

# People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 4th September, 2018

## MEETING OF PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Nicholl (Chairperson);  
Aldermen Copeland, McCoubrey, Rodgers and Sandford; and  
Councillors Baker, Corr, Corr Johnston, Heading,  
Magee, Magennis, Milne, McReynolds, Newton and  
O'Donnell.

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

### **Apologies**

Apologies were recorded on behalf of Councillors Armitage, Canavan, Lyons, McCusker and Pankhurst.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 7th August 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 September.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations were reported.

### **Matters Referred from Council/Motions**

#### **Motion – Graffiti**

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

"This Council recognises the damage caused by and unsightliness of the growing amount of graffiti within our City centre and our neighbourhoods, on our shutters, our walls, our doors, our utility boxes etc.

As the Council has the power under Article 18 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 to remove or obliterate any graffiti which, in the opinion of Council, is detrimental to the amenity of any land in the district, pro-active policies and procedures for addressing the problem need to now be put in place, perhaps on the lines of those adopted in 2016 by Ards and North Down Borough Council.

Accordingly, the Council agrees to allocate the necessary funding and resources, or the reprioritisation of existing resources, to tackle the environmental scourge of graffiti in the City."

The Committee agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting.

### **Motion - Green Spaces**

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

"This Council agrees to establish a strategy to tackle the issue of grass cutting along verges and roads in the City. This will include auditing the number of sites that need maintenance, determining the best way to maintain them, increasing revenue to meet the costs and setting up a forum with other relevant agencies, including the Department for Infrastructure, to ensure that the areas are maintained in a way which promotes road safety, civic pride and protects the environment."

The Committee agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting and that, within the context of this report, consideration would be given to the use of glyphosate based weed killers and possible alternatives.

### **Motion – Unadopted Alleyways**

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

"This Council will engage with relevant agencies to develop protocols in respect to addressing issues around unadopted alleyways across the City, recognising health and safety and public hygiene concerns. All efforts should be also made to identify legal owners and compel them to meet their obligations."

The Committee agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting and that this would include details in respect of the location of unadopted alleyways throughout the City.

## **Committee/Strategic Issues**

### **Update on Strategic Cemetery and Crematorium Development**

The Committee was advised that, at the meetings of the Strategic Cemetery and Crematorium Working Group held on 6th June and 15th August, the following key items had been considered:

- update in respect of the new Crematorium Development at Roselawn and the tender process to appoint a specialist project team;
- the use of memorial trees at Roselawn;

- update in respect of the water infrastructure at Roselawn;
- update in respect of unstable headstones; and
- update in respect of the permanent memorial to mark Plot Z1 in the City Cemetery.

It was highlighted to the Committee that, following the Motion in respect of children's funeral charges, which had been raised at the May meeting of Council, the Working Group had considered this in detail. At the meeting of the Working Group, held on 15th August, it had recommended to the People and Communities Committee that it waive cremation fees for all under eighteen year olds from a Northern Ireland address. It had also recommended that burial fees be waived for residents of the City who were under eighteen years old, however, this would not extend to any costs associated with the purchase of a grave. In addition, it recommended to the Committee that the aforementioned provisions would be extended to asylum seekers.

The Committee:

- approved and adopted the minutes of the meetings of the Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Working Group held on 6th June and 15th August; and
- noted that Councillor Corr would replace Councillor Carson on the Working Group with immediate effect.

### **Physical Programme and Asset Management**

#### **Grant of Right of Way to Trustees of St. Mary Magdalene Parish Church, Donegall Pass**

The Committee was advised that, approximately ten years ago, the Council had granted the Trustees of St. Mary Magdalene Parish Church a Right of Way to provide an emergency egress from the rear of church property via a path leading to Lindsay Street. This path had been used over this period, however, the legal process had not been completed and no formal Grant of Easement had been executed.

The Committee was informed that the Reverend Robert Bradford Memorial Park was due for refurbishment and included in the design was a proposal to close off the Lindsay Street access and incorporate the pathway into the park. This would necessitate the realignment of the emergency exit onto Apsley Street and the issue of a formal Grant of Easement for execution for all parties.

The Committee recommended to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that consent be granted to a right of way in favour of the Trustees of St Mary Magdalene Parish Church to provide an emergency egress through the Council owned Reverend Robert Bradford Memorial Park.

### **Update on Partner Agreements**

The Director of Neighbourhood Services reminded the Committee that the Council had previously agreed to enter into Partner Agreements at seven sites and she then provided an update on the progress in relation to the Agreements for April – June 2018.

She advised that officers from the Council had met with representatives from East Belfast Football Club to highlight the Council's concern over its continued non-compliance. She reported that, at this meeting, an agreed plan of action had been drawn up in an attempt to address the ongoing issues within a reasonable timeframe, which would be closely monitored.

She advised that the regular checks on the necessary Insurance, Health and Safety and Governance had been undertaken and all sites had been fully compliant.

