

People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 11th October, 2016

MEETING OF PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Garrett (Chairperson);
the High Sheriff (Alderman Rodgers);
Aldermen McKee and Sandford; and
Councillors Austin, Beattie, Brown, Copeland, Corr,
Corr Johnston, Heading, Jones, Lyons, Magennis,
McCabe, McCusker, Newton, Nicholl and
O'Neill.

Also attended: Councillor Collins.

In attendance: Mr. N. Grimshaw, Director of City and
Neighbourhood Services;
Mrs. R. Crozier, Assistant Director;
Mrs. S. Toland, Assistant Director; and
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology was received on behalf of Alderman McCoubrey.

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 7th September and 13th September were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 3rd October.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Schedule of Meetings 2017

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 7th September, it had agreed that, in addition to its normal meetings, it would hold quarterly special meetings of the People and Communities Committee, which would be attended by the Housing Executive's Regional Manager to enable the Members to raise local housing matters.

The Committee approved the following schedule of meetings for the People and Communities Committee during 2017, with all meetings scheduled to commence at 4.30 pm:

- *Special Meeting - Wednesday 4th January*
- Tuesday, 10th January
- Tuesday, 7th February
- Tuesday, 7th March

- Tuesday, 4th April
- *Special Meeting – Wednesday 5th April*
- Tuesday, 9th May
- Tuesday, 13th June
- No meeting in July
- *Special Meeting – Wednesday 2nd August*
- Tuesday, 8th August
- Tuesday, 12th September
- Tuesday, 10th October
- Tuesday, 7th November
- *Special Meeting – Monday 13th November*
- Tuesday, 5th December

Matters Referred Back/Notice of Motion

Notice of Motion - Hire Charges for Council Pitches

The Committee was reminded that, at the meeting of the Council on 3rd October, the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Collins and seconded by Councillor Heading, had been referred to the Committee for consideration:

“This Council notes the concerns raised by local football teams over the cost of pitches, including grass, 3G and 4G pitches. Some of our most long-standing service users have indicated that they have had to face a price increase of up to 20-25% over the recent period, with some teams reporting that the price of grass pitches has risen from £30 to £55 over a two year period and 3G pitches from £90 to £120 over a one year period. The Council agrees that this is simply unattainable for many local teams and it is serving to negatively impact upon grassroots football. The Council views it as important that we ensure that these facilities are within the reach of our local teams and, accordingly, agrees that these price increases should be reversed and a re-examination undertaken of pitch pricing policy to ensure that these facilities are accessible to all.”

With the permission of the Chairperson, Councillor Collins addressed the Committee and outlined his concerns surrounding the increase in the hire cost of the Council's pitches. He stated that this was a problem that was universally affecting a large number of organisations and clubs and he called upon the Council to undertake an urgent review of the current pricing structure.

After consideration, the Committee agreed that an update report would be submitted to a future meeting of the People and Communities Committee which would, for comparative purposes, include information on the cost to hire 3G pitches at other local councils, schools, universities and private sector facilities.

Councillor Collins then left the meeting.

Notice of Motion - Street Disorder

The Committee was reminded that, at the meeting of the Council on 3rd October, the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor McDonough-Brown and seconded by Councillor Nicholl, had been referred to the Committee for consideration:

“This Council recognises the substantial social and economic contribution which students and universities make to our City. We also condemn, without reservation, the disorder seen on the streets of Belfast and express our support for the affected residents. The Council resolves to consider a report in the relevant Committee specifically addressing the return of wardens, the installation of CCTV, the impact of private landlords and options for more rigorously enforcing bye-laws. The Council also agrees that Chief Officers will attend the Interagency Group in recognition of the seriousness of the problem.”

A Member requested that the update report would consider antisocial behaviour as well as street disorder throughout the City. Another Member asked the officer to include reports, minutes and decisions taken in relation to street disorder that had been considered previously by the Committee.

After consideration, the Committee agreed that an update report would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee that would consider both anti-social behaviour and street disorder in a citywide context.

Committee/Strategic Issues

Minutes of Strategic Cemetery and Crematorium Development Working Group

The Assistant Director advised that, at the meeting of the Strategic Cemetery and Crematorium Development Working Group held on 5th September, the following key issues had been considered:

- opening arrangements for Christmas/New Year and extra statutory holidays;
- update on the use of shoring at Roselawn Cemetery;
- update on the Council's memorial management policy;
- customer survey of users of the City of Belfast Crematorium;
- update on crime/anti-social behaviour at cemetery sites; and
- update on the Loughview Park Cemetery planning application.

Following a query from a Member, the Assistant Director confirmed that the economic appraisal process associated with future cremation options was ongoing and advised that a report would be brought back to the Committee in the near future.

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Working Group and agreed that party briefings would be made

available on the proposals regarding the future cremation options before being presented to the Committee.

Update on Open Spaces Strategy

The Committee considered the following report

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 A review of the Open Spaces Strategy is a critical component of the Belfast City Local Development Plan (LDP) and will influence the future needs and direction of relevant planning policy in the city.**
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to outline for Members the proposed approach and timeframe associated with the review of the Council’s Open Spaces Strategy – ‘Your City, Your Space’.**

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to;**
- Approve the planned approach and timeframe associated with the review of the Open Spaces Strategy and to approve the request to procure appropriate technical assistance to support this specialist work.**

3.0 Main report

Local Development Plan

- 3.1 As part of Local Government Reform, the Council gained a new and effective opportunity to develop agreed future visions through the Belfast Agenda and is required to prepare a co-ordinated and planned approach to delivering this vision spatially, through the Local Development Plan (LDP). Led by the Planning Committee, work is ongoing on evidence-gathering and development of Preferred Options Papers (POPs) on a number of thematic areas, which will all feed into the Plan strategy document, to be published by early summer 2017. A critical component of the Plan strategy is an updated Open Spaces Strategy.**

Open Spaces Strategy

- 3.2 The Council’s existing Open Spaces Strategy was launched in November 2005, with an ambitious action plan. Delivery of the Open Spaces Strategy enabled the Council to achieve the following outcomes: healthier places, safer spaces, protected heritage, shared spaces and increased community**

involvement and participation. Some key successes achieved include:

- Attainment of 15 green flag accreditations;
- Development of management plans for open spaces in partnership with stakeholders;
- Funding contributions from Heritage Lottery Funding, Sport NI, Public Health Agency, DSD BRO and Big Lottery;
- Delivery of the Playing Pitches and Growing Communities strategies;
- Improved site presence in parks with the introduction of a park warden service;
- Increased number and participation levels at local events and outreach programmes;
- Delivery of the 'Parklife' outdoor education programme to schools across Belfast;
- Improved management of all Belfast street trees; and
- Introduction and delivery of a playground improvement programme.

- 3.3 In the context of the statutory requirement for a Local Development Plan, it is now necessary for the Council to review and update the Open Spaces Strategy based on more recent development of significant regional and local strategic, policy and planning changes. This will necessitate broadening the strategy's existing focus on Council-owned open spaces, to set out a vision for all open spaces in the city.

Planning Policy

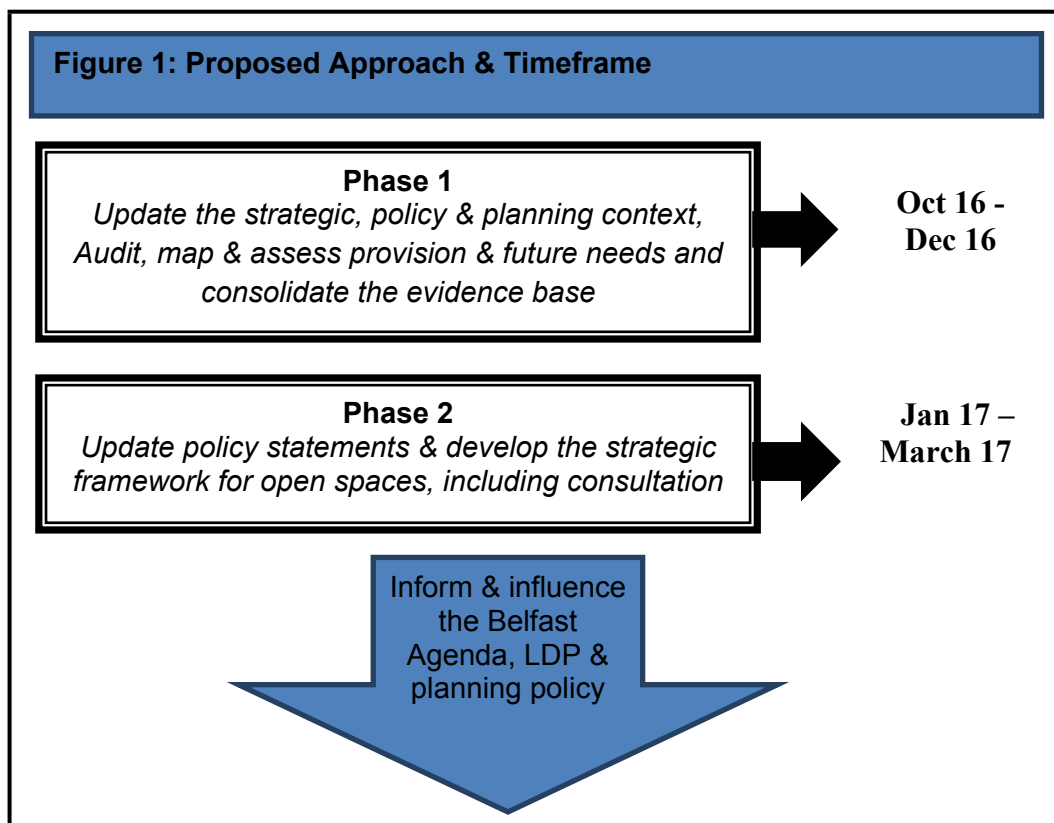
- 3.4 Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) provides guidance on the preparation of LDPs and requirements in relation to open spaces states that councils should:

- Reflect on the aims, objectives and policy approach of the SPPS;
- Survey/ assess existing open space provision and future needs (public and private);
- Consider open spaces within or adjoining urban areas;
- Consider outdoor recreational facilities in the countryside; and
- Take account of the provision, role, distribution and accessibility of other forms of open space i.e. children's play areas, availability of indoor sports facilities.

