the disparity of regeneration funding applied to Northern Ireland in comparison to other UK cities and the benefit of a Regeneration Framework that would seek to align the city and Council's strategic priorities to support and strengthen the city's position in relation to investment and funding opportunities to deliver economic, social and commercial outcomes aligned to the Belfast Agenda; the Bolder Vision etc. Further updates on these, alongside proposals for a reframed City Centre Investment Fund will be brought to Committee. As agreed at the SP&R February meeting a special meeting will also take place of the SP&R Committee to consider the Regeneration Framework, city centre development and heritage assets with the meeting date to be confirmed in the near future.

3.12 **Financial and Resource Implications**

None associated with this report.

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

3.13 None associated with this report.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Social Supermarket Fund

The Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services submitted the undernoted report:

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

1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise members on the following matters;

- the outcome of the recent open call for applications to the Social Supermarket Fund 24/25.
- the current finance available to support successful applicants to the Social Supermarket fund

- the finance available to support delivery of a Hardship Programme in 24/25

and; to ask members to;

- consider options for funding successful applicants to the Social Supermarket Fund 24/25 and recommend an option to Council.
- grant delegated authority for the Operational Director of Neighbourhood Services to make further allocations to agreed organisations, based on the agreed option, if further funding becomes available.
- agree that a meeting of the Cost of Living Working Group will be scheduled for May 24 and that a further update on delivery of the 23/24 Hardship programme will be provided at that point when monitoring returns have been collated.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 That members consider the following report and note the following;

- the outcome of the recent open call for applications to the Social Supermarket Fund 24/25.
- the current finance available to support successful applicants to the Social Supermarket fund
- the finance available to support delivery of a Hardship Programme in 24/25

Members are also asked to;

- consider the identified options for funding successful applicants to the Social Supermarket Fund 24/25 and recommend an option to Council.
- grant delegated authority for the Operational Director of Neighbourhood Services to make further allocations to agreed organisations, based on the agreed option, if further funding becomes available.
- agree that a meeting of the Cost of Living Working Group will be scheduled for May 24 and that a further update on delivery of the 23/24 Hardship programme will be provided at that point when monitoring returns have been collated.

3.0 Main report

Background

3.1 In response to recommendations in the Welfare Reform Mitigations report, the Department for Communities (DfC) has

operated a Social Supermarket Pilot programme since October 2017. Following positive evaluation of the Social Supermarket Pilot Programme, funding was made available through the CSP in 20/21 to expand the concept to all council areas.

The aim of a social supermarket is to offer a sustainable response to food insecurity by seeking to help address the root causes of poverty rather than simply provide food. This is achieved by providing, in addition to food support, a referral network for wraparound support.

Key Issues

- 3.2 Previously, Council has worked with identified partners to develop models for delivery. The People and Communities Committee granted approval on 9 November 2023 to operate an open call for grant applications to the Social Supermarket Fund in 2024/25. Members were advised at this point that because activity is 100% funded by DfC, there was a risk that funding to support successful applications might not be in place from April 24.
- 3.3 However, on balance, it was agreed that it was preferable to undertake the application process so that funding could be issued as soon as it became available from the department. Members agreed that funding of up to £50,000 would be available for each individual project; this in line with other large grant funding programmes.
- The 2024/25 Social Supermarket Support Fund received 28 applications totalling £946,619.70 by the closing date of 12 noon on Friday 26 January 2024. Following assessment and independent moderation the recommendations for awards provided in Appendix 1.
- 3.4 Funding for Social Supermarkets is primarily drawn from the DfC Community Support Programme (CSP) Letter of Offer, which includes a 100% DfC funded funding stream for this work. DfC advised on 29th March that the available budget for 24/25, at this stage, is £104,686, which is based on a quarter of the direct award to BCC last year. However, there is no confirmation of the total allocation for 24/25.
- 3.5 Members will recall that as part of the 24/25 Hardship Programme, SP&R approved that £150,000 be allocated to Social Supermarkets in addition to the DfC funding.

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- 3.6** Members of People and Communities committee were provided with an update on the outcome of the open call application process on 9th April and asked to approve delegated authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to approve funding awards to Social Supermarkets as funds become available. Members of P&C were keen that SP&R consider possible support to these projects so that as many as possible could be supported.
- 3.7** DfC issued accounts direction to councils on 16th January to enable any unspent Hardship funding to be transferred to a useable reserve in 2023/24 and ringfenced for Hardship programmes within the 2024/25 financial year. This guidance also states that COVID-19 funding underspends can be carried forward and used for this purpose.
- 3.8** At present the identified underspends that are available for the 24/25 Hardship Programme are £223,400. This figure may rise when financial returns for the 23/24 programme have been provided by delivery organisations. Members are asked to consider the options in the table below and advise if they are content to approve an allocation to Social Supermarkets from the 24/25 budget.
- 3.9** A Cost of Living Working Group was established to consider the development and funding allocations for the 23/24 Hardship Programme, which was agreed by SP&R in December and is outlined in Appendix 2. Members are asked to agree that a further meeting of this group will be convened in May 24 to provide Members with an overview of programme delivery highlights and to inform members decision making in relation to the delivery of a Hardship Programme for 2024/25.
- 3.10** However, given the current lack of available DfC budget, members are asked to consider and approve one of the options below in advance of the next meeting of the Cost of Living working group.

Option	Detail	Pros	Cons
Option 1	Fund top 13 scoring projects on a 100% basis. Issue 25% of funding initially and increase as total DfC	Follows good practice to support scores of 60 and above. Minimises risk to council by only providing	No indication from DfC on when decision on full allocation will be available. Note: in 23/24 BCC received confirmation of

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	<p>allocation is confirmed.</p> <p>Total Cost - £490,508.70 25% - £122,627.18</p>	<p>funding on a quarterly basis until the annual allocation if confirmed by DfC.</p> <p>Should funding not become available in a timely manner from DfC it is possible that Hardship Programme could provide further funding to these 13 projects for a further time period.</p>	<p>full allocation in July 23.</p> <p>No security of funding for organisations who completed strong applications.</p>
Option 2	<p>Fund 21 projects on a 70% basis. Issue 25% of funding initially and increase as total DfC allocation is confirmed.</p> <p>Total Cost - £550,021 25% - £196,436</p>	<p>This option is based on projected total DfC allocation and £100,000 allocation from Hardship Programme and is therefore within anticipated budget.</p> <p>Provides funding for all 21 projects and ensures service delivery to a larger number of individuals.</p>	<p>No indication from DfC on when decision on full allocation will be available and no confirmation of what final allocation will be. Note: in 23/24 BCC received confirmation of full allocation in July.</p> <p>Any reduction in % of funding may impact on viability of delivery for</p>

			<p>individual projects.</p> <p>If the Hardship programme finances are directed towards supporting social supermarkets there is limited budget available to support other initiatives through a 24/25 Hardship programme.</p>
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3.11 Further detail on the outcome of the Social Supermarket Fund application is provided in the full People & Communities committee paper attached in Appendix 3.

3.12 Financial implications

At present the identified underspend from 21.22 and 22.23 Hardship Programmes is £60,300. A further £163,100 has been identified to date from Covid funding underspends. Members may wish to note that Covid underspends cover a number of grant programmes, Micro/Medium grants in 20/21, 21/22 and 22/23 as well as Kitchen Equipment Grants 20/21 and 21/22 and Thematic and Strategic Partner funding awards 20/21 and 21/22. This provides a total available Hardship budget of £223,400 for 24/25.

3.13 DfC advised on 29th March that the available budget for 24/25, at this stage, is £104,686, which is based on a quarter of the direct award to BCC last year. However, there is no confirmation of the total allocation for 24/25. DfC have advised that they will include the balance of their funding to Footprints Women’s Centre (funded directly through the DfC pilot) in the CSP contract. This is likely to be in the region of £50,000, which will create a potential contribution from DfC of £468,744, although this is not confirmed.

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Confirmed DfC budget 25%	£104, 686
Projected DfC budget 100% (based on 23/24 and Footprints allocation)	£468,744
Current available Hardship Programme 24/25 budget (from identified underspends)	£223,400*

***Note - Additional funds may be identified following financial returns for 23/24 programme**

3.14 Equality or Good Relations Implications and Rural Needs Assessment

The 24/25 Social Supermarket Fund open call has been screened for Equality, Good Relations and Rural Needs Implications.”

The Committee noted the following;

- the outcome of the recent open call for applications to the Social Supermarket Fund 24/25.
- the current finance available to support successful applicants to the Social Supermarket fund
- the finance available to support delivery of a Hardship Programme in 24/25

The Committee:

- agreed to adopt option 2 for funding successful applicants to the Social Supermarket Fund 24/25.
- granted delegated authority for the Operational Director of City and Neighbourhood Services to make further allocations to agreed organisations, based on the agreed option, if further funding becomes available.
- agreed that a meeting of the Cost of Living Working Group be scheduled for May 24 and that a further update on delivery of the 23/24 Hardship programme be provided at that point when monitoring returns have been collated.

Gaeltacht Quarter dual language street signs proposal

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

At the meeting of the Strategic Policy and resources Committee on 20th October 2023, ratified at Council on 1st November 2023, it was agreed to proceed with the proposal for the erection of dual language street signs in the Gaeltacht Quarter, in line with the process set out in the report.

- 1.2 This report is to update members on the results of the work undertaken to consult with the occupiers of the streets within boundary agreed by the Committee on the 20th October. It also updates members on the progress made in considering the proposal for the erection of new signage.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to consider the contents of the report and to:

2.2

- a. Agree to the erection of dual language street nameplates, with the second language being Irish, in the list of 301 streets contained in Appendix A which were included in the consultation and where any level of objections raised did not meet the agreed 15% threshold, including the following 10 streets in the list, for which there are no occupiers:

- 2.3 Ardmonagh Way, Ballymurphy Street, Dairy Street, Divismore Way, Monagh By Pass, Mulhouse Road, Springview Street, Stanley Street, Theodore Street, Turin Street

2.4

- b. Agree that a full survey be carried out for Clovelly Street for which the level of objections to the proposed approach met the 15% threshold.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 At the meeting of the Strategic Policy and resources Committee on 20th October 2023 it was agreed:

- 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
- 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.

This was ratified by full council on 1st November 2023.

Consultation

- 3.2 Significant work was undertaken to identify and review the streets within the boundary agreed for the Gaeltacht Quarter project which did not already have dual language street signs in place, and also to identify the individual addresses within each of these streets, for consultation. Particular attention was taken along the agreed boundary, where streets continued through the boundary and on either side of the peace line wall and gates, to ensure letters were only delivered to properties within the boundary. This resulted in 8887 addresses being identified for the purposes of the consultation with residents. Letters were issued to all residents through a mail drop using an external company 'Postal Sort'. The purpose of this letter was to advise residents about the proposal to erect dual language street signage and also to give residents the opportunity to object to the proposal for their street.
- 3.3 Elected members were given the list of streets subject to the proposal in advance of the resident consultation to allow for any potential for adverse impacts to be raised.
- 3.4 A public advert was placed in both the Irish News and the Andersonstown News to inform residents of the Gaeltacht Quarter of the approach being taken and how an objection could be made.

3.5 Results

Of the 302 remaining streets identified within the Gaeltacht Quarter which did not already have dual language street signage in place, 10 did not have any occupiers. These are included in the recommendations section above.

- 3.6 The consultation with residents of 8777 properties in the remaining 292 streets, was issued on 24th January 2024 with a closing date for objections of 4pm on 23rd February 2024
- 3.7 In total, 21 objections were received from residents of 16 individual streets using the reply form provided.
- 3.8 From the analysis of these objections, there was one street (Cloveley Street) where the level of objection to the proposal met the agreed 15% threshold as agreed by members. Of the 15 letters issued to residents in this street there were 3 objectors to the proposal which is a 20% objection rate. One resident provided comment, 'as this is mixed area I think this would cause tension for us and our neighbours'
- 3.9 The remaining 18 objections were spread across 15 streets with no objection rate over 6% for any of these streets.

Additional project tasks

- 3.10 Work and discussions are ongoing between staff within Property and Projects and Building Control to consider the next part of the project, to erect the nameplates. The proposal is to follow the existing process and utilise the current street signage contract and contractor. Whilst the project will be managed by Property and Projects, the Building Control Service will work in conjunction with the project manager to provide the necessary guidance, assistance and oversight. This may also require a resource to be provided by the Building Control Service to carry out some of the duties associated with the project.
- 3.11 It is suggested that the erection of the nameplates will be undertaken in a number of established clusters, potentially clusters of approximately 30 streets. The main tasks associated with the project include:
- On site identification of all existing nameplates in each street to supplement data already collected as a desktop exercise using google street view.
 - Engagement with homeowners where signs are on properties and to advise about the need for access to their property for the erection of new nameplates. (From existing desktop work to date there are approximately 75% of signs erected on private property)
 - A work order to be raised for each street with the location, type of sign and the translation for every identified existing sign using information captured at site survey stage.

- Quality checks of work orders prior to issue to contractor and also of manufactured signs prior to erection on site.
 - Checks of nameplates once erected and payment of invoices and dealing with any on site issues regarding installation.
- 3.12 The project has been discussed with our street signs contractor who has confirmed they have the necessary capacity to carry out the work within the project subject to agreement of detailed project plan timescales. Our current estimates for the project are based on completion within 6 months following Council ratification of the project moving to Stage 3 – Committed under the Capital Programme.
- 3.13 As discussed above a desktop analysis had found that the majority of the existing street nameplates are erected on the walls of private properties. BCC will need to engage with each resident of these properties to inform them of the proposal to change to a dual language nameplate. This is a more time-consuming exercise and therefore the staffing to carry out this engagement and the tasks associated with identifying the location and type of signage are being considered to avoid any detrimental impact on the current processing times for the existing applications.

Translations

- 3.14 Translations for the streets have been requested from Queens University who intend to have these completed this month.

3.15 Financial and Resource Implications

Following consideration at SP&R Committee in March 2024, Members moved the project to *Stage 2 – Uncommitted* on the Capital Programme. The Physical Programme Update report also presented to Members this month seeks approval to move this project to *Stage 3 – Committed* in line with the agreed three stage approval process for capital projects.

3.16 Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment

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 actions set out in the previous report and agreed by members. 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.

3.17 The consultation with residents provided an opportunity for feedback of any equality or good relations issues associated with the proposed approach. Only one comment was received from a resident in Clovelly Street as discussed above at 3.8.

3.18 The consultation actions have now been carried out and results are being brought to committee for consideration."

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor I. McLaughlin,
Seconded by Councillor Ferguson,

That the Committee agrees to defer consideration of the matter in order to undertake further engagement with those communities on the boundary lines at interface areas.

Amendment

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

That the Committee agrees to adopt the recommendations as set out in paragraph 2 of the report.

On a vote by show of hands, fifteen Members voted for the amendment and five against and it accordingly declared passed.

The amendment was put as the substantive motion and passed.

Culture Night

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the matter to enable a further report to be submitted on the cost to fund each of the three options.

Physical Programme and Asset Management

Physical Programme Update

The Director of Property and Projects submitted for the Committee's consideration the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The Council’s Physical Programme currently includes over 200 capital projects with investment of £150m+ via a range of internal and external funding streams, together with projects which the Council delivers on behalf of external agencies. The Council’s Capital Programme forms part of the Physical Programme and is a rolling programme of investment which either improves existing Council facilities or provides new facilities. This report presents requests for a stage movement approval under the Capital Programme, along with updates on capital letters of offer and contracts awarded.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- **Capital Programme - Dual Language Street Signs - Gaeltacht Quarter project - Agree that this project is moved to *Stage 3 – Committed* with a maximum budget of up to £170,000.**
- **Leisure Transformation Phase 4 – note that an update on this will be part of the Party Group briefings being scheduled to inform work on future capital priorities.**
- **Capital Letters of Offer – to note the update in relation to capital letters of offer.**
- **Contracts awarded in Q2 2023/24 – to note the update in relation to contracts awarded.**

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

Capital Programme - Proposed Movement

3.1 Members will be aware that the Council runs a substantial Physical Programme. This includes the rolling Capital Programme – a multimillion regeneration programme of investment across the city which improves existing Council assets or provides new council facilities. Members are advised that the Property and Projects Department is happy to arrange a site visit to any projects that have been completed or are underway.

3.2 Members have 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. Members are asked to note the following activity on the Capital Programme:

Project	Overview	Stage movement
Dual Language Street Signs - Gaeltacht Quarter	The erection of dual language street signs en bloc within the Gaeltacht Quarter.	Move to Stage 3 – Committed

3.3 Dual Language Street Signs - Gaeltacht Quarter

In March, SP&R Committee agreed to move the Gaeltacht Quarter Dual Language Street signs project to *Stage 2 – Uncommitted*. As per the three stage approvals process, an Outline Business Case has been completed and the team can now progress to delivery stage.

Members are asked to agree that this project is moved to *Stage 3 – Committed* with a budget of up to £170,000. The Director of Finance has confirmed that this is within the affordability limits of the Council.

3.4 Leisure Transformation – Phase 4

Members will recall that last month it was agreed to hold a series of party briefings to inform the future proposed workshop with Members on capital priorities. As Members are aware Space and Place Architects have been engaged by the Council to carry a review of current leisure provision across the city including a review of metrics such as facilities mix, usage, catchment, condition, revenue costs and current subvention levels of the leisure facilities which have not been taken forward as part of the leisure programme to date and also those independently managed community centres which have a focus on leisure. The review has also considered the impact of the LTP to date. Leisure has already been identified by Members as a key priority for the next few years and it is therefore proposed that an update on leisure and the S&P report will be part of the party group briefings to be held prior to the future capital workshop.

3.5 Capital Letters of Offer

Members are asked to note the update in relation to capital letters of offer from December 2023 to March 2024 at Appendix 1.

3.6 Contracts Awarded

Members are asked to note the award of tenders for capital works including services related to works in Q2 2023/24 at Appendix 2.

3.7 Financial & Resource Implications

Financial – Dual Language Street Signs - Gaeltacht Quarter – Maximum budget of £170,000.