The Director reminded the Committee that funding of up to £20,000 per annum was available for each partner for the delivery of a programme (supporting the Sports Development Plan). She reported that letters of offer had been sent to all partners based on approved sports development plans in the current financial year and added that full payments had been made to all Partners in this Quarter.

She explained that, in line with the Council's objectives, the diversification of use and improved sports development impact were priorities at the partner agreement sites and she advised that so far the programme delivery had led to significant positive achievements across the seven sites. She drew the Members' attention to a table which indicated the outputs at the sites as reported by the partners up to the end of June 2018.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

### **Finance, Procurement and Performance**

#### **Financial Reporting – Quarter 1 2018/2019**

The Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services summarised the contents of the report which presented a Quarter 1 financial position for the People and Communities Committee, including a forecast of the year end outturn. He advised that the detail included the Quarter 1 position for the Committee showed an under-spend of 289k (1.5%), with the forecast year-end position being an under-spend of £598k (0.8%) which was well within the acceptable variance limit of 3%.

The Committee noted the contents of the Quarter 1 financial update.

### **Operational Issues**

#### **Naming of New Streets**

The Committee approved the naming in respect of Hazel Drive, off Lagmore Road, BT17 and Hazel Mews, off Lagmore Road and the proposed Hazel Drive, BT17.

### **City Greenways Workshop**

The Director reminded the Committee that the following motion in respect of the Greenway Strategy had been referred from Council to the May meeting of the People and Communities Committee, where it had been agreed that an update report would be submitted to a future meeting.

*“That this council will support the further development of the Greenway strategy in Belfast, including assessing the benefits of a Sydenham Greenway, linking East Belfast and Holywood and the development of the Greenway in West Belfast and the Shankill linking Belfast and Lisburn. Council will engage with potential partners to assess how such a strategy would be implemented, with focus on improving connectivity and benefiting health and well-being in our community.”*

She advised that, over the past year, the North and West Area Working Groups had also discussed the importance of the Belfast Hills to its neighbouring communities and it had agreed to a combined meeting to look at increasing accessibility from the hills to the surrounding neighbourhoods and to the City centre. She also reminded the Committee that, at its meeting held on 6th February, had agreed, in principle, to support Ligoniel Improvement Association in its Heritage Lottery Fund Great Places application for its North Belfast Greenway Project.

The Director advised that, given the strategic importance of all of these individual issues, it was suggested that an all Member workshop would be convened to enable Elected Members and officers to consider them holistically.

The Committee agreed to hold an all Member workshop to discuss greenways on a north, south, east and west basis on 14th November at 4.30 p.m. in the Lavery Room.

### **Update on Transfer of Houses in Multiple Occupation**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

- 1.1 The new legislative control, the Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Act NI 2016 completed Final Stage on 15th March 2016 and received Royal Assent on 12th May 2016. On commencement of this Act, HMO regulation will transfer to local Councils.**
- 1.2 The Committee will recall that an update paper was presented at the meeting on 10th April 2018. A further paper regarding the Department of Health Consultation on proposals to make amendments to the Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 was presented to the Committee on 8th May.**

1.3 This paper provides a further update on the progress with the transfer of Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) function from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) to Councils.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- note the update information regarding the Houses of Multiple Occupation function and the current status of the programme of transfer.

3.0 Key Issues

3.1 The Regional Board, made up of representatives from the three cluster leads (ie Belfast City Council, Causeway Coasts and Glens Borough Council, and Derry City and Strabane District Councils), and representatives from DfC and NIHE, now meets on a monthly basis.

3.2 In order to manage BCC's workload and responsibilities, a BCC HMO Board has been established, and also meets on a monthly basis, usually the week before the Regional Board meeting.

3.3 The date for the transfer of functions is 31st March 2019.

Legislation/regulations

3.4 The Department of Health proposed that amendments should be made to the Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, as outlined in the P&C Committee paper in May 2018. Given that the operation of the HMO licensing scheme will be the responsibility of councils, the proposed amendments would have allowed Councils to carry out all the checks/inspections (including fire safety) required to license or otherwise an HMO. The Department for Health has informed the Regional Board that without an Assembly they cannot make the amendments as it is a change to primary legislation, so therefore would not be in place for commencement of the HMO Act in April 2019. Members of the Regional Programme Board are meeting with representatives from the NIFRS to consider the development of a mechanism to ensure public safety, possibly via a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU), until the legislation is in place.

3.5 DfC is currently considering the process required to lay the necessary regulations to allow for the transfer including setting a licence fee. The Councils are continuing their work

on calculating the cost of the new regime and this will feed into the Department's legislative timetable.

Operating Model:

- 3.6 Committee reports have been presented to all 11 Councils regarding the future operating model, as well as the ongoing work in relation to the estimating the cost of the new regime, fee setting, transferring staff and the procurement of a new ICT system.

SLA

- 3.7 A draft SLA has been prepared and following consultations with other Councils it will be brought to committee for approval.