- 3.5 Planning Policy 8 'Open Space, Sport and Recreation' (PPS8) defines open space as *'all open space of public value, including not just land, but also inland bodies of water such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs which offer important opportunities for sport and outdoor recreation and can also act as a visual amenity'*.
- 3.6 The typology of open space of public value ranges from parks and gardens to outdoor sports facilities, play parks, greenways, urban green spaces, community gardens and cemeteries.

Planned Approach and Timeframe

- 3.7 The ambition is for Council to review the Open Spaces Strategy and develop a draft framework by April 2017 for public consultation, which is required to inform the ongoing preparation of the LDP. An action plan for the Council-owned open spaces will be developed thereafter.
- 3.8 The proposed approach to review and develop the revised Open Spaces Strategy and timeframes are outlined below.



3.9 An inter-departmental working group made up of officers from various disciplines across the Council will be set up to guide the review of the Open Spaces Strategy, including the Planning and Place Service.

3.10 It was also agreed by the People and Communities Committee in October 2015 to review the Belfast Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) which will take into account the new Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy. This will also help support the evidence base required as part of the LDP process.

3.11 Financial & Resource Implications

While Council officers will be involved in the development of the strategy, this is a specialised expertise and external technical assistance will be required, the cost of which will be met through existing departmental budgets.

3.12 Equality or Good Relations Implications

There are no equality and good relations implications at this stage. Equality screening of emerging proposals will be undertaken as part of the strategy review process.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations as set out within the report.

Committee Plan Progress Report

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the People and Communities Committee Plan highlighting progress and achievements to date.

1.2 The People and Communities Committee Plan was approved by Committee on 13 October 2015, following a planning workshop with Members in June 2015 and further discussion at Committee on 11 August 2015.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to;

- Note the Committee Plan highlights update report and to agree to attend a Committee Planning workshop to be held in November 2016. The proposed workshop will enable the development of a work plan for the People and Communities Committee and will help

shape the new Corporate Plan and budget setting process for 2017/18.

3.0 Main report

The People and Communities Committee is currently working to an ambitious Committee Plan which describes how its purpose, objectives and activities contribute to the strategic direction of the Council's Corporate Plan and the achievement of the city's long term vision and priorities detailed within the emerging Belfast Agenda.

3.2 The current Committee Plan was created after discussion with Members about the role of the Committee and its priorities for the City. The following priorities were agreed by Members during a planning workshop in June 2015:

- Living Here: Improve the city living experience; Improve neighbourhoods; Reduce health inequalities; and Improve community relations;
- Infrastructure and Services: Deliver fit-for-purpose city services; Ensure fit-for-purpose city infrastructure; and
- Enablers: Strong City Leadership and Citizenship.

Committee Plan Update

3.3 Over the last year, set against a background of ongoing change and increased pressure on financial resources, Committee has made progress. Lead officers were asked to provide detailed progress updates and some key highlights are summarised below against the Belfast Agenda priorities:

3.4 Living Here – Improve the city living experience highlights:

- As part of the delivery of the Playing Pitches Strategy new changing pavilions have been erected at Waterworks, Cliftonville, Woodlands and Dixon Playing Fields and a number of new 3G pitches completed. New partner agreements have been signed at 7 sites with key/ holding arrangements. Sports development plans have been developed and are being delivered by the Council's partners. We have completed the review of grass pitch allocation.
- Work is progressing on delivering year 3 actions of the Amateur Boxing Strategy. Outcomes achieved to date include enabling club support pathways; creating school and community pathways; showcasing boxing and hosting taster sessions and events; working with

partners to deliver and improve coach education and funding club support programmes.

- We continue to develop our community centre research including a typology, analytical tool and management information system. We have baselined current community centre provision which will help inform the shape of the council's future provision within neighbourhoods and across the city.

3.5 Living Here – Improved neighbourhoods highlights:

- We established a cross-council working group to develop a draft volunteering charter, action plan and a good practice toolkit and volunteering opportunities provided have increased.
- We completed Phase 1 of the Connswater Community Greenway and are on schedule to complete Phase 2 by December 2016. We are currently looking at future resourcing and programming to ensure the sustainability of the Greenway and to date have named 4 bridges, with 4 more to complete. The new C.S. Lewis Square *is scheduled to open in November 2016, showcasing 7 key pieces of public art.*
- *We continue to drive the citywide Policy and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) and have developed an outcomes based approach to manage and monitor performance.*
- *We have invested in our neighbourhoods by delivering a range of local events including Rose Week, Spring Fair and Autumn Fair, Play Days and Party in the Park and programmes and activities including summer schemes, fun days, primary school athletics, music in the park and holiday programmes.*
- *We delivered community engagement and programming to support the Girdwood project and shared space principles were agreed by the Girdwood forum.*

3.6 Living Here - Reduce health inequalities highlights:

- *We continue to work with our partners as part of the Belfast Strategic Partnership (BSP) and locally within neighbourhoods to deliver an integrated programme of work to tackle health inequalities and encourage healthy and active lifestyles. Some collaborative pieces of work completed include the development of a child friendly action plan, age-friendly Belfast charter, local suicide community response plans and a food, fuel and finance poverty tool kit.*

- *A total of £162,000 has been awarded to 14 projects, targeting under-represented people and groups living in areas of disadvantage via the Active Belfast Grants Scheme.*
- *We have supported a range of partnership initiatives including Jog Belfast, the Diabetes Pathway Programme and the 'Choose to live better' campaign.*
- *We continue to deliver a range of sports development initiatives including Clubmark Club accreditation scheme, Support for Sport funding programme, Everybody Active 2020 Programme and the Belfast Sports Award and Forum.*
- *As part of our Growing Communities Strategy, we continue to empower and engage local communities by delivering a programme of growing, environmental learning and healthy eating activities across the city.*

3.7 *Living Here - Improve Community Relations highlights:*

- *An interface action plan identifying priority sites for action is being developed and will be discussed with Members at party briefings in the autumn.*
- *The Good Relations Unit have supported 42 organisations through Tranche 1 of the small grants scheme and 31 organisations through planned intervention funding.*
- *We have also delivered a range of community relations projects impacting at a neighbourhood level, including the shared space programme at Girdwood Community Hub, schools project to reduce levels of hate crime and submitted the Peace IV plan to SEUPB.*

3.8 *Infrastructure and Services – Deliver fit-for-purpose city services highlights:*

- *We have created the new City and Neighbourhood Services Department and we are currently finalising the work on our departmental change programme. The change programme identifies key work streams to be taken forward by working groups in order to deliver improved local outcomes and customer focus for the new department.*
- *We continue to invest £585k as part of our playground refurbishment programme investing in 10 existing facilities, with works already underway at Glencairn playground. Under LGR Transition funding new playgrounds will be constructed at Poleglass, Colin Valley football site and Blacks Road.*

- Work underway to initiate a scoping exercise on value and quantity of grant aid distributed across all C&NS services in support of community infrastructure and service projects in local neighbourhoods.

3.9 Infrastructure and Services – Ensure fit-for-purpose infrastructure highlights:

- The development of the strategic waste plan is ongoing in order to reduce the amount of waste generated and ensure the city maximises the amount of waste recycled. We have approved the proposal for the strategic management of waste in NI and we are currently delivering Belfast specific actions.
- We have adopted the propositions detailed within 'Towards a Resourceful Belfast: A Materials Strategy' and we are currently developing a strategy and programme of work using the circular economy approach in collaboration with the Waste Resources Action Programme (WRAP).
- *Work with ARC21 to procure waste technology continues and a Public Accounts Committee hearing will be held in October to consider the residual waste treatment project.*
- We have reviewed household recycling and civic amenity site provision. This will be presented to Committee in autumn and subject to a formal consultation process.
- We have developed draft waste storage guidelines for Purpose Built Managed Student Housing Associations (PBMSA).

