

**Democratic Services Section
Legal and Civic Services Department
Belfast City Council
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS**



**Belfast
City Council**

10th January 2025

HYBRID MEETING OF THE CLIMATE AND CITY RESILIENCE COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet in hybrid format, in the Lavery Room - City Hall and via Microsoft Teams, on Thursday, 16th January, 2025 at 5.15 pm, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

John Walsh

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

1. **Routine Matters**
 - (a) Apologies
 - (b) Minutes
 - (c) Declarations of Interest
2. **Presentation**
 - (a) Sustainable Tourism Initiatives in Belfast - Visit Belfast
3. **Business in the Community's 2024 Northern Ireland Environmental Benchmarking Survey Results (Pages 1 - 20)**
4. **UP2030 Update - Net Zero Neighbourhood Framework (Pages 21 - 28)**



Subject:	Results from the 2024 Business in the Community, Environmental Benchmarking Survey
Date:	16 th January 2024
Reporting Officer:	Debbie Caldwell, Climate Commissioner, Claire Shortt, Monitoring, Learning and Reporting Officer
Contact Officers:	Claire Shortt

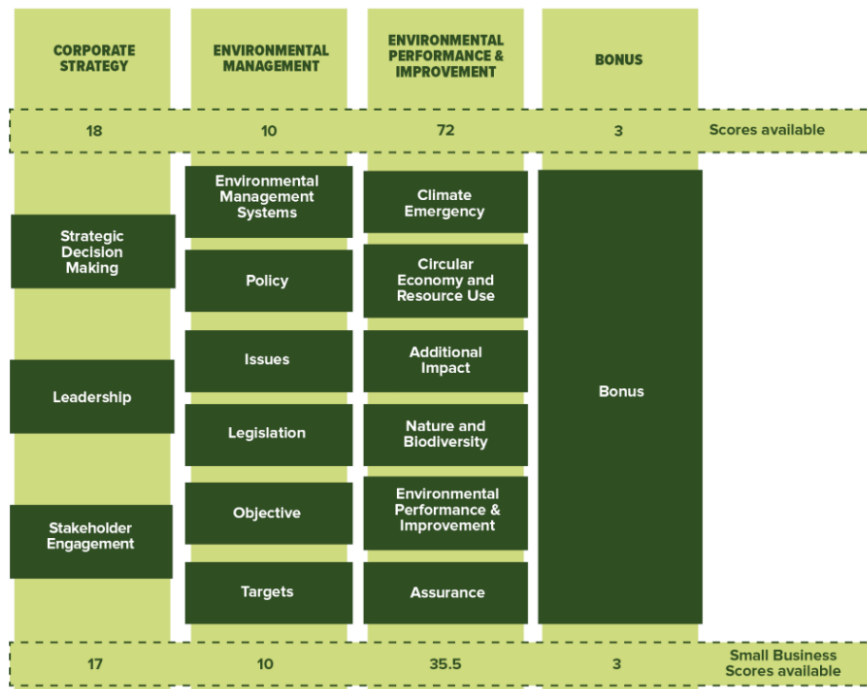
Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To update members on the recent Gold award to Belfast City Council in the 2024 Business in the Community, Environmental Benchmarking Survey (up from Silver in 2023).
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is requested to note the 2024 award and agree to submission to the 2025 survey.
3.0	Main report
3.1	Background - 2024 Business in the Community, Environmental Benchmarking Survey
3.2	In July 2023, the Council made it's first annual submission to the Business in the Community, Environmental Benchmarking Survey. The submission was undertaken to

support baselining of environmental activity in the organisation and to benchmark Belfast City Council to other organisations in the region. It also demonstrates publicly our commitments to being environmentally responsible and transparent and helps us to track our progress over time and see how far we have come. Last year Council scored a silver award.

3.3 The Survey is Northern Ireland’s leading environmental benchmarking exercise. It is a free, annual, self-disclosure exercise open to members and non-members of Business in the Community. There are five levels of awards ranging from Platinum at the top through Gold, Silver, Bronze and Green. The Survey is split into the following sections:



3.4 132 organisations took part in the survey this year, a 9% increase from 2023. Belfast City Council scored 79% against an average of 76%. The areas that received full marks this year and therefore helped achieve the gold award were around strategic decision making (for example the inclusion of a large programme of work on climate and environment under the ‘Our Planet’ section in the Belfast Agenda), leadership (the establishment of the Our Planet Board, City Resilience and Climate Committee, and Belfast Climate Commission) and publically reporting to the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP). The staff travel survey also demonstrated the Council’s commitment to measuring scope 3 emissions and the development of the council’s draft Climate Action Plan (CAP) helped move the organisation up a level in the results. Recycling of old laptops, participation in the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan and the recent work around single use plastics also gained positive marks.

3.5 Organisations also receive a Gap Analysis Report that provides feedback on its score in each section, enabling us to identify areas where action can be taken to improve environmental impacts and increase future scores in subsequent Surveys.

3.6 One of the areas that the gap analysis highlighted for improvement was around the council’s use of renewable energy. This year funding secured from the shared island fund will be used to install solar panels on the Donegal Pass community centre (plans for procurement in January 2025).

3.7 There were several changes to the Survey questions this year, scored and unscored, to continue to challenge participants included an increased focus on commitments, policies or actions in place to maintain, enhance and conserve nature and biodiversity.

3.8 There are three other councils that participate in the survey - Mid and East Antrim (platinum), Antrim and Newtownabbey (Gold) and Ards and North Down (Silver) and other organisations such as the Belfast Met (Gold), Ulster University (Platinum) and Visit Belfast (Bronze). Many

	organisations such as the Belfast Harbour Commission, International Airport and George Best City Airport have been participating in the survey for more than 20 years and are now in the platinum category.
4.0	Financial & Resource Implications
4.1	There are no financial and resource implications.
5.0	Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Implications
5.1	Any good relations or equality implications will be identified as part of the Council's screening process.
6.0	Appendices
6.1	The Results 2024 NI Environmental

This page is intentionally left blank

2024 Northern Ireland environmental BENCHMARKING survey REPORT



Funded via the Carrier Bag Levy by:



Department of
Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs
www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Page 5

An Roinn
Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe

Department of
Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers

CONTENTS



THE SURVEY

The Survey in 2024

3

3

THE RESULTS

By Achievement Level

4

4

Small Business

5

By Sector

6

THE HEADLINES

8

INSIGHTS

9





THE SURVEY IN 2024

The NI Environmental Benchmarking Survey is Northern Ireland's leading environmental benchmarking exercise, attracting organisations from numerous industries. It is a free, annual, self-disclosure exercise open to members and non-members of Business in the Community.

Taking part enables an organisation to publicly demonstrate its commitment to being environmentally responsible and transparent. The surveying process and results allow organisations to examine and reflect on their environmental performance and compare themselves to other organisations to drive improvements.

Started 26 years ago by [George Dawson](#), the Survey is recognised as a positive influencer that is helping organisations throughout Northern Ireland to achieve more sustainable ways of doing business.

For a overview of the findings outlined in this report in video format, please click on the image below.