Resources – Officer time to deliver as required

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

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

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Assets Report

The Committee:

i) Station Street car park – Licence Renewal

approved the renewal of a Licence agreement from the Department for Communities to the Council in relation to the Council operated off-street car park at Station Street.

ii) Cherryvale Park – Licence for the siting of a container

approved the grant of a licence to Bredagh Gaelic Athletic Club for the siting of a container at Cherryvale Park.

iii) Conacre / Grazing Agreements

approved conacre licences for a 1-year term for grazing and grass cutting of agricultural Council lands at Glencairn, Lagan Meadows, Ballygomartin Road North, Clement Wilson Park, and Roselawn.

Finance, Procurement and Performance

Contracts Report

The Committee:

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

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- approved the award of Single Tender Actions in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions as detailed in Table 2 below:

Table 1: Competitive Tenders

Title of Tender	Proposed Contract Duration	Est. Max Contract Value	SRO	Short description of goods / services
Microsoft Enterprise Subscription Agreement (ESA)	Up to 3 years	£2,200,000	P Gribben	To support current technology and hardware used throughout the Council.
Provision of Fuels from CCS RM6177 – National Fuels 2 Framework Agreement for Gas Oil, Diesel, Kerosene, Gas Oil class D	Up to 2 years	£3,000,000	D Sales	The fuels are used throughout the Council sites to ensure the operation of vehicles and the heating of buildings
Roller shutter repairs/maintenance	Up to 4 years	£130,000	S Grimes	To support maintenance teams in maintaining roller shutter doors throughout Council estate.
Glazing repairs/maintenance	Up to 4 years	£60,000	S Grimes	To support maintenance teams in repairing windows throughout Council estate.
Occupational health services	2 + 1 year extension	£380,000	C Sheridan	Provision of occupational health services for staff
Building maintenance	Up to 4 years	£800,000	S Grimes	To support maintenance teams in maintaining wide range of buildings and assets throughout Council estate.
High level lighting repairs/maintenance	4 years	£600,000	S Grimes	To support maintenance teams in maintaining high level lighting at buildings, car parks,

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				pitches and other assets throughout Council estate.
Air conditioning systems repairs/maintenance	4 years	£400,000	S Grimes	To support maintenance teams in maintaining air conditioning systems at buildings throughout Council estate.
Provision of temporary agency workers (for specialist roles)	2 years	£2,000,000	John Tully	<p>Framework to support the current contract with Matrix SCM for circumstances where Matrix SCM Ltd cannot provide a suitable candidate for a required role. This tends to be for specialist/niche roles.</p> <p>Call off contracts will be awarded via the Crown Commercial Services framework RM6277 using direct award to local suppliers who have availability at the time.</p> <p>This will ensure this spend is regularised using a compliant procurement route with this spend historically been awarded under STAs.</p>

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Table 2: Single Tender Actions

Title	Duration	Est. Max Contract Value	SRO	Description	Supplier	STA Reason Code
Premier account and application support for Microsoft products	Up to 3 years	£210,000	S McNicholl	Microsoft support for all of the Council Microsoft products. Microsoft are the only supplier to offer the level of support the Council requires.	Microsoft	3

STA/ Direct Award Reasons

Reason Code	Reasons in line with Public Contract Regulations
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 not in line with Public Contract Regulations (PCR 2015)

West Belfast Well Being Hub

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 advise members the Notice of Motion referred back to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee (SP&R) from March’s Council.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- **note the report and agree on whether the request should be dealt with via the discretionary payments process or via the end of year finance report.**

3.0 Main report

3.1 A Notice of Motion was brought to the Standards and Business Committee on 29th August 2023 to explore all options to fund the West Well Being Suicide Prevention Centre, including using reserve funds, if necessary, to source up to £50,000 so the organisation can continue to deliver its full range of services for the remainder of 2023. It was proposed by Councillor Collins and seconded by Councillor McCusker. The Standards and Business Committee agreed that, in the first instance, the motion be referred to SP&R.

3.2 At the SP&R committee meeting of 22nd September 2023, the Committee considered the motion and agreed that the request be considered as part of the Quarter 2 Financial Report.

3.3 The Quarter 2 Financial Report as presented to members at SP&R on 24th November 2023 highlighted the Q2 financial position and the forecast position of the council. Members agreed that reallocation of forecast underspends be considered as part of the year-end finance report.

3.4 The Committee’s attention was drawn to the motion calling for emergency funding of £50K to be allocated to West Wellbeing Suicide Prevention Centre which the Committee, at its meeting on 22nd September 2023, had agreed to consider as part of the Quarter 2 Financial Report. It was noted that requests of this nature were dependent upon funding being available for reallocation and the Director of Finance pointed out that the Quarter 2 finance report, which had been considered earlier in the meeting, had indicated that none was available. The

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request would, therefore, be dealt with as part of the year-end financial report.

- 3.5 Subsequently information was provided to the Chair of West Well Being advising of the Discretionary Payments Fund that was being reviewed, and in January 2024 the application pack was sent directly to the Chair. No application, or further correspondence, was received.
- 3.6 On this basis it was then recommend that the Notice of Motion was closed. Subsequently, at the Council meeting of 4th March 2024, it was agreed that the Motion would not be closed and referred to SP&R committee for further discussion.
- 3.7 Members are therefore asked on how they wish this motion to proceed, either:
1. Via the year-end reallocation process, which would be dependent on monies being available; or
 2. Via the Discretionary Payment Process which will open in June but will again be capped at £20k.

As per any funding, either option would require due diligence to be carried out prior to funding being provided.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.8 None at this stage

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

- 3.9 None.”

The Committee agreed that the request be dealt with via the discretionary payments process.

Equality and Good Relations

Language Strategy Action Plan

The Committee agreed to defer the report to enable the Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services to ascertain the possible cost implications of those additional actions which were raised at the meeting by Members.

Irish Language Policy

The Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services submitted the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 To provide an update on the progress on the development of a Draft Irish Language Policy.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that Members:

1. Note the progress on the development of a Draft Irish Language Policy;
2. Provide approval for the Draft Irish Language Policy to go out to public consultation;
3. Agree the recommended next steps as set out at paragraph 4.0 and in particular to the development of an implementation plan aligned to budgetary considerations.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Work initially started on a draft Irish Language Policy in 2022. However following initial consultation it was considered more appropriate to focus on the work which had already begun on the Language Strategy Action Plan.

The draft Policy was discussed at the Irish Language Stakeholders Forum on 1st February 2024. An updated version of the draft Policy was brought to the Language Strategy Working Group on 9th February 2024 and then Strategic Policy & Resources Committee on 23rd February 2024.

3.2 Following feedback from stakeholders and CMT, the draft Policy was presented to SP&R on 23rd February 2024. At that meeting a number of amendments were proposed to the Policy. In addition, parties requested briefings on the draft policy in advance of it being brought back to SP&R for approval in advance of a formal public consultation.

A copy of the minutes of that meeting are attached at Appendix One.

3.3 The following issues were raised at the Party briefings:

- Potential cost implications, particularly in relation to the proposed amendment to the Policy proposed at SP&R Committee (the adoption of a new bilingual logo);
- The impact of any bilingual rebrand on staff; and
- The impact on equality and good relations (including community relations).

3.4 The amendments proposed at the Committee's meeting on 23rd February 2024 and subsequently adopted at Council, are as follows:

'Belfast City Council will adopt a new bilingual (Irish/English) corporate identity and the bilingual logo will become the new, proactive, de-facto council logo to be used comprehensively across all corporate branding. The English-only version of the logo will be available upon request. The same typeface and font-size will be used for both languages and the Irish text will be as visible and legible as the English text.'

Appendix 1:

To be added into Category 1(a): City Centre Public Realm Signage (street signposts)

To be added into Category 1(b) and 2(b): Dumps, Recycling Centres / stations

To be added into Category 3 (as being upgraded): Bins

Point 14 (page 3):

The Council will develop a list of key strategic Council documents and publications to proactively be made available in Irish. The 10 most common front-facing forms (online and hard copy) will be identified and translated into Irish for immediate use. The Council commits to publishing information leaflets, marketing and promotional materials bilingually in printed form and online. In instances where consultations are being conducted and the subject matter has the potential to impact the use of the Irish language or the Irish language community themselves, consultation questionnaires, engagement sessions and associated documents will be conducted proactively through the medium of Irish/bilingually as part of the active offer.

Point 18 (page 4):

The Council commits to publishing regular and often bilingual English / Irish content across all social media platforms. Information posts, marketing initiatives, community / service announcements will take place in Irish and in English. The relevant officer(s) will work in conjunction with the marketing team to develop a comprehensive strategy on how best to promote the Irish language across the Council's platforms. The Strategy will set out clear annual goals, increasing annually, around the % of social media posts produced.

To be added under 'Communications':

The Council will develop and maintain a functioning bilingual (Irish/English) website. A choice of languages, English/Irish, will first appear on the Council home page and users will be asked which language they wish to view the site in. The Council website will also develop, host and regularly update a specific Irish language page, with information about the Irish language services available from Council, information on classes throughout the city and on Irish medium education.'

- 3.5** Members are reminded that there are already commitments to some of these actions in the draft Language Strategy Action Plan. Consultation arrangements are dealt with through the Council's Equality Scheme which commits the Council to removing barriers to consultation. Therefore there are existing obligations mirroring some aspects of the proposal.

4.0 **Next Steps**

If Members are content for the Draft Irish Language to issue for public consultation, then officers recommend that the following steps be undertaken as part of the overall policy development process:

- i.** Officers will prepare a draft consultation document and associated questionnaire to issue alongside a draft EQIA for formal public consultation;
- ii.** staff will be consulted through the Council's Industrial Relations Framework as part of the consultation process;
- iii.** officers will undertake to develop indicative costings of the proposals whilst the public consultation is ongoing;

- iv. any identified costings to be presented to Committee once the Policy has been subject to consultation and a final policy position proposed;
- v. that the policy will be subject to a detailed implementation plan which will outline delivery of specific actions arising out of the policy.

5.0 Financial & Resource Implications

The financial implications of the implementation of this policy will need to be considered once a final policy position is proposed.

6.0 Equality or Good Relations / Rural Needs Implications

The draft Irish Language Policy is currently being subject to a Section 75 Equality Screening and Rural Needs Impact Assessment.

It is anticipated that an EQIA will be required and consulted upon along with the draft Policy.”

Moved by Councillor Nic Bhranair,
Seconded by Councillor R M Donnelly,

That the Committee agrees to adopt the recommendations as set out in the report.

On a vote by show of hands, fourteen Members voted for the proposal and five against and it was declared carried.

The Committee noted that the Policy would subject to a full Equality Impact Assessment and consultation with the Trade Unions on the draft Policy through the Council's Industrial Relations Framework.

80th Anniversary of D-Day Landings

The Committee:

- i. approved the proposed programme of events to be organised by the Council over the 80th Anniversary period, on Wednesday 5th and Thursday 6th June 2024; and
- ii. approved costs in the region of £10,000 to deliver this programme.

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Friday, 19th April, 2024**

Operational Issues

**Minutes of Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum
11th April 2024**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Party Group Leaders' Consultative Forum of 11th April.

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

The Committee:

- Approved the use of the Banqueting Hall by Lord Mayor on 31st May 2024; and
- Approved the recommendations as set out in Appendix 1 below.
- Approved an additional request in relation to an organ donation organisation.

NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED	CIVIC HQ RECOMMEND
2024 EVENTS						
Institute of Public Health	26 September 2024	Alcohol Awareness engagement to improve the understanding of the health savings of minimum unit pricing of alcohol in Northern Ireland. Numbers attending – 160	D	Charge £115	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No Hospitality
Ulster Supported Employment and Learning	9 October 2024	Graduation Ceremony celebrating a milestone for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) who completed their journey through	C & D	No charge - Complimentary as Charity	Yes, Tea and Coffee Reception	Approve No Charge Tea and Coffee Reception <i>£500 given to their chosen caterer</i>

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Friday, 19th April, 2024**

NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED	CIVIC HQ RECOMMEND
		the Skills for Life and Work programme. Numbers attending – 160				
Glór na Móna	19 October 2024	20th Anniversary Celebration- Drinks Reception, Dinner, Speeches and entertainment. Numbers attending – 350	C & D	No charge as charity	Yes, Wine Reception as significant anniversary	Approve No Charge Wine Reception <i>£500 given to their chosen caterer for wine on arrival</i>
2025 EVENTS						
The Scout Association, Northern Ireland Scout Council	3 January 2025	Chief Scout's Award and Queen's Scout Award Presentation – 120 young people receiving awards and attending a reception. Numbers attending - 450	B & D	No charge - Complimentary as Charity	Yes tea and coffee reception as charity	Approve No Charge Yes Hospitality £500 given to their chosen caterer for reception
Holocaust Memorial Day Trust	23 January 2025	Northern Ireland regional ceremony to mark Holocaust Memorial Day 2025 - a time for all to remember the millions of people killed in the Holocaust and subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur. The event is the official Northern	C	No (charity)	No hospitality (<i>funding provided</i>)	Approve No Charge No hospitality

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
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NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED	CIVIC HQ RECOMMEND
		Ireland commemoration of the Holocaust. Numbers attending – 350				

Issues Raised in Advance by Members

Baby Loss Awareness - Councillor Beattie to raise

The Committee agreed to mark Baby Loss Awareness Week, with the Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal Services to submit a report on the arrangements for the event, to include display of clay tiles and the illumination of the City Hall, to a future meeting of the Committee.

**Use of City Hall - Launch of Orangefest –
Councillor Bunting to raise**

The Committee acceded to a request from the Belfast County Grand Lodge for the use of the City Hall for the launch of Orangefest.

Chairperson

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Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 3rd May, 2024

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE LAVERY ROOM

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

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;
Mr. T. Wallace, Director of Finance;
Mr. D. Sales, Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood
Services;
Ms. C. Sheridan, Director of Human Resources; and
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors de Faoite, Nelson and Whyte.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Restricted Items

The information contained in the reports associated with the following 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 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.

**Special Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 26th January, 2024**

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

**Independent Review of the Summer
Community Diversionary Festival Fund**

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the independent review of the Summer Community Diversionary Festival Fund (SCDF) and seeking agreement to the approach and criteria for an open call for the SCDF for 2024.

After discussion, it was agreed that the criteria be amended to include the following:

- a. Only events scheduled for July and August are eligible for funding.
- b. Only applications which score above the eligibility threshold can be considered for funding. Any applications which do not make the threshold cannot be considered for funding.
- c. If successful applicants fail to submit all paperwork and receipts for vouching purposes by designated date, then they are automatically ineligible for next year's programme.
- d. That the application form and guidance notes be amended to include the changes outlined in paragraph 3,8 of the report
- e. That an independent evaluation be undertaken of any events which received funding.

The Committee also agreed to hold a cross party workshop to discuss the recommendations from the draft Independent report in order to make longer-term changes from summer 2025 onwards.

Pay and Grading Review - Update

The Committee noted an update on the Pay and Grading Review, that the Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal Services has used her delegated authority to approve the satisfactory service payments and that a detailed report would be submitted to the May meeting of the Committee.

Incident at Roselawn Crematorium

A Member drew the Committee's attention to an incident which occurred at Roselawn Crematorium, and which had received media coverage the previous day.

After discussion, the Committee agreed:

- I. to condemn the incident at Roselawn Crematorium at which masked men had attended a funeral;
- II. that the Council instigate an investigation into the incident;
- III. that the PSNI be formally requested to investigate; and

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- IV. that a press release be issued by the Council condemning the incident and outlining the actions agreed by the Committee.

Standing Order 14

The Committee agreed that, in accordance with Standing Order 14, the minutes be submitted to the Council meeting on 7th May for ratification.

Chairperson

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People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 9th April, 2024

HYBRID MEETING OF THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

- Members present: Councillor Murray (Chairperson);
Councillors Bell, Black, Bower, R. Brooks, Bunting,
Cobain, de Faoite, Doherty, M. Donnelly,
R-M Donnelly, Flynn, Kelly, Magee, Maghie,
McAteer, Ó Néill and Verner.
- In attendance: Mr. D. Sales, Strategic Director City Operations;
Mrs. S. Toland, Director of City Services;
Mr. S. Leornard, Director OSSS and Resources and Fleet;
Mr. J. Girvan, Director of Neighbourhood Services;
Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control; and
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor Canavan.

Minutes

It was reported that the minutes of 12th March had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 8th April, subject to the following amendments:

XL Bully Restrictions announced by DAERA Minister

At the request of Councillor Flynn, the Council agreed to write to the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, to enquire as to what impact the legislation would have on local councils and animal welfare charities, and what resources would be allocated to deal with those impacts.

Blanchflower Stadium – Preferential Use Agreement

The Council agreed that the Committee's decision, that officers would look to work with local community-based football clubs to develop an allocation model which was fair and equitable for all users, to ensure that all clubs would get fair access to pitches throughout the week, would be brought back to the Committee for further consideration. As this is subject to call-in it will be considered at the May meeting of Committee.

Requests for Events in Parks

The Council agreed that the Committee's decision to grant authority to the applicant for the proposed Finaghy Cultural Festival would be referred to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for reconsideration.

The minutes of the meetings of 12th March were taken as read and signed as correct, subject to additions/amendments as outlined above.

Declarations of Interest

Councillors Doherty and M. Donnelly declared an interest in agenda item 3 (e) Social Supermarkets 2024/25 as they worked for organisations that had applied for funding and they removed themselves from the meeting during consideration of the agenda item.

Restricted Items

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 Schedule 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.

Difficult to Access Streets Update

(Mr. J. McConnell, City Services Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Director OSSS and Resources and Fleet provided the Members with an update on the progress made regarding the planning and launch of a pilot scheme to challenge inappropriate parking in streets that had been identified across the city, this was a collaborative scheme with the Council, the Department of Infrastructure (DfI) and the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI).

