

# People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 5th November, 2019

## MEETING OF PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Michael Collins (Chairperson);  
Councillors D. Baker, Black, Bunting,  
Corr, Donnelly, M. Kelly, Magee, McCusker,  
McLaughlin, McMullan, Newton,  
Smyth and Verner.

Also attended: Councillor O'Hara.

In attendance: Mr. R. Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services;  
Mrs. S. Toland, Director of City Services;  
Mrs J. Wilson, Business Manager; and  
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from the Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor McReynolds, Alderman McCoubrey and Councillors de Faoite and Mulholland.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 8th October were taken as read and signed as correct.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were recorded.

### **Schedule of Meetings 2020**

The Committee approved the schedule of meetings for the People and Communities Committee as outlined below and agreed that all meetings would commence at 5.15 pm:

Tuesday, 14th January  
Tuesday, 4th February  
Tuesday, 18th February (Housing)  
Tuesday, 3rd March  
Tuesday, 7th April  
Tuesday, 5th May (Housing)  
Tuesday, 12th May  
Tuesday, 9th June  
Tuesday, 4th August (Housing)  
Tuesday, 11th August  
Tuesday, 8th September

Tuesday, 6th October  
Tuesday, 3rd November (Housing)  
Tuesday, 10th November  
Tuesday, 8th December

The Committee agreed that its meeting on 3rd December, 2019 commence at the earlier time of 4.30 p.m.

### **Restricted Items**

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

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

### **Request for use of Botanic Gardens**

The Committee deferred consideration of the matter to enable a further report to be submitted:

- To include a diary of events which have already been agreed by the Council on the use of Council owned-premises and facilities and other events being put on by external promoters which are not being held on Council-owned properties; and
- Providing details of the impact of such events on Council provision and staff resources and how this might impact on other parts of the city.

### **Matters referred back from Council/Motions**

#### **Playground Equipment for Children with Disabilities**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

**1.1 The Council, at its meeting on the 2nd September 2019 considered a motion which had been moved by Alderman McCoubrey and seconded by Councillor Smyth:**

**1.2 *‘This Council recognises the need to improve play facilities for those Children with disabilities, and undertakes to engage with those in the sector who can best advice on making play facilities more accessible.***

*An audit should be undertaken of current facilities across the city and opportunities for disability improvements identified, work to be completed through the course of the current council term.'*

1.3 At the People and Communities Committee meeting on the 10th September 2019 it was recommended that Committee consider the motion and take such action as may be determined.

## 2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the work undertaken to date by the Council in providing playground equipment across our sites for children with disabilities as part of the Councils on-going Playground Improvement Programme.
- Agree the Council undertake a consultation exercise with relevant organisations who work closely with parents of children and young people with disabilities to gauge their thoughts and views on current playground facilities and what other improvements they would like to see, making them more accessible for their children.

## 3.0 Main report

3.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the current provision with regards to playground facilities for children with disabilities and our recommendation to undertake a consultation exercise with organisations who work closely with parents of children and young people with disabilities, giving consideration to children with sensory disabilities such as ADHD. The consultation will assist the Council in identifying future improvements to playground facilities, making them even more accessible for all.

3.2 Back in January 2019 the Council undertook an audit which was conducted by an Independent Playground Inspector (Register of Play Inspector International) RPII of all our playground facilities as part of a review to changing the design of our playground signage which would more clearly identify playground equipment suitable for appropriate ages and abilities.

3.3 The RPII independent Inspector's report highlighted each individual piece of playground apparatus, manufacturer's recommended age range and whether or not the unit would

be suitable for a child with a disability however it didn't include information regarding sensory requirements. (See Appendix 1 – example of individual playground/age range report) and (Appendix 2 – Example of the new playground signage).

- 3.4 The new playground signage is now in place along with the appropriate 'Age Range' stickers being attached to playground apparatus.
- 3.5 Over the past several years the Council has made significant strides to install more inclusive playground equipment as part of the Councils Playground Improvement Programme (See Appendix 3 – Example of recently installed playground which shows the variety of inclusive playground equipment). The Council continues to install inclusive equipment and for the first time the Council will be installing a specific wheelchair friendly swing seat as part of the refurbishment programme at Ormeau Park lower (See Appendix 4– Illustration of new disability friendly swing unit).
- 3.6 Several months ago the Council began a programme of retrofitting larger disability friendly swing seats within our playground sites (See Appendix 5 – Photograph of a recently retro fitted swing seat). The timeframe to install this type of swing seat in all of our playgrounds would have been two years due to the cost to purchase this type of swing seat as we have 101 playgrounds, however the Council recently applied for a grant from the Department for Communities under its 'Access and Inclusion fund' to assist the Council in its roll out of these Inclusive swing seats and if successful we should see one Inclusive swing seat installed in each of our playgrounds by 2020.
- 3.7 Key Issues
- Members are asked to note the Council's on-going commitment in providing inclusive playground equipment for children of all abilities.
- 3.8 To further improve playground facilities across the city, it is proposed that a consultation exercise be undertaken with relevant organisations who work closely with parents of children and young people with disabilities and implement improvements coming out of the consultations, subject to available funding etc.