39

THE NUMBER OF ORGANISATIONS IN THE TOP BAND, PLATINUM, INCREASED TO 39, A RISE OF 12

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE NI ENVIRONMENTAL BENCHMARKING SURVEY



THE RESULTS | BY ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL



TOP PERFORMER

Spirit AeroSystems

PLATINUM

ABP Food Group	↑
AG Paving and Building Products Ltd	↔
Almac Group Ltd	↑
Belfast Harbour Commissioners	↔ 25+
Belfast International Airport	↑ 25+
Breedon Group	↑
Collins Aerospace – Kilkeel	↔
Danske Bank	↔ 10+
Dunbia (UK)	↑
Encirc Glass	↔ 10+
Farrans Construction	↑ 20+
firmus energy	↔
Foyle Food Group	↔ 10+
GEDA Construction	NEW
George Best Belfast City Airport	↔ 20+
Gilbert-Ash Ltd	↑ 10+
GRAHAM	↔
Henry Brothers	↔ 25+
Heron Bros Ltd	↑ 10+
Huhtamaki Foodservice Delta Ltd	↑
Hyster-Yale Group	
Kier Ltd	↑
Marcon Fit-Out Ltd	↑
McCue	↑
McLaughlin & Harvey Ltd	↑ 25+
Metal Technology Ltd	↑
Mid and East Antrim Borough Council	↑ 10+
Moy Park Limited	↔ 25+
Northern Ireland Electricity Networks	↔ 10+
Northern Ireland Housing Executive	↔
Northstone Materials Limited	↑
Openreach Northern Ireland	↔
Ove Arup & Partners Ltd	↔
Phoenix Energy Group Limited	↔ 25+
Queen's University Belfast	↔ 20+
Seagate Technology (Ireland)	↔ 25+
Spirit AeroSystems	↔ 25+
Translink	↔ 25+
Ulster University	↔ 20+

GOLD

A&L Goodbody Northern Ireland LLP	↑
Allstate Northern Ireland	↓
Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	↓
Belfast City Council	↑
Belfast Metropolitan College	↔ 10+
Business in the Community NI	↔ 10+
Caterpillar (NI) Ltd	↔ 20+

GOLD

Coca-Cola HBC Ireland and Northern Ireland	↓
Eakin Healthcare	NEW
Felix O'Hare & Co Ltd	↓
Fibrus	↔
Henderson Group Ltd	↓
JP Corry	↓ 10+
Kilwaughter Minerals Limited	↑
McAvoy	↑
Mutual Energy	↑
Northern Ireland Assembly	↑ 10+
Portview Fit-Out Ltd	↑
South West College	↑
Thompson Aero Seating	↑
Veolia	↑

SILVER

Ards and North Down Borough Council	↔
BiOPAX LTD	NEW
Campbell Contracts Ltd	↔
Ciena	↔
DAWSON-WAM Ltd	↓
Dowds Group	↔ 10+
Education Authority	NEW
Finnebrogue	NEW
Galgorm	↔
Haldane Group	↔ 25+
Irish Football Association	↑
ISS A/S	↔
Jenkins Group Ltd	↔
John Thompson & Sons Ltd	↔
Lidl	NEW
Mannok Build Ltd	↔
McAdam Design	↑
Mivan Ltd	↔
MSO Cleland Ltd	NEW
National Museums NI	↔
NI Co-Ownership Housing Association	↑
Power NI	↔
Public Prosecution Survey	↑
SlurryKat Limited	↔
SONI	↔
Southern Health and Social Care Trust	↔ 10+
Specialist Group	NEW
The Police Service of Northern Ireland	↔
The SHS Group	↔
Ulster Carpet Mills (Holdings) Ltd	↔
Unitrunk Ltd	↑
Viberoptix OPCO Lmt	NEW
Walter Watson Limited	NEW
Western Health and Social Care Trust	↔ 10+
Woven Housing Agency Ltd	↑

BRONZE

ABM Ireland	NEW
AG Wilson Civil Engineering	NEW
Antrim Electrical & Mechanical Engineers Ltd	↔
Antrim Supplies Ltd T/A Work Wear Mallusk	↑
Carson McDowell	NEW
DHL Supply Chain	↓
Digestors, Silos & Tanks Ltd t/a Silotank	NEW
Learning Pool	NEW
Meridian Utilities Ltd	NEW
Morrow Contracts	NEW
MSM Contracts	NEW
Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority	↑
NovoGen Engineering Solutions Ltd	NEW
RiverRidge Recycling (Portadown) Ltd	NEW
Southern Regional College	NEW
Suki Tea Makers	↔
Titanic Belfast	↑
Visit Belfast	NEW
Woodside Logistics Group	NEW

GREEN

Arbour Housing	↓
Bann Joinery & Flooring Limited	NEW
BLK BOX Fitness	↓
CavanaghKely	NEW
Clearbox Communications	NEW
Dale Orr	NEW
Davison Quality Foods	NEW
Dolgan Ltd	NEW
Down Business Centre	NEW
Future Renewables	NEW
Heron Manufacture Ltd	NEW
Northern Ireland Authority For Utility Regulation	↔
Plastics 2000	NEW
Prestige Insurance Holdings Limited	NEW
Solmatix Ltd	↔
The Conservation Volunteers	NEW
TST Transport Ltd	↓

KEY

New to the Survey in 2024	NEW
Remained in the same band as 2023	↔
Moved up from 2023	↑
Dropped from 2023	↓
Participated for at least 10 consecutive years	10+
Participated for at least 20 consecutive years	20+
Participated for 25+ consecutive years	25



TOP PERFORMING SMALL BUSINESS

Digestors, Silos & Tanks Ltd t/a Silotank

BRONZE

Antrim Supplies Ltd T/A Work Wear Mallusk

Digestors, Silos & Tanks Ltd t/a Silotank

Meridian Utilities Ltd

Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority

NovoGen Engineering Solutions Ltd

Suki Tea Makers

GREEN

Bann Joinery & Flooring Limited

Clearbox Communications

Dale Orr

Davison Quality Foods

Dolgan Ltd

Down Business Centre

Future Renewables

Plastics 2000

Solmatix Ltd

The Conservation Volunteers



THE RESULTS | BY SECTOR



CONSTRUCTION

AG Wilson Civil Engineering	BRONZE
Antrim Electrical & Mechanical Engineers Ltd	BRONZE
Bann Joinery & Flooring Limited	GREEN
Campbell Contracts Ltd	SILVER
DAWSON-WAM Ltd	SILVER
Dowds Group	SILVER
Farrans Construction	PLATINUM
Felix O'Hare & Co Ltd	GOLD
Future Renewables	GREEN
GEDA Construction	PLATINUM
Gilbert-Ash Ltd / Gilbert-Ash Ireland Ltd	PLATINUM
GRAHAM	PLATINUM
Haldane Group	SILVER
Henry Brothers	PLATINUM
Heron Bros Ltd	PLATINUM
JP Corry	GOLD
Marcon Fit-Out Ltd	PLATINUM
McCue	PLATINUM
McLaughlin & Harvey Ltd	PLATINUM
Metal Technology Ltd	PLATINUM
Mivan Ltd	SILVER
MSM Contracts	BRONZE
Portview Fit-Out Ltd	GOLD
Solmatix Ltd	GREEN
Specialist Group	SILVER
Viberoptix OPCO Lmt	SILVER

EDUCATION

Belfast Metropolitan College	GOLD
Education Authority	SILVER
South West College	GOLD
Southern Regional College	BRONZE
The Conservation Volunteers	GREEN
Ulster University	PLATINUM

ENGINEERING

Caterpillar (NI) Ltd	GOLD
Hyster-Yale Group	PLATINUM
McAdam Design	SILVER
NovoGen Engineering Solutions Ltd.	BRONZE
Ove Arup & Partners LTD	PLATINUM
Spirit Aero Systems	PLATINUM
Unitrunk Ltd	SILVER
Walter Watson Limited	SILVER