3.10 Enablers - Strong City Leadership highlights:

- While we continue to deliver quality, operational services across the city, we are also exploring service delivery options, approaches and plans for the new department. As part of this exploratory work, we have facilitated area working group workshops with members focusing on how we integrate neighbourhood services, create synergies, drive efficiencies and improve our customer focus.
- Work is also continuing on the bereavement improvement programme including the review of burial policy for future new burial grounds and cremation provision. We commenced the implementation of the new memorial management policy and code of memorial safety working practice and have facilitated awareness sessions with Memorial Sculptors.

- We are finalising agreement on a multi-agency framework and work package for ASB service delivery across Belfast.
- As part of the Olympia/Windsor development, we have established a Belfast Community Benefits Initiative for delivery over the next ten years with DCAL and IFA. A year 1 action plan has been agreed by all partners, meeting objectives including promoting equality, tackling poverty and social exclusion in the Belfast Area.

3.11 Enablers – Citizenship highlights:

- We have successfully developed and delivered the children and young people outcomes framework and will be commencing a review of summer activity provision.
- We delivered a comprehensive community and voluntary sector support training programme to over 300 participants and have completed a partner programme with Belfast Metropolitan College, with 14 Officers achieving level 3 education and training accreditation.

3.12 Next Steps

The Council is now entering a key phase of the strategic planning calendar, when plans at the various levels are reviewed and refreshed in order to inform priorities and decisions about resource allocation in the year ahead 2017/18. An overview of the key milestones to be taken forward as part of the Committee Planning process are set out below:

- *Integrate feedback from the Area Working Group workshops (Aug– Sep 16)*
- *Convene People and Communities Committee planning workshop (Nov 16)*
- *Integrate feedback into the budget setting process and Corporate Plan (Dec – Feb 17)*
- *Present the final draft Committee Plan to Committee/ Council (April 17)*

3.13 Financial & Resource Implications

The Committee Plan has been developed and delivered in the context of the resources available to the Committee. The Committee planning workshop will give Members the opportunity to review progress to date, help shape the

budget process for 2017/18 and effectively align resources to Member priorities.

3.14 Equality or Good Relations Implications

There are no direct implications at this stage. However, where necessary all projects, programmes and activities contained within the Committee Plan have been subject to equality screening in line with the Council's processes."

The Committee adopted the recommendations as set out within the report.

**City and Neighbourhood Services Department –
Change Update**

The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services advised the Committee that, following an assimilation process, Mrs. S. Toland and Mrs. R. Crozier had been appointed to the positions of Assistant Director, with immediate effect.

He outlined that the change process was ongoing and that the Department's organisational structure would be determined in the coming months and the Committee would be updated accordingly.

Noted.

Physical Programme and Asset Management

**Request from Crumlin Star Football Club
Re: Strangford Avenue**

The Assistant Director advised that a request had been received from Crumlin Star Football Club seeking preferential use of pitch three and the adjacent pavilion. She explained that Crumlin Star had requested that if the Council would investigate the possibility of bringing pitch 3 and the associated pavilion up to Intermediate League Standard, which would enable the Club to play its home games at Strangford Avenue.

The Members were also advised that the Club had indicated that, if successful, it would explore other investment options to assist with the enhancement of the facility and proposed that the Council would remain responsible for the maintenance of the pitch but that the Club would pay for the use of the facility.

The Assistant Director reported that, whilst this was a preliminary proposal, a number of issues existed which she outlined as follows:

- it would be up to the Club to liaise with the IFA (Intermediate League Committee) regarding the suitability of the facility and to establish what works, if any, would be required;
- planning consent might be required;
- the Club would be required to submit its proposal to the Council;

- officers viewed this as an investment in the Club rather than an investment in the asset (it would not improve the asset or increase its usage);
- the pitch was already used and, should the Council agree to the proposal, it would be necessary to displace existing users and find alternative facilities; and
- it would be necessary to consult with other park users regarding the proposal as it would restrict access to the space for local residents who might wish to use the open space for passive recreational purposes.

The Committee was reminded that a report outlining a request from Aquinas Football Club had also been considered by the Committee in August.

The Committee noted the report and granted officers authority to proceed to review the proposal and any potential implications and agreed that an update report would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee for consideration.

Whiterock Leisure Centre - Team Pavilion Shower Closure

The Assistant Director provided the committee with a comprehensive update in respect of an ongoing environmental health issue which had resulted in the closure of the shower facilities at the Whiterock Leisure Centre changing pavilion.

The Committee was advised that there had been a series of elevated readings at the changing pavilion shower heads in the Whiterock changing pavilion. The Assistant Director reported that, whilst elevated, most of the readings had been below critical threshold levels, however, the problem remained in the hot water supply system whilst the cold water supply was clear.

Following a query from a Member, the Assistant Director assured the Members that the Council had carried out extensive work over the past two years in an attempt to resolve these ongoing issues.

The Director advised the Committee that the pavilion had been closed over the summer months in order to facilitate these works and, given the consistently elevated readings recorded, the pavilion remained closed. She continued that shared use of the internal leisure centre changing was not a practical option due to space and access restrictions and she proceeded to outline a number of options for alternative provision.

The Committee noted the issues in respect of the water supply to the existing shower and toilet facilities in the pavilion and agreed to proceed with option C in the report: to decommission all water supplies to the pavilion, while retaining changing rooms as a dry facility, along with the installation of rented standalone two block changing container with integrated referees room and toilet (for an initial trial period of six months).

Request from Hillview Amateur Boxing Club

The Assistant Director advised the Committee that Hillview Amateur Boxing Club currently had no training facilities and she explained that it had explored a number of options but unfortunately none of these had proven practicable or feasible.

The Committee noted that the Club had secured funding from Sport NI and the former Department of Culture Arts and Leisure but it had to be expended within the current financial year, ending March 2017.

The Assistant Director reported that the Club remained committed to securing premises and was requesting that the Council would consider the feasibility of constructing a building within the Finlay Park facility.

The officer outlined that there was a number of issues to be considered such as suitability, planning, funding and sustainability but officers were content to meet with representatives of the Club. She added that, should the site at Finlay Park prove deliverable, it was proposed that the Council would lease the land to the Club.

The Committee:

- granted authority for officers to work with Hillview Amateur Boxing Club to establish the feasibility of constructing a boxing facility at Finlay Park; and
- noted that this might require a lease agreement with the club in relation to part of the existing site and was subject to the approval of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and to planning approval being granted for use of the site.

Proposed Relocation of Playground and MUGA at Braniel Estate

The Assistant Director advised the Committee that it was being asked to consider a proposal which had come forward from a residents group in the Braniel Estate regarding the possible relocation of the existing playground and MUGA. She detailed that, under the Review of Public Administration, a playground, MUGA, bowling green, community centre and an area of open space within the Braniel estate had all transferred from Castlereagh Borough Council to Belfast City Council.

The officer drew the Members' attention to photographs and maps of the existing facilities. She outlined that, whilst officers would concur that the existing facility was not ideally located, it was proposed that an information session would be set up to discuss proposals with the wider community and to establish support for it or otherwise. She stated that it would also provide an opportunity to identify if other proposals were being considered within the community.

Several Members indicated that there was divided opinion within the estate over the proposal and therefore engagement with the local community would be recommended. It was also suggested that the update report should be looked at within the context of the ongoing community facility review.

The Committee:

- noted the report and agreed to commence an engagement process with the local community to establish if there was support for the proposal, highlight any concerns and ascertain if there were any other alternative proposals;
- agreed that this issue should be looked at within the context of the ongoing community facility review; and
- agreed that an update report would be brought to a future meeting of the Committee for consideration.

Finance, Procurement and Performance

Letter of Variance Re: BCC 2016/17 Community Support Programme Grant to Include Additional Grant in Respect of Welfare Reform

The Committee considered the following report.

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 The purpose of the report is

- To note correspondence received from the Department for Communities (DfC) 7th September, regarding the Welfare Reform Readiness Programme.
- To invite Members to agree to accept the subsequent offer of additional in-year funding under the Community Support Programme (CSP) from the DfC.
- In line with contract conditions, consider and agree a mechanism to distribute this additional grant across the five advice consortia.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Accept the additional in year grant as outlined in the DfC Letter of Variance.
- Consider and agree the proposed model for the distribution of funds across the 5 area based advice consortia.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 The purpose of this Letter of Variance is to amend the Council's CSP Letter of Offer (dated 31st March 2016) following the Department's decision to revise the financial offer by allocating further funding from the Welfare Reform

Advice monies for Welfare Reform Readiness and Welfare Reform Training.