Legal

- 3.8 Work continues to identify the most appropriate options, and potential costs, regarding the regional supply of legal services to Councils in the new scheme.

Staff Transfer – HR

- 3.9 Consultation with staff transferring from NIHE to BCC continues. Two members of NIHE staff will form a transition team, and started work in BCC offices in August for two days a week to start preparing a procedure manual and other relevant documentation.

ICT

- 3.10 BCC's Digital Services has lead on the process to procure a regional ICT solution for the new scheme. This will be paid for by the DfC as a transition cost. The specification was developed which required significant consultation with other Councils, EHNI and NIHE. The procurement process is nearing completion, and it is anticipated that the contract will be awarded shortly. Digital Services are currently developing a SLA for ICT support across all the Councils.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.11 It is anticipated that all costs associated with the new HMO licencing scheme will be met by fee income. Given that this is a transferring function with a new legislative regime coming in, decisions around financial, resource implications and transfer will be taken via the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

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

- 3.12 No equality or Good Relations implications have been identified.”

The Committee noted the update information regarding the Houses in Multiple Occupation function and the current status regarding the programme of transfer.

**Update on Partnership Work to Address Anti-Social Behaviour**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

- 1.1 Further to previous agreements at People and Communities Committee, this report provides the agreed update on anti-social behaviour in parks and open spaces covering the April – July 2018 period.

- 1.2 At previous meetings, Members further agreed that initial work would be focussed on Falls Park/City Cemetery, Orangefield Park/Avoniel Park, Marrowbone, Dunville and Ballysillan.

**2.0 Recommendation**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:

note the progress against these actions and to receive a further progress report in November, 2018.

**3.0 Main Report**

**Key Issues**

**Current Context**

- 3.1 *Reported Anti-Social Behaviour To Council*

Ongoing analysis of reports from members of the public, along with anti-social behaviour witnessed by Council Officers has identified the following parks/open spaces as having issues with persistent anti-social behaviour.

- 3.2 Please note figures provided below are for the period April – July, 2018.



Park/Open Space	Area	Reported Social Incidents	Anti-Behaviour
Woodvale	West	11	
Ormeau	South	10	
Jubilee Gardens	North	10	
Girdwood	North	8	
Botanic	South	8	

- 3.3 Please also note that the list below only represents the parks/open spaces with the highest numbers of reports of anti-social behaviour. Reports of anti-social behaviour are received for other parks/open spaces across the city but at a much lower level.

**Repairs at Parks/Open Spaces**

- 3.4 As indicated above, anti-social behaviour is often under-reported. Officers therefore regularly review requisitions for repairs at parks/open spaces due to vandalism, criminal damage or arson.
- 3.5 There has been a marked reduction in serious vandalism, criminal damage or arson at all parks and open spaces across the city with only minor damage presenting.

**Member Feedback**

- 3.6 Elected Members engage regularly with Officers articulating concerns about anti-social behaviour in parks/open spaces. Officers have reviewed their Elected Members contact on this issue and the following parks/open spaces present most frequently as of concern:

Park/Open Space	Area
Falls Park/City Cemetery	West
Marrowbone	North
Orangefield/Avoniel	East

**Animation/Programming**

- 3.7 **Progress to Date**

- Community Youth Outreach Teams have been proactive around a number of parks and open spaces, in particular Falls Park, Marrowbone and Orangefield/Avoniel.

- A range of positive programming and animation events continue to take place in priority parks and open spaces particularly at the weekends. Activities include community fun days, sports tournaments, health and wellbeing events and added value is being achieved by aligning existing Council services in support of this work.
- Outreach Teams continue to deliver summer activities to encourage positive use

**3.8 Next Steps**

- Continued delivery of the Marrowbone Park programming/animation plan
- Ballysillan Park programming/animation plan to be finalised with stakeholders
- Alignment of Urban Villages Projects around Ballysillan Park and Marrowbone Park to maximise available funding to address anti-social behaviour in parks and open spaces and support the associated Urban Villages consultation in the areas
- Ongoing delivery of Policing and Community Safety Partnership funded diversionary and developmental activities for young people across the city.

**Operational Co-ordination**

**3.9 Progress to Date**

- Parks Management Group has been established for Marrowbone and Ballysillan including Elected Members, community and youth providers and other statutory agencies;
- Improved youth provider co-ordination across the city appears to be making a positive impact on the levels of anti-social behaviour in parks and open spaces in recent months;
- Weekly operational tasking meetings take place between Council, Police and other statutory agencies as needed to review operational priorities and plan for the week ahead;
- PSNI committed additional resources during the summer period in support of this issue; and
- Mobile CCTV is proactive around priority Council owned parks and open spaces

**3.10 Next Steps**

- Further development of parks management groups for priority parks and open spaces;
- Finalise report on opportunities for improved youth provider co-ordination across the city; and
- Further development of process to maximise internal and external resources/co-operation

**Awareness Raising**

**3.11 Progress to Date**

- PSNI continue to proactively use their social media channels to deter anti-social behaviour around parks and open spaces
- The scoping with partners for the Inter-Agency Community Safety Schools Programme has been completed and the programme is currently being finalised

**3.12 Next Steps**

- Ongoing development of partnerships with post primary schools across Belfast to take place, seeking co-operation around communication with parents and pupils regarding wider community impacts and risks of anti-social behaviour
- Engagement to take place with organisations who advocate and lobby for young people in the development of messaging to maximise impact e.g. Children's Commissioner
- Delivery of the Inter-Agency Community Safety Schools Programme during academic year
- Detailed scoping of how to proactively encourage parental responsibility around this issue.