**3.9 Financial and Resource Implications**

**There are no financial or resource implications attached to this report, however any improvements / recommendations arising from the consultation and engagement will need to be considered in terms of resource implications for the council.**

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

**None.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations and agreed also that the consultation exercise should include local community organisations which work with children with disabilities and children with special needs and the parents of the users of the facilities.

**Motion – Parenting NI’s “Parenting in the Picture” Campaign**

The Committee considered the following motion which had been proposed by Councillor Mulholland and seconded by Councillor Smyth and, in accordance with Standing Order 13(f), be referred to the Committee for consideration:

“Following on from the 20th year of Parenting Week last week, this Council recognises the vital importance of parents to society.

Further, it notes with concern that 82% of parents indicated in the most recent “Big Parenting Survey”, that they felt that parents do not get enough support.

In order to bring attention to this and to attempt to redress this, the Council formally supports Parenting NI’s ‘Parenting in the Picture’ campaign. This Council pledges to work towards implementing the promises and commitments contained in this campaign.

To do this, the Council commits to conduct an audit of existing initiatives it delivers to support parents with a view to working with the voluntary and community sector, as well as other partners, to explore if such initiatives may be improved as well as seek to bring forward new programmes to support our parents.”

The Committee noted the motion and agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting outlining how this might be facilitated, resourced and managed.

### **Motion – Action on Avoidable Winter Deaths**

The Committee considered the following motion which had been proposed by Councillor McAteer and seconded by Councillor Black. The motion had been referred to the Committee by the Council in accordance with Standing order 13(f):

“In December last year, NISRA published Excess Winter Mortality figures for the period 2017/18 which revealed the second highest recorded number of excess winter deaths in the north of Ireland since data began in 1974/75. Further, these shocking statistics recorded that the number of excess winter deaths in the north had more than doubled since 2015.

2017/18 statistics record that 1,500 people died, who were classed as Excess Winter Deaths and of these 22% or 320 people, were from the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust. These deaths are Avoidable Winter Deaths and even one is too many. Unfortunately, it is our citizens aged over 65 who are most affected, particularly those vulnerable elderly people aged 85+.

The increase in winter deaths is widely understood to be down to the flu and spells of very cold weather - yet these deaths are avoidable. A combination of high energy prices, fuel poverty, ill health, low income and poor housing can make winter a dangerous time for many older people.

As we await the NISRA figures for 2018/19 and approach the upcoming winter, this Council will do all in its power to effectively act on avoidable winter deaths. This Council welcomes the joined up multi-sectoral approach that will focus on preventing avoidable Winter Deaths through Belfast’s Community Planning Process and will also convene and facilitate a meeting of Belfast’s community, voluntary and social enterprise agencies who focus on protecting and supporting older vulnerable people, to identify, develop and support innovative programmes that can be deployed and co-ordinated to prevent avoidable deaths in our city over the upcoming winter.”

The Committee noted the motion and agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting outlining how this might be facilitated, resourced and managed.

### **Committee/Strategic Issues**

#### **Update on Review of Open Spaces and Streetscene**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

**1.1 At its meeting on the 23rd August 2019, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee noted an update report and progress achieved in relation to the City and Neighbourhood**

Service (CNS) Transition and Improvement Programme (T&IP), including the ongoing development a new Open Spaces and Streetscene Service.

1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with a further update on the progress of the development of the Open Spaces and Streetscene, and to set out next steps.

## 2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is requested to

- note the contents of the report and the progress achieved in relation to the creation of the new Open Spaces and Streetscene service since August 2019. The Committee is also asked to note the further work planned in this review.
- Members are also asked to note that this report will be presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for noting.

## 3.0 Main report

### Key issues

3.1 The development of the new Open Spaces and Streetscene (OSS) service is a priority project in the CNS Transformation & Improvement Programme. The development of this new service directly supports the delivery of the outcomes, objectives and priorities within the Belfast Agenda, Corporate Plan and the Council's Improvement plan, reflected in the OSS vision to create:

3.2 *'A service where we see it, do it, or report it. We have pride in our work, maintain environmental standards, and work together to maintain the public realm with and for our city's residents and visitors.'*

3.3 Consultation at the Open Spaces and Streetscene Management and Trade Union Sub-group has been ongoing since February 2019, and has included detailed consultation on the draft job descriptions which were set out in a detailed proposal document. Comprehensive written information and feedback has been provided to staff and Trade Unions as part of this consultation process.

3.4 Other direct and extensive engagement has also taken place with staff at all levels in the legacy services of Parks and

Street Cleansing, as well as affected staff in Resources and Fleet. This has included:

- context briefings organised for approximately 100 managers and supervisors in August 2019;
- 19 staff briefings which took place across the city during September and October 2019, reaching approximately 500 staff and;
- five staff 'surgeries' which took place across the city in late October 2019, to facilitate one to one, and small group sessions with affected staff;
- a number of management and trade union representatives participated in a two day study visit to comparator councils in Nottingham and Wakefield in October 2019, supported by the Association for Public Services Excellence (APSE).
- Staff engagement will continue over the coming months, with further staff briefings being planned for the new year.