FINANCIAL

CavanaghKelly	GREEN
Danske Bank	PLATINUM
Prestige Insurance Holdings Limited	GREEN

FOOD AND DRINK

ABP Food Group	PLATINUM
Coca-Cola HBC Ireland and Northern Ireland	GOLD
Dale Orr	GREEN
Davison Quality Foods	GREEN
Dolgan Ltd	GREEN

FOOD AND DRINK

Dunbia (UK)	PLATINUM
Finnebrogue	SILVER
Foyle Food Group	PLATINUM
Galgorm	SILVER
Henderson Group LTD	GOLD
John Thompson & Sons Ltd	SILVER
Moy Park Limited	PLATINUM
Suki Tea Makers	BRONZE
The SHS Group	SILVER

GENERAL MANUFACTURING

AG Paving and Building Products Ltd	PLATINUM
Almac GroupLTD	PLATINUM
BIOPAX LTD	SILVER
BLK BOX Fitness	GREEN
Collins Aerospace - Killeel	PLATINUM
Digestors, Silos & Tanks Ltd t/a Silotank	BRONZE
Eakin Healthcare	GOLD
Encirc Glass	PLATINUM
Heron Manufacture Ltd	GREEN
Huhtamaki Foodservice Delta Ltd	PLATINUM
McAvoy	GOLD
MSO Cleland Ltd	SILVER
Plastics 2000	GREEN
Seagate Technology (Ireland)	PLATINUM
SlurryKat Limited	SILVER
Thompson Aero Seating	GOLD

GENERAL SERVICES

ABM IRELAND	BRONZE
Belfast City Airport	PLATINUM
Belfast Harbour Commissioners	PLATINUM
Belfast International Airport	PLATINUM
Carson McDowell	BRONZE
DHL Supply Chain	BRONZE
ISS A/S	SILVER
Jenkins Group LTD	SILVER
Titanic Belfast	BRONZE
TST Transport Ltd	GREEN
Visit Belfast	BRONZE
Woodside Logistics Group	BRONZE

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT AND AGENCY

National Museums Northern Ireland	SILVER
NI Authority for Utility Regulation	GREEN
NI Fishery Harbour Authority	GREEN
Police Service of Northern Ireland	SILVER
Public Prosecution Service	BRONZE

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES TRUST

Southern Health and Social Care Trust	SILVER
Western Health and Social Care Trust	SILVER

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

Allstate Northern Ireland	GOLD
Ciena	SILVER
Fibrus	GOLD
Learning Pool	BRONZE

LOCAL AUTHORITY

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	GOLD
Ards and North Down Borough Council	SILVER
Belfast City Council	GOLD
Mid and East Antrim Borough Council	PLATINUM
Northern Ireland Assembly	GOLD
Northern Ireland Housing Executive	PLATINUM

MINING AND QUARRYING

Breedon Group	PLATINUM
Kilwaughter Minerals Limited	GOLD
Mannok Build Ltd	SILVER
Northstone Materials Limited	PLATINUM

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION

A&L Goodbody Northern Ireland LLP	GOLD
Arbour Housing	GREEN
Business in the Community NI	GOLD
Clearbox Communications	GREEN
Down Business Centre	GREEN
Irish Football Association	SILVER
NI Co-Ownership Housing Association	SILVER
Queen's University Belfast	PLATINUM
Woven Housing Association Ltd	SILVER

RETAIL

Lidl	SILVER
------	--------

TEXTILES AND CLOTHING

Antrim Supplies Ltd T/A Work Wear Mallusk	BRONZE
Ulster Carpet Mills (Holdings) Ltd	SILVER

UTILITIES

firmus energy	PLATINUM
Kier LTD	PLATINUM
Meridian Utilities Ltd	BRONZE
Morrow Contracts	BRONZE
Mutual Energy	GOLD
Northern Ireland Electricity Networks	PLATINUM
Openreach Northern Ireland	PLATINUM
Phoenix Energy Group Limited	PLATINUM
Power NI	SILVER
SONI	SILVER

WASTE/ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

RiverRidge Recycling (Portadown) Ltd	BRONZE
Veolia	GOLD



NEW BUSINESS IN 2024	REFERRAL BUSINESS
Dolgan Ltd	ABP Food Group
Southern Regional College	Belfast Metropolitan College
Digestors, Silos & Tanks Ltd t/a Silotank	Danske Bank
GEDA Construction	Farrans Construction
Viberoptix OPCO Lmt	Fibrus
MSO Cleland Ltd	Finnebrogue
Bann Joinery & Flooring Limited	Gilbert-Ash Ltd
Heron Manufacture Ltd	Heron Bros Ltd
Woodside Logistics Group	Huhtamaki Foodservice Delta Ltd
Woodside Logistics Group	Kilwaughter Minerals Limited
Morrow	Meridian Utilities Ltd
Plastics 2000	Metal Technology Ltd
Meridian Utilities Ltd	Morrow Contracts
The Conservation Volunteers	Northern Ireland Electricity Networks
Future Renewables	South West College
ABM Ireland	Spirit AeroSystems

BRING A BUSINESS

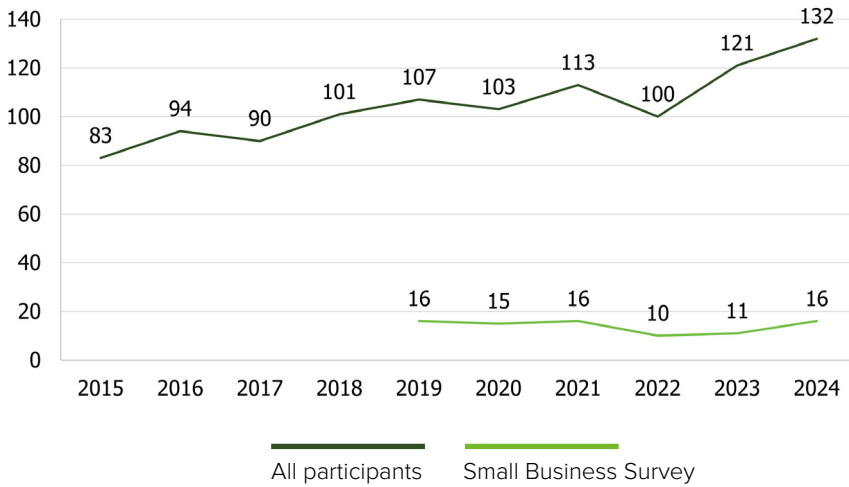
16

ORGANISATIONS
DEMONSTRATED
ENVIRONMENTAL
STEWARDSHIP
BY INTRODUCING
ANOTHER
BUSINESS TO JOIN
THE SURVEY





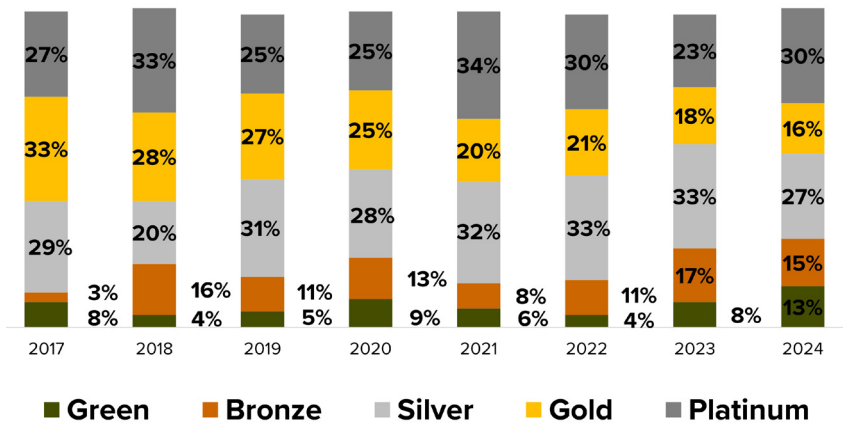
TOTAL PARTICIPANTS



16

SMALL BUSINESSES PARTICIPATED IN THE SMALL BUSINESS SURVEY AND A TOTAL OF 132 ORGANISATIONS TOOK PART IN 2024 – A 9% INCREASE ON 2023