**Maximising Strategic Opportunities**

**3.13 Officers continue to work to ensure alignment and connectivity between other strategic programmes of work to maximise the potential to positively impact on the ongoing challenges in parks and open spaces:**

- PEACE IV Shared Spaces Project and Wider PEACE IV Programme – Officers continue to ensure the capital/programming investment from PEACE IV Programme are aligned to ongoing work aimed at

improving safety in parks and open spaces. Contracts for a range of PEACE IV work are in the process of being procured and awarded.

- **Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) – Council was recently successful in securing £40,000 of funding from the Department for Economy to facilitate innovation around how to better encourage positive use and deter negative use of parks/open spaces. Officers are currently working with partners to refine the ‘challenge’ to be launched mid October 2018.**
- **Fresh Start – Tackling Paramilitarism Action Plan – Officers continue to work with Executive Office Officials and individual lead departments/organisations in maximising the benefit of the following work streams within the action plan for communities in Belfast**

#### **Community Safety Strategic Tasking Work**

- 3.14 Due to ongoing Elected Member and community concern about anti-social behaviour across the city and limited resource available to address this, the Director of CNS identified the need to develop a strategic evidence led tasking approach across agencies. The objectives are primarily to maximise the available resource, allocate resources where needed most and maximise the outcomes for safer communities. The work has been scoped to include three stages of tasking as detailed below:**
- 3.15 Stage 1: Reactive tasking – gather the one dimensional current statistical picture and seek to build a two dimensional dashboard which houses anecdotal/ practitioner information and conduct defined testing of the reporting/ recording mechanisms at a front line level.**
- 3.16 Stage 2: Reflective tasking - core implementation of the business practice being installed for stage 1 and use of more sophisticated analytics to identify patterns, correlations, trends and gaps which would inform proactive and intelligent operational tasking and decision making.**
- 3.17 Stage 3: Resilient tasking – further development of statistical picture and practitioner/anecdotal information to provide insight for strategic and longer term approach to strategic tasking and decision making, ultimately with the aim of preventing rather than managing community safety issues.**

**3.18 Progress to Date**

The work is ongoing but progress to date is summarise for Members consideration:

- The data dashboard has been developed using a pre-existing Council system and refreshes automatically every 24 hours to all other Council systems. The dashboard also absorbs monthly PSNI & NI Housing Executive statistics.
- Opportunities for joint working with the Department of Justice are being progressed
- Data Protection implications have been considered and a Privacy Impact Assessment conducted. No personal data is being processed, but this will be continuously reviewed
- Staff training is being provided to ensure existing service delivery benefits from the learning
- Initial learning from this work has identified opportunities to use this approach in supporting service delivery in other business areas and this will be further examined in the coming months.

**3.19 Next Steps**

Initial progress has been encouraging, but further work is required to embed this approach across agencies and in particular the importance of being able to gather anecdotal/practitioner insight both from within the statutory sector, but also from within communities. Key next steps are:

- Secure the commitment of other statutory agencies to provide relevant data into the system.
- Develop the anecdotal/practitioner insight element of the data dashboard, particularly given high levels of under-reporting of community safety issues in parts of the city.
- Continue to input learning to the Strategic Hub and Information Management CNS Change Project for wider corporate and departmental benefit.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

**3.20 Staff Resources**

The above approach continues to support the values and principles of the City and Neighbourhood Services and wider Corporate Change Programme.

### **Financial Resources**

All of the above work continues to be accommodated from within existing Council and (D)PCSP revenue budgets. The work is intended to maximise existing resources, reduce duplication and facilitate joined up decision making and resource allocation in the identified parks/open spaces.

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

- 3.21 There are no implications at present, however, this will monitored on an ongoing basis.”

The Committee noted the progress report and that a further report would be submitted at the November meeting of Committee.

### **Ribbon of Poppies Campaign 2018**

The Committee considered a report in relation a request from the Ancre Somme Association, Lurgan, and Brownlow Royal British Legion regarding the Ribbon of Poppies 2018 campaign.

The Committee agreed that the matter be referred to the Party Leaders' Forum.