The Committee was reminded that it was the intention, via the initiative, to introduce targeted measures in identified areas where parking was of particular concern in relation to the Council Waste Collection Services being able to collect bins on the day of collection. Following liaison with the various stakeholders, a launch date of the 6th May had been agreed, and the Members were provided with an overview of the proposed measures, areas to be targeted and a timeline for the pilot.

**People and Communities Committee,
Tuesday, 9th April, 2024**

The Committee was advised that the plan would involve:

- an 18-month rolling and overlapping plan of education and enforcement;
- 6 target areas covering between 60 and 70 streets;
- each area being targeted three times over the 18 months for a period of 6 weeks each time;
- an agreed media and comms exercise in relevant areas and potentially across the city;
- raising awareness through lettering of both residents and owners of illegally parked cars; and
- joint and coordinated PSNI / DFI enforcement through Neighbourhood Policing Teams and DFI mobile enforcement units.

The Members noted that a communications plan had been compiled to ensure that the pilot was shared on the relevant social media platforms and also directly with the residents of the specific streets to be targeted.

Following discussion during which several queries were addressed by the Director, the Committee agreed the operational roll out of the plan, the accompanying communications plan, and the commencement date of 6th May for the pilot.

Committee/Strategic Issues

GLL 2024 Business Improvement Plan

The Committee was advised that, under the terms of the leisure contract between the Council and GLL, GLL was required to provide an Annual Business Improvement Plan for the following year. This report had previously been presented through the Active Belfast Limited. The Members noted that, as the contract was now under direct Council control, this and future annual service reports would be presented through the People and Communities Committee.

During discussion clarification was sought on the following matters and it was agreed that the Committee would be updated in due course:

- whether there was an intention to extend the installation on EV charging points to more leisure centres in the city;
- when the café at Templemore Baths would be reopening as there was currently only a vending machine option;
- how many summer scheme places were allocated through the leisure centres in the city; and
- how the placement and location of university placement students was agreed.

The Committee noted the annual GLL 2024 Business Improvement Plan available [here](#).

**Leisure Services Community Engagement
and Underrepresented Target Groups**

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

To provide members with the annual update for 2023 on community engagement and underrepresented group focused promotional activity.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Members are requested:

To consider and record receipt of the information provide below and at Appendices 1 and 2 attached. CNS officers will be in attendance to respond to any queries raised by members.

3.0 Main Report

Background

3.1 Under the terms of the leisure contract between BCC and GLL, GLL is required to provide an annual report on community engagement initiatives for the preceding year. This annual service reports will be presented through the People and Communities committee.

GLL is a leading social enterprise. One of GLL’s core priorities is to ensure full access for all members of the community and to encourage more people to be more active, more often. CNS works closely with GLL to encourage community outreach and regular participation amongst traditionally underrepresented target groups.

GLL employ a Regional Business Manager (RBM), whose key focus is to drive participation and usage, ensuring more people from every background are regularly and meaningfully engaged and taking part in sport and physical activity.

In support of this the RBM manages a team of three Community Sport Officers, a team of ten Health Officers and one Group Exercise Coordinator. All members of the team have work programmes designed to deliver on strategic objectives with a focus to increase participation in both the mainstream and underrepresented groups.

GLL is committed to support community access offering varied opportunities delivered in centres that are accessible, affordable, and non-inhibiting.

GLL re-invests through the GLL Sport Foundation that provides and sustains support for talented individuals.

53% of Belfast GLL members benefit from concessionary charges thereby helping to remove affordability as a barrier to participation.

3.2 Outcomes and proposals

Sport National Governing Body (NGB) and Club Programmes

GLL continue to support a number of Sport NGBs in the delivery of their holiday programmes, grassroots events and performance programmes. Holiday camps were delivered by the Irish FA and Ulster Badminton. In addition to this GLL worked with Peace Players International. British Fencing and Ulster Boxing in the delivery of coaching workshops throughout the summer months.

All Ireland water polo league events are hosted regularly at Lisnasharragh LC and the venue has also hosted a number of Ulster Swimming Galas. Ulster Boxing competitions are regularly welcomed to centres including Girdwood CH, Ballysillan LC, Brook LC and Whiterock LC. Shankill LC hosts the Northern Ireland Futsal Federation league for both males and females and in the Autumn, began hosting Northern Ireland Fencing competitions. NGBs regularly deliver coach education courses at BCC leisure centres.

BCC leisure centres, programmed by GLL, host over 200 local sports clubs and performance squads. Leisure centres in Belfast are utilised for club and performance training and service a variety of local and regional competitions. Gaelic games, boxing, fencing, football, futsal, rugby, tennis, table tennis, cricket, basketball, baseball, netball, softball, dodgeball, swimming, water polo and martial arts are amongst the sports allocated essential training facilities for programme delivery.

School & Youth programmes

GLL works with local Primary and Post Primary schools to provide facilities to support physical education delivery. Over 80 schools accessed school swimming lessons accounting for an allocation of over 5,000 programmed pool lane hours in 2023.

Centres facilitated a number of primary and secondary school end of term celebrations in June. Schools were able to access a variety of junior products and swimming pools across the city to celebrate the conclusion of their academic year.

GLL have expanded their Holiday Scheme programme to now deliver in Easter, Summer and Halloween. In total 80 supervisors and instructors were recruited to deliver the programme during the three holiday periods. Twelve centres in total delivered the programme over the three holiday periods. Programmes varied from a traditional holiday activity scheme model and others delivering sports specific models. Football, Gaelic games, gymnastics, basketball, swimming and tennis were offered as sports specific schemes. GLL worked in partnership with Ulster GAA, Ulster Badminton, Northern Ireland Fencing, Ulster Boxing and Peace Players International to support coaching sessions throughout the holiday scheme programme. In total the GLL Holiday Scheme catered for 2,766 children which represented 81% of the spaces offered. Additional detail is provided in Appendix 1.

GLL delivers a lessons and courses programme currently focused on swimming, gymnastics, tennis and climbing. Throughout 2023 over 5,500 children have been enrolled on swimming lessons, 40 in diving lessons, 220 in tennis lessons, 160 in gymnastics sessions and 50 in climbing lessons. In the coming year (2024) GLL plan to expand the swimming programme to cater for 6,500 children weekly, 65 in diving, over 250 in tennis, over 250 in gymnastics and 65 in climbing.

Brook LC has engaged with a number of Special Needs schools to offer the Air Venture product to support with Physical Education delivery. This combined with the sensory pool has resulted in 30% of all Brook Leisure Centre programming being an inclusive offering.

Community outreach

In 2022 GLL established community engagement leads in each centre to drive local engagement projects but also support citywide initiatives. In December twelve centres supported the Cash for Kids Mission Christmas. Over 700 gifts were donated with an estimated value of £10,000.

GLL continue to partner with 'Menshed' by offering space at Girdwood CH, Brook LC and Whiterock LC where the focus is on improving mental health for men.

GLL have supported a number of mental health charities and initiatives in the form of awareness and fund raising.

The Colin Autism Support Group uses Brook LC for parents of children with autism and other learning disabilities.

Avoniel and Andersonstown hosted open days for community organisations to promote their work to customers within the centres.

The Belfast Community Sport team delivered an outreach event to Ulster University Sports Studies students in October at Girdwood CH. This event saw over 80 students participate in a variety of sports and activities. GLL also presented employment opportunities within Belfast highlighting student placement opportunities and their trainee manager scheme.

Older Participant Programmes

At the end of 2023 30% of all Belfast pay and play and prepaid members were aged 60+. Council continues to provide free of charge access for over 60's before 11.00am Monday to Friday.

GLL delivers a daily programme of activities targeted at and suitable for older people. The programme expanded month on month throughout 2023. Belfast benefits from a citywide pool programme that ensures there is always Swim for Fitness (lane swimming) and Swim for All (family casual swim) options available every day across the city. GLL continue to deliver an introductory physical activity programme suitable for members looking for a lower intensity/low impact workout.

GLL deliver a number of active ageing mornings across the city which include activities such as Danderball, Pickleball, Table Tennis, Boccia and Water Polo. These are being delivered at Avoniel LC, Falls LC, Girdwood CH, Grove WC, Lisnasharragh LC, Olympia LC Ozone, and Shankill LC. GLL have plans in place to expand the programme in 2024.

On Friday 29th September Girdwood CH hosted the Better Club Games. Six centres were represented and a total of 50 participants took part in seven sports/activities throughout the day which included Pickleball, Table Tennis, Badminton, Bowls, Boccia and a selection of physical challenges. Additional information is provided in Appendix 2.

GLL deliver chronic conditions (Cancer & Cardiac) rehabilitation programmes, whilst also supporting and hosting Diabetes and Strength & Balance programmes. Many of the referrals for these interventions are older people.

Strategic partnerships and working groups (attended by CNS and GLL) are well established around chronic conditions pathways to ensure collaboration with key organisations such as Public Health Agency, Belfast Health & Social Care Trust and charitable partners.

Girdwood CH partners with Chest, Heart and Stroke Association in offering weekly low intensity exercise along with arts and crafts.

People with disabilities

GLL supports the NOW group (Social Enterprise) in the delivery of a 'Lets Get Fit Now' programme in Falls LC. This programme offers participants with a learning disability the opportunity to participate in tailored fitness classes and gym inductions.

Belvoir Activity Centre in partnership with Disability Sport NI provides a dedicated disability sports hub catering for a range of wheelchair-based sports and activities including Wheelchair Basketball, Boccia and New Age Curling. Ballysillan LC also supported the Northern Ireland Powerchair team in their World Cup preparations as well as providing training space for the Trailblazers club.

Whiterock LC supports disability groups in Upper Springfield by offering sports and fun fitness sessions twice per week.

The GLL Sport Foundation in Belfast currently supports 2 disabled and Paralympic athletes. Athletes benefit from financial awards of up to £1,250 which will contribute to their individual coaching, travel, competition, and equipment costs.

Brook LC has a swimming pool specifically designed to cater for those with sensory needs and those with wide range of disabilities. The centre runs six weekly 'quiet swims' currently attracting approximately 20 to 30 participants in each session. GLL engage with Swimming Buddies, an organisation that specialises in Autism friendly swimming lessons. Currently sessions are being offered throughout the week at both Brook LC and Templemore Baths. Brook LC also supports the delivery of Air Venture inclusive sessions which are designed to meet the sensory requirements of participants.

Women and Girls

47% of all current Belfast members are female (16,719).

In partnership with Irish FA, GLL provide female only football sessions at five centres across the city through the IFA Shooting Stars Programme.

GLL have supported Netball NI in the delivery of their social netball programme and are also in discussion about the potential for Lisnasharragh LC to become a regular training base for the senior international squad.

GLL supports 64 female athletes through the GSF programme (51.2%) to enable them to compete at national and international level in their respective sports.

GLL works in partnership with WISPA in the delivery of female only classes (aqua aerobics, yoga, Pilates and circuits) at Avoniel LC, Belvoir AC, Brook LC, Olympia LC, Shankill LC and Whiterock LC

Brook LC delivered an after schools multisport and fitness programme for girls and also works in partnership with local GAA clubs to deliver a 'Gaelic for mothers' programme.

Family programming

GLL have created a balanced programme of activities across all centres allowing families to participate. For example, a 'basic group exercise offering' which permits junior members to exercise with older family members.

Junior group exercise classes have been introduced into the group exercise timetable and GLL plan to expand this programme in 2024 subject to the availability of qualified staff.

Adult and Child gym sessions have been added across the city which permits children as young as 9 to attend the gym as long as they are accompanied and supervised by a parent/guardian.

Junior and family products such as water slides, Surf Belfast and the Aqua Play at Andersonstown LC, Air Venture at Brook LC and Aqua Splash at Lisnasharragh LC are all meeting the demands of families, particularly over the weekend and holiday periods.

Birthday parties are offered at all centres and represent good value for money. Provision includes bouncy castles, climbing wall, sports (indoor and outdoor) along with the new products mentioned above.

Wet centres provide family fun pool sessions, with floats and inflatables, as part of their weekly programme.

Brook LC offers weekly pool parties and family aqua aerobics sessions.

GLL continue to provide a citywide family membership which was first launched in August 2021. At the end of December 2023 there was over 400 family memberships across Belfast which equates to 1,982 members.

Summary

- 3.3 To consider and record receipt of the information provide above and at Appendices 1 and 2 attached. CNS officers will be in attendance to respond to any queries raised by members.

Communications and Public Relations

- 3.4 None.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.5 None.

Equality or Good Relations Implications

- 3.6 None.”

Several Members welcomed the update and during discussion a Member highlighted the need for officers to continue to liaise with Elected Members and GLL to enhance and strengthen the leisure provision offered throughout the city to those people with additional needs.

The Committee noted the GLL Holiday Scheme Programme Report 2023 available [here](#) and Better Club Games Report 2023 available [here](#).

GLL Service Report 2023/24

The Committee was advised that, under the terms of the leisure contract between the Council and GLL, GLL was required to provide an Annual Service Report for the preceding year. This report had previously been presented through the Active Belfast Limited. The Members noted that, as the contract was now under direct Council control, this and future annual service reports would be presented through the People and Communities Committee.

The Committee noted the Annual GLL Service Report for 2023 available [here](#).

Consultation - Rethinking Our Resources: Measures For Climate Action and Circular Economy in NI

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform members of the launch of a public consultation by DAERA on ‘Rethinking Our Resources: Measures for Climate Action and a Circular Economy in NI’

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 Members are requested to:

- note the contents of the report,
- agree the upcoming workshop to formulate a Belfast City Response on the key items within the consultation.
- Agree to support a request via the Council Waste Forum for a time extension to consider a full and proper response to the consultation.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 On 7th March, 2024, The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) published a consultation titled ‘Rethinking Our Resources: Measures for Climate Action and a Circular Economy in NI’ seeking views of key stakeholders

3.2 DAERA stated that the purpose of the consultation is to work towards meeting legal requirements and the statutory targets contained within the Climate Change Act (NI) 2022 and the Waste and Contaminated Land Order (NI) 1997.

3.3 DAERA stated that they wanted to hear the views of stakeholders on proposals designed to improve the quality and quantity of household and non-household municipal recycling, reduce food waste, and cut landfill rates with a view to developing policy options.

3.4 They noted that the consultation also covered proposals on the implementation of recycling for businesses, (also known as the non-household municipal sector), which is now included in the legal definition of municipal waste in legislation through amendments made by the Waste (Circular Economy) (Amendments) Regulations (NI) 2020. DAERA have positioned this consultation in relation the relevant legislative context as follows;

‘The EU Circular Economy Package (CEP), which the UK committed to prior to EU exit, was transposed into domestic legislation in December 2020 via the Waste (Circular Economy) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020. This amended the content of the Waste and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 and introduced a range of targets including a

municipal waste recycling target of 65% by 2035 (with interim targets of 55% by 2025 and 60% by 2030) and municipal waste landfill target of 10% or less by 2035.

- 3.5 This legislation also extended the definition of ‘municipal waste’, to include waste collected from sources other than households where the waste is similar in nature and composition. This means that most businesses, public sector and third sector organisations are now in scope of this revised definition. In addition to these targets, we also have a new recycling target arising from the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022, which requires Northern Ireland to achieve a 70% waste recycling rate by 2030’.
- 3.6 This consultation has been much anticipated by those involved in Waste Management. Since publication, BCC officers have been reading and understanding the content of the consultation. It is their view that this is potentially the most important consultation in relation to the future collection recycling and treatment of waste for many years. The findings and outcomes of the consultation will determine the future government direction of travel in terms of the management of Waste and will be a major influencer in the subsequent Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy to be developed later in 2024 by DAERA.
- 3.7 The consultation is open for 12 weeks, and consists of 26 distinct proposals split into 2 areas.
- Part 1 - Proposals 1 to 12 - to improve commonality in collections from households.
 - Part 2 - Proposals 13 to 26 - to improve recycling of Non-Household Municipal Waste

Over the 26 proposals consultees are asked to put forward views on over 100 separate questions.

The 26 proposals are outlined and detail the considerable complexity of the consultation - a link to the full suite of consultation documentation is here; <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/rethinking-our-resources-measures-climate-action-and-circular-economy-ni-consultation>

- 3.8 There are concerns from officers across the 11 NI Councils that the 12 week consultation period is too short to answer this consultation properly and there is a proposal being raised at the Council Waste Forum on 12th April to agree to make a request from all Councils to DAERA for an extension to this deadline, to allow for consideration and appropriate governance arrangements for every NI council to be carried out properly. BCC officers would

request that the People and Communities Committee support this proposal for a time extension.

- 3.9 That said, and without an extension currently being granted, in order to complete as full and considered response as possible, officers would propose to run a member's workshop, in the City Hall from 12.00 – 2 p.m. on Thursday 18th April. The workshop will be designed to gain consensus with members on the consultation response and in particular on identified key topics. Officers will then endeavour to formulate a draft response for the May Peoples and Communities Committee meeting for approval and subsequent submission to DAERA at the end of May.
- 3.10 Should members wish to attend this workshop, Officers would encourage Members to familiarise themselves as much as possible by referencing the link above.

Financial and Resource Implications

None

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

None.”

Several Members welcomed the opportunity, given the importance of the consultation, to participate in the proposed workshop and agreed that this would provide a forum for more detailed discussion.

Following a query, the Director of Neighbourhood Services undertook to liaise with the Member directly regarding the use of single use plastics and whether the Council planned to increase its number of water refill points at pitches.

The Committee agreed:

- that a workshop be convened for Members of the Committee, in the Lavery Room, on Thursday, 18th April from 12.00 noon – 2.00 p.m. to enable the Members to participate in helping formulate a Belfast City Response on the key items within the consultation;
- to support a request via the Council Waste Forum for a time extension to the 12-week consultation period to give adequate time for Councils to consider the consultation and prepare a full and detailed response; and
- that a letter should also be sent on behalf of the Council directly seeking a time extension to the 12-week consultation period.

Social Supermarkets 2024/25

(Ms. N. Lane, Neighbourhood Services Manager, and Ms. M. Higgins, Lead Officer Community Provision, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the outcome of the recent open call for applications to the Social Supermarket Fund.