- 3.2 The additional allocation to BCC is as follows:
- 3.3 Welfare Reform Readiness Programme. To provide support to front line advice organisations currently funded through the council's Community Support Advice grant. The programme will ensure that advice organisations are prepared to assist customers through the implementation of Welfare Reform. The individual allocation to each Council area will be for the delivery of specific objectives in relation to Welfare Reform through Council's existing contractual arrangements with advice providers via the CSP.
- 3.4 Additional funding of £203,677.26 has been offered to the Belfast area. This must be allocated on the same basis as the original 2016/17 awards.
- 3.5 Welfare Reform Training Programme. Additional funding of £65,400.00 which has been allocated based on the number of current front line advisers per council area. The Training Programme will consist of six Welfare Reform courses required by all front line generalist advisers and volunteers. The programme will enable front line advice organisations to complete immediate training requirements related to Welfare Reform. (Details at Annex 2 of Letter of Variance).
- 3.6 It is anticipated that there will be a regional allocation of £500,000 per year towards front line training. There is also provision for training to be targeted at a number of other groupings including elected Members.
- 3.7 The funding is in year and must be spent by 31st March 2017. Councils are not required to match this additional funding which must be used to meet the specific objectives referred to above. Additional funding will not be extended into the next financial year.
- 3.8 Belfast Generalist Advice Consortia
- Council currently administer an annual grant programme of £931,765 to five consortia covering north, south, east, west and central Belfast under its Advice & Information Services grant programme. This programme supports the consortia to deal with an average of 127,400 enquiries per year across the city.
- 3.9 The purpose of the Generalist Advice Funding is to support core costs and associated programme costs, offering longer term sustainability for Belfast based

Generalist Advice organisations that have full time staff and ongoing annual costs, and that produce work which substantially benefits the city.

- 3.10 The programme includes a formula for determining the percentage allocation of funding to the four quadrants and to central Belfast. This formula, which takes account of need (via the proxy of population and deprivation), was previously reviewed in 2015 to ensure it is up to date and based on available and credible data sets.
- 3.11 The DfC Letter of Variance stipulates the additional in-year funds should be distributed via our current generalist advice infrastructure (the five advice consortia). Officers therefore suggest that this is based on Council's existing allocation model. The table below details the current 2016/17 grant award for each consortium and the proposed grant uplift based on the area percentage allocation. The marginal percentage anomaly has been equally spread across neighbourhood consortia to maximise the available budget.

Area	Area Allocation Based on new boundary 2015	Recommended awards based on agreed model to reflect 2015/16 available budget	Letter of Variance
			Additional allocation for Welfare Reform Readiness and Welfare Reform Training
Central	10.00%	£ 82,588.50	£26,983.07
East Belfast	14.41%	£134,593.53	£38,849.37
North Belfast	24.71%	£241,153.43	£66,564.33
South Belfast	15.37%	£143,538.48	£41,432.51
West Belfast	35.37%	£329,891.59	£95,247.97
Total	99.86%	£931,765.53	£269,077.26

- 3.12 If this approach is agreeable, each consortium will be required to submit proposals outlining how they intend to meet the programme objectives.
- 3.13 Following Committee decision, officers will initiate pre-contract discussions with organisations to discuss the proposed 2016/17 grant revision and to outline any specific conditions attached to the funding offer. Officers will assess and approve individual submissions. Further conditions may be attached to letters of offer as deemed necessary. Members should note that all funding

agreements will continue to be subject to receipt of satisfactory monitoring reports.

Financial & Resource Implications

Financial:

- 3.14 Any additional funding contracts issued will be wholly dependent upon additional income from the Department for Community. There is no requirement for BCC match funds.

Human Resources

- 3.15 Within current officer team.

Equality or Good Relations Implications

- 3.16 The programme is citywide and open and accessible to all sections of the community.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations as set out within the report.

Community Development Grants Programme 2017/18

The Committee was advised of a potential shortfall in the Community Development Grants Programme budget for 2017/18.

The Director reported that the budget for the current contracts was made up of the following sources of funding:

- £1,404,000 from the Department for Communities under the Community Support Programme,
- £1,050,483 from the Council and an additional investment of £635,523 from the Council in 2015/16 and 2016/17.

The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services advised that the Council had traditionally invested approximately £2.6m annually in support of local community development activities, of which £1.568m came directly from the Department for Social Development (DSD) via its regional Community Support Programme. He outlined that the Community Development Grant Programme (CDGP) covered General Advice Grants, Capacity Building Grants, Revenue Grants for Community Buildings and the Council's small grants, which included the Summer Scheme and Community Development Project Grants.

The Director reported that, for the past two years, the funding had been supplemented by £635k of non-recurrent allocations which had been used to enable the grants programme to be extended to cover the new Council areas and to fund a larger number of organisations.

The Committee noted that the Department for Communities was currently reviewing the Community Support Programme (CSP) but, to date, no formal information had been issued in relation to the scope of the review or any potential impact on the allocation model, therefore, in the absence of any detailed information, officers were planning on the basis of a consistent level of CSP grant to the Council for 2017/18.

The Committee was advised further that the Director of Finance and Resources had already reported to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that the Council may be in a deficit position in regards to the rates settlement with Land and Property Services. This meant that the additional non-recurrent resource required from the Council to extend the existing CDGP into 2017/18 may not be available. The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services undertook to keep the committee informed.

Operational Issues

Safety of 3G Pitches

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 9th August, it had considered a report on the safety of 3G pitches and requested that a further report be brought back on the technical specification of the material used in Northern Ireland 3G pitches.

The Assistant Director advised the Committee that the Council currently had a contract in place with Laydex (NI) Ltd for the supply of rubber crumb, the product currently being supplied by Laydex (NI) Ltd was manufactured by Murfitts Industries Ltd.

The Committee noted that in response to its request for further technical information, additional information on the specification had been sought from Murfitts Industries Ltd, and the following information had been provided:

'all our tyres are only sourced from within the EU and we check every tyre that comes in to the yard. Our methods have been tested and the rubber crumb 'mixture' falls within REACH guidelines'. (REACH is the EU regulation concerning the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals).

The Assistant Director outlined that Murfitts Industries Ltd had also provided the Council with:

- the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for their recycled rubber granulate product which confirmed that the product was *'classified as non-hazardous under normal use and handling conditions'; and*
- a technical report undertaken by Labosport which tested their Styrene Butadiene Rubber (SBR) granulate to EN 71-3 safety of toys part 3: migration of certain elements. This standard sets limits on a range of chemicals in order to minimise children's exposure to certain potentially toxic elements should the toy/material be ingested and the report concluded that the rubber granulate complied with the requirements of the standard.

The Committee noted the update report.

**Women's U19 European Championship 2017 –
Update Report**

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the forthcoming Women's Under 19 European Championships and to inform Members of the impact on council facilities and to re-affirm council support.**

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- **Note the update and confirm support for the IFA in hosting the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) Women's Under 19 European Championships in 2017;**
- **Agree to the addition of a pitch at Alderman Tommy Patton and Cherryvale as training venues at no cost;**
- **Agree to provide the Irish Football Association (IFA) with free use of Blanchflower Stadium to facilitate evening training for those team training in Northern Ireland in preparation of the Women's U19 Tournament, the teams are from Northern Ireland, England, France and the USA. Training will potentially be from 14-24 October; and**
- **Authorise the Town Solicitor to ensure that these requirements are integrated in the Council's legal agreements with the Irish Football Association.**

3.0 Main report

- 3.1 The Committee is reminded that the former Parks and Leisure Committee received and approved a report regarding Council support for the then proposed application to hold the Women's U19 European Championships.**
- 3.2 The bid to host the Championships was successful and they have now approached the Council to work towards having the facilities prepared in time for the tournament.**
- 3.3 The City Growth and Regeneration Committee agreed to support the tournament in May 2016, as part of a series of high profile international events, as part of the Council's ongoing Place Positioning work.**

- 3.4 Members are reminded that Council had previously agreed to supply facilities at no cost and the IFA had indicated that the potential training venues would be:**
- Blanchflower Stadium**
 - Ulidia Playing Fields**
 - Strangford Avenue Playing Fields**
 - Victoria Park**
 - Dixon Park Playing Fields.**
- 3.5 However, having reviewed the grounds criteria, IFA only took forward Blanchflower Stadium and Ulidia Playing Fields and these are subject to UEFA approval. The IFA has also requested that Council agree to additional facilities at Cherryvale Playing Fields and Alderman Tommy Patton Park be included for the purposes of being used as potential training venues. This would be limited to one pitch per site.**
- 3.6 Members are asked to note again the potential implications of using the facilities as training venues:**
- a. Potential closure of the pitches before the end of the local football season;**
 - b. Pitches may require attention prior to the regular season and may not be available until after the start of the season;**
 - c. Potential restricted access to each of the sites for members of the public;**
 - d. Alignment of the pitches to meet the pitch size requirements;**
- 3.7 A UEFA delegation is scheduled to meet with the IFA and Council Officers during October 2016 to finalise selection of the facilities for training and for matches. Officers will meet with them to discuss the preparation of the pitches on each site selected. Once this is clarified, discussions will be held with any clubs who might be impacted upon by the use of the facilities. As far as possible alternative facilities will be offered. However, as this is an IFA sponsored event, it is hoped that the IFA will work with the leagues to accommodate fixtures.**
- 3.8 Members will be aware that this is a significant event for local football and will attract media coverage. The IFA is confident that a successful tournament will support Northern Ireland and Belfast is securing other tournaments in the future.**
- 3.9 The Committee is asked to consider a late request from IFA to use free of charge the Blanchflower Stadium between the 14-24 October 2017 as a training facility for the Women's U19**

Preparation Tournament. The teams potentially using the floodlit facility are NI, England, France and the USA.