PROPORTION OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH BAND

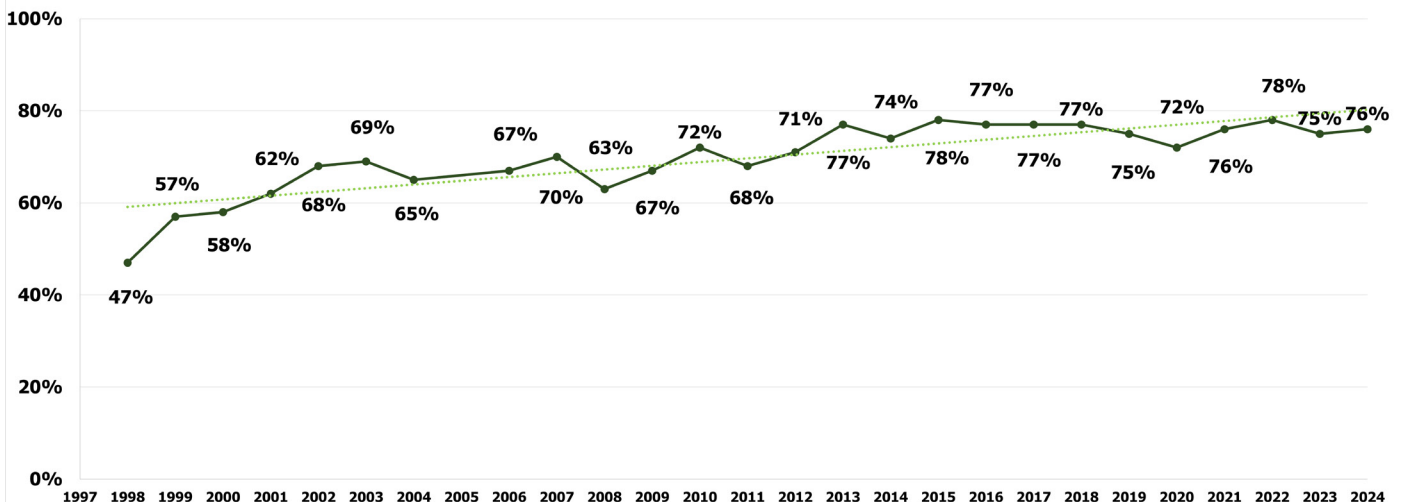


THE AVERAGE SCORE IS

76%

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY WAS THE HIGHEST SCORING SECTOR, WITH UTILITIES A CLOSE SECOND

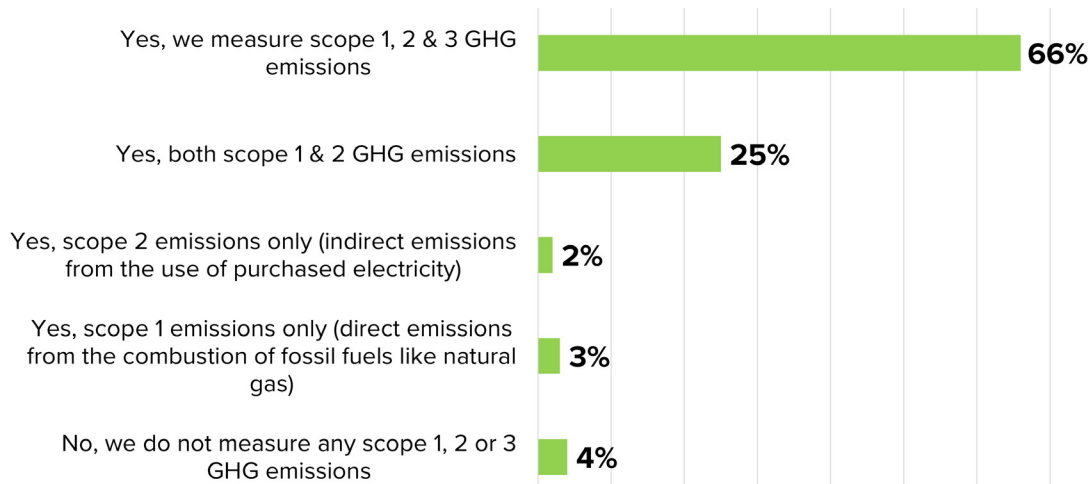
SURVEY SCORES OVER TIME



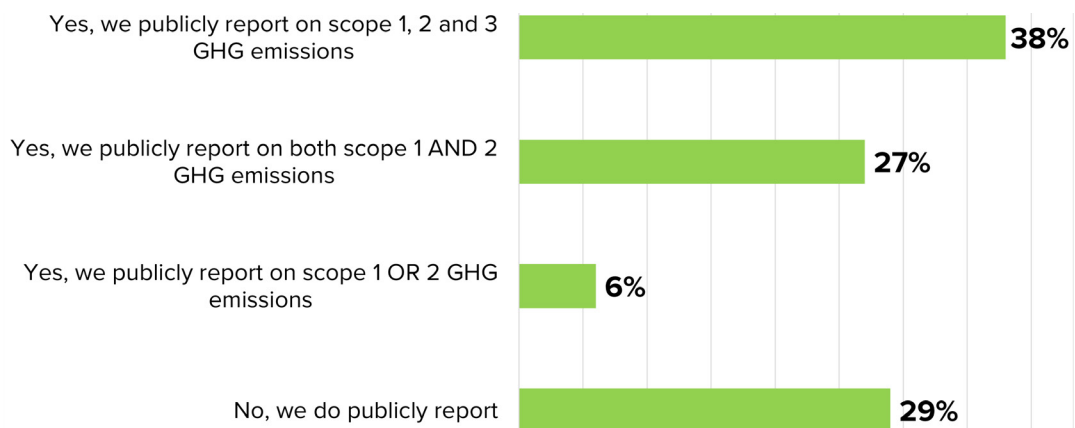


GHG EMISSIONS MEASURING AND REPORTING

MEASURING AND REPORTING ON GREENHOUSE GASES (GHG)



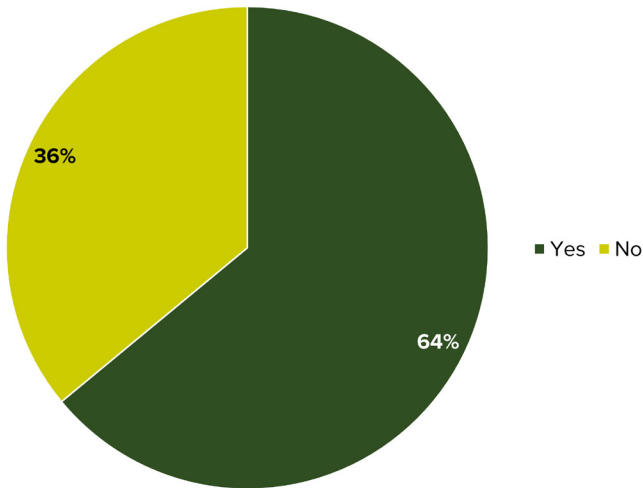
DO YOU PUBLICLY REPORT ON YOUR GHG EMISSIONS?