The Members were advised that, subsequent to the report being issued, the Department for Communities had since released £104,000 of the funding, this was on a 25% basis.

The Members discussed at length options to enable payments to be made to organisations as quickly as possible, however, following discussion:

The Committee agreed to defer the report to the April meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources to enable officers to prepare additional information in advance of the meeting and also agreed to write to the Department for Communities to reiterate the need for funding to be made available to Councils and to highlight the essential services that Social Supermarkets offered to local communities and to seek additional funding.

Operational Issues

Requests for Events in Parks

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The Committee is asked to note that Council has received several requests from event organisers to host events across several city park locations in 2024 and these include.

- **Live at C.S. Lewis Square – C.S. Lewis Square**
- **Outdoor Church Service – Waterworks Park, Woodvale Park and Marrowbone**
- **Twilight Walk – Barnetts Demesne**

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is asked to grant authority to the applicant for the proposed event on the dates noted and to delegate authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to ensure the following:

- I. If appropriate negotiate a fee which recognises the costs to Council, minimises negative impact on the immediate area and takes account of the potential wider benefit to the city economy, in conjunction with the Councils Commercial Manager.**

- II. Negotiate satisfactory terms and conditions of use via an appropriate legal agreement prepared by the City Solicitor, including managing final booking confirmation dates and flexibility around 'set up' & take down' periods, and booking amendments, subject to:
- The promoter resolving any operational issues to the Council's satisfaction.
 - The promoter carrying out appropriate resident & community engagement
 - The promoter meeting all the statutory requirements of the Planning and Building Control Service including the terms and conditions of the Park's Entertainment Licence.

Please note that the above recommendations are taken as a pre-policy position in advance of the Council agreeing a more structured framework and policy for 'Events', which is currently being taken forward in conjunction with the Councils Commercial team.

3.0 **Main Report**

3.1 **Key Issues**

3.2 If agreed, the event organiser or promoters will be required in advance of the event to submit an event management plan for approval by the Council and all relevant statutory bodies. This will include an assessment of how the event will impact upon the surrounding area and measures to mitigate these impacts.

3.3 **Live at C.S. Lewis Square – C.S. Lewis Square – Thursday 25 to Monday 29 July**

3.4 Belfast City Council has received a request from Eastside Arts to host a two-day music event followed by a free family funday at C.S. Lewis Square in July. The events are due to be part of this years upcoming East Side Arts Festival and will have a Live Band that will perform on the Friday night followed by an Electronic music event on the Saturday. Both of these events will be ticketed.

3.5 The funday on the Sunday will be a free event aimed at families to attend throughout the day. It will include arts & crafts along with market stalls.

3.6 The Key Dates are as follows:

Set up - Thursday 25 July 2024 – 8 am onwards.
Live Band - Friday 26 July 2024 – 7pm to 11pm

Electronic Music - Saturday 27 July 2024 - 3pm to 11pm
Family Funday - Sunday 28 July 2024 – 12pm to 4pm
De-Rig - Monday 29 July 2023 – 12pm

- 3.7 **Outdoor Church Service – Woodvale 16 June, Marrowbone 23 June & Waterworks 23 June**
- 3.8 Belfast City Council has received a request from The Ark Church Belfast to host three separate outdoor services in Belfast parks in the month of June. These locations are Woodvale Park, Marrowbone & Waterworks Park. These services have previously taken place in 2022 but had not taken place last year. The group wish to be granted permission to allow them to take place again this year.
- 3.9 The services are expected to attract around 200 attendees at each service. The service will include live songs of praise that will be played over speakers. They plan on having gazebos in place at each park to use as a cover in the event of bad weather.
- 3.10 The purpose of their request is to be able to carry out their services outdoors in the hope that it will reach new people. Each event will have stewards at them to ensure no issues occur and the group will be providing their own bins to ensure all litter is removed from the site.
- 3.11 The Key Dates are as follows:
- Woodvale Service 16 June 2024**
- Set-up - 6pm
Service - 7pm - 8.30pm
De-Rig - 9pm
- 3.12 **Marrowbone & Waterworks Service 23 June 2024**
- Set-up - 6pm
Service - 7pm - 8.30pm
De-Rig - 9pm
- 3.13 **Twilight Walk – Barnetts Demesne – Friday 27 September 2024**
- 3.14 Belfast City Council has received a request from 26 extreme to host their annual Twilight Walk at Barnetts Demesne on Friday 27 September 2024. The walk will be a circular route, starting and ending at the Belfast Activity Centre. After the walk ends, there will be music with food available to buy for the participants, the radio station U105 will be in attendance and a gazebo, all within the grounds of the Belfast Activity Centre. At the end of the evening

there will be a speech by a Marie Curie nurse, and a firework display the fire work display will go over the grounds of Barnetts Demesne with the event coming to a close at 10pm.

- 3.15 The event organisers are anticipating around 1000-1500 walkers for this event, passing down past Malone House to the Lagan towpath, then back towards Mary Peters' Track, up around Queens' University's playing fields and back to the Belfast Activity Centre.
- 3.16 There is no formal charity collection on site, but Marie Curie will put out collection buckets should participants want to donate on the night. There is also a fee of £20 per person for participants in the walk. Marie Curie will pre-register participants for the walk, and registration will also be available on the night. This event has happened in previous years with no issues occurring due to this.
- 3.17 The Key Dates are as follows:
Set up - Friday 27 September – 8am to 4pm
Event - Friday 27 September – 5pm to 10:30pm
De-Rig - Friday 27 September – 10:30pm to 11:55pm
- 3.18 **Financial and Resource Implications**
- 3.19 There are no known financial or resource implications at this stage,
- 3.20 **Equality or Good Relations Implications/
Rural Needs Assessment**
- 3.21 There are no known implications.”

Following a query regarding the proposed events at the Waterworks Park, Woodvale Park and Marrowbone Park, the Member was advised that the organiser had held similar services in 2022 without issue.

A Member highlighted that the update report was still outstanding regarding the status of the ongoing review into the framework and policy for Events and asked officers to pursue this matter with the Council's Commercial team.

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

Static Park Warden Pilot Update

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 To update Members on an ongoing pilot static park warden initiative focused on addressing ASB in 3 park sites in the city.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to note the content of the report and to agree subject to budget to extend the pilot until the end of the September 2024 and to agree that Falls Park is included as an additional site for the pilot.

3.0 Main report

Background

3.1 Belfast City Council have the responsibility to maintain and keep our public parks safe for citizens and accessible for all.

3.2 Members will recall that a report on ‘Anti-Social Behaviour within BCC Parks’ was tabled at People & Communities Committee on 10th January 2023 overviewing ASB in our Parks over a 3-year period. This report set out mechanisms and roles responsible for reporting ASB and highlighted factors contributing to an inconsistent capturing of data on ASB resulting in limitations on data available in determining patterns and hotspots.

3.3 At Member’s request at this meeting a further report was tabled at P&C the following month (7th February 2023, entitled ‘Anti-Social Behaviour - update on previous interventions and initiatives in parks’, exploring a number of approaches successfully undertaken in our parks to alleviate ASB for potential future implementation, budget and resources depending. This included dedicated warden/attendant and animation in Dunville Park and Divis Back Path which encouraged community ownership of these parks.

3.4 Strategic Policy and Resource Committee on 24th March 2022 agreed to the reallocation of £220,254 to made available for the delivery of a ‘pilot project replicating model used in Dunville Park to reduce levels of ASB in parks’. It was further noted that the resources should be directed to those parks in the city already identified at January P&C Committee as having high levels of reported ASB – to include Dunville Park and Pairc Nui Chollan’ with additional parks to be included.

'Static' Park Warden Deployment

- 3.5 Members will be aware that Council's existing Park Warden Teams are located in each quadrant of the city and carry out an important role in our parks and open spaces which are not limited to addressing ASB issues. They are deployed, as required, to provide a targeted response in parks with identified ASB issues during their working hours which reflect the standard 'dawn to dusk' opening hours of our parks.
- 3.6 Following risk assessment for the new warden roles, and recognition that posts were for a specific initiative to tackle ASB – it was confirmed that the pilot 'static' wardens must work in pairs at all times and as a result of this that the employment of a total of 6x wardens was possible, limiting the pilot to 3x park sites citywide.
- 3.7 Woodvale Park was added to Dunville Park and Pairc Nui Chollain as the focus for the pilot initiative. Operational working hours for the new wardens were also agreed on the premise that an afternoon/evening and a weekend focus would allow them to better target ASB. Hours of operation at these 3 sites Wednesday to Sunday 3pm – 11pm each day, except Sunday with an earlier finish time at the earlier time of 10.30pm.
- 3.8 It was agreed that the newly recruited staff for the pilot would be operationally managed during the pilot period through OSS area teams. 6 Park Wardens began in August and following a short induction were placed in the 3 parks in September 2023. The pilot has now been in operation for 7 months.

Key Findings – Pilot Period To Date

- 3.9 The Pilot has been operating since the start of September 2023 and ASB reporting statistics are now available for the 6 consecutive months of September through to end of February 2024. Key findings from data recorded over this period, based on an evaluation framework drafted at the Pilot's initiation, are set out below:
- 3.10 Since the start of the Pilot there has been a 26% decrease in ASB incidences reported overall at the 3 park sites when compared to the same months the year previous (Sept 22- Feb 23). 61 ASB incidences were reported during the September - February 'Pilot period' compared to the figure of 82 for same period the year previous. This includes a slight increase in figures for ASB reports for the Woodvale Park site.

3.11 ASB reporting trend for each park over the Pilot period when compared to same 6mth period the previous year (monthly average) was as follows:

3.12

- Dunville Park - monthly average reports decreased from 6.8 to 2.3 (41 previous year and 14 during Pilot period)
- Woodvale Park- monthly average reports increase from 1.2 to 1.8 (7 previous year and 11 during Pilot period)
- Pairc Nui Chollan monthly average reports decreased from 8.5 to 6. (*Note opened in November 2022 totals not comparable as data is available for 4 months in previous period only*)

3.13 Members should note that evening programming (midnight soccer and other diversionary activities) have also been taking place during the pilot period and have very likely have had a positive on ASB at these locations.

3.14 During the pilot period, members should note that there has been an increase in reported ASB in some park/playground sites in the vicinity of the pilot sites. Breakdown of reporting increase in each park as follows:

- Falls Park - ASB reports up from 51 to 66 (29 % increase)
- Ohio St playground - ASB reports up from 5 to 9 (80% increase)

3.15 Given the impact of the pilot at the 3 sites chosen and the ongoing issues particularly at Falls Park members are asked to consider extending the pilot to cover Falls Park and to note that if they agree to this the number of static wardens will increase by 3 to ensure operational requirements of the pilot at that site can be met.

3.16 Members should note that the Park Warden pilot has been supported by the Safer Neighbourhood Officers and the PSNI. Good working relationships have been developed which have ensured and improved response to ASB incidents at the sites.

Financial and Resource Implications

3.17 Based on forecast spend for the pilot initiative there are funds to continue until early June 2024. There is no available budget for the Pilot going forward beyond this time. Should members agree to the extension it should be noted that this will be funded from within existing budget estimates.

3.18 Members should note that subject to support from Continuous Improvement (CI) the City and Neighbourhood Services

Department is planning to review the park warden function. This pilot will be used to inform this review.

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

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

Several of the Members welcomed the work that had been done to date and asked that their thanks be extended to the staff for the efforts that they had put in to developing the initiative.

The Committee agreed, subject to budget, to extend the pilot until the end of the September 2024 and that Falls Park be included as an additional site for the pilot.

Dual Language Street Signage Proposal

The Committee agreed the erection of a second street nameplate in Irish at St Johns Avenue, Tullagh Park, Corrina Park, Orient Gardens, Brookvale Avenue, Oakhurst Avenue and Suffolk Crescent and agreed to defer consideration of the decision to erect a Dual Language Street Sign at Sunningdale Park North and Ben Madigan Park South until those applications already received to date had been processed.

Proposal for Naming New Streets

The Committee approved the applications for the naming of five new streets in the city, Blackthorn Place, Blackthorn Grove, Blackthorn Crescent, Black Ridge Drive and Black Ridge Grange

Issues Raised in Advance by Members

Renaming Suffolk Community Garden - Councillor Kelly

Councillor Kelly agreed to submit an application seeking to have Suffolk Community Garden renamed through the Council’s normal procedure and officers advised that a report would be submitted to Committee in due course.

Dilapidated Buildings - Councillor R. Brooks

Councillor R. Brooks referred to the detrimental impact that derelict and dilapidated buildings were having on local communities, citing local examples in East Belfast. In recognising the Council’s commitment made in the Belfast agenda to address dereliction it was agreed that the Council would write to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) urgently seeking the Minister to bring forward a Dilapidation Bill.

At the request of Councillor de Faoite, it was agreed also to write to the Department of Finance and Department for Communities seeking the allocation of a package of funding to assist councils to more effectively tackle the problems associated with dilapidation.

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It was further agreed that officers would submit a report to a future meeting detailing the number of derelict buildings on arterial routes throughout the city.

Communication Boards - Councillor Bunting

At the request of Councillor Bunting, it was agreed that officers would submit a report to a future meeting providing an update in respect of communication boards which had previously been trialled in a number of Council parks.

Chairperson

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 10th April, 2024

MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

- Members present: Councillor Nic Bhranair (Chairperson);
Alderman Lawlor;
Councillors Bunting, Duffy, Flynn, Garrett, Lyons,
Maskey, F. McAteer, McCabe, McCormick, McDowell,
McKay, McMullan, Murray and Walsh.
- Also attended: Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Groogan).
- In attendance: Mr. D. Martin, Strategic Director of Place and Economy;
Mr. J. Greer, Director of Economic Development;
Mrs. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration
and Development;
Mr. S. Dolan, Senior Development Manager; and
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillors Canavan, S. Douglas, McDonough-Brown and McLaughlin.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the 13th and 27th March were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 8th April.

Declarations of Interest

Councillors Nic Bhranair and Walsh declared an interest in item 5.a) Update on Neighbourhood Tourism, in that the organisation they worked for was in receipt of funding from the Programme and left the room whilst the item was under discussion.

Agenda Items and Late Reports

The Chairperson expressed her disappointment with the late reports submitted to the Committee and highlighted that every effort should be made to avoid such an occurrence in the future, to allow the Committee ample time to consider the items thoroughly.

Restricted Items

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

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

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

Vacant to Vibrant Programme

The Committee was provided with an update on the Vacant to Vibrant Programme and the recommendations from the Vacant to Vibrant assessment panel following the recent receipt and assessment of applications.

The Committee:

- I. Noted the update in relation to the city centre Vacant to Vibrant Programme; and
- II. Agreed to the recommended grant awards as outlined within Section 3.14 of the report.

Presentation

Translink - Belfast Grand Central Station

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. D. McAllister, Head of Belfast Grand Central Station Programme, Mr. D. Curry - General Manager Bus Services, and Ms. L. Shannon, Corporate Communications Manager, representing Translink to the meeting.

The representatives provided an update of the Belfast Grand Central Station/ Weavers Cross Transport Led Regeneration Project which included details of the Street Works Programme and Public Transport Interventions, together with Rail Engineering Works for 2024.

The Committee noted the contents of the Presentation and agreed that Translink could present further updates at future Special Committees, if required.

Regenerating Places and Improving Infrastructure

Belfast City Centre Regeneration Tracker

The Director of City Regeneration and Development presented a Review of the regeneration and development activity which had been undertaken in 2023 in relation to the Belfast City Centre Regeneration Tracker, which included the Role of the city centre and the Benefits of investment, together with its aligned to the eight core policies of the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (BCCRIS).

The Committee then considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 To provide Members with an update on the Belfast City Centre Regeneration Tracker which captures regeneration and development activity which took place in the City Centre during 2023, as aligned to the eight core policies of the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (BCCRIS). The detail of this report will be provided by way of a presentation at Committee.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 Members are asked to note that:

- i) An overview of regeneration and development activity which took place in Belfast City Centre and Titanic Quarter during 2023, as aligned to the eight core principles set out in the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy, will be provided by way of a presentation to be made to this Committee on 10th April 2023.**
- ii) This will include identifying challenges and proposed next steps to help unlock the next stage of the delivery of the Regeneration & Investment Strategy priorities for discussion with Members.**

4.0 Main Report

4.1 As members are aware the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (BCCRIS) sets out our collective ambition for the continued growth and regeneration of the city core and its surrounding areas for the period 2015 to 2030. It contains a road map of policies to guide city centre decision-making and key projects that translate those policies into action, aligned to our overarching ambitions outlined

within the Belfast Agenda. BCCRIS seeks to address the universal elements of a thriving city centre as well as challenges and conditions that are unique to Belfast and is underpinned by the following eight core principles:

- Increase the Employment Population;
- Increase the Residential Population;
- Manage the Retail Offer;
- Maximise the Tourism Opportunity;
- Create Regional Learning and Innovation Centres;
- Create a Green, Walkable, Cyclable Centre;
- Connect to the City Around, and
- Shared space and social impact.

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

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

4.3 The city centre provides an important role for Belfast, the Council and the wider region given Belfast's role as the regional driver and the critical role the city centre in particular plays in terms of employment, investment, tourism, education and a place to live and to visit. , The city centre makes up 2.6% of Belfast's spatial area but represents the largest employment base employing over 86,000 workers across the various sectors, representing c37% of Belfast's workforce. Approx 80% of the Councils income comes from the district rate, with the city centre accounting for 42% of Belfast's non-domestic rates income equating to 27% of the Councils total rates income. The sectors contributing greatest to city centre rates are the office sector (60% of city centre non-domestic rate or 16% of Councils total rate income) and retail (22.5% of city centre non-domestic rate or 6% of Councils total rate income). From 2020/21 to 2022/23 the city centre non-domestic rate has increased year on year going from £42.19m to £46.52m over this 3-year period.

4.4 The purpose of the Regeneration Tracker is to provide Members with an overview of regeneration and development activity which has taken place in Belfast City Centre and Titanic Quarter during 2023 (1st January – 31st December), aligned to the eight core policies outlined within the Belfast

City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy. An overview of the Future City Centre Performance Dashboard will also be included, providing an overview of footfall, jobs, vacancy, and cleanliness and safety among other indicators to provide a health check overview of the performance of the city centre.