### **Consultation on Proposed Amendments to the Statutory Food Law Code of Practice (NI) 2018**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

- 1.1 The Statutory Food Law Code of Practice instructs local authorities how to plan and deliver their regulatory activities. The Council must follow its requirements. The Food Standards Agency have recently published and are consulting on a number of proposed changes to the Code aimed to improve the process of food business registration and the application of the food hygiene intervention scheme. In part these changes are intended to reduce the level of intervention required by Local Authorities in recognition that severe funding cuts to English authorities are preventing increasing numbers from complying with the current requirements. Therefore whilst it is not the FSA intention the proposals may result in an overall reduction in service in Northern Ireland if applied. This report aims to inform Members of these proposals and presents a draft response, as attached, for consideration. The consultation period ends on 27th September 2018, extended to 11th October 2018.

**2.0 Recommendation**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to consider and agree the consultation response.**

**3.0 Main Report**

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is proposing changes to the Food Law Code of Practice (Code) for NI and has launched a public consultation seeking comments and views from stakeholders. The consultation package including the draft code of practice is available at <https://www.food.gov.uk/news-alerts/consultations/regulating-our-future-amendments-to-the-food-law-code-of-practice-northern-ireland>

Key proposals include:

**1. Enhanced Registration**

- Food businesses are currently required to be registered with their Local Authority at least 28 days before commencing trading and this is considered important to allow Councils to plan their regulatory activities. Each Council currently operates its own independent registration system. Whilst many Councils including Belfast City Council have on line electronic forms available the majority of registrations continue to be made on paper and the information is not shared with the Food Standards Agency. The FSA is proposing amendments to enable the introduction of a new digital centralised registration system to replace the individual local systems. It is anticipated this will make it easier for business to register and access tailored information, it will improve the information collected which the FSA will pass on to Councils to help plan their activities. For the first time the FSA shall have real time access to information on all food businesses in England, Northern Ireland and Wales and it is their intention to use this data to develop a new centralised risk assessment engine that may determine interventions required for new businesses. The FSA plan to develop and launch the new web based system in April 2019.

The draft Council response supports the increasing use of technology to access and deliver services and recognises the potential benefits to users of a central online registration system. There is little information available as to the likely specification of the system therefore it is difficult to predict how well it will operate. The draft response outlines potential

barriers to use including, lack of awareness, computer skills, literacy issues etc and suggests that alternative options including paper should be available. It also emphasises the need to continue to consult with Councils and businesses as the system is developed to ensure it is user friendly and fit for purpose. Currently officers often assist food businesses in completing paper registration forms on site and it will be important to ensure that our own officers have mobile devices and technology provided to continue do so on line.

- Many new food businesses fail to comply with the requirement to register before opening and only register at the Councils intervention. The FSA is considering how to increase the numbers of businesses proactively registering as this will help ensure they are visited by the Council and in compliance before they open. They are considering adding an additional score that may affect a premises Food Hygiene Rating if it is found on inspection not to be registered.

The draft response confirms that the Council believes it is important to introduce new measures to incentivise registration and/or penalise noncompliance. However, it does not agree that non registration should lower the Food Hygiene (compliance) Rating as this will confuse consumers as to the hygienic conditions observed on the premises and may increase the level of intervention required in the future when no additional risk exists. The response suggests alternatives that could be considered including use of fixed penalty notices, introducing charges for registration, working with insurance companies and sharing data with HRMC and other third parties dealing with businesses to encourage registration.

## 2. Revisions to the food hygiene intervention rating scheme

The food hygiene intervention rating scheme within the Code outlines how local authorities must assess and score the food safety risk from a specific food establishment and use that score to determine the nature and frequency of future interventions required for that establishment. Part of that score relates to the levels of compliance observed at inspection and it is this part of the score that is used to determine the published Food Hygiene Rating which must be displayed at the entrance to the premises. The FSA is proposing a number of changes to the risk scoring scheme aimed at reducing the levels of interventions required, in particular for business showing full compliance over a sustained period of time. It is anticipated by the FSA these



changes will reduce the regulatory burden on better businesses and allow local authorities to divert resources to more effectively target higher risk activities. Specific changes include:

2.1 Defining and recognising 'full and sustained compliance' by applying a risk score reduction which will increase the time between inspections in such premises.

The draft response confirms that Council supports the principle of recognition for full sustained compliance to reduce the frequency and/or nature of future regulatory interventions. It does not support recognition resulting in the removal of establishments handling open high risk food completely from the inspection programme as this would affect Councils ability, over the longer term, to:

- (a) detect changes in businesses that could affect consumer safety, and
- (b) to refresh food hygiene ratings thereby negatively impacting in the integrity of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme as scoring will become more and more outdated.

The Council believes that the current proposals will remove many premises handling open high risk food from the inspection programme and therefore does not support the current proposals. Consideration should be given to the development of a more innovative approach to achieve the same global reduction in the overall regulatory burden whilst maintaining a minimum level of inspection in all premises handling open high risk food. In the absence of revised proposals to that effect the Councils preference is a smaller reduction (-5 ) with additional safeguards to prevent establishments handling open high risk food falling to category 'E' which would remove them from the inspection programme.