SCOPE 3 MEASURING AND REPORTING

DO YOU HAVE TARGETS TO REDUCE SCOPE 3 EMISSIONS?

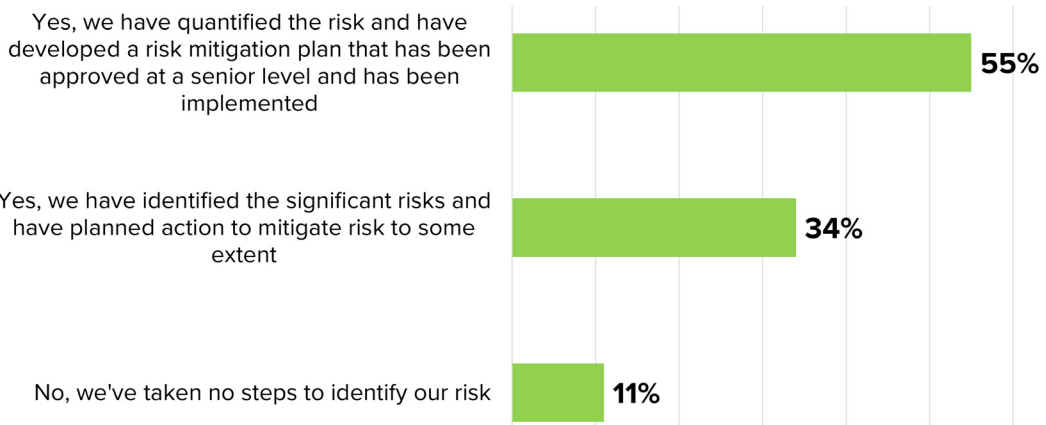


For companies not measuring Scope 3 emissions, the following barriers have been reported:

- Scope 3 emissions are tracked, but the biggest challenge is the reliance on the supply chain to provide accurate data in a timely matter, such as environmental product declarations
- No capacity to fulfil the reporting requirements for scope 3 emissions. However, there are plans to employ relevantly skilled employee(s) to report/measure scope 3 emission on behalf of the company
- Plan to prioritise scope 1 and scope 2 before dealing with scope 3
- Beginning to measure scope 3 emissions but are not at the stage to report on these emissions

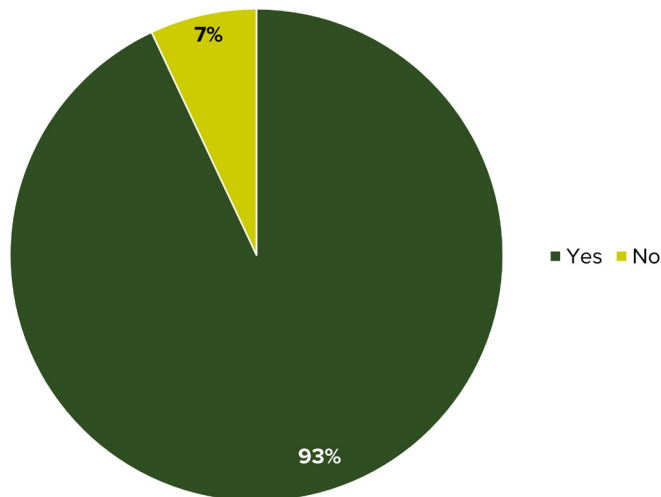
CLIMATE RISK

HAVE YOU IDENTIFIED THE POTENTIAL DIRECT AND INDIRECT RISKS FROM CLIMATE CHANGE FOR YOUR ORGANISATION?

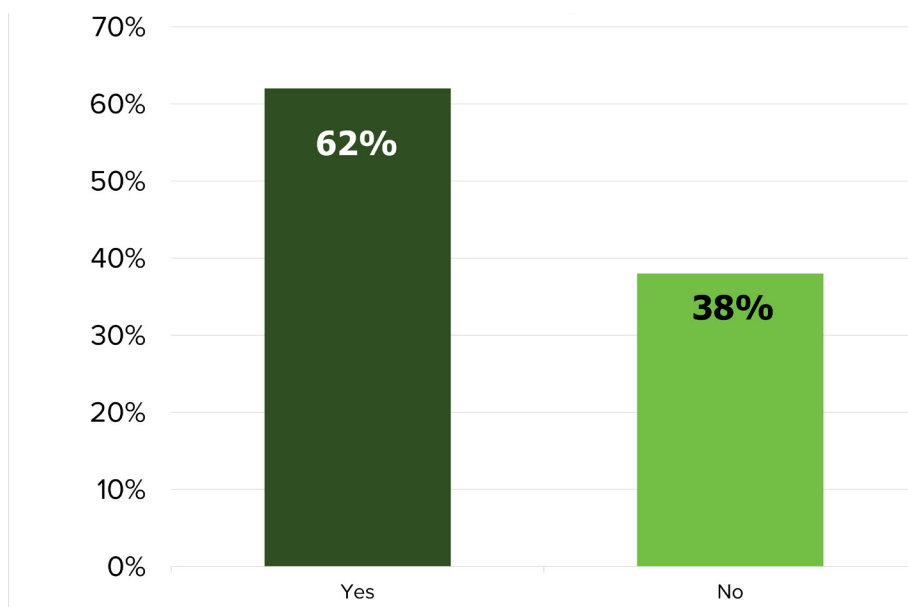




IF YOU ANSWERED YES TO THE ABOVE, ARE THESE CLIMATE-RELATED RISKS ON YOUR ORGANISATION'S RISK REGISTER?



IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS, HAVE YOU OBSERVED ANY DIRECT OR INDIRECT IMPACTS OF EXTREME WEATHER OR CLIMATE CHANGE ON YOUR BUSINESS?



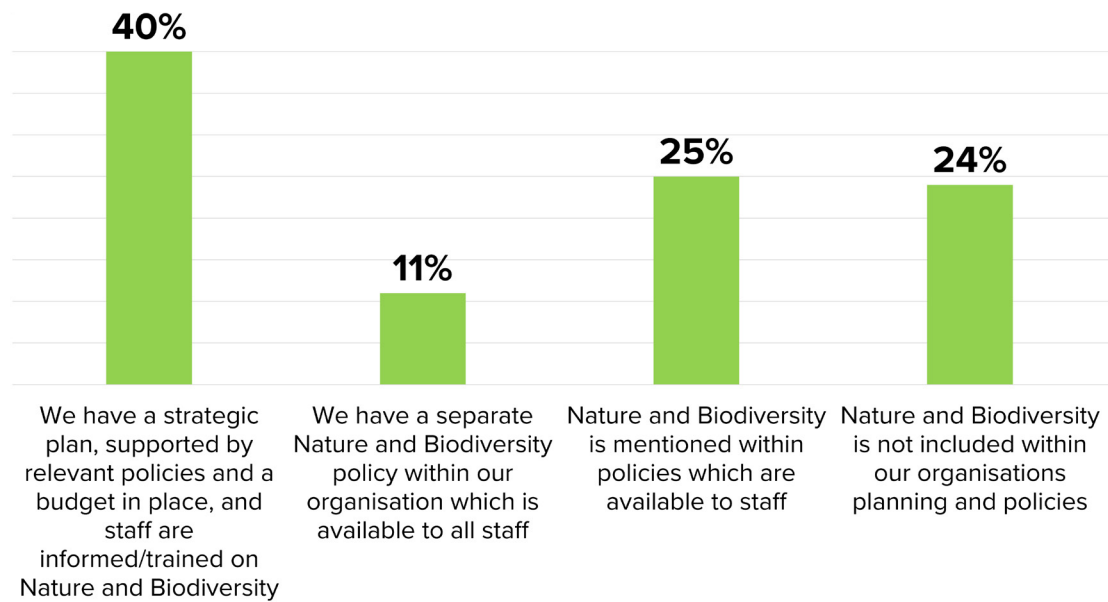
Examples of direct or indirect impacts reported:

- Customer demand for sustainability is driving changes, such as reducing plastic packaging
- Extreme weather (storms, flooding) has directly impacted the supply chain, leading to delays, road closures, and suspension of production for several days
- Insurance premiums are increasing due to climate-related risks, prompting more focus on climate impacts in insurance assessments

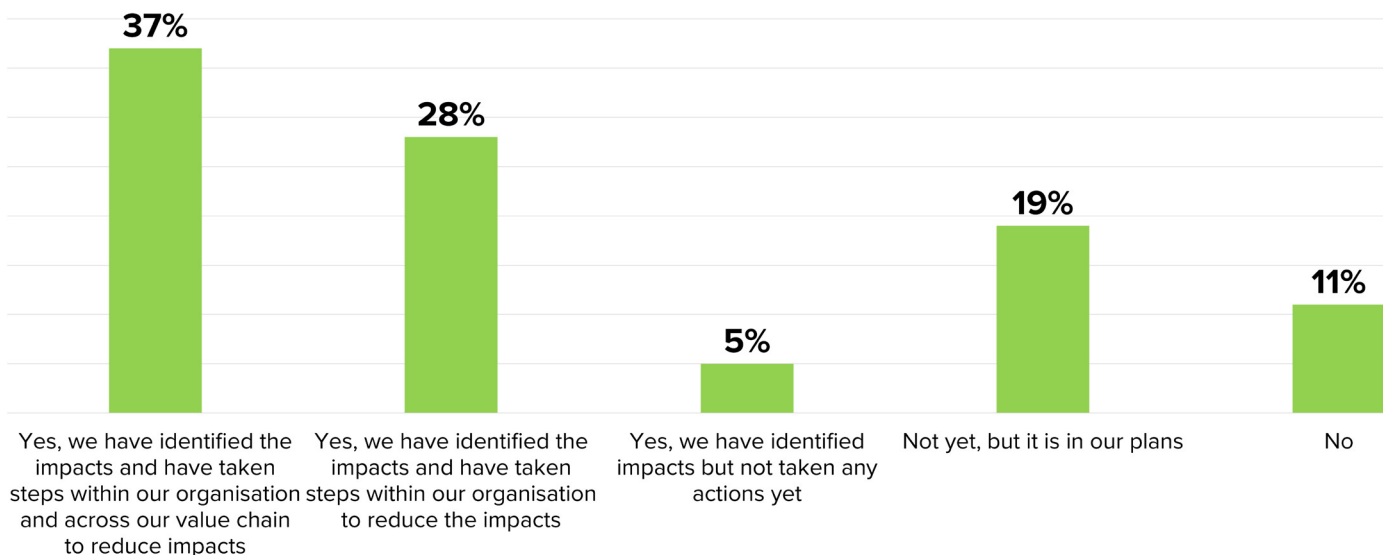


NATURE AND BIODIVERSITY

HAS YOUR ORGANISATION INCLUDED NATURE AND BIODIVERSITY IN ITS STRATEGIC PLANNING AND POLICIES?



HAS YOUR ORGANISATION TAKEN ANY ACTIONS TO IDENTIFY/ REDUCE ITS IMPACT ON NATURE AND BIODIVERSITY WITHIN THE ORGANISATION AND/OR ACROSS ITS VALUE CHAIN?

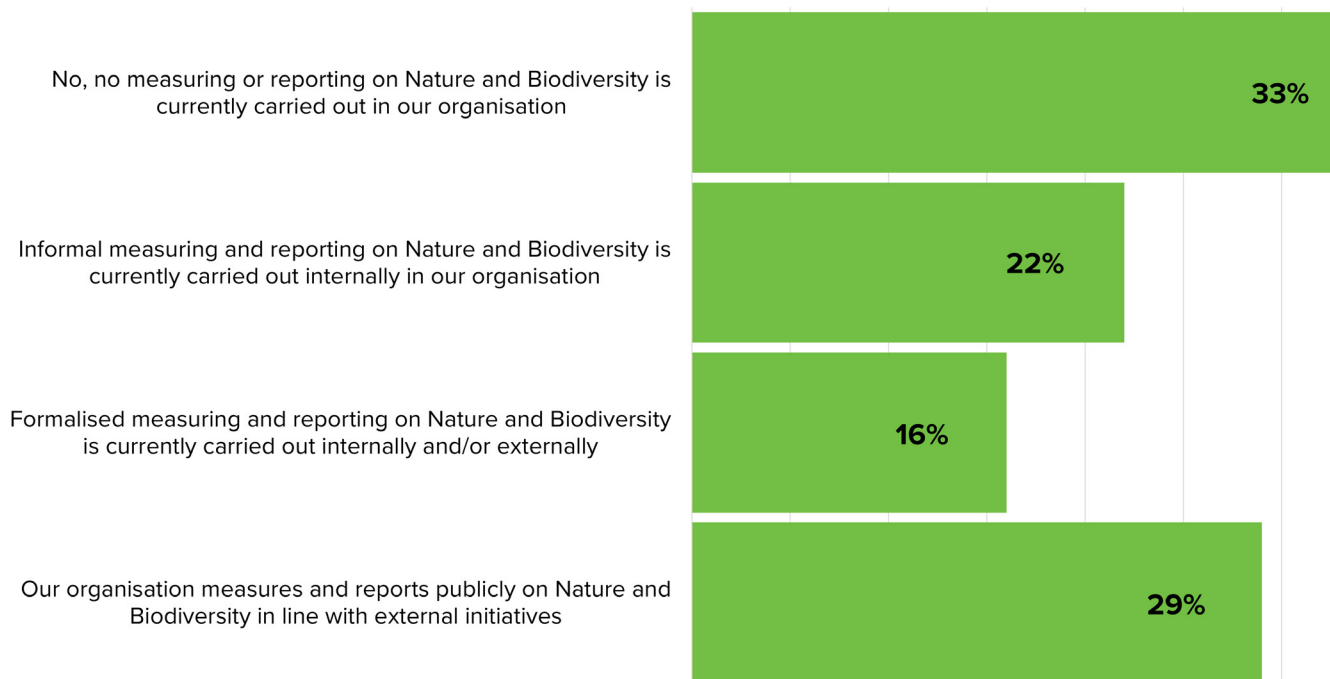


Examples of actions taken:

- Preservation and enhancement of local biodiversity is a fundamental element in our ESG strategy focusing on “Acting as an environmentally responsible business by supporting biodiversity projects and initiatives within the community that we serve.”
- Whilst we understand that planting trees is important, we are very aware of the need to support nature by helping to maintain an ever-decreasing population of insects. We are looking at this as part of our green assets plan.
- Regular Toolbox Talks (TBT) with our sub-contractors that include impacts on nature and biodiversity in order to educate the sub-contractors working on our sites
- Engaging with our sub-contractors and the local community and school cleaning up the local garden area, providing bird boxes, planters, soil and wildflower seeds



DOES YOUR ORGANISATION MEASURE AND REPORT ON NATURE AND BIODIVERSITY?