- 4.5 A number of the core principles and projects and developments identified within BCCRIS have progressed well since 2015 to date (and in particular during 2023 which will be the focus of the presentation to Committee). This has included significant office development, hotel and tourism, purpose-built student accommodation and major developments identified in BCCRIS such as the relocation of the University Ulster, progression of the new Transport Hub and Weavers Cross development, progression of City Deal projects including the Belfast Stories tourist attraction, waterfront development etc. Whilst retail across the UK has remained challenging previous reports to this Committee have shown that city centre ground floor vacancy levels have decreased 23% to 21% and there have been a number of new first to Belfast /first to market brands who have recently located in the city centre. It is however recognised that challenges remain around city centre living, place-shaping and public realm, dereliction, and infrastructure investment. As reported to CGR in February 2024 the lack of regeneration related funding for Belfast (and the wider region) as compared to other UK city regions has put Belfast at a distinct disadvantage in terms of city competitiveness and addressing issues of viability, place making and progressing development and regeneration including housing and increased city centre living. As highlighted to Committee there are a number of funding streams available in other UK cities that have helped accelerate development inc the Brownfield Infrastructure and Land Fund, Future High Streets Fund, Transforming Cities Fund etc. The experience from other cities has shown that these have been critical in order to realise the full regeneration potential of their city centres and to meet wider city region requirements.**
- 4.6 Notwithstanding the lack of this external funding, the Regeneration Tracker presentation to be made to Committee will highlight positive development activity during the 2023 period across the private and public sectors. In order to deliver the growth ambitions as set out in the Belfast Agenda to 2035 it has been estimated that this will require c £5.5bn investment and clearly the role of the private sector is critical in this. The Regeneration Tracker details the extensive private sector development delivered in 2023 along with highlighting**

some of the projects where Belfast City Council are leading on the delivery of addressing some of our key sectors for growth. This includes the Housing Led Regeneration Programme, the Bolder Vision, Strategic Property Acquisitions, Belfast Region City Deal Projects inc Belfast Stories, Cathedral Gardens redevelopment, 2 Royal Avenue, potential acquisition /vesting of the Tribeca site, the Vacant to Vibrant Programme, Belfast 2024 cultural activities etc.

- 4.7 An update on these various areas of work have been brought to both CGR and SP&R Committees. In terms of city centre living specifically it is worth highlighting the update brought to the March CGR Committee in relation to the housing led regeneration programme. This included an update on the Development Partner process where Members had been advised of the progress on the competitive dialogue process with 3 bidders for a significant multi-site, residential led mixed use regeneration development opportunity (c £630m GDV). This followed the development of a number of Concept Regeneration Plans for Council and wider public and private sector lands and PADS for each of the cluster sites. Members were also updated on the reframed Inner North West Development Brief which had been forwarded to Housing Associations, which had followed the previous pause at the request of Members and liaison with DfC as landowners and with NIHE. An update was also provided in relation to the city-wide Strategic Site Assessments where planning appraisals and feasibility studies are underway and updates to be brought initially to the Area Working Groups from May onwards.
- 4.8 It is worth highlighting that there are a significant number of consented residential units / schemes that have come through the planning system in the city centre particularly, and that many of these have not progressed for various reasons including issues around policy, viability, infrastructure etc, most of which are outside Council's responsibility. Notwithstanding this however it is worth noting that there are currently over 1,000 homes under construction across 6 city centre sites, and over 1,550 social homes under construction across the city. As agreed by Members it is also intended to hold an All-Party Roundtable on Housing Regeneration to consider the various housing regeneration issues in more detail.
- 4.9 The Regeneration Tracker will present an update on the progress of development and regeneration activity within the city centre in 2023 as well as identifying challenges and proposed next steps to unlocking the next stage of the

delivery of the Regeneration & Investment Strategy for discussion with Members.

5.0 Financial and Resource Implications

None associated with this report.

6.0 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

None associated with this report.”

During discussion, the Director of City Regeneration and Development explained that a potential reiteration of the Vacant to Vibrant scheme to include upper floors in vacant building was being explored. She also highlighted that there were few vacancies of high-grade office space, however, there were challenges emerging with older office spaces in terms of potential new legislation relating to minimum EPC standards.

After discussion, the Committee noted the contents of the presentation and the overview of the regeneration and development activity which had taken place in Belfast City Centre and Titanic Quarter during 2023, as aligned to the eight core principles set out in the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy, in particular, the challenges and proposed next steps to help unlock the next stage of the delivery of the Regeneration and Investment Strategy priorities.

(Councillor McDowell in the Chair)

Positioning Belfast to Compete

Update on Neighbourhood Tourism

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to further update Members on the research and engagement work undertaken to date which will inform the development of a new Neighbourhood Tourism Investment Programme in due course.

The report also provides an outline proposal for future funding of the existing City Connections programme.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 Committee is asked to:

- i) Note the contents of this paper and subsequent next steps for final scoping and designing of an appropriate**

Neighbourhood Tourism funding model, which suits the needs of applicants and their stage of development whilst also meeting council ambitions.

- ii) Consider the recommendation to allow funding to be released under strand one of the programme to EastSide Partnership and Fáilte Feirste Thiar, in recognition of their current capacity to deliver on objectives relating to neighbourhood tourism.

3.0 Main Report

Programme Aims:

In June 2023, Members granted permission to proceed with the development of a new Neighbourhood Tourism Investment Programme. This pilot programme will provide mentoring and financial support over a two - year period, to promote the development and implementation of market-led tourism products and experiences in locales across the city, increasing footfall, dwell time and spend and sharing the benefits of tourism beyond the city centre. The programme also aims to prioritise collaborative working models and uplift sectoral capacity, skill and growth.

Research and Engagement 1: Open Workshops (x9):

Extensive research has already been undertaken with a range of internal and external sectoral stakeholders. This work has helped to identify needs, gaps and opportunities and will help inform programme criteria and ensure proposals are aligned with the ambitions of 'Belfast Stories'.

Neighbourhood Tourism workshops were a key part of the recent engagement work at which both groups and individuals could find out more about Neighbourhood Tourism and express their own views and prioritisations around thematic questions.

Nine workshops were held across inner and outer North, South, East and West Belfast and the city centre which attracted 98 participants from 58 organisations. These were held in the following venues: *Belfast Castle, Ulster Museum, City Hall, EastSide Visitors' Centre; St Comgall's, Malone House, Shorts Recreational Club, Roddy McCorley Centre and Crumlin Road Gaol.*

In order to accommodate input from people who were not able to attend the workshops, two further avenues of engagement were made available via:

- an offer to meet one - to - one with an independent facilitator and;
- (ii) an online survey.

The Neighbourhood Tourism workshops followed a set format, with participants addressing six specific questions:

- i) How would you describe your neighbourhood to a tourist?
- ii) Market segments : does this reflect the interests of visitors who visit your area?
- iii) Stories : what stories do local people want to share with tourists?
- iv) Neighbourhood products and experiences : what already exists? what could be done that is new?
- v) Itineraries : how ready is your neighbourhood to welcome visitors?
- vi) What could an investment fund look like?

An analysis is currently underway of the information gathered and a final report along with options and recommendations will be brought to Committee for consideration by May 2024 .

In the interim, the following is a summary of how the workshops were received and the main points which came through at a neighbourhood level which will inform the final programme design and support.

- There was a high level of interest from a range of community organisations. Participants were positive, engaged and clearly wanted to learn more about the concept of 'Neighbourhood Tourism' and the benefits it could bring to localities across the city.
- Most participants benefitted from the overview of market segments, narratives and trends provided as part of the workshops. For voluntary and community organisations in particular, this was an exercise in finding out what they did not know and recognising they had a long road ahead in developing viable products and experiences.
- There was an acknowledgement that people's current level of understanding tourism and visitor needs would benefit from an increased knowledge of the subject, this could include tourism products, delivery methods, infrastructure and the development of tourism clusters.
- There was also learning about the wealth of stories and assets that already exist within both the city and neighbourhoods. This helped further understanding as

to how lived experience matched with professional expertise can bring authenticity.

- Stakeholders talked over breaks, left together, exchanged contact details and talked of future collaborations. They also asked for more opportunities for learning, information sharing and networking.

The following points were raised by workshop participants for Council to consider in any future approach to Neighbourhood Tourism:

- A relatively small funding pot to cover projects from across the city.
- Funding welcomed as it will minimise financial risks associated with new product development and market testing.
- Tourism offerings should come from locally based residents and organisations,
- ie. fear of being marginalised by bigger, outside organisations with no real connection to local areas.
- Open to a collaborative approach but provision should also be included to allow smaller, individual applications.
- Match funding should not be a requirement as it could exclude potential applicants.
- A hybrid model of financial support combined with business mentoring would be beneficial.
- Support for marketing and sales came through strongly.
- Clustering opportunities could maximise impact, increase benefits and avoid duplication.
- Council to be cognisant of how parts of the city are currently not as developed as others in terms of tourism offerings and the ability to bring forward new concepts and products.
- Funding model to be user friendly and proportionate to level of funding requested.

Research and Engagement 2 : Sectoral Stakeholders:

The Neighbourhood Tourism based workshops were supplemented with interviews and engagement with representatives from key sectoral bodies, area partnerships and local and central government, including:

- Party Group Leaders and Elected Members who attended the workshops.
- Key BCC teams and departments, including:

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- **Property and Projects**
- **Neighbourhood Regeneration**
- **Neighbourhood Integration**
- **Community and Neighbourhood Assets**
- **Central Grants**
- **City Innovation**
- **Economic Development**
- **Culture**
- **Tourism**
- **Belfast 2024**
- **Belfast Stories**

As well as external stakeholders including:

- **Department for Communities**
- **Department for the Economy**
- **Tourism NI**
- **Visit Belfast**
- **Tourism Ireland**
- **The Greater Shankill Convention**
- **Maritime Belfast**
- **EastSide Partnership**
- **Fáilte Feirste Thiar**

A brief synopsis of feedback from sectoral representatives currently includes:

- **Concerns in terms of restricted capacity levels with a particular focus on quality, marketing and viability.**
- **It was also felt that more investment was needed in Neighbourhood Tourism. Successful destination development in areas such as West Belfast, East Belfast and Maritime Belfast indicated the scale of investment required.**
- **A number of other strategies are currently under review or in development and it appears that stories will be a common driver for all key partners and sectoral bodies going forward.**
- **It was suggested that people, stories or themes should be the focus of the programme rather than neighbourhoods or that there could be distinct strands for neighbourhoods and for storytelling. There was some concern that a focus on geographic communities excludes community of identity, for example, the LGBTQ plus community.**
- **Other stakeholders suggested that investment should support existing or emerging anchor attractions and**

assets such as the city's cemeteries, Belfast Castle and Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund projects.

- There was discussion as to whether the investment programme is a fund, a strategy or a building block contributing to neighbourhood tourism development alongside, for example, a skills and training agenda.
- Consultees felt that a key benefit of the investment programme should be allowing providers to 'de-risk' the development of new and enhanced products and experiences. This should be matched by a risk appetite prepared to accept greater risk in pursuit of the greater potential benefits of innovation.

- Several consultees also reinforced that this is a pilot and in such a context, success and failure are different sides of the same point, provide that lessons are drawn and learning shared.

Opportunities available within Go Succeed Programme:

As part of the consultation and engagement process, Council's Tourism staff have met on a regular basis with colleagues in Economic Development to explore how a new Neighbourhood Tourism Investment Programme could benefit from the opportunities available within the existing Go Succeed programme. The aim is to provide wrap - around support in the form of concept development, tailored business assistance, guidance and mentoring. This integrated approach would provide the business acumen and support needs raised by attendees at the neighbourhood tourism workshops.

Funding Models:

Research and engagement work to date has provided learnings which will be taken into consideration when developing an appropriate funding model over the coming months.

It is clear that different destinations and neighbourhoods across the city are at varying stages of development. So, too, are potential providers which include businesses, social enterprises, charities, voluntary groups and sole entrepreneurs across the private, community, culture and heritage sectors.

Many providers are small and lack staff, time and financial resources to innovate or take a risk on something new or unproven. For others, tourism is not a core organisational

function or focus. Some have a model that they have not been able to grow or monetise, while Tourism NI has indicated a gap in support for established providers to internationalise their offer.

Consideration will also be given by the Tourism Development Team to the respective implications of employing either a commissioning model or a grant funding model within the CGU framework. Work will also continue to delineate operational roles and responsibilities and appropriate methods for monitoring and evaluation of outcomes.

A detailed report on all engagement feedback and next steps, alignment to Go Succeed and funding model recommendations for member consideration will be presented at May 2024 Committee.

4.0 Eastside/Failte Feirste Thiar

In East Belfast, EastSide Tourism is a long-established community organisation that has many years' experience in servicing visitors' needs. In the west of the city, Fáilte Feirste Thiar is also firmly established and has a strong track record in supporting and delivering neighbourhood tourism services.

During the research and engagement work, several stakeholders, not just those with a destination management remit, emphasised the importance of destination management at a quarter or neighbourhood level.

Consultees pointed to gains made in the East, West and Waterfront areas in relation to strategy, co-ordination, networking, marketing, promotional material, digitisation, packaging, clustering, volunteer development, visitor servicing, accreditation and more.

In recent years, Council has provided funding to EastSide Tourism and Fáilte Feirste Thiar to enable the City Connections programme, a partnership between the two organisations which works to maximise the impact of tourism at a local level.

Given these organisations are long established with a strong remit of neighbourhood tourism and the current limited capacity for others to deliver offerings of a similar calibre, it is recommended to split the investment programme into two strands:

The total budget for the Neighbourhood Tourism Investment Programme is £500,000 over a two-year period from 2024 - 2026.

- i) Strand One will continue to support the work of EastSide Tourism and Fáilte Feirste Thiar for two years, this will be by way of an annual funding agreement which will be subject to the achievement of KPIs and agreed deliverables. The organisations would each receive £62,500 per annum. This funding will support an outcomes-based model that will integrate support and capacity building to other Neighbourhood Tourism projects through an agreed delivery programme. Officers will work with both organisations to outline associated KPIs and deliverables for this funding and will be monitored via funding agreements.
- ii) Strand Two will provide £250,000 across the programme 2 year lifespan to support other applicants beyond to develop, test and bring to market new or enhanced tourism products and experiences. (If funding for EastSide Tourism and Fáilte Feirste Thiar is approved under strand one, these organisations would be excluded from applying for funding under strand two). The funding model options will be brought back to committee in May 2024.

5.0 Financial and Resource Implications:

Funding for year 1 (2024 / 25) and year 2 (2025 / 26) will be provided from Belfast Region City Deal Reserve. This is a total of £500k over the 2 financial years - £250k per annum.

6.0 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment:

The Neighbourhood Tourism Investment Programme has been screened for:

- i) Equality of opportunity and good relations and
- ii) Disabilities duties

On the basis of the answers to the screening questions, it was recommended that the policy is 'screened out - mitigating actions' (minor impacts).

Therefore, the consultation and engagement on Neighbourhood Tourism and draft Equality Screening took simultaneously between January and March 2024.

This means that policy development was shaped by the findings of the consultation and screening, allowing any potential negative impacts to be designed out and opportunities to promote equality or good relations, built in.

Only minor positive impacts have been identified at this stage. The council will continue to monitor for further differential impacts.”

During discussion, Members raised the importance of building capacity of other community organisations and smaller groups which might wish to apply for Strand Two of the Neighbourhood Tourism programme.

The Director of Economic Development explained the equality screening element, in that inclusive tourism has been considered, together with products relevant to all market segments.

After discussion, the Committee:

- I. Noted the contents of the report and subsequent next steps for final scoping and designing of an appropriate Neighbourhood Tourism funding model, which suited the needs of applicants and their stage of development whilst also meeting the Council’s ambitions;
- II. Agreed to the release of funding under strand one of the programme to EastSide Partnership and Fáilte Feirste Thiar, in recognition of their current capacity to deliver on objectives relating to neighbourhood tourism; and
- III. Agreed that capacity building be developed for other community organisation and smaller local groups which might wish to apply for Strand Two funding.

(Councillor Nic Bhranair in the Chair)

International Relations Activity – New York-New Belfast event

The Committee was reminded of the ongoing work to develop and deliver a range of activities to attract further foreign direct investment and capital investment in the city and support the growth and scaling of innovative Belfast companies in key growth sectors. This included support for trade development and export support; engagement in showcasing and promotional activities in key markets and development of promotional collateral and materials setting out the sectoral and infrastructure offer in the city.

The Director of Economic Development advised that one of the key international opportunities to promote the business and investment opportunities in Belfast was the annual New York-New Belfast (NYNB) showcase event which had been running for more than a decade. For the last three years, the event had been streamlined to focus on seeking economic opportunity within New York City and the wider east coast. Over 150 business, civic and political leaders gather to hear the latest Belfast capital developments

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and trade and investment offer across our growth sectors. An added dimension to the showcase was an opportunity to promote the tourism and cultural offers within the city, including the 2024 Year of Culture programme.

He stated that, this year, presented an opportunity to update potential investors on the progress of the Belfast Region City Deal key assets. An increasingly important area of engagement with the US market was the growing number of scaling companies seeking investment and mentorship to launch into the US market. Finally, the event and associated meetings provided an opportunity to meet face to face with companies which were considering establishing a base in Europe, to encourage them to explore Belfast as an investment location – particularly given the unique investment proposition that the region now benefited from. He reported that, as well as the business event, the Council delegation would undertake a series of targeted business meetings in partnership with Invest NI's USA office.

He confirmed that the 15th NYNB event would take place on 6th June, 2024. Among key attendees and speakers were Comptroller Tom Di Napoli, who continued to invest US Pension Funds into NI businesses, as well as committed supporter of Belfast, Michael Flannery, who worked with US-based tech businesses targeting global markets.