2.2 Currently premises, such as care establishments, catering for vulnerable groups including the very young, the very old and the sick, receive an additional score to raise their inspection frequency as such premises were considered to be higher risk. The FSA is proposing to remove this additional score reducing these premises to a level where less frequent and less thorough interventions would replace inspections.

The draft response confirms Councils opinion that premises serving vulnerable groups should be subject to a periodical inspection and risk assessment and therefore it does not support the removal of the additional score. The response

recognises the very serious consequences that food poisoning can have on such vulnerable groups including risk of death and also the resultant loss of public confidence in our care institutions. There are many documented incidents of outbreaks in care establishments including some within Northern Ireland Trusts. The proposals also fail to recognise the value of periodic inspections to the care establishment operators in offering advice and guidance to improve food safety.

2.3 The current scheme allows the application of an additional risk score in exceptional circumstances where the officer has concern over high levels of microbiological risk from an establishment. The FSA is concerned that the additional risk score is being incorrectly applied as 24% of premises in England Wales and Northern Ireland have been awarded the additional score. The FSA are therefore proposing to remove the significant risk score from the Code.

In Belfast City Council currently, only one premises has an additional score applied, equating to 0.0003 % of premises, thus demonstrating unlike England its use is exceptional and rare. Whilst its removal would have little impact overall, on an individual premises basis officers do find it useful in exceptional circumstances to move the next inspection forward. Therefore the draft response confirms the Council would like to see the retention of the additional score to be used in exceptional circumstances to move forward next inspection. We would like consideration to be given to greater flexibility of its use beyond micro biological risks for example for significant allergen risk, food fraud, or chemical contamination.

The full draft response to the consultation paper is attached, including answers to all the questions asked.

#### Finance and Resource Implications

There may be some initial resources required to integrate the Councils back office system with the new registration system and to implement changes to the risk scoring scheme. It is not possible to estimate what these are at this stage but it is expected that these will be absorbed with existing budgets if the FSA do not cover the costs.

#### Human Resources

There are no human resource implications.

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

**There are no equality or good relations implications, there is no requirement for rural needs assessment.”**

The Committee endorsed the draft consultation response, available on the Council’s website, <https://minutes3.belfastcity.gov.uk/documents/s73490/Draft%20response.pdf> to the Foods Standards Agency (FSA in relation to the proposed amendments to the Statutory Food Law Code of Practice (NI) 2018, and agreed that it be submitted before the deadline of 11th October.

**Drug Support Services and Response – Request for Workshop**

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 provide Members with the opportunity of a workshop at a suitable date in October 2018.**

**1.2 The purpose of the meeting would be for PSNI to brief Members on what they are doing to tackle large-scale supply of drugs and for the main commissioners of services (PHA/Trust) to brief Members on what support services are provided to help those suffering with drug related issues.**

**2.0 Recommendation**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- agree to hold a workshop on a suitable date in October with the PSNI and the main commissioners of drug support services, namely the Public Health Agency and the Belfast Trust.**

**3.0 Main Report**

**Key Issues**

**3.1 A number of Members have expressed concern in recent months about drug use in Belfast and in particular, its changing nature i.e. intravenous drug use and the associated levels of drug litter in the city. Additionally, there has been a lot of media attention on the issue.**

**3.2 Council works closely with other statutory bodies as well as community and voluntary sector partners around this issue**

and there is a wider recognition that the emergence of heroin use, other opiate based drugs and poly drug misuse (taking a mixture of drugs/alcohol) are changing the nature of drug use across the city.

- 3.3 The result of this is that new challenges and pressures are emerging both in the city centre and in communities across the city including the relationship between vulnerability to addiction and vulnerability to mental health challenges.
- 3.4 Members are therefore asked to consider holding a workshop at a suitable date in October 2018 to discuss this issue in more detail with relevant agencies.

#### Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.5 Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) co-funds the following services with the Public Health Agency, aimed at supporting efforts to address these issues:
- Street Injectors Support Service (£15,000)
  - Mental Health/Addictions Dual Diagnosis Services (£30,000).

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

- 3.6 There are no implications at present, however, this is monitored on an ongoing basis given the level of vulnerability present with this client group.”

The Committee agreed to hold a workshop on a date to be determined in October with the PSNI and the main commissioners of drug support services, namely the Public Health Agency and the Belfast Trust.

#### Use of Glyphosate Based Weedkiller

The Committee considered the following report:

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

- 1.1 On 10th August 2018, jurors in a US court found in favour of a groundskeeper who claimed that Monsanto’s Roundup had contributed ‘substantially’ to his terminal illness and ordered the company to pay \$289 million (£226m) in damages. It also found that the manufacturer, knew of the product’s potential health risks as a ‘possible carcinogen’, and acted ‘with malice or oppression’ by failing to warn users.