3.10 Financial & Resource Implications

The estimated cost of meeting the requirements will be met within revenue budgets, and there will potentially be minimal loss of income. However, depending on ground conditions and use the pitches may require ongoing attention during the period of the tournament.

3.11 Equality or Good Relations Implications

There are no equality implications.”

A Member voiced his disappointment that no training venues had been identified in the North or West of the City. Following discussion, the Committee noted that the sites were for purposes of training only and that criteria for the event stipulated that natural turf pitches were required. It also noted that the training venues were still subject to UEFA approval and that the actual Championship matches would be being played throughout Northern Ireland.

Detailed discussion also ensued in respect of the feasibility and implications of enhancing the standard of more of the Council's facilities throughout the City to Intermediate League Standard.

The Committee adopted the recommendations as set out within the report and also agreed that an update report would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee that would consider the implications of the requirements for Intermediate League Standard pitches in the context of the current provision of pitches across Belfast.

The Green Flag Award

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting held on 13th September, a Member had raised some concern regarding the inclusivity of the Green Flag Award.

The Assistant Director outlined to the Committee that the Green Flag Award was a universal award that currently operated in Australia, the Channel Islands, England, Germany, the Netherlands, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, Scotland, the United Arabs Emirates and Wales.

The Committee noted that in Northern Ireland the Green Flag award was administered by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful and that fifty one sites currently held the award. In the Republic of Ireland the awards scheme was administered by An Taisce and twenty two sites currently held the award.

The Assistant Director reported that, whilst the bodies that administered the awards scheme in each jurisdiction differed, the Green Flag Award and its application remained the same and she drew the Members' attention to the following criteria that was applied:

- a welcoming place;
- healthy safe and secure;
- well maintained and clean,
- sustainability;
- conservation and heritage;
- community involvement;
- marketing; and
- management.

The Committee noted the update report.

Rose Week 2016 and Rose Garden New Landscape Design

The Committee was reminded that the City of Belfast International Rose Garden was created in Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park in 1964 and each year the Rose Week event was held to coincide with the judging of the trial roses. She advised the Committee that, this year, Rose Week had been held from 18th to 24th July and it was estimated that 67,800 people had attended the event (which was a marked increase from previous years).

The Assistant Director advised that it was important to continue to review and refresh the event and consequently Perceptive Light had been commissioned to undertake a survey of the visitors to Rose Week. She reported that whilst most visitors were satisfied with the overall event, the visitors had cited a number of potential improvements that could be made to the event. These included: an increase in the number of craft stalls; increased seating areas; increased catering (both local and continental); increased advertising of events; additional car parking; and the use of more signage around the park.

The Assistant Director reported that a major redesign of the gardens had not taken place since the 1980s and it was felt now that a new design was required to produce a more appealing, contemporary design that would incorporate plants other than just roses. She advised that discussion had already commenced with stakeholders such as the Rose Society of Northern Ireland which had indicated that it would be in agreement with the proposed concept and would welcome the opportunity to be involved.

The Committee expressed its appreciation for the continued hard work, dedication and commitment which had been undertaken by both the Members of the Rose Society of Northern Ireland and the park staff in preparation for this event and requested that this be placed on record in the minutes.

The Committee:

- noted the success of Rose Week 2016 and the officer's recommendations for improving the event in 2017;
- noted the proposed development of a new landscape design for the International Rose Garden, which would be completed within existing revenue budgets; and

- recorded the Committee's thanks to the Members of the Rose Society of Northern Ireland and the parks staff for their continued hard work in contributing to the success of the event.

**Belfast Model Flying Club - Hosting of 2019
Air Modelling European Championship**

The Assistant Director advised that a request had been received from the Belfast Model Flying Club seeking the Council's support in making an application to host the Air Modelling European Championships at the Blanchflower Playing Fields in mid-2019.

She reported that the Blanchflower Playing Fields already had one take-off and landing area for model planes, however, the Chairman of the Control Line Technical Committee of the British Model Flying Association had provided a list of requirements, which would be necessary for hosting the event, which she outlined as follows:

- Council approval would be required for the use of the facility, no later than January 2017;
- a painted area to prevent damage from paraffin for race category;
- a level and short cut grassed area for aerobatics;
- 2 bitmac circles for competition; and
- temporary cages to provide safety for the 'pilots' when in competition.

In addition, the club was seeking the Council to fund the requirements as outlined above. The officer reported that the estimated cost of the bitmac area and the provision of the cages was estimated to be in the region of £30,000 - £35,000. The Committee were advised that this would be a temporary fixture and the ground would be reinstated after the event.

The Assistant Director advised that officers were satisfied that the site could accommodate the requirements and felt that the event would attract public and media interest.

The Committee were reminded that the development of the Blanchflower Playing Fields was in progress, supported by the Belfast Investment Fund, and therefore any development of the site would be assessed in terms of its 'fit' within the wider development project. Accordingly, it was recommended that the Committee agree to grant permission to the Belfast Air Modelling Club to hold the event at Blanchflower Playing Fields, subject to:

- the future development of the site and its feasibility to physically accommodate the event;
- the club ensuring that all the necessary health and safety requirements were put in place and the Club complying with the Council's event management plan in consultation with the Park Manager; and
- the Council agreeing to meet the cost of the works in order for the club to meet the requirements of hosting the event, estimated to be in the region of £30,000 - £35,000 from the 2019 Departmental Budget.

A Member expressed concern at the proposed expenditure and following discussion the Committee agreed to vote on the recommendation.

On a vote by show of hands eleven Members voted for the proposal and six against and the recommendation was declared carried.

Street Naming

The Committee approved the naming of Broom Drive, off Broom Park, BT17.

International Men's Day 2017

The Assistant Director advised the Committee that it was proposed that the Council would hold an event in the City Hall on 18th November from 10.00 a.m. – 12.00 p.m., to mark International Men's Day, which would be the third consecutive year that the Council had celebrated the event.

The officer outlined that there would be events and initiatives happening all over the world, reflecting the Six Pillars of International Men's Day, as follows:

- working together to promote positive male role models;
- working together to celebrate men's positive contributions;
- working together to focus on men's health and well-being;
- working together to highlight discrimination against males;
- working together to improve gender relations and improve gender equality; and
- working together to create a safer, better world.

The Committee was advised that the proposed Council event would focus on men's health and wellbeing, including mental health and building emotional resilience. It was noted that the event would be organised in conjunction with the Belfast Health Development Unit and would cost in the region of £1000, which would be covered from within the existing Environmental Health revenue budgets.

Accordingly, it was recommended that the Committee agree that International Men's Day was an important annual event which should be recognised and supported by the Council as a member of Belfast Strategic Partnership in its work to address health and life inequalities across the city.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Response to Suicide Prevention Strategy

The Committee considered the following report which outlined the proposed response from Belfast City Council to the new draft strategy for suicide prevention in Northern Ireland, Protect Life 2:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1** The Department of Health has released for consultation a new draft strategy for suicide prevention in Northern Ireland, Protect Life 2; it is available on the Department’s website at <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/consultations>. This report outlines a proposed response from Belfast City Council to the draft strategy.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1** The Committee is asked to

- Agree that the proposed response (copy available on modern.gov). The closing date for response is the 4th November 2016.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Key Issues

In Northern Ireland an average of 274 people die by suicide each year and suicide rates in the most deprived areas are three times higher than in the least deprived areas, indicating a stark health inequality. Statistics released by the Department in November 2015 show that the rate of suicide in areas of deprivation compared with the overall rate is increasing and research commissioned under the existing Protect Life Strategy found that, on a per capita basis, deaths in Belfast were 40% higher than the Northern Ireland average.

- 3.2** The new draft suicide prevention strategy, Protect Life 2, aims to build on the first protect life strategy, which was refreshed in 2012 and it continues with the goals set by the previous strategy of reducing the rate of suicide in Northern Ireland and of reducing the increasing health inequality associated with suicide.

- 3.3** The draft strategy indicates that deaths by suicide in Northern Ireland appear to be associated with high levels of mental ill-health, exposure to community conflict and the legacy of the conflict and exposure to stress including economic deprivation. The cultural relationship with over consumption of alcohol also appears to be a contributory factor, The strategy recognises that in addressing those most at risk there must be a focus on providing support and treatment for people who have suicidal thoughts. It goes on to highlight that these services also need to address the

diverse needs of different sub-groups in terms of age, gender, sexual orientation, social class and locality.