The Committee approved a financial contribution of £5,000 towards the 2024 New York New Belfast event and agreed to the attendance of the Lord Mayor and relevant senior officials, up to a to a maximum estimated cost of £8,000.

Update on Lord Mayors Day

The Director of Economic Development provided an overview of the Lord Mayor's Day Event, which would take place on Saturday, 18th May, encompassing a day of festivities in City Hall Grounds between 12pm-5pm. He highlighted that it would also align with welcoming Little Amal to the city and the Lord Mayor would host Little Amal as part of the event.

The Committee approved the proposal for the Lord Mayor's Day Event and allocated a budget of £42,000 for its implementation. The Committee noted that the event played a crucial role in promoting civic pride and cultural heritage.

Strategic and Operational Issues

City Growth and Regeneration Committee Plan 2024-2025- Update

The Committee noted that the draft Committee Plan would be presented for consideration at its meeting in May and that, subsequently, it might require updating when the four year Corporate Plan for the Council had been agreed.

Notice of Motion Quarterly Update

The Committee was advised that there were 11 Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance for which it was responsible for.

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It was reported that the Committee should consider the recommendation to close seven motions, as follows:

Category 1 Recommended Closures

- Review of the Belfast Bikes Scheme (ID = 72)
- Disabled Parking Accreditation Scheme (ID = 153)
- Translink – Night-time provision of services (ID = 289)
- Support the network of WW2-era Pillboxes (ID = 303)
- Cathedral Quarter (ID = 318)
- Late Night Public Transport (ID = 349)

Category 2 Recommended Closures

- Street Art Walls (ID = 329)

During discussion, in response to a Member's question in relation to the continued issue outlined in the Translink – Night-time provision of services Motion (ID = 289), the Director of City Regeneration and Development advised that the need had been identified by Translink as an action with the Community and Active Sustainable Travel Group. The Senior Manager also highlighted that during a presentation from the Purple Flag Initiative representatives to the All-Party Working Group on the City Centre in January, Members had been informed that 3 Belfast Improvement Districts were working with Translink to explore funding options to progress the issue.

One Member requested that the Disabled Parking Accreditation Scheme Motion (ID = 153) remained open, so that a report could be submitted on the costs and process of joining the Disability Motoring UK's Disabled Parking Accreditation scheme.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor McMullan,
Seconded by Councillor Lyons,

In relation to the update on the Motion 'Review of the Belfast Bikes Scheme' (ID = 72), from March 2020, to consider granting free access to young people to the Belfast Bikes Scheme, the Committee agrees that it would consider this as part of the rate setting process for 2025/26.

On a vote by show of hands, four Members voted for the proposal and ten against and it was accordingly declared lost.

Accordingly, the Committee:

- Noted the updates to all Notices of Motion that the Committee was responsible for as referenced in Appendix 1; and
- Agreed to the closure of six Notices of Motion, as referenced in Appendix 1 and noted in paragraph 3.4 of the report (with the exception of ID = 153); and

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- Agreed that the Disabled Parking Accreditation Scheme Motion (ID = 153) remained open, so that a report could be submitted on the associated costs and process of joining the Disability Motoring UK's Disabled Parking Accreditation scheme, for consideration at a future Committee.

Issues Raised in Advance by Members

Belfast 2024 Animation - Culture Night (Cllr Groogan to raise)

In response to the Deputy Lord Mayor's suggestion to support cultural venues in the City to open on the evening of 'Culture Night' in September, within the Belfast 2024 Programme of events, the Committee agreed to refer the decision to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 19th April for consideration so that further detail of how this could be facilitated, resourced and managed could be provided.

Chairperson

Licensing Committee

Wednesday, 17th April, 2024

MEETING OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE LAVERY ROOM

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

In attendance: Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;
Mr. S. Hewitt, Building Control Manager;
Mr. K. Bloomfield, HMO Manager;
Mr. J. Cunningham, Senior Licensing Officer;
Mr. C. McLaughlin, Solicitor (Regulatory and Planning);
Mrs. L. Toland, Senior Manager (Economy); and
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillors Collins, McCusker and McMullan.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 20th March, 2024 were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council, at its meeting on 8th April, 2024, 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 recorded.

Non-Delegated Matter

Issue Raised in Advance by a Member

Request to receive a delegation re: the new Pavement Cafe Guidelines - Councillor McKeown to raise

The Chairperson advised that he had been contacted by a delegation who wished to present to the Committee regarding the new Pavement Café Guidelines.

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The Committee agreed to receive the presentation and welcomed Mr. Neil Hutcheson (Federation of Small Businesses), Mr. Stephen McGorrian (Horatio Group and Hospitality Ulster) and Mr. Damien Corr (Cathedral Quarter BID) to the meeting.

On behalf of the delegation, Mr. Hutcheson outlined that:

- the hospitality and retail industry in NI was dealing with huge cost increases, dampened demand and an inability to raise prices much further due to the ongoing cost of living crisis;
- none of the government support, which was available in England, was available in NI, notably the significant rates discount of 75%;
- businesses really appreciated the support that the Council had given to businesses during the pandemic;
- it was clear that there was a desire for a pavement cafe culture in NI and that everyone was keen to see a permanent and effective scheme, particularly taking into account the needs of disabled groups;
- they appreciated that the existing legislation and draft guidance restricted the Council on how it could operate, however, they did not feel that a best practice consultation process had been followed;
- had best practice been followed, the vast majority of businesses, licensed or unlicensed, would have applied to the permanent scheme and would be successful, thereby demonstrating its success;
- the timeframes had been too short for businesses, it had been carried out at a difficult time of year for them and they had not been able to critique draft wording before it had been implemented;
- some of the concerns which they had raised during the consultation had not been addressed;
- some business owners were concerned regarding liability insurance and how it would operate if an incident occurred when a premises was unlicensed or in breach of its licence;
- there were flaws with the draft guidance from DFI and there had been a lack of engagement between DFI and businesses;
- they were requesting that the Committee grant a further extension of the transition period, for two or three months, so as not to penalise those who had already applied to the permanent scheme, and also to alleviate the insurance issue;
- a more structured engagement with businesses was required with stakeholders, and should include DfC and DFI; and
- the Council would consider highlighting the scheme and providing an incentive to businesses, for example, financial assistance with street furniture.

The Senior Licensing officer thanked the representatives for their presentation. He reminded the Committee that, in June 2020, the Council had agreed to implement a temporary Pavement Café scheme to assist the hospitality sector during the Covid-19 pandemic. The process had been focused on business needs and was always meant to be a temporary process. He reminded the Committee that the scheme had been extended on a number of occasions, with the transition period ending on 30th April, 2024.

**Licensing Committee,
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He outlined that there had been extensive engagement with a wide range of stakeholders regarding the proposals for the permanent scheme, including disabled groups and FSB, and that officers had met many business owners on site. He reported that officers had a meeting scheduled for next week with Hospitality Ulster in respect of the scheme. He emphasised that the scheme was not about a blanket, “one size fits all” approach.

The Members were advised that two information sessions had been held, in February 2024, and the Council had also used its social media to encourage business owners to apply to the permanent scheme.

The Senior Licensing Officer reported that officers had worked with businesses to assist them with their applications. He explained that the permanent scheme mirrored the temporary scheme in many aspects, however, fees had been introduced and the standard licence conditions had been revised. It was reported that what had been deemed appropriate during the temporary scheme, in terms of the location or size of the pavement café area, would not necessarily fit within the terms of the permanent scheme and that more detail, generally, was required from applicants.

The Members were reminded that the purpose of the permanent scheme was to allow a food and drink business to place temporary furniture in a public area. It was not an extension of a bar or a smoking area.

He outlined that, to date, 40 applications had been received for the permanent scheme, 35% of which were new applicants and 65% were from those who held a temporary licence. The Members were advised that DFI had reported they did not expect to issue a large number of refusals.

The Committee was advised that, while officers would be happy to have further meetings with the BIDs or with FSB, they suggested that there was perhaps more merit in meeting with individual businesses in order to provide advice on their specific queries or concerns.

In response to a Member’s comment, the Building Control Manager confirmed to the Committee that officers would not carry out enforcement action in respect of a business if an application for a permanent licence had been submitted and had not yet been processed.

During discussion, a number of Members stated that the Committee and the Licensing officers had given extensive thought and consideration to the Permanent scheme and that significant consultation had been carried out with a large range of stakeholders. A number of Members added that, while everyone wanted to see a busy, flourishing city centre, there were other competing issues which also had to be taken into account, including accessibility and street cleansing considerations.

Mr. McGorrian stated that he acknowledged that some business owners had gone too far and pushed the limits as part of the temporary scheme.

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The Senior Licensing Officer acknowledged that concerns had been raised regarding the “twenty minute rule” within the legislation, which stated that the street furniture within the pavement cafe area should be capable of being moved within twenty minutes.

Mr. McGorrian stated that his issue was not with the logistics of removing the furniture within a certain timeframe but, rather than having to purchase temporary or easily moveable items, such as windbreakers, he would have preferred to invest in more aesthetically pleasing outdoor furniture.

In response to a query raised by the deputation, the Solicitor (Regulatory and Planning) advised the Committee that it would be for the licensee to ensure that they were adequately covered in terms of the hypothetical insurance queries which had been raised. He also clarified that the legislation stated that all furniture had to be “of a temporary nature that could be removed within 20 minutes at the end of the licensed period”.

The Senior Licensing Officer added that, while enforcement officers would not be insisting that businesses moved the furniture strictly within 20 minutes, the intent of the legislation was to ensure that the furniture was of a temporary or moveable nature, for accessibility and street cleansing reasons. He acknowledged, however, that officers would be flexible, where possible, and would continue to listen to individual concerns from businesses.

The Chairperson added that the Committee had been involved in discussions around the scheme for months and that officers had worked tirelessly to take as much as possible on board from numerous stakeholders, with different competing priorities. He stated that, while it was not a perfect piece of legislation, the guidelines were a live document and that peoples lived experience would continue to ensure that changes could and would be made as officers saw fit. He added that the permanent scheme, as it stood, was the best and “least worst” option.

In response to comments made by the deputation, the Senior Manager (Economy) advised the Committee that the “Go Succeed” service was providing financial assistance of up to £4,000 to businesses. She outlined that the assistance was available for wider business support, including issues such as attracting new business or seasonality issues.

After discussion, the Committee:

- noted the concerns which had been raised by the delegation, particularly in relation to the 20 minute rule, and noted that officers would continue to work with applicants regarding any specific issues; and
- noted the potential financial assistance of up to £4,000 which was available to businesses through the Go Succeed service, linked to wider business support around issues such as attracting new business or seasonality issues.

Delegated Matters

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

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

The Committee noted a list of applications which had been approved under the Council's Scheme of Delegation during April 2024.

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.

**Consideration of Designating Resolution for
Street Trading Sites at Queen's Quay**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 Under the provisions of the Street Trading Act (NI) 2001 a district council has powers to designate and rescind the designation of specific streets or parts of streets as being suitable for street trading. The Act also allows a council to vary a previous designating resolution in relation to the commodities or services to be supplied in specific streets.
- 1.2 If a street or the commodity to be offered has not been designated under the Act the Council cannot issue a licence for street trading from a stationary position in that street.
- 1.3 The process of considering and reviewing the designation of streets is therefore an essential part of the legal framework within which the Council is enabled to regulate street trading in the City.
- 1.4 Committee will recall that, at your meeting of 17 January this year, you granted approval to initiate the statutory process for the designation of 4 sites at Queen's Quay which had been identified as a result of an expression of interest received from Maritime Belfast Trust to allow trade from new sites.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Based on the information presented the Committee is requested to consider the proposal and to:

1. Approve a Designating Resolution to designate the whole street or part of the street (site/s), where it may allocate street trading pitches. The Designating Resolution will include the operational date and may stipulate either:

- Only specified articles, things or services or classes of specified articles, things or services that may be sold or supplied; or**
- Specified articles, things or services or classes of specified articles, things or services that are prohibited.**

OR

2. Decide not to proceed with any or all of the proposal.

2.2 In addition to making any Designating Resolution, Members may, having considered all comments, record any reasonable conditions that should be applied to a subsequent licence. For example, these may include hours of trade, days of trade, duration of licence, etc.

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

3.1 The designation process involved seeking comments from interested parties, including relevant statutory bodies, through public advertisement and consultation.

3.2 The Street Trading Act (NI) 2001 requires the Council to ensure that each application is fairly and objectively assessed, that all relevant factors are considered and, in doing so, the Council must consult with the:

- a) PSNI, and**
- b) Department for Infrastructure - Roads.**

3.3 The Council may also consult other persons as it considers appropriate. Such consultees may include local residents, business and commercial premises in the vicinity of the site in respect of which the application has been received.

- 3.4 The purpose of this report is to enable the Committee to consider the proposal in conjunction with the submissions received and make a decision on whether or not to designate the sites proposed.
- 3.5 Where appropriate, the commodities are also considered in addition to a synopsis of the comments received during the consultation period. Copies of all the responses are also attached to this report for your information as Appendix 1 and a location map is included at Appendix 2.

Queen's Quay (4 sites)

- 3.6 Maritime Belfast Trust made the application with the consent of the Department for Communities, who are the landowner. The proposal is for commodities to be later determined in conjunction with Maritime Belfast/ the Department for Communities, however there will be no late-night hot food trading.

Department for Communities (DfC)

- 3.7 The DfC is supportive of the designation of these trading pitches on Queen's Quay but highlight the need for flexibility as to their specific location, as the area remains an important access point and operational area for their River Management Team. The DfC is content to support the application for the trading pitches subject to the flexibility in location being confirmed.
- 3.8 Committee may wish to note that Queen's Quay is being proposed for designation for 4 trading pitches within a defined area. This will allow the final positioning to be decided by the DfC, to meet their operational requirements.
- 3.9 This would be the same approach previously used when the designation of Donegall Quay on the opposite side of the river, which is also managed by DfC, was agreed for 6 sites.

Police Service of Northern Ireland

- 3.10 Police have no objection and acknowledge that no night-time hot food trading sites are being considered.

DFI Roads

- 3.11 The Department have no objection to the proposal as the location is not part of the adopted road network.

Published 28 day Notice

- 3.12 No responses were received as a result of the public notice.
- 3.13 Members are reminded that the designation process is about the principle of a street trading pitch being at the location. Matters regarding the suitability of a particular person, the stall and the ability to manage the site are considered as part of the licensing process.
- 3.14 The person requesting a site to be designated, is merely a 'trigger' for the process and they may not be the person who is ultimately granted the Street Trading Licence to operate at the site. Members are reminded that on occasions the Committee has considered multiple competing licence applications for a street trading site.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.15 The cost of all notices is included in current revenue budgets.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

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

The Committee approved a Designating Resolution for street trading pitches at Queen's Quay.

Application for the Variation of a 7-Day Annual Entertainments Licence for Oh Yeah Music Centre, 15-21 Gordon Street

The Building Control Manager outlined that the days and hours during which entertainment may be provided at the Oh Yeah Music Centre, under the terms of its current Entertainments Licence, were:

Monday – Friday	8:00 am to 1.00am the following morning
Saturday	8:00 am to 2.00am the following morning
Sunday	8:00 am to 12.00 midnight.

He explained that, at present, entertainment was provided in the form of live bands playing from Monday to Sunday inclusive.

The Committee was advised that the licensee had stated that they would like to extend the permitted hours until 2.00am on a Friday night to bring the hours in line with a Saturday night. Some promoters had shown interest in booking the venue on a Friday night until 2.00am. They had also stated that the facility to provide entertainment to 2.00am on a Friday night would only be used occasionally.

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Public notice of the application had been placed and no written representations were lodged as a result of the advertisement.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service had both been consulted in relation to the application and they had both confirmed that they had no objection to the application.

The Members were advised that no noise complaints had been received by the Service in relation to the venue in the past 12 months.

The Committee approved the application for the variation of the 7-Day Annual Entertainments Licence to vary the hours during which entertainment may be provided as follows:

Monday – Thursday	8:00 am to 1.00am the following morning
Friday - Saturday	8:00 am to 2.00am the following morning
Sunday	8:00 am to 12.00 midnight.

**Application for the Variation of a 7-Day Annual
Entertainments Licence for The Post House,
32-40 Malone Road**

The Building Control Manager reminded the Committee that that particular area of the Malone Road was a major centre for nightlife in the city in the 1990s. The three licensed premises located in this area, The Botanic Inn, The Eglantine Inn (which was now The Post House), and the Wellington Park Hotel had, in the past, been subject to objections and complaints which had resulted in a number of Committee and Special Committee meetings. Additionally, decisions of the Council were the subject of appeal by the applicants and heard at Belfast Records Court.

The Members were reminded that the normal process for dealing with Entertainments Licence applications which were not the subject of objections was that the licence would be granted, as provided for in the Council's Scheme of Delegation. However, due to previous conditions set by the Council restricting the hours of entertainment for the three licensed premises in this area, the application was being presented to the Committee for its consideration even though no objections had been received.

The Committee was advised that major refurbishment works had been carried out to the premises in 2023 and The Post House now operated as a restaurant/bar where previously, as the Eglantine Inn, it operated as a nightclub.

The days and hours during which entertainment may be provided under the terms of the current Entertainments Licence were:

Monday - Tuesday	11:30 am to 11.00pm
Wednesday - Saturday	11:30 am to 1.00am the following morning, and
Sunday	12:30 pm to 12.00 midnight.

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A special condition permitted entertainment to 12.30am on Easter Monday and if Christmas Eve, New Year's Eve, St. Patrick's Day or Halloween fell on a Monday or Tuesday night.

A further condition stipulated that the Licensee was to attend, as required, liaison meetings between the Building Control Service, the Lower Malone Residents' Association and the Police Service of Northern Ireland. However, since the current applicant had taken over the premises there had been no requests from any party to hold such a meeting.

The Committee was advised that the nature of the variation was to extend the hours during which entertainment may be provided on Monday and Tuesday nights to 1.00am the following morning. This would allow the business to stay competitive with other local bars in the area and in the City Centre as they lost any crowd they had on those nights to other local bars after 11pm.