Participants reported the following challenges in addressing Nature and Biodiversity:

- Some pushback on the introduction of wildflower areas because of a perception that they look "untidy"
- Difficulty acquiring suitable budgets each year to adequately maintain nature and biodiversity projects
- The big challenge is quantifying the impact in projects to enhance biodiversity



ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE BASELINE YEAR V CURRENT YEAR

64%

OF RESPONDENTS
CAN DEMONSTRATE
REDUCTION IN GHG
EMISSIONS

52%

OF RESPONDENTS
CAN DEMONSTRATE A
REDUCTION IN WASTE
PRODUCED

42%

OF RESPONDENTS
CAN DEMONSTRATE A
REDUCTION IN WATER
CONSUMPTION

60%

OF RESPONDENTS
CAN DEMONSTRATE
AN IMPROVEMENT
IN WASTE DIVERTED
FROM LANDFILL

54%

OF RESPONDENTS
CAN DEMONSTRATE
AN IMPROVEMENT IN
THEIR ADDITIONAL
IMPACT AREA

23%

OF RESPONDENTS
CAN DEMONSTRATE
AN IMPROVEMENT
ACROSS **ALL** IMPACT
AREAS



Business in the Community stands for responsible business. Set up in Northern Ireland in 1989, we now have over 270+ members and are the largest business-led coalition dedicated to corporate responsibility.

www.bitcni.org.uk

E: environment@bitcni.org.uk

BELFAST

Bridge House
Paulett Avenue
Belfast, BT5 4HD
T (028) 9046 0606
E: info@bitcni.org.uk

NORTH WEST OFFICE

BEAM Centre
INVISTA House
Third Street, Maydown
Derry/Londonderry
BT47 6TH
T (028) 7186 1550
E: info@bitcni.org.uk

Registered Details

137 Shepherdess Walk, London N1 7RQ.

Registered Charity No: 297716. Company Limited by Guarantee No: 1619253



This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 4



Belfast
City Council

CLIMATE AND CITY RESILIENCE COMMITTEE

Subject:	UP2030 update, Net Zero Neighbourhood Framework
Date:	16 January 2025
Reporting Officer:	Debbie Caldwell, Climate Commissioner
Contact Officer:	Callie Persic, Development Manager

Restricted Reports									
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
<p>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</p> <p>Insert number <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information relating to any individual 2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) 4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter 5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained 6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction 7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime 									
<p>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</p> <table style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;">After Committee Decision</td> <td style="width: 30%;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>After Council Decision</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sometime in the future</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Never</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>		After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	Never	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>								
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>								

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To provide an update on the UP2030 Net Zero (NZ) Neighbourhood Framework, including the work to date across the priority themes of active travel, greening and retrofit, stakeholder engagement, and key milestones for 2025, including holding a Members briefing workshop.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. To note the progress to date and future key milestones for the UP2030 Net Zero Neighbourhoods Horizon Europe funded project to develop a Net Zero Neighbourhood Framework. II. To note that a Members’ briefing workshop in early summer on the emerging draft Framework prior to taking the final draft Framework to Committee in the autumn. III. To note the 3 main themes of the Framework around Greening, Retrofit and Active Travel, and how the UP2030 project can be upscaled to help build understanding and capacity for communities about NZ as well as integrate and inform both local community plans and Council workstreams such as the emerging area planning approach; climate-related work programmes; housing led regeneration programme and specifically how it will fit with the Belfast Agenda Community Planning Boards Action Plans. IV. To note that an update report on UP2030 was brought to the City Growth & Regeneration Committee yesterday, 15 January 2025.
3.0	<p>Background</p> <p>Members will recall that Council is involved in a three-year Horizon Europe consortium programme called Urban Planning 2030 (UP2030) that aims to guide cities through the transitions required to meet their climate neutrality ambitions. The City Regeneration and Development and Climate teams were successful in joint bid of €204,250/£176,024 to further an integrated approach between urban planning, achieving net zero and aspects of resilience. At the most recent update to the City Regeneration & Development and Climate and City Resilience Committees in June 2024 Members were reminded that Belfast is one of 11 pilot cities, and the focus of the project is on the development of a net zero neighbourhood framework around three thematic areas: active travel, greening and retrofit. These themes link across to the UP2030 pillars of a fair and just transition, carbon neutrality and resilience. The Framework will be informed by data, stakeholder engagement and the use of climate tools to support analysis, mapping and engagement in the pilot area.</p> <p>3.1 The geographic area of the UP2030 pilot was agreed at the City Growth and Regeneration Committee in March 2023 and covers the Linen Quarter and surrounding city centre communities of Barrack Street, Sandy Row, Donegall Pass and the Market. Whilst this work was undertaken within</p>

3.2	<p>a defined boundary the purpose was to produce a framework that could be adapted and used within all communities and districts to set forward net zero tailored approaches, attract funding and deliver climate adaption plans tailored for the uses of that specific district.</p> <p>Over the past year and a half there has been engagement with communities and wider city partners at each key stage. Members received an update at the CG&R and Climate and City Resilience Committees in June 2024 that outlined the stakeholder engagement, workshops, key milestones and highlighted wider alignment of the UP2030 programme with other workstreams such as the Solar PV Study and the Belfast Retrofit Delivery Hub.</p>
4.0	Main Report
4.1	<p><u>Progress to date</u></p> <p>Cross-sector stakeholder engagement</p> <p>As reported in June 2024, stakeholder engagement has been a key feature of the programme, and the team continue to engage with the local areas as well as thematic, statutory, and citywide partners that have broad experience or are prospective delivery partners. Between April and October 2024 significant engagement took place through workshops and interactive sessions with a range of cross-sector stakeholders including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belfast City Council officers across departments • Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel (CAST) Belfast Agenda subgroup • City Greening Group • Belfast Retrofit Delivery Hub • Cross sector stakeholder Vision and Actions feedback workshop • Youth session with South Belfast Alternatives Youth Group • QUB StreetSpace engagement and research group • Donegall Pass Seniors' Group • Open Botanic Festival • Retrofit workshop with elected Members • World Cities Day Youth Event with BCC Youth Council
4.2	<p>The purpose of these events was to encourage people to step into the future and consider what life might be like in a NZ Belfast of 2050 and gain agreement on the vision for the project across the three themes (greening, active travel and retrofit) as well as to engage in 'climate conversations' to build awareness and understanding of climate change. During the sessions, participants were presented with mapped geospatial analysis data and the insights gathered on the project to date and asked for feedback on the emerging Framework ideas, local priorities and build a shared understanding of NZ options. Through this we were able to sense check the emerging framework</p>