1.2 Further to this case, the purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of the Council's current use of Monsanto's Roundup and other similar products, the regulatory regime for these products and the Council's health and safety management arrangements for their use.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is requested to note the contents of this report.

3.0 Main Report

Council Use

3.1 The Council's Parks Service currently uses a number of weedkiller products which are based on the active ingredient glyphosate. These include Roundup 450, Nomix Dual and Nomix Hilite. These are primarily used for treatment of invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed and perennial and annual weeds in our parks and open spaces.

3.2 Glyphosate is a non-selective herbicide, meaning it will kill most plants. Glyphosate is rarely used on its own in the field and is an active ingredient in a range of broad spectrum herbicide formulations. Herbicide formulations such as Roundup include a variety of other chemicals and additives to help glyphosate work and extend the product's life shelf.

3.2 As Green Flag Award winners, the Council's use of weedkillers, including glyphosate based weedkillers, has significantly reduced in recent years as the Council has developed more environmentally friendly approaches to parks management.

Glyphosate approval process in Northern Ireland

3.4 In order for glyphosate to be used in the EU, authorisation is required under the terms of the EC Regulation 1107/2009, Plant Protection Products. This process involves all Member States, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and the European Commission.

3.5 When a company submits approval for an active ingredient such as glyphosate, the EFSA carries out a peer review and sends its conclusion to the European Commission. On the basis of the EFSA's review, the European Commission decide whether to authorise the substance.

3.6 Since glyphosate was introduced in 1974, all regulatory assessments have established that glyphosate has low hazard potentials to mammals. However, the International

Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) concluded in March 2015 that glyphosate is 'probably carcinogenic'.

- 3.7 Consequently, the IARC conclusion triggered a reconsideration of the evidence on carcinogenicity in the EU evaluation. The EU renewal process was the first comprehensive regulatory assessment of glyphosate conducted after the IARC evaluation. In November 2015, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) found it 'unlikely to pose a carcinogenic hazard to humans' based on a 'large body of evidence' including 'key studies not considered by IARC' that remain unpublished.
- 3.8 Following these divergences, the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) was asked to assess the hazard properties of the substance before taking a decision on its potential renewal at EU level. It concluded in March 2017, on the basis of the evidence used by EFSA, that glyphosate did not class as a carcinogen.
- 3.9 In July 2017, the Commission proposed to renew the approval of glyphosate for 10 years. In the face of opposition by some Member States, the Commission proposed, in early November 2017, a five-year renewal. On 12 December 2017, the Commission adopted the act to renew the approval of glyphosate for 5 years.

Council health and safety management arrangements for glyphosate based products

- 3.10 In accordance with our statutory obligations under the Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978 and the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (NI) Regulations 2003 (as amended), all chemicals used within the Council are required to have a COSHH Assessment.
- 3.11 The COSHH assessment identifies the hazards associated with the product, who may be exposed, how they may be exposed and the controls required to safely use the product.
- 3.12 COSHH assessments have been completed for all the pesticides in use within the Council which contain glyphosate as an active ingredient. These include:

Supplier	Product
Monsanto	Round Pro Biactive 450
Nomix Enviro Ltd	Dual
Nomix Enviro Ltd	Hilite

- 3.13 When conducting these COSHH assessments, reference is made to the product's Safety Data Sheet (SDS). By law suppliers of chemicals must provide an up to date safety data sheet if a substance is dangerous for supply. Safety data sheets provide information on chemical products that help users of those chemicals to make a risk assessment. They describe the hazards the chemical presents, and give information on handling, storage and emergency measures in case of accident.
- 3.14 None of the Safety Data Sheets for glyphosate based products used by the Council have classified them as carcinogenic.
- 3.15 As a result of the COSHH assessment process, these products are currently approved for use within the Council on the basis that the recommended control measures are followed. These control measures typically include the wearing of chemical resistant gloves to EN 374 standard; suitable protective overalls and rubber boots during application; suitable respiratory protective device and chemical resistant goggles if exposed to vapour/spray.
- 3.16 Furthermore, the Park's service risk assessment for the use of pesticides stipulates all staff carrying out spraying must have relevant training (PA1, PA6) to ensure they are competent to carry out the task.

Alternatives to Glyphosate based weedkillers

- 3.17 As advised, the Council currently use a number of glyphosate based products. The alternatives to this would include:
- 3.18 1. Use of contact herbicides in place of glyphosate based products Contact herbicides are not as effective as glyphosate based herbicides as they do not kill the root system and therefore would require repeat treatment and additional resource. Contact herbicides can be more expensive.
- 3.19 2. Use of alternative practices such as strimming, mulching, hoeing and hand weeding in place of weedkillers ;

Use of alternative practices would be more labour intensive and would require additional resource. The majority of perennial weeds treated by Parks Operatives are on hard surfaces so hand weeding would not be possible as a control measure.