At present entertainment was provided in the form of live bands playing from Thursday to Sunday inclusive. The Members were advised that the entertainment would be in the form of one-piece acoustic acts on those nights.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service had both been consulted in relation to the application and had confirmed that they had no objection to the application.

No noise complaints had been received by the Service in relation to the venue in the past 12 months.

After discussion, the Committee approved the application for the variation of the 7-Day Annual Entertainments Licence to vary the hours during which entertainment may be provided as follows:

- Monday - Saturday 11:30 am to 1.00am the following morning, and
- Sunday 12:30 pm to 12.00 midnight; and

The Committee also:

- noted that the entertainment provided on Monday and Tuesday nights would be in the form of one-piece acoustic acts and;
- further agreed that officers would facilitate a meeting of the Lower Malone Residents' Association and the new owners of the venue, in order to try and encourage positive relations.

Chairperson

Planning Committee

Tuesday, 16th April, 2024

MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Garrett (Chairperson);
Aldermen Lawlor, McCullough and Rodgers;
Councillors Anglin, Bell, Bradley, T. Brooks,
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. D. O’Kane, Acting Planning Manager (Plans and Policy);
Ms. C. Reville, Principal 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 and 27th March, 2024 were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council, at its meeting on 8th April, 2024, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor T. Brooks declared an interest in relation to items 9a - LA04/2023/4366/F - Proposed 14 storey (plus basement) purpose-Built Grade A Office premises with retail/restaurant unit at ground floor, including external landscaped terrace areas, public realm works, and all associated site works. 14 Dublin Road and 9b - LA04/2023/4373/F - Erection of 17 storey Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation (PBMSA) with additional use of accommodation outside term time comprising 459 no. units with communal facilities, internal and external communal amenity space and ancillary accommodation. 14 Dublin Road, in that she was employed by Queen’s University, Belfast.

Councillor T. Brooks declared an interest in relation to item 9c - LA04/2023/3635/RM - Redevelopment of existing surface level car park for erection of residential development comprising of 205 No. units, car parking, landscaping and all associated site works. Lands bound by Glenalpin Street, Wellwood Street and Norwood Street, in that she owned an apartment on Victoria Street.

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Councillor Whyte declared an interest in relation to item 9f - LA04/2022/0930/F - Retrospective: Change of Use from Class A1 & D2 to a Gymnasium on Ground Floor. 47 Ravenhill Road, in that the statutory consultee who was objecting to the proposal was a client of the company he worked for.

Withdrawn Items

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

- LA04/2023/4208/F - Change of use from Dwelling to HMO (6 Beds). 24 Orient Gardens; and
- LA04/2023/4162/F - Change of use from retail unit to amusement arcade and adult gaming centre. 51 Rosemary Street.

**Notification of Provision/Removal
Of Accessible Parking Bay**

The Committee noted the removal of accessible parking bays at the following locations:

- 28 St Judes Parade; and
- 60 Nevis Avenue.

The Committee noted the provision of accessible parking bays at the following locations:

- 14 North Hill Street;
- 38 Marlborough Park North;
- 41 Lichfield Avenue;
- Flat 21, Block 13 Queen Victoria Gardens;
- 13 Eglantine Avenue; and
- 5 Jubilee Avenue.

**Notifications from Statutory Bodies,
Abandonment and Extinguishment**

**Abandonment at The Back Street at
Botanic Avenue and Donegall Pass**

The Committee noted the proposed abandonment.

**Notifications from Statutory Bodies,
Traffic Calming Measures**

Provision of McClure Street

The Committee noted the proposed traffic calming scheme.

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Provision of Third Street

The Committee noted the proposed traffic calming scheme.

Planning Appeals Notified

The Committee noted the appeals decisions.

Planning Decisions Issued

The Committee noted the planning decisions issued in March, 2024.

Miscellaneous Reports

**Consultation on Local Development Plan for Lisburn
and Castlereagh City Council - Revised Timetable**

The Committee noted the update which set out Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council's revised Local Development Plan timetable.

**Confirmation of Listed Buildings - Colenso
Parade, Botanic Gardens and University
Road/Stranmillis Road**

The Committee noted the confirmation of the listing of:

- Gate Screen, at Colenso Parade, Botanic Gardens; and
- Gate Screen, at University Road/Stranmillis Road, Botanic Gardens.

New Planning Applications

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

(Councillor T. Brooks left the meeting.)

**LA04/2023/4366/F - Proposed 14 storey (plus
basement) purpose-Built Grade A Office
premises with retail/restaurant unit at ground
floor, including external landscaped terrace
areas, public realm works, and all associated
site works. 14 Dublin Road**

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

- Principle of the proposed uses;
- Design and placemaking;
- Impact on heritage assets;

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- Impact on amenity;
- Climate change;
- Open space;
- Access and transport;
- Health impacts;
- Environmental protection;
- Flood risk and drainage;
- Waste-water infrastructure;
- Natural heritage;
- Waste management;
- Employability and skills;
- Section 76 planning agreement; and
- Pre-Application community consultation.

He explained that the site was within the city centre and was a highly sustainable location for new office development and would provide office accommodation for 500 staff that would positively impact economic activity.

He stated that the proposal was considered to be of a high quality design which was appropriate to its location, which had been cleared and occupied by meanwhile uses.

He informed the Committee that no objections had been received from statutory consultees, except from NI Water regarding the wastewater capacity, however, it was considered unreasonable to withhold planning permission on those grounds. He added that the Council's Environmental Health Service and Urban Design Officer had offered no objections and pointed out that there was an outstanding response from Waste Management and Shared Environmental Services, but that it was expected to offer no objection, subject to conditions to mitigate potential impacts on Belfast Lough.

He reported that, having regard to the Development Plan and material considerations, it was recommended that planning permission was granted, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. T. Stokes, TSA Planning, and Ms. L. McCarthy, Kainos, to the meeting.

Mr. Stokes explained that Kainos, a company established in Belfast, was a global force behind some of the most cutting-edge software used around the globe and employed over 3,100 people in 23 countries. He added that the company felt that its decision to locate its headquarters in Belfast was an ode to its dedication to the city and its young people.

He stated that Kainos had a longstanding relationship with Queen's University, Belfast and had partnered with the University on many occasions over the years to deliver initiatives to improve digital skills and foster innovations.

He explained that the Kainos Headquarters Scheme represented a total investment of £35 million to Belfast, with the potential for significant job creation that would include construction jobs and apprenticeships for the duration of the build, with the economic impact set to positively benefit suppliers and subcontractors from the local area.

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Councillor T. Brooks returned to the meeting to make a comment in relation to Bankmore Square, a site adjacent to the application site, whereby she stated that she would urge the Department for Infrastructure to consider enhancements to Bankmore Square rather than bulldozing a park to accommodate a road for the proposed Glider route.

(Councillor T. Brooks left the meeting whilst the Committee made its decision and for the following two applications, as she had declared an interest.)

The Committee granted planning permission, 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 to deal with any other issues that might arise, to include those raised in the further consultation responses from Shared Environmental Services and Waste Management, provided that the issues were not substantive.

**LA04/2023/4373/F - Erection of 17 storey
Purpose Built Managed Student
Accommodation (PBMSA) with additional use of
accommodation outside term time comprising
459 no. units with communal facilities, internal
and external communal amenity space and
ancillary accommodation. 14 Dublin Road**

The Planning Manager summarised the application for the Committee and highlighted the following key items for consideration:

- Principle of PBMSA in this location;
- Design and placemaking;
- Impact on heritage assets;
- Impact on amenity;
- Climate change;
- Open space;
- Access and transport;
- Health impacts;
- Environmental protection;
- Flood risk and drainage;
- Waste-water infrastructure;
- Natural heritage;
- Waste management;
- Section 76 planning agreement; and
- Pre-Application Community Consultation.

He explained that, since the publication of the report, the Council's Waste Management Team had provided a response which had offered no objection to the application and he pointed out that, whilst the waste storage exceeded 30 metres from the collection point, this could be mitigated at the Building Control stage of the application.

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He stated that the Council's Environmental Health had indicated that a robust management plan was required to address the impacts from the outdoor amenity areas, to include restriction of the hours of use of the terraces to between 8 a.m. and 11 p.m. and recommended that a solid glazed screen should surround the terraces, rather than railings. The Planning manager advised the Committee that these matters could be controlled by a condition and through a Section 76 planning agreement.

He reported that, having regard to the Development Plan and material considerations, it was recommended that Planning Permission be granted, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. P. Stinson, Turley, and Mr. C. McGowan, Queen's University, Belfast, to the meeting.

Mr. Stinson stated that he welcomed the recommendation to grant planning permission, having worked proactively with officers to provide a design and layout which was acceptable and met a student housing need.

He explained that he had worked closely with Kainos to ensure that, together, they would deliver regeneration of the whole site and stated that the planning process to date had supported the critical timeline for the project which aimed to have student occupation for the beginning of the 2026/27 academic year.

Mr. McGowan stated that, since its formation in 1845, Queen's University (QUB) had been a significant stakeholder in the development of Belfast, providing beneficial economic impact and that, in 2021, the total economic impact on the UK economy, associated with the University's activities, was estimated at over £3 billion.

He explained that QUB currently had over 24,000 students and almost 5,000 staff, and that the university owned and managed over 3,500 beds across its accommodation sites. He stated that the private rental sector was under continued pressure, exacerbated by shortages in social housing provision and the use of rental properties as Airbnb's.

He referred to the case officer's report, which stated that higher education providers had estimated that approximately 6,000 additional student beds were required across the city in the forthcoming years and he stated that the application was the first step in addressing the increasing demand for student accommodation in Belfast city centre.

He concluded by stating that, in response to the ongoing global climate crisis, the project had been designed as the university's first Passivhaus certified project, which underlined QUB's commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and its Net Zero Plan, and that planning permission for the development would enable QUB to enter into a contract with GRAHAM for the construction of what would be the largest Passivhaus certified building on the island of Ireland.

In response to a comment from a Member with regard to the traders who were trading on the site as part of a meanwhile use project, the Director of Planning and Building Control stated that she would be happy to engage with the applicant to establish what action had been

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taken to date and then work with colleagues in City Regeneration and Development to see whether alternative locations could be found.

The Committee granted planning permission, 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 to deal with any other issues that might arise, provided that the issues were not substantive.

LA04/2023/3635/RM - Redevelopment of existing surface level car park for erection of residential development comprising of 205 No. units, car parking, landscaping and all associated site works. Lands bound by Glenalpin Street, Wellwood Street and Norwood Street

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the application to allow Members to undertake a site visit.

(Councillor T. Brooks returned to the meeting.)

LA04/2022/1083/F - Residential development comprising 115 units (apartments and duplexes including 27 social housing units) with associated private and communal amenity space, landscaping, parking provision, access, relocation of existing sub station and site works (amended description and scheme). Lands at London Road/Lismore Street

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

- Principle of housing in the location;
- Housing density;
- Affordable housing;
- Housing mix;
- Adaptable and accessible accommodation;
- Design and placemaking;
- Public realm;
- Impact on heritage assets;
- Climate change;
- Residential quality and impact on amenity;
- Open space;
- Access and transport;
- Health impacts;
- Environmental protection;
- Flood risk and drainage;
- Waste-water infrastructure;
- Waste management;

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- Natural heritage;
- Employability and skills;
- Section 76 planning agreement; and
- Pre-application Community Consultation.

She explained that the proposal included approximately 25% of social housing units, of which there was a significant unmet need in the city and that the Northern Ireland Housing Executive was supporting of the social housing element of the application.

She reported that there were no unacceptable adverse impacts on amenity of any adjacent residential properties and that DfI Roads, DfI Rivers, NI Water, NIEA, HED and SES had offered no objections to the proposal.

She stated that, having regard to the Development Plan and material considerations, it was recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. M. Gordon, Turley, to the meeting. In response to a question from a Member regarding the affordable housing element of the application, Mr. Gordon explained that the proposal allowed for one block of social housing that would potentially be managed by a housing association.

A Member of the Committee explained that he had concerns with regard to the social housing element of the application being in one block rather than pepper-potting social housing throughout the entirety of the proposal.

The Committee granted planning permission 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 subject to final comments from DfI Roads, and to deal with any other matters that arise, provided that they were not substantive.

The Committee agreed to write to the Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations to seek clarity on its policy view with regard to pepper-potting/mixed tenure housing provision.

LA04/2023/4397/F - Variation of Condition 3 of LA04/2020/1211/F relating to the submission of a Verification Report for Phase 4 of the approved development. No 46 Montgomery Road (former Hughes Christensen site, now Lidl), vacant site between nos 44 and 46, Montgomery Road, and no 41 Montgomery Road (former Lidl)

The Principal Planning Officer explained that the application sought to vary condition three of planning permission LA04/2020/1211/F, which granted planning permission for a mixed-use regeneration scheme.

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She stated that condition three related to the submission and agreement in writing of a verification report which related to the removal of above and below ground fuel tanks, prior to any phase of the permitted development becoming operational.

She reported that consultees had offered no objections to the application and that no representations had been received.

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

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions and an informative referring to the original Section 76 planning agreement obligations which would continue to have effect.

The Committee 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 of the decision, provided that they were not substantive.

(Councillor Whyte left the meeting while the following item was under consideration.)

LA04/2022/0930/F - Retrospective: Change of Use from Class A1 & D2 to a Gymnasium on Ground Floor. 47 Ravenhill Road

The Principal Planning Officer outlined the application to the Committee and explained that the site was located within the Belfast Area of Parking Restraint and adjacent to Tennants Textiles Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) site.

She reported that that the proposal complied with the relevant design, transport and amenity policies within the Local Development Plan.

She stated that DfI Roads and Environmental Health were content with the application, subject to conditions and that HSENI had advised against approval at the COMAH site. She added that there had been 104 representations in support of the application and that the proposal would provide an overall enhancement to the health and wellbeing of the local community and keep the building in use.

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, provided that they were not substantive.

(Councillor Whyte returned to the meeting.)

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LA04/2024/0055/F - New kiosks and associated canopy structure. Existing open public space along river edge at Queens Quay

The Principal Planning Officer outlined the application to the Committee and explained that the site comprised of an area of open tarmac between the River Lagan and the Queen's Quay, within the development limits for Belfast. She highlighted the following key issues for consideration:

- Principle of development;
- Design and placemaking;
- Impact on amenity;
- Health impacts;
- Access and transport;
- Climate change;
- Environmental protection;
- Landscape impact;
- Flood risk and drainage; and
- Impact on the historic environment.

She reported that the application was neighbour notified and that no third-party representations had been received, and that Environmental Health had been consulted and offered no objection to the proposal, subject to conditions.

The Committee granted temporary planning permission for five years, 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 the issuing of the decision, provided that they were not substantive.

LA04/2024/0334/F - Renewal of planning permission LA04/2021/2804/F - shipping container for bikes and equipment. Land adjacent to Connswater Community Centre

The Principal Planning Officer provided the Committee with an overview of the application and outlined the principle of development, impact on the character and appearance of the area and noise, odour and other environmental impacts.

She explained that no third-party objections had been received and that DfI Roads had offered no objection to the proposal.

She stated that, having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal was considered acceptable and that it was recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to conditions, for a temporary, two-year period.

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions, for a temporary two-year period 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, provided that they were not substantive.

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LA04/2023/2849/F - Renewal of planning permission LA04/2021/0791/F for temporary single storey timber structure. 402 Newtownards Road

The Principal Planning Officer summarised the application for the Committee and explained that the pavilion had been constructed on the existing square, leaving the paving intact and exposed and that the development offered shelter to users of C.S. Lewis Square and passing through via the Connswater Greenway.

She stated that the retention of the structure would not detract from the public space and surrounding area, including the Connswater Greenway.

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, provided that they were not substantive.

Restricted Items

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 Committee meeting during discussion on the following item as, due to their nature, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Update on LA05/2023/1001/O - Proposed extension to Sprucefield Park comprising new retail units, 1 no. hotel, 1 no. restaurant and 1 no. cafe/restaurant pod

The Acting Planning Manager provided the Committee with an update on the planning application for Sprucefield Out of Town Retail Park that had been submitted to Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council.

The Committee:

- Noted the background to the current planning application at Sprucefield and the letter issued to Department for Infrastructure (DfI) seeking to understand whether they will be exercising their powers under Section 29(1) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 to call in the planning application;
- Noted the response from DfI which advised that a notification direction had been issued to LCCC on 29th February which requested a

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notification from DfI when its planning committee reached a recommendation in relation to the application;

- Agreed to delegate authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to formally write to DfI to request that its call-in power would be invoked, should LCCC recommend approval and DfI decided not to “call in” the application;
- Noted the holding representation issued to LCCC on 28th March 2024; and
- Agreed to delegate authority to the Director Planning and Building Control to complete the submission of a detailed representation in respect to the current Sprucefield planning application, given the potential impact the proposal could have on Belfast City Centre and its hierarchy of district and local centres.

Council attendance at Goldmine Public Inquiry

The Solicitor (Regulatory and Planning) provided the Committee with an update on the potential of Belfast City Council attendance at the Goldmine Public Inquiry.

The Committee agreed to refer the matter to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration.

Chairperson

Climate and City Resilience Committee

Thursday, 11th April, 2024

MEETING OF THE CLIMATE AND CITY RESILIENCE COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE LAVERY ROOM

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

In attendance: Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy;
Ms. D. Caldwell, Climate Commissioner; and
Mr. G. Graham, Democratic Services Assistant.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of the High Sheriff, Councillor S. Douglas and Councillors Carson and McAteer.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 14th March were taken as read and signed as correct.

Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were reported.

Climate and Nature Action: A Vision for the Connswater Community Greenway [Presentation - Jacqueline O'Hagan from EastSide Greenways]

The Committee was advised that Ms. J. O'Hagan from Eastside Greenways was in attendance to provide a presentation and she was welcomed to the meeting by the Chairperson.

Ms. O'Hagan outlined the role of Eastway Greenways as a subsidiary of Eastside Partnership. She provided an overview of the areas covered and the status of the Greenway and rivers pre-development and the achievements and outcomes following regeneration.