- 3.4 It is a comprehensive strategy in that it contains a considerable amount of information in terms of the risk factors that can lead to suicide (clearly set out on page 31). It outlines the services that exist, the investment that has been made in suicide prevention to date and suggests what more needs to be done. It alludes to the wider social determinants of mental health and wellbeing and discusses the need for a more joined up and integrated approach to addressing the risk factors and the underlying causes of suicide. It identifies the policy context and proposed governance arrangements for developing this integrated and strategic approach to suicide prevention.
- 3.5 However there are a number of potential limitations in the draft strategy; for example, the actual aims and objectives of the strategy appears to be mainly orientated around treatment and crisis response with limited focus on tackling the wider social and economic factors associated with suicide. This focus has the potential to limit the strategic action plan, and possibly wider investment, in delivering a truly integrated, cross departmental and cross sectoral approach in the development and delivery of policy and services that contribute to suicide prevention, which is a core principles of this new strategy.
- 3.6 *'Be co-ordinated across government. Improve cross-sectoral, cross-departmental and cross-jurisdictional collaboration in the development and delivery of policy and services which contribute to suicide prevention'*
- 3.7 The fact that the draft strategy improves and enhances existing services and addresses some of the gaps in service provision is welcome. However the question remains, will a strategy that focuses on those who are in crisis, suicidal and self harming and on the needs of high risk groups, without also focusing on the protective factors concerned with building resilience and connectedness, be able to maximise its impact on reducing the number of suicides and on reducing the differential in the associated health inequality?

The strategy refers to a positive mental health action plan that will be developed under the public health strategy 'Making Life Better' and this again raises a question, does having a separate action plan under a separate strategy to address the protective causes have the potential to create disjointed working, duplication, split resources and therefore to reduce impact.

Policy Context and Strategic Priorities

- 3.8 When considering the policy context set out in Appendix 2 of the draft strategy it is clear that it is very broad and this reflects the complexity inherent in suicide prevention work. Having said that the new Protect Life strategy provides a real opportunity to realise the aspirations of the draft Programme For Government in terms of breaking down silos and working jointly to provide better outcomes for people's wellbeing. The strategy alludes to achieving better integration of the strategies and policies in Appendix 2 but there is no clear objective within it as to how this integration will be achieved. As mentioned above the strategy refers to a positive mental health action plan that will be developed under the public health strategy 'Making Life Better'; in addition to this it contains a strategic action to develop a mental health promotion action plan but it doesn't discuss how these will be linked.
- 3.9 The strategic priorities in Protect Life 2 are set out in figure 9 on page 63 and are divided into three main areas, population interventions, targeted interventions and indicated intervention and these are explained in the section 'conclusion and priority areas', which starts on page 59. The population interventions which have the potential to tackle the root causes of suicide appear limited. The strategy refers to population interventions delivered through associated strategies for preventing substance misuse, fostering supportive communities and schools, preventing domestic and sexual abuse, addressing poverty, and supporting victims, as being relevant but it is not clear how Protect Life 2 will enable suicide prevention to be a key element in the implementation of those strategies. The link between the strategies is made but the leadership; governance and accountability appear to require further development if Protect Life 2 is to achieve its full potential in meeting its purpose of reducing the differential in suicide rates between the most deprived and least deprived areas.

Governance

- 3.10 The proposed oversight and governance arrangement outlined in the draft strategy appear to mirror to a large extent what has gone before. The strategy does refer to a new steering group but there will be separate working groups formed under it and the suicide strategy implementation body, the local sub regional protect life implementation groups and the Ministerial Coordination Suicide Prevention group will all remain. The strategy is not

clear on how these groups will work together to ensure effective implementation and maximum impact. Organisations and departments may agree to the principles embodied in the strategy but ensuring engagement and participation may be more difficult to achieve. It will be important therefore in developing the governance and accountability arrangements in the strategy that they drive collegial working across sectors and organisations to develop a common purpose around reducing the number of suicides. The role of the community and voluntary sectors will be vital in this process and there will be a need for less rigid structures and greater flexibility and responsive allocation of resources. The opportunities for co-design and co-production with the community and voluntary sectors are alluded to in the strategy but are not explicit elements within it.

Strategic Action Plan

- 3.11 The development of a strategic action plan under Protect Life 2 will be pivotal in the successful implementation of the strategy. The Council response has suggested that it could be strengthened as a key driver for suicide prevention across Northern Ireland by incorporating and consolidating the positive mental health actions currently being proposed under the Making Life Better Strategy. This will provide a strong and visible context of suicide prevention for the wider determinants of mental health such as housing, education, employment, etc. This suggestion does not take away from the merit of a reduced number of strategic actions to aid explicit linking from the strategy to commissioning plans, as recommended in the evaluation of the existing protect life strategy; it is simply suggesting that addressing the underlying causes of suicide should be an intrinsic element of those strategic actions. This type of approach to suicide prevention with a focused cross-sectoral action plan linked to a priority based outcomes framework could be developed to include new ways of working, partnership agreements, innovative contracting (for example, alliance contracting) and robust system development for data collection, information sharing and management.

Future Search

- 3.12 Members and officers from the Council recently took part in a 'Future Search' event, organised by the Belfast Protect Life Implementation Group, to assist in the development of an implementation plan to tackle the issue of suicide in Belfast. It was facilitated by Michael Donnelly, a leading expert in these events. The 'future search' process was about finding common ground and securing the authority and resources to make change happen. It is anticipated that the findings from

the Belfast event will be used to influence the further development of the Protect Life 2 strategy.

3.13 Financial & Resource Implications

None

3.14 Human Resources

An officer from Community & Neighbourhood Services continues to chair the Belfast Suicide Community Response Group.

3.15 Equality or Good Relations Implications

The consultation process includes equality screening carried out by Department of Health.”

The Committee endorsed the draft response to the Department for Health, relating to the new draft strategy for suicide prevention in Northern Ireland, Protect Life 2 (copy available on Modern.gov) and agreed that it should be submitted by the required deadline of 4th November 2016.

DAERA Consultation on the Designation of the Lagan Meadows as a Quiet Area

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 At the Committee meeting of 7th June 2016, Members considered a paper recommending that the Lagan Meadows be proposed as a Candidate Quiet Area to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA). The identification and designation of Quiet Areas is a requirement of the Environmental Noise Directive (END) and of the Environmental Noise Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006.

1.2 DAERA is presently consulting upon the ‘Designation of Lagan Meadows as a Quiet Area pursuant to the Environmental Noise Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006’ and has formally written to the council seeking its view on the designation. The consultation will conclude on 19th October 2016.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to

- Consider this report and to endorse the designation of the Lagan Meadows as a Quiet Area.
- Endorse the draft consultation response to DAERA (Appendix 1).

3.0 Main Report

Background

- 3.1** END requires Member States to ‘preserve environmental noise quality where it is good’ through the identification and protection of Quiet Areas within agglomerations, recognising that Quiet Areas can make a beneficial contribution to public health, particularly for people living in noisy city areas.
- 3.2** In its written response to DAERA, the Committee recommended that the Department consider the Lagan Meadows as a Candidate Quiet Area due to the local soundscape and the fact that the Lagan Meadows fulfil the functional objectives described in the European Environment Agency publication, ‘Good practice guide on quiet areas’, i.e. a calm place to relax, think, walk, bike, read or picnic.
- 3.3** In addition, the Committee requested that DAERA engage with the council, prior to subsequent rounds of Quiet Area designations, in order to refine the Department’s Policy Guidance and screening criteria relating to the identification of Quiet Areas. The next round of noise mapping and Quiet Area designation is scheduled to commence from June 2017. The Committee highlighted that it would welcome the opportunity to consider the appropriateness of other potential sites across the city as part of this next round, including Greenville and Orangefield Parks.
- 3.4** Finally, the Committee concluded that neither Ligoniel nor Tullycarnet Parks were suitable for designation as Quiet Areas due to their soundscapes and as a consequence of the Council’s longer-term leisure and other objectives for these Parks. These Parks were identified as Candidate Quiet Areas by DAERA as part of an earlier consultation exercise conducted during September 2015. The Committee agreed however to reconsider Ligoniel and Tullycarnet Parks during subsequent rounds of Quiet Area designations in light of updated DAERA Policy Guidance and screening criteria.

Main Issues

- 3.5** Quiet Areas can make a beneficial contribution to public health, particularly for people living in noisy city areas.

Accordingly, END requires Member States to 'preserve environmental noise quality where it is good' through the identification and protection of Quiet Areas within agglomerations. An agglomeration is a geographic area having a population in excess of 250,000 persons, a population density equal to or greater than 500 people per km²; and which is considered to be urbanised. Once designated, councils are required to manage the local noise environment within Quiet Areas to avoid increases in noise from sources covered by END.

3.6 In its consultation document, DAERA has confirmed that it is content to put forward the Lagan Meadows as a Quiet Area instead of either Ligoniel or Tullicarnet Parks, noting that the Council has agreed to reconsider both these areas following the next round of noise mapping which is scheduled to commence from June 2017.

3.7 In addition, DAERA has highlighted that during an earlier Quiet Area consultation exercise of September 2015, a total of 42 consultation responses were received. Of the 42 consultation responses, 25 included requests to have the Lagan Meadows designated as a Quiet Area.