- 3.20 Glyphosate is the only recommended control mechanism for the control of Japanese Knotweed so therefore no alternative is available.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

- 3.21 At this stage, there are no financial or resource implications however should alternatives to Glyphosate based weedkillers be used in the future, additional budget would be required for the purchase of contact chemicals and/or additional resource to apply alternative practices. Exact costs would have to be explored.

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

- 3.22 None.”

The Committee noted that, as agreed earlier in the meeting, further consideration to the use of glyphosate based weed killers and possible alternatives would be given when considering the Motion in respect of Green Spaces.

**Northern Ireland Health and Fitness Awards**

The Director of Neighbourhood Services advised that the Leisure Development Unit had organised the Teenage Kicks programme for thirteen years. She reported that, during that time, the dance-mentoring programme had worked with over 3,000 children and young people in the primary, secondary and special school sectors to try and promote the development of young people’s self-confidence, body image and leadership skills through an eight-week programme of dance with fitness guru ‘Fitness Freddy’.

The Committee was advised that the inaugural Northern Ireland Health and Fitness Awards were being held on Saturday, 22nd September in the Crowne Plaza, Belfast. The awards would be a celebration of excellence and achievement across the entire health and fitness industry. The Director stated that she was pleased to report that the Teenage Kicks Programme had been shortlisted as a finalist in the Health and Fitness Event of the Year category and she sought permission for the Council to be represented at this event.

The Committee granted permission for the Chairperson, the Deputy Chairperson (or their nominee), the Director of Neighbourhood Services, the Sports Development Officer, along with the programme delivery Partners to attend the inaugural Northern Ireland Health and Fitness Awards on 22nd September in the Crowne Plaza, Belfast.

**Naming of Path at Olympia Leisure Centre**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 5th June, it had agreed that a public vote would be conducted in respect of the appropriate title for the naming of the tree-lined boulevard leading to Olympia Leisure Centre from the Boucher Road. The Committee had agreed six names for the public to choose from:

- Boucher Boulevard;
- Elisha Scott Boulevard;
- Grace Bannister Way;



- Legends Way;
- Olympia Boulevard; and
- Windsor Way.

The public vote had available from Monday, 23rd July to Sunday, 19th August, during which votes had been cast online, by e-mail, telephone, post and in five venues in the Village area. The total number of votes cast was 2,393 and the Members were referred to a table which provided a breakdown of the votes cast.

The Director reported that Windsor Way was the name that had received the most public support, with 1704 votes (71%) of the vote.

The Committee agreed the title of the boulevard leading to Olympia Leisure Centre be named as Windsor Way.

### **Donation of a Discus Cage for Mary Peters Track**

The Committee was reminded that the Mary Peters Track had recently had a major upgrade with the installation of a new International standard Mondo Track and a new 300 seater stadium. It noted that the original proposals had included plans to install two discus/hammer cages but due to budget constraints only one cage had been installed.

The Director of Neighbour Services advised that the family of a thrower called Mr. Mike Fulton, who had sadly passed away a number of years ago, had contact the Northern Ireland Amateur Athletics Association offering to donate a discus cage, in his memory, for use at the Mary Peters Track. The cost of installing and purchasing the cage would be in the region of £11,000 and the family had made a financial donation via the Community Foundation, Northern Ireland.

The Committee noted that, if permission was granted to install the discus cage, it was intended, after installation, that the Northern Ireland Amateur Athletics Association would hold a small reception to thank the funders and benefactor's family. Representatives from Belfast City Council would also be invited to the ceremony.

The Committee agreed to grant permission for the installation of a discus cage in the Council's Mary Peters Track, subject to the following conditions, as requested by the Estates Unit:

- appropriate documentation being received from the Contractor carrying out installation, to include specifications, duration of works and public liability insurance;
- permission being obtained, if not already granted, from Queen's University who are the land owners; and
- letters of indemnity being obtained between the Contractor, the Council and Queen's University.

**Issues Raised in Advance by Members**

**Christmas Tree in Belvoir – Councillor Newton**

With the permission of the Chairperson, Councillor Reynolds addressed the Committee. He advised that he was seeking clarity on behalf of the Belvoir Residents' Group regarding a previous request to plant a 'living Christmas tree' at Belvoir Drive, Belvoir Estate.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services advised that, at the May meeting of the People and Communities Committee, permission had been granted to the Belvoir Residents' Group to plant 'a living Christmas tree' at Belvoir Drive and advised that procurement of this tree would take place during October and that it would be paid for by the Belvoir Residents Group.

Noted.

**Invitation to Community Rescue Service  
to Address the Committee – Councillor McCusker**

With the permission of the Chairperson, Councillor Heading, on behalf of Councillor McCusker, sought permission for the Community Rescue Service to attend a future meeting of the Committee to highlight its valuable voluntary work with the local community.

The Committee agreed to invite the Community Rescue Services to a special meeting of the Committee (Housing Issues) on 12th November to inform the Committee of its important work in the City.

Chairperson