She advised that the Greenway had been completed in 2017 and a strategic partnership entered into with the Council to co-manage the Greenway. She stated that the aim now was to maximise the potential of the Connswater Community Greenway as a catalyst for the ongoing physical, social and economic regeneration of East Belfast.

Following a consultation and engagement exercise, a report was produced with seven recommendations such as: to eliminate emissions through a modal shift, network expansion, energy saving and energy generation; to capture carbon through wetland expansion, tree

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planting and soil improvement; strengthen resilience with a planting strategy, flood management and greenway neighbourhoods; and to build biodiversity by undertaking habitat surveys. It also included raising awareness by holding events, producing signage and artworks; to nurture research through testing and developing; and sustain activity by maintaining/growing capacity of local skills.

She concluded by stating that the idea of the vision was for partnership working and to bring people together who were working in these areas.

Ms. O'Hagan then answered a number of questions from the Members, following which the Chairperson thanked her for the presentation and she left the meeting.

Noted.

**Belfast Festival of Learning week
22-27 April – theme 'Our Planet'**

The Members were reminded that Belfast had joined the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities in 2018 in recognition of the City's commitment to promoting and encouraging lifelong learning for people of all ages. Within The Belfast Agenda, the Council had a vision that the city should be a great place for everyone to live and providing lifelong learning opportunities is a core part of this. Learning has the potential to transform lives for the better- it can build better relationships and help enhance quality of life for everyone in the city.

Belfast had been awarded a UNESCO Learning Cities Award for outstanding learning in 2021. Whilst Belfast continued to play its role as a member of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities as well as a member of an All-Island Network of Learning Cities, it was felt there was a real opportunity to build on Belfast's Learning City status and to bring city stakeholders together to reenergise our focus and maximise the opportunities presented. It was important to recognise that it was not about creating new initiatives but rather connecting and enhancing existing programmes and initiatives as well as aligning policy ambitions across multiple partners. A Learning Cities Leadership Group currently existed and comprised representatives from QUB, UU, BMET, BHSCT, PHA, Education Authority, Libraries NI, community partners and the Council.

Festival Learning Week (22nd-27th April 2024)

A key focus of the annual programme of work had been a 'Festival of Learning' which was a week-long programme of free interactive and engaging events. The festival showcased the range of learning opportunities that already existed in Belfast. Council officers had worked closely with community partners to develop an inclusive programme of citywide learning events to take place as part of a week-long festival of activity from 22nd April till 27th April 2024.

Given the significance of the climate challenges facing the city the theme for this year's Festival of Learning Week was '**Our Planet: Climate Action**'. The festival would deliver free events across the city which promoted citizen awareness of, and engagement in initiatives focusing on lifelong learning in the context of the local and global climate emergency. This would align with the focus of the UNESCO's 6th Annual Conference on Learning Cities (2024) which was 'Learning Cities at the forefront of climate action'.

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Funding of £10K had been secured through the Public Health Agency in support of the delivery of the Belfast Festival of Learning. An additional £10k match funding from Council had been agreed through the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and funded through available in-year budgets within City and Organisational Strategy.

A meeting had been scheduled with the Director of Communications and Public Relations UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning on 12 April to discuss further opportunities to build on the opportunities for lifelong learning with Council Officers.

The Committee:

- i) Noted the planned Belfast Festival of Learning launch event on Monday 22nd April 2024 (recognised worldwide as Earth Day), 11am-1pm in 2 Royal Avenue and consider attendance;
- ii) Agreed to help raise awareness of the week-long programme of free events which are available during the Belfast Festival of Learning Week (22nd April – 27th April 2024); and
- iii) Noted that the focus of this year's Belfast Festival of Learning will be 'Our Planet: Climate Action'.

Local Area Energy Plan (LEAP)

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

- I. **To present the draft Local Energy Action Plan (LAEP) and Queen's Island Decarbonisation Plan to elected members.**
- II. **Note the contents of the reports and the proposed outline priority decarbonisation projects (domestic retrofit, heat network, solar PV on public buildings, solar car port with EV charging and oil boiler to heat pump transition) and near-term actions to progress the LAEP and the two modelled scenarios for Queen's Island (a Heat network and Solar Photovoltaic Carports.**
- III. **Note that the 'Belfast Net Zero pathfinder' project provides the funding to enable BCC to immediately progress the LAEP and the Queen's Island Decarbonisation Plan by developing two of the priority projects identified in these plans: 1) heat network, and 2) a solar PV project.**
- IV. **Note that the Climate Team are currently working with Climate NI to develop a proposal to secure up to €120k**

from a new funding programme Pathways2Resilience which has become available through Horizon Europe to support the development of climate adaptation and resilience for the city.

- V. An update will be brought back to elected members in due course.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 Give approval to:

- I. establish a LAEP delivery group to support the delivery of decarbonisation projects across the city;
- II. establish a community of practice to ensure that the data generated by the modelling is fully utilised by key stakeholders across the City (eg QUB and UU).

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Background

A place-specific approach to delivery is critical to achieving a timely and cost-effective Net Zero as each place has its own unique geographical, socio-economic features and challenges. For example, Belfast's dependence on imported fossil fuels - gas and oil to heat buildings and on petrol and diesel for virtually all its transport needs means that we spend over £300m on energy across the city every year – set to rise to c.£466 million per year or more in 2050. Belfast also has unique geographical features including access to the sea and 10km of waterfront as well as being located over a porous aquifer with Sherwood Sandstone which has above ambient temperatures which could be used to support low carbon infrastructure.

- 3.2 A Local Energy Action Plan (LAEP) assesses the unique characteristics of Belfast as part of the net zero transition and uses place-based data and network system modelling to identify the most cost effective and impactful pathway to achieving net zero for the city.

- 3.3 The Energy Systems Catapult (ESC) were appointed in February 2023 to develop a LAEP for the Belfast area while also providing an Energy Decarbonisation Plan specifically for the Innovation District of Queens Island. This is a foundational piece of work for Belfast to help attract external funding and investment into the city and will feed into the wider business case for potential LAEP roll out across Northern Ireland.

- 3.4 The LAEP approach was developed by ESC to provide decision-makers with the detailed information needed to support informed investment decisions that enable a cost-effective transition to Net Zero.
- 3.5 The approach uses whole system modelling with local stakeholder knowledge to deliver a comprehensive, data-driven and cost-effective plan for decarbonisation based on the unique characteristics of Belfast's buildings, transport systems, local industry, energy generation and distribution assets, geographic and spatial constraints, and social factors including fuel poverty.
- 3.6 The process brings together the public and politicians, businesses and regulators, energy networks and local authorities, to help towns and cities decarbonise their energy systems on the path to Net Zero.

3.7 **Objective**

The overall objective was to develop a Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) for the city of Belfast and a Decarbonisation plan for part of the Innovation District, Queens Island with two intended outcomes:

- A facilitated, collaborative and coordinated transition towards becoming carbon neutral by 2050 with the plans and actions of stakeholders contributing towards a collective goal; and
- an optimised, cost-effective, transparent and evidence-based pathway to achieving the target.

3.8 **Key outputs**

The draft LAEP (attached at Appendix 1) includes the following key outputs:

1. *The Pathway* sequencing all of the interventions within the LAEP that set out the area's proposed route to net zero including near-term and long-term components;
2. A '*plan on a page*' illustrating focus zones, priority actions, and areas of energy network change;
3. *Visual focus zones* for all the prioritised activity associated with the main components of the proposed energy system;
4. *Five outline priority projects* to take forward;

5. *Breakdown of investment* to decarbonise the local area aligned to the main energy system components; and
 6. *Next steps* - near-term activities and actions needed to progress the LAEP.
- 3.9 The outputs will determine network system choices, the level of investment required to transition to a net zero energy system, high level project identification and required policy changes.
- 3.10 The decarbonisation plan is a whole energy system approach to considering how Queens Island can achieve Net Zero over time eliminating the use of fossil fuels on site and replacing with a decarbonised alternative, while also considering the knock-on impacts on the other systems in place. The draft LAEP and the Decarbonisation Plan for Queens Island (Appendix 2) have been presented to the local energy consortium highlighting the most effective pathways to achieve decarbonisation in the city, accounting for the local development and growth plans.
- 3.11 Local energy consortium
- The work took place over one year and involved a diverse group of stakeholders in the city's energy system with oversight from a Steering group comprising: BCC, NIE, SONI, Phoenix Energy, NIHE, NIGS, the Federation of Master Builders, NI Water, Consumer Council, DFE and DAERA.
- 3.12 LAEP outline priority projects
- Through a combination of modelling and wider factor analysis with local stakeholders, five outline priority projects were identified for near term implementation. These projects were proposed on the basis of delivering a significant impact against Belfast decarbonisation ambitions. These include:
- a High Temperature District Heat Network in City Centre which aims to connect multiple anchor loads from public buildings during phase 1, then connecting to domestic buildings in phase 2;
 - a Domestic Retrofit pilot that targets a mixed tenure, low-income area with EPC ratings D-G;
 - a Solar PV on Public Buildings project providing a total of no less than 1MWp of renewable electricity for local consumption;
 - Solar Car Port with EV Charging;

- an Oil to Low Carbon Heating Transition project that seeks to replace existing oil heating in domestic and non-domestic buildings with low carbon heating technologies such as heat pumps.

3.13 Modelled Scenarios for Queen’s Island Decarbonisation Plan

- Heat network (Belfast Met, Citi Gateway, Titanic Belfast, PRONI, Titanic Hotel)
- Solar Photovoltaic Carports (Odyssey and Catalyst)

3.14 Next steps

The ‘Belfast Net Zero pathfinder’ project will develop two of the priority projects identified in these plans: 1) heat network, and 2) a solar PV project. The project is funded by Innovate UK and will run for one year from 1st June. See Appendix 3 for more information. The Climate Team will also establish:

- a LAEP Delivery group to maintain momentum, commitment and collaboration around delivering the LAEP; and
- a community of practice to ensure that the data generated by the modelling is fully utilised by key stakeholders across the City (eg QUB and UU).

3.15 A report will be brought back to update elected members in due course.

3.16 Funding Opportunity

A new funding programme has become available through Horizon Europe that will help support the development of climate adaptation and resilience for the city. The Pathways2Resilience project is run by Horizon Europe and aims to increase the resilience of European regions and communities.

3.17 The programme seeks to empower regions and communities through systems innovation and capacity building towards climate resilience and can provide up to €120k to each participating region to co-design a vision of a climate resilience future and innovation to ensure long term impact.

3.18 This current call which closes on 6th May aims to support 40 regions across Europe throughout 2024 and 2025. Applying for this call will provide access to networks, learning and capacity to help progress climate adaptation planning for the city, which is in

line with the Northern Ireland Climate Adaptation Plan which is entering its third cycle.

- 3.19** The Climate Team is currently engaging with Climate NI and DAERA on the role of local councils and Pathways2Resilience will provide more support to build more resources and capacity for this work if successful in securing funding. The Climate Team are currently working with Climate NI to develop a proposal to the fund. A further update will be brought back to elected members in due course.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.20** The funding (£150K) secured from Innovate UK will be used to progress two of the outline priority projects.

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

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

The Committee agreed to:

- I. establish a LAEP delivery group to support the delivery of decarbonisation projects across the city;
- II. establish a community of practice to ensure that the data generated by the modelling is fully utilised by key stakeholders across the City (eg QUB and UU); and
- III. to invite representatives from Edinburgh City Council to present to a future meeting of the Committee on their experience in the development of Saughton Park as a model for the production of green energy, including their development of geo-thermal energy as part of their green energy mix.

Notices of Motion - Quarterly Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to update Committee on the progress of all Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance for which the Climate and City Resilience Committee is responsible for.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that the Climate and City Resilience Committee:

- Note the updates to all Notices of Motions and Issues Raised in Advance that this Committee is responsible for and
- Agree to the closure of Issues' Raised in Advance 277, 278, 316 and 324 as referenced in Appendix 1 and paragraph 3.4 below.

3.0 Main report

Background

3.1 At Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 25th October 2019, the following Notice of Motion was agreed:

“That this Council notes that other Councils produce a monthly status report in relation to Notices of Motion; and agrees Belfast City Council adopts a similar practice and produces a monthly Notice of Motion Update which will be brought to each full Council Meeting, detailing the following:

- 1. Date received**
- 2. Notice of motion title**
- 3. Submitted by which Councillor**
- 4. Council meeting date**
- 5. Committee motion is referred to**
- 6. Outcome of committee where Notice of 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 Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance at Committee was created and quarterly reporting to Committee commenced in March 2021.

Appendix 1 is the latest quarterly update showing all active Notices of Motions and Issues Raised in Advance which the Climate and City Resilience Committee is responsible for.

3.3 Closure of Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance

At Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 20th November 2020, it was agreed that Notices of Motion could be closed for one of two reasons:

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

3.4 The Climate and City Resilience Committee are asked to agree that the Issues' Raised in Advance as outlined below are now closed:

Category 1 Recommended Closures:

- ***New Ireland Forum and Citizens' Assemblies (Ref 278) -*** This Issue Raised in Advance called on the Council to write again to the Taoiseach's office regarding the establishment of a New Ireland Forum for the 21st Century, alongside a series of comprehensive Citizens' Assemblies, to examine the practical, social and economic aspects of a New Ireland. The Council wrote again to the Taoiseach Office on 23 January 2023 and as of yet no reply has been received. Therefore it is recommended that this Issue Raised in Advance is now closed.
- ***Felling of trees in Orangefield Park (Ref 316) –*** This Issue Raised in Advance relates to the felling of approximately one hundred and seventy trees in Orangefield Park by contractors, acting on behalf of N.I.E. The Member requested to be furnished with information on the circumstances surrounding the decision to fell the trees, the agreement which was in place between the Council and N.I.E., the cost of the tree restoration programme and what legal redress the Council might have in the matter. At the Dec 23 Committee an update was provided by the Neighbourhood Services Manager on learning from the incident and changes to working practices associated with the tree cutting undertaken by contractors, working on behalf of NIE. Therefore it is recommended that this Issue Raised in Advance is now closed.
- ***Proposed agenda items for future meetings (Ref 324) –*** This Issue Raised in Advance requested that consideration be given to the inclusion of four agenda items for discussion at suitable future dates. Two of the four themed presentations requested (Passivhouse and Embedded Carbon) were included in the Dec 23 Climate and City Resilience Committee. The other two items requested relate to active travel which is covered by the City Growth and Regeneration Committee. Therefore it is recommended that this Issue Raised in Advance is now closed.

Category 2 Recommended Closures:

- ***Energy Efficiency Education Programme for Citizens (Ref 277)*** – This Issue Raised in Advance made a recommendation that Belfast City Council should develop an energy efficiency campaign to educate and inform citizens around how to conserve energy use and attempt to reduce the financial pressures households will face, working alongside relevant partners in both government and the community sector. In 2022 an Energy Efficiency Campaign was run through the Community Planning team, producing advice materials, delivered in a targeted manner through community services, advice centres and outreach teams. A similar approach was taken during the 23/24 winter period, including energy efficiency guidance and tips being included in the 2023/2024 ‘Cost-of-Living Support Guide’. This work will be reviewed with the aim of developing resources that can be delivered on an ongoing basis and in a targeted manner. Therefore it is now recommended that this Issue Raise in Advance is now closed.

3.5 Financial and Resource Implications

There are no additional financial implications associated with this report.

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

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

The Committee noted the updates to all Notices of Motions and Issues Raised in Advance that this Committee is responsible for and agreed to the closure of Issues’ Raised in Advance 277, 316 and 324 as referenced in Appendix 1 of the Notice of Motion Database.

The Committee agreed that the New Ireland Forum and Citizens’ Assemblies (Ref 278) be retained in the Notices of Motion and Issues’ Raised in Advance Database and that a further letter be sent to the newly appointed Taoiseach, Simon Harris TD, regarding the establishment of a New Ireland Forum for the 21st Century, alongside a series of comprehensive Citizens’ Assemblies, to examine the practical, social and economic aspects of a New Ireland.

Chairperson

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Standards and Business Committee

Tuesday, 30th April, 2024

MEETING OF THE STANDARDS AND BUSINESS COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE LAVERY ROOM

Members present: Councillor McDonough-Brown (Chairperson); Aldermen McCullough and Rodgers; and Councillors Bradley, M. Donnelly, P. Donnelly, D. Douglas, Duffy, Groogan, Kelly, Lyons, Magee, Maghie, F. McAteer, G. McAteer, McDowell, R. McLaughlin and McMullan.

In attendance: Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor; Mr. J. Hanna, Democratic Services and Governance Manager, and Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported on behalf of Alderman Lawlor and Councillor McCormick.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 28th March were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 8th April.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Motions

The Committee considered the following two motions which had been received in advance of the Council meeting on 7th May:

Agricultural Fines for Pollution

Resolved – “That the motion be referred to Council for debate, with no restrictions on the number of speakers.”

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Plant Based Councils Initiative

The Committee noted that the motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Flynn and seconded by Councillor Smyth, would be referred, in the first instance, to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Chairperson

Agricultural Fines for Pollution

“This Council notes the ongoing issues with deteriorating water quality in our rivers and waterways across Northern Ireland as highlighted in the recent New State of Our Rivers Report by the Rivers Trust.

Of the 450 river stretches looked at in Northern Ireland, 0% achieved good overall status, and 12% were given either poor or bad overall status. Only 31% achieved good ecological status, and just 2 stretches achieved high ecological status, and almost 70% failed to meet the requirements for good ecological status. This has impacted on the overall quality of Lough Neagh, which supplies over half the drinking water to Belfast, due to excess run-off from industrial agricultural processes.

This Council recognises that we are in the midst of a freshwater crisis in Northern Ireland and are concerned that the capping of agriculture penalties for repeated negligent breaches at 15% in October 2022 is not a sufficient deterrent.

As such, this Council calls on the DAERA Minister to reinstate the previous more stringent penalties to more accurately reflect the environmental harm caused.”

Proposer: Councillor Smyth

Seconder: Councillor Groogan

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