3.8 Financial & Resource Implications

There will be a requirement for officers to periodically monitor noise levels within the Lagan Meadows to ensure that the Quiet Area is protected. This cost is included within existing revenue estimates. Financial and resource implications will be reassessed should the designation of additional Quiet Areas be proposed.

3.9 Equality & Good Relations Implications

There are no relevant equality considerations associated with the proposal of the Lagan Meadows as a Quiet Area."

The Committee endorsed the designation of the Lagan Meadows as a Quiet Area and the draft consultation response to DAERA (copy available on Modern.gov) and agreed that it should be submitted by the required deadline of 19th October 2016.

Response to DoJ proposal Re: Model Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise Sector

The Committee was advised that correspondence had been received from the Department for Justice seeking views and comments from the Council on a consultation paper on the proposed new approach to commissioning, awarding and disbursing funding to the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VSCE) sector.

The Assistant Director reported that the document outlined that the proposed new system had been developed in line with the Government's stronger focus on outcomes, as set out in the draft Programme for Government Framework, and the

Department's drive to create a system which would disburse funding in a fair, equitable and transparent way.

She continued that, in establishing a new system of funding for the VSCE, the Department wished to secure a number of objectives that she outlined as follows:

- funding to reflect an outcomes focused service;
- providing greater transparency in funding decisions;
- providing all VCSE organisations with fair and equitable access to funding;
- increased flexibility and responsiveness to priorities;
- promoting and securing the development of high quality services and best value; and
- developing opportunities for collaborative work and better partnership arrangements.

She informed the Committee that the Department was working to develop the new system for funding the VCSE by Autumn 2016, which would allow sufficient lead in time for the sector to prepare as the new system would commence from April 2017.

The Committee retrospectively endorsed the following draft response to the Department of Justice, relating to the VCSE sector funding model. It noted that in order to meet the deadline of 23rd September, it had already been submitted with the codicil that it would be subject to the agreement of the People and Communities Committee and the subsequent ratification of the minutes by the Council.

Consultation Response to Department of Justice: VCSE Funding Model

Name of Organisation: Belfast City Council

	Consultation Question	Response
Q1	Do the policy aims behind the proposed funding system provide a robust approach to enabling the VCSE to deliver services which support and achieve key departmental objective?	<p>The funding system appears to have some elements that will work more than others, for example, the co-partnership working, measurement of service delivery and involvement from the VCSE at the early design stage will create more confidence in such a system. However the full cost recovery element of the system may deter smaller community & voluntary groups from applying for funding.</p> <p>The outcomes to be achieved should reflect regional and local level priorities recognising the Council's Community Planning function. Additionally Council's are responsible for supporting the SE sector: the outcome of this proposed change may result in the creation of new SE's and/or skills gaps in existing SE's.</p>

		<p>Timely engagement with Councils is therefore critical in order to ensure alignment to local outcomes and that adequate support is planned and available for the sector.</p>
Q2	<p>Will the new funding system better enable the Department to prioritise and direct available funding to key areas to be delivered by the VCSE?</p>	<p>The new funding system will directly link to the draft PfG and will have clear strategic objectives which will enable the VCSE to apply for and deliver services aligned to these. It will however rule out any organisations who are not delivering on these objectives.</p> <p>The commitment to ensure that levels of accountability are commensurate to the level of funding in line with the Code of Practice on reducing bureaucracy in funding is to be welcomed.</p> <p>Council welcomes the new focus on achieving impact instead of focussing on merely quantitative measures such as expenditure or number of new interventions etc. This is in line with the approach taken by Council in developing the Belfast Agenda, the Community Plan for Belfast. However in order to maximise success, the Department should commit to providing further advice and guidance to the sector in developing appropriate project performance measures that reflect the desired population level impacts.</p> <p>If DOJ are clear about their priorities and the outcomes they wish to achieve through this funding model from the outset, the VCSE will be better placed to develop initiatives to achieve these and to monitor success.</p>
Q3	<p>Will the new funding system provide greater opportunity for wider participation from the VCSE in the commissioning of services?</p>	<p>There is the opportunity for the development of consortia and an increase in co-partnership working, therefore increasing opportunities for the VCSE. However the costs of involvement in co-design may be prohibitive to small groups with no core funding.</p> <p>If organisations in the sector are provided with opportunities to access training, support and guidance to up skill them on this new approach then there should be wider participation.</p>

		<p>However if this is not provided, opportunities may be limited to those organisations with greater capacity.</p> <p>Depending upon the nature of the contracts to be commissioned, opportunities exist to look at ways in which contracts can link to other initiatives, for example, how individuals supported through youth justice could link in with employability/enterprise initiatives.</p>
Q4	Will the new system improve confidence in the consistency and transparency of how funding is awarded?	<p>The opportunity for the VCSE to become involved in the development of the funding system through co-design may instil more confidence in the openness and transparency of how the funding is awarded.</p> <p>The Department should provide further clarity on the proposed innovation funding model and how this will be implemented in practice.</p> <p>The proposed phasing in of the new approach and the commitment to minimise disruption to the sector is also to be welcomed.</p> <p>The document does not yet make clear how the outcomes at population level and project level performance results will be reported and disseminated.</p> <p>While Open Call commissioning is to be welcomed as improving access and transparency, DOJ needs to clearly communicate the objectives of the funding and the approach that the sector needs to take to measure the impact.</p>
Q5	Do you consider that embedding a culture of co-design in the new funding system will better harness the knowledge and skills of the VCSE and lead to the design and delivery of more effective services being delivered for the public?	<p>Yes, co-design needs to be a key feature of the new funding system to enable VCSE to have a clear insight of how services need to be and should be delivered, to support the delivery of effective services on the ground, and to select the most appropriate organisations for receipt of funding.</p> <p>This will also ensure that the market is clear about what the department want to achieve through any new funding model.</p>

Q6	Do you consider that the use of Full Cost Recovery costing will provide greater opportunity for more VCSE organisations to compete for funding?	<p>Full cost recovery may provide a level playing field, but it also opens up the possibility of double funding for those organisations that may be in receipt of core funding.</p> <p>Additionally, some VSCE groups may struggle with sustainability as funding moves from core funding to full cost recovery project associated funding, especially if their business model has been built around longer term recurring core funding.</p> <p>The change in emphasis from core funding to project funding on a full cost recovery basis should result in fairer and more objective assessment of proposals while ensuring that the sector is not disadvantaged.</p>
Q7	Do you agree that the use of a Full Cost Recovery approach will promote greater understanding within VCSE of the costs involved with delivering specific projects, and therefore ensure VCSE organisations do not deliver services at a loss?	The more established community & voluntary groups will understand the costs involved with the delivery of planned projects, however the smaller community & voluntary groups may be at a loss.
Q8	Will the incremental approach to implementation provide sufficient safeguards against negative impacts on VCSE organisations during the three year transitional period?	Whilst the consultation document outlines a number of approaches to market engagement, there should be more emphasis on up skilling organisations to ensure they have the capacity to apply for and manage funding under this model.
Q9	Will the funding model provide equality of opportunity to all VCS bodies seeking to bid for funding?	This new model has the potential to exclude those smaller organisations that don't have the capacity to apply for or manage funding under this model.

Q10	Do you envisage the implementation of a new funding model will negatively impact on any particular groups?	<p>The implementation of a new funding model may negatively impact upon smaller community & voluntary groups.</p> <p>However, and as part of the co-design conversation, the model may enable larger organisations to deliver services most appropriate to them (through full cost recovery) and give smaller organisations the opportunity to apply for smaller funding streams.</p>
Q11	Please provide other comments and views on the proposed new VCSE Funding System:	<p>The consultation document is quite high level and provides little detail on how the funding change will have an impact on the organisations delivering programmes on the ground.</p> <p>The consultation outlines that there will be a number of initiatives to engage the market in advance of the new funding proposal, however these seem light touch. There should be more emphasis on up skilling organisations who apply for this funding to ensure that all opportunities to receive funding are distributed equally among organisations no matter what scale.</p> <p>Other additional comments:</p> <p>The proposed approach to co-design of interventions reflects the model that Council is proposing for implementation of its Local Action plan under the PEACE IV programme. As such opportunities should be identified for developing and sharing good practice in this area and on identifying potential for collaborative initiatives.</p> <p>The Department should commit to early engagement with Council and information sharing relating to the assessment of project proposals to ensure that Council's funding programmes are aligned with, and clearly complementary to, the Department's funding to the VCSE sector.</p> <p>As the new process is anticipated to commence from April 2017, Council would wish to be kept informed of key dates and further detail on the</p>

		<p>proposed co-design and commissioning processes as it is developed. Given the scale of the change and the intention to co-design with the sector, this time-line may be ambitious. It also limits the potential to build skills across the sector to ensure equality of access.</p> <p>Whilst the review is welcome, a new approach by DOJ alone could create confusion and inconsistency, particularly when other departments, for example, OFMDFM and DfC are also providing money to VCSE. An executive wide review would be beneficial.</p> <p>The increased focus on outcomes is welcome, however, consideration needs to be given to the capacity of some VCSE organisations to manage the associated performance systems to support outcomes based accountability. As previously noted, DoJ should consider a support programme of training and capacity building.</p>
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Response to Department for Communities Proposals for the Provision of Strategic Support to Voluntary and Community Sector in Northern Ireland

The Committee was advised that correspondence had been received from the Department for Communities seeking views and comments from stakeholders on the draft consultation paper on Proposals for the Provision of Strategic Support to the Voluntary and Community Sector in Northern Ireland 2017 – 2021.