	<p>ideas, build a shared understanding of NZ options and agreed the adaptive pathways for the short/long term sequence of actions that would be required to support the transition as well as explore opportunities for pilot projects to help test concepts for the NZ Framework alongside continued stakeholder engagement.</p>
4.3	<p>There have also been indirect engagement opportunities that have helped to build knowledge and expand networks which will also help to inform the Framework. For example, a session was held with the Belfast Retrofit Delivery Hub with energy managers from public and private sector with large scale estates to share experience on retrofitting buildings to reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions. Belfast Retrofit Delivery Hub hosted a peer-to-peer exchange with the Galway City Council, the Warm Homes Hub community retrofit programme and a variety of interested stakeholders from Belfast to explore their One Stop Shop approach and retrofit methodology. This is part of the ongoing work of the Climate Team and demonstrates the importance of linking the shared learning and feedback into the NZ Framework.</p>
4.4	<p><u>Building out the Framework</u></p> <p>The UP2030 team have consolidated the feedback to date on the emerging vision and thematic adaptive pathways, data and worked with consortium partners on the format and content of the Framework. Sections one to three of the draft Framework are due for submission to the UP2030 Consortium in February 2025 and is based around the following chapter outline:</p> <p>Preface</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction and Context 2. Neighbourhood Assessment 3. Vision and Adaptive Pathways 4. Pilots and What We Tested 5. Lessons Learned 6. Net Zero Neighbourhood 7. Implementation and Recommendations 8. Outputs and Visual Aids <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report Document: Comprehensive overview • Visual Guides: Posters, infographics on achieving net-zero by 2050 • Glossary
4.5	<p>Pending feedback from the UP2030 Consortium on the draft Framework, the intention is to go back out to stakeholders in late Spring/early Summer to sense check the actions within the emerging final draft and explore dissemination. As part of this, it also proposed to hold a Members' briefing workshop in early summer that will provide an opportunity to input into the Framework and explore</p>

	<p>the themes prior to bringing this to Committee for approval in the autumn. It is proposed to invite Members from City Growth & Regeneration, Climate & City Resilience and Members who represent the UP2030 area. The final Framework must be submitted by November 2025.</p>
4.6	<p>Primarily, the target audience for the Framework is decision makers and policy makers in local and central government, statutory partners, communities and urban practitioners. As part of the legacy of the project, officers are considering how it will be of use to key stakeholders and looking at this through ‘personae’ such as a community group, investors, senior public officials, or a thematic or special interest organisation. The value of taking this approach means that officers will be able to structure and tailor the content of the Framework, so that it is accessible and relevant to the core audiences and assist in the dissemination of the material.</p>
4.7	<p>Action Phase: Testing Net Zero options</p> <p>Alongside the drafting of the Framework, the UP2030 team is in the Action Phase of the programme, which focuses on testing options that could be included in the NZ Framework under the three themes, active travel, greening and retrofit. The exploration of solutions is central to the action phase of the programme wherein we need to trial approaches or actions that can help us achieve NZ whilst also providing an opportunity to engage with citizens on the key themes of the project. The piloting of these approaches helps us to capture lessons learned and recommendations that will form part of the final NZ Framework as well as gaining a better understanding of the capacity building and knowledge exchange required to help communities transition together. Through this period officers have continued to engage with stakeholders, delivery partners and tool providers to solidify partnerships that will help test some of the NZ approaches that are in the emerging draft Framework. Included in this action phase is a pilot Walking Bus project that will be funded and delivered by Belfast Healthy Cities by March 2025. A Walking Bus is a group of children walking to school together in the morning. They are supported by an adult at the front and at the back of the group, acting as the 'driver' and 'conductor' of the walking bus.</p>
4.8	<p>Additionally, a Walking Bus is an action in the Belfast Agenda CAST Action Plan and is an approach that was suggested by communities during the UP2030 engagement period. This pilot draws upon the expertise of one of the consortium tool providers, Design Clips, who are an architectural practice specialising in participatory planning and placemaking with a focus on co-design with children, and Belfast Healthy Cities, who are currently working with schools to deliver walking buses. Adding to the Walking Bus concept, a toolkit and teacher training materials have been developed encouraging children to ‘audit’ their route to school and considering how their neighbourhood could be cleaner, greener and healthier, creating safe routes and healthy places. Further to the pilot, this toolkit (including a Walking Bus toolkit, teaching materials and activity materials) will be a free resource for</p>

	any school or community in Belfast and is an example of how the UP2030 NZ approach can be scaled up in other areas.
4.9	Similarly, it was agreed in the Climate and City Resilience Committee in June 2024 to support Royal Society of Ulster Architects (RSUA) with their Early Career Architects proposal to run a Net-Zero Neighbourhood Ideas Competition as a partnership between the (RSUA) and JP Corry with support from the NIHE and the Northern Ireland Construction Group (NICG). This work is ongoing and intends to explore how a holistic neighbourhood approach to lowering carbon emissions compares to a more focused property-by-property approach and is an opportunity to build on the visioning outcomes of the retrofit work and importantly, engage with communities in the pilot area to codesign approaches for net zero delivery and contribute to the development of the NZ Framework and consider how it can be replicated in other areas.
4.10	Increasingly, new technology comes forward to help address carbon emissions and within the greening theme, we are completing a cost/benefit exercise on the planting and maintenance of 44 trees in the AQMA of Cromac Street in comparison to the installation of a technical solution, 'CityTree', which claims to achieve the benefit equivalent in cleansing the air. This exercise builds on the work of the 'Tree Establishment Strategy' survey completed by colleagues in City and Neighbourhood Services which has identified existing canopy cover across the city and highlighted much needed tree planting in areas that have the lowest tree canopy cover, and subsequent lowest tree equity scores and the UP2030 pilot area includes some of the highest priority areas of the city.
4.11	<p>Key milestones for 2025</p> <p>The final output of the UP2030 programme is a NZ Framework that will be an interactive pdf, supplemented by user-friendly information that can also be distributed to communities and other stakeholders. However, central to this project is how the learning is embedded and helps Council and partners adapt and prepare for climate change. The dissemination will take different forms and officers will the publish and promote the material in different formats, engage with communities and engage across Council teams and seek to influence wider city and regional stakeholders. The final output is being developed with target audiences in mind that includes decision makers, urban practitioners and community leaders. It is hoped that the Framework will help these audiences to understand what a transition to net zero could look like through the three themes, and the urgency of sequenced actions required.</p>
4.12	<p>The UP2030 programme concludes in December 2025. Below are the high-level milestones and deliverables for the year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing roll out of demonstration projects as part of the Action Phase, i.e. Walking Bus, RSUA Early Career Architects NZ Neighbourhood Ideas Competition

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission of the draft Framework by February 2025 • Engage in consortium upscaling workshops and with tool providers, including utilisation of the financial and governance toolkit and peer-to-peer learning, and provision of material/content. • Stakeholder and Member engagement to sense check and validate the NZ Framework, May-June • Submission of final Framework and reporting to the UP2030 Consortium in November 2025 • Launch and dissemination December 2025 and ongoing into 2026.
5.0	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>Members will be aware that given that the UK is no longer within the EU, the status of Council was changed from to being a Partner to that of an Associate which means that funding is underwritten by the UK government (UK Research & Innovation, UKRI) fund rather than the EU. The Horizon Europe UP2030 Project is 100% funded for revenue only. No additional funding is required from Council however a small team drawn from the Climate Unit and City Regeneration and Development work together to oversee development and support implementation. Officers continue to work with partners to identify potential capital or revenue funding in the future and align current and emerging workstreams that could support the transition to net zero.</p>
6.0	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>Officers will carry on an Equality Screening on the final NZ Framework and will incorporate within the emerging proposals.</p>
7.0	<p>Appendices</p>

This page is intentionally left blank