The Assistant Director outlined that the document set out, for consultation, the proposed new arrangements for the provision of strategic support to the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in Northern Ireland for the period 2017 – 2021, and invited the Council to submit comments in particular about:

- a proposed new vision for the provision of strategic support to the VCS;
- a series of high level desired outcomes; and
- key priorities and proposals geared to support the achievement of the desired outcomes (subject to the availability of funding).

She outlined that from the detail of the consultation paper it was clear the proposals were in relation to regional support programmes and did not include any project related funding to individual VCS groups provided through central or local government for the delivery of services.

The Committee endorsed the following draft Council response to the consultation on Proposals for the Provision of Strategic Support to the Voluntary and Community Sector in Northern Ireland 2017 – 2021:

1	<p>To what extent do you agree with the Vision and underpinning desired headline outcomes? What else, if anything should be included in the Vision or underpinning desired headline outcomes? Is there anything that should not be included?</p>	<p>Council is supportive of both the vision and outcomes focussed approach and further agree with the headline outcomes identified.</p> <p>One area that might be more explicitly included in the sub-outcomes would be the need for good collaborative/partnership arrangements across the VCS.</p>
2	<p>To what extent do you agree with these priorities and proposals? Do these priorities and proposals address the main issues? What else, if anything should be included in the priorities and proposals? Is there anything that should not be included</p>	<p>Council agree with the priorities and proposals identified, however, DfC might consider the inclusion of other areas such as:</p> <p>Governance: to include the need for having good financial governance arrangements, including financial management, full cost recovery, sustainability/exit plans</p> <p>Organisational Capacity/Skills: agree with the development of a skills framework to identify skills needs and address gaps and associated development and leadership support to be provided. It is important that the support provided covers the range of groups that exist in the sector including those who are well established but also medium to smaller sized groups.</p> <p>Council agree with the need to support the sector with the on-going changes in charity law reform through training support and the delivery of road show events.</p> <p>Council agree with the development of a resource and toolkit on governance and self assessment guides which will assist VCS organisations. We further support the</p>

		<p>proposed document drafting service to ensure up to date constitutions.</p> <p>Given the significant level of engagement, service delivery and capacity support for the sector from local government, it is critical that DfC work closely with local Councils on the design and roll out of these resources. Belfast City Council have in place a capacity building support programme through the provision of training and officer support network already in place which provides capacity support to the sector; it is therefore crucial that support packages are not duplicative, are complimentary and add value, are easily accessible and they provide a consistent message.</p> <p>Additionally, a number of thematic work streams across BCC also provide capacity building support for the sector. For e.g. the Cultural Framework sets out a commitment to build the capacity of that sector, including supporting participation in voluntary and amateur arts activities through establishing key partnerships. This also includes building the capacity of the sector to measure and evaluate the impact and value of the arts, improving both knowledge of impact practice and outcomes based measurement.</p> <p>There is a need to ensure that provision is joined up at a central and local government level in order to ensure VFM, ease of access that there is not an oversupply of support offers to the sector.</p> <p>Policy/Advocacy and co-design of Public Services: Council agree that there is a need for facilitating a programme of engagement with MLA's, Assembly Committees, Permanent Secretaries etc and supporting joint structures such as the Joint Forum. Beyond this however, there is a need to</p>
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		<p>ensure that there are further mechanisms in place to support effective engagement across the range of community groups and importantly to capture the voice of smaller groups so they are engaged and have the opportunity to influence policy.</p> <p>Impact Outcome Measurement: Council agree with the need to measure impact. This is in line with the approach taken by Council in developing the Belfast Agenda, and the Community Plan for Belfast. In order to maximise success, the Department should commit to providing further advice and guidance to the sector in developing appropriate project performance measures that reflect the desired population level impacts. Any guidance and support such be linked to the emerging outcomes and indicators in the PfG and related Implementation Plans.</p>
3	<p>To what extent do you agree with these priorities and proposals?</p> <p>Do these priorities and proposals address the main issues? What else, if anything should be included in the priorities and proposals? Is there anything that should not be included?</p>	<p>Strong, collaborative leadership is a supporting principle of the Council's Corporate Plan.</p> <p>We support the need for the development of a "Strategic Leadership for Change" training programme for VCS leaders. However, there is a need to ensure that there is a programme of support for smaller organisations so that they can effectively respond to the changing environment.</p> <p><u>Change Fund and Investment Readiness Programme</u></p> <p>Council agree with the need for a Change fund and investment readiness programme as support in managing change. This fund and programme should be outcomes focussed and be accessible in design and application to both larger and smaller organisations.</p>

		<p>We support the need for organisations to diversify their funding within the context of financial constraints in order to promote sustainability.</p>
4	<p>To what extent do you agree with these priorities and proposals?</p> <p>Do these priorities and proposals address the main issues? What else, if anything should be included in the priorities and proposals? Is there anything that should not be included?</p>	<p>Council support the commitment to facilitate an inclusive VCS. The specific priorities in relation to women and the faith based sector appear reasoned and welcome. However, as noted in the paper there will be emerging needs for other groups. No related arrangements however are detailed as to how further reviews will happen and appropriate arrangements put in place to address these emerging needs.</p> <p>Additionally, any support arrangements for women's groups should be based on an assessment of their capacity building needs such as skills development and issues of organisational sustainability. The skills audit proposed should include both the women's and faith based sector and any emerging groups.</p> <p>Council also welcome the proposal to facilitate a Community Faiths Forum that will provide a collective voice on areas of poverty, community development and other related issues. There is no detail on how the forum will be populated. The forum needs to have balanced representation and ensure that those organisations represented have in place adequate governance arrangements to support them to best represent the views of local people.</p>

5	<p>To what extent do you agree with these priorities and proposals?</p> <p>Do these priorities and proposals address the main issues? What else, if anything should be included in the priorities and proposals? Is there anything that should not be included?</p> <p>Should a new Volunteering Strategy and Action Plan be developed?</p>	<p>Council is committed to active citizenship and Volunteering and have recently agreed a Volunteer Charter for the city. We therefore welcome the identified need for a regional strategy which would recognise volunteering as central to everything the sector is about in facilitating social action and in building communities and active citizenship.</p> <p>There is a need to provide more strategic support to organisations around promoting, involving and managing volunteers. Additionally, there is a need to ensure that the VCS receive the appropriate level of support in order for volunteering to be able to contribute to the sector being healthy and sustainable.</p> <p>While council recognise that small grants are a valuable resource for groups who are reliant on volunteers to deliver their programmes and services, we are not sure that a small grants scheme is a priority on its own right. There is no evidence of the impact of the small grant programme to date and therefore there should perhaps be a more strategic approach to supporting organisations on volunteering based on collaborative/partnership working and based on need.</p> <p>Having an agreed approach to measuring the impact of volunteering across society would support volunteer involving organisations. It would also provide evidence to support DfC to help raise the value of volunteering generally in society and inform approaches across local government.</p> <p>There should be opportunities for all groupings to be involved as volunteers but we</p>
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		<p>welcome the accepted need to specifically target under represented groupings.</p> <p>BCC welcome the proposals which, if appropriately delivered, will contribute to volunteering continuing as an integral element of the VCS and its future health and sustainable. There is, however, a need to re-examine the oversight and co-ordination of the implementation of this work in order to best ensure that current arrangements are adequate, representative and that the ongoing work programme is effective.</p> <p>Gap: an area that appears to be overlooked is the area of organisational governance and the reliance on volunteer trustees. The requirements placed on groups and organisations by the Charity Commission appear to be absent. Volunteers not only deliver services, but are responsible for governance in many community and voluntary sector groups</p>
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Food Hygiene Rating Act

The Committee was reminded that Belfast City Council had adopted the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme in June 2011, shortly after its introduction by the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland (FSANI).

The Assistant Director advised that, since that date, the Council had been rating the standard of food hygiene compliance observed by Food Safety Officers during inspections and publishing the information online. She continued that, whilst business owners were provided with window stickers and encouraged to display its allocated hygiene rating, there was no legal requirement for them to do so and many, particularly the poorer rated, did not.

The Assistant Director reported that, on 29th January, the Food Hygiene Rating Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 had received Royal Assent. She detailed that the Act introduced the new mandatory Food Hygiene Rating Scheme which legally required, for the first time, food business operators to display a valid food hygiene rating sticker at each of its public entrances.

The Committee noted that the implementation of the Act had commenced on 7th October and that it placed a statutory duty on the Council to rate food establishments and enforce the legislative requirements. It was also noted that Council officers would be able to issue fixed penalty notice for non-compliance and, if necessary, instigate legal proceedings.

Chairperson