3.5 Consultation on the new staff OSS structure and job descriptions is now complete. Transfer mechanisms to be applied to move current posts and permanent post-holders from old to new structures, are those set out in existing Council policy. Approximately 70% of the staff currently employed in the OSS legacy services of Parks and Street Cleansing will benefit from an uplift in grade and salary following their transfer onto the new structure.

3.6 Implementation of the transfer of staff will get underway in November 2019, with the structure to be fully populated by the end of March 2020, following completion all relevant recruitment processes.

3.7 A key objective of the review has been to create permanent employee opportunities, ensuring that people can avail of good jobs that pay well and provide opportunity for advancement. The new staff structure includes 600 permanent posts, and will result in a significant number of new, permanent appointments at management, supervisory and front line levels. This, in turn, will see a significant reduction in the number of temporary contracts and agency assignments used across OSS. Current temporary staff and agency assignees have been facilitated with Job Application and Interview Skills training, in advance of the recruitment of these permanent roles. It is also expected that a number of the new, front line posts will be ring-fenced for recruitment as part of the council's inclusive growth strategy, and preparatory work is ongoing in this regard.



- 3.8 The new structure includes a wider career pathway in terms of public realm cleanliness and environmental upkeep (Open Spaces and Streetscene), and will be supported by a comprehensive learning and development framework. This framework will focus, initially, on induction of staff into the new ways of working, and which will evolve to support role enrichment, staff development and effective succession planning.

**Financial & Resource Implications**

3.9 **Financial**

The department has confirmed that implementation of the changes and realignment of budgets to create permanent posts has been achieved and are included within the service's revenue estimate for 2020/21

3.10 **Human Resources**

There are no adverse human resources implications.

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

There are no adverse equality or rural needs implications."

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Next Steps to undertaking a Detailed Air Quality  
Assessment for Belfast City for nitrogen dioxide and  
fine particulate matter (PM2.5)**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

- 1.1 Members will recall that at the People and Communities Committee meeting of 8th October 2019, a report was presented to the Committee summarising current ambient air quality conditions and challenges across the city. The report also provided background information on the introduction of low emission zones. At the conclusion of the Committee, and having considered the content of the report, Members agreed that a report would be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee on how the council might undertake a detailed air quality assessment for the city, including measuring for PM<sub>2.5</sub>.

1.2 This report therefore provides an overview to Members of the various requirements and components of a detailed assessment for the city for fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) and nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), based upon the requirements of the government's Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance LAQM.TG(16) document and the various other technical guidance provided on the Defra Local Air Quality Management Support website.

1.3 This report also provides an estimate of the likely cost and duration of a detailed assessment for the city and suggests a number of elements to developing our approach to this in the recommendations.

## 2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is requested to note the contents of this report and agree to the following actions:

- This committee writes to the Permanent secretary for DAERA with an invite to address committee on the strategic policy position of the emerging concerns around air quality and on the Departmental action on achieving the Program for Government target around improving air quality in light of emerging evidence on health impacts.
- Recommend that BCC sets its own air quality ambitions in a new Air Quality Plan, that is due to be written in 2020 and to include the review of Air Quality Management Areas in light of evidence and emerging standards and agree that officers are tasked with looking at best practice and engage with other Local authorities who are progressing this agenda and seek some expert advice on the best and most effective way to achieve actions round improving air quality, so that we seek to inform solution based outcomes linked to the Belfast Agenda. As part of this process members would be invited to participate in a workshop with input from relevant knowledgeable / experienced speakers.
- Members are requested to note the estimated costs of commissioning an appropriately experienced environmental consultancy to undertake a detailed assessment for nitrogen dioxide and fine particulate matter, to note that there are also staff resources required internally to support this, and the timescales to deliver and agree that officers are to consider all the above steps to inform how this could be managed

within the revenue estimates. In light of the resource implications and cross cutting issues, this report will also be brought before the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

**3.0 Main report**

**Key Issues**

- 3.1** Members will be aware that the council has a statutory requirement to complete review and assessments, updating and screening assessments and progress reports on an annual basis in order to assess ambient quality across the city and to monitor progress towards achieving ambient air quality objectives within our four Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA).
- 3.2** Updating and screening assessments and progress reports are undertaken in accordance with the government's policy timetable as outlined within the government's LAQM.PG(NI)09 and LAQM.TG(16) publications. These reports, covering the Belfast City Council district, provide ongoing evidence of progress towards the air quality objectives by the council and relevant authorities by comparing all new monitoring data against the various air quality objectives, evaluating the impact of road traffic and other transport sources, evaluating industrial emission sources, and assessing the impact of new commercial, domestic and fugitive sources.
- 3.3** Where these annual reports indicate that there is a risk of air quality objectives not being achieved (outside of existing Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs)), the council is then required to undertake a detailed assessment. The conclusions from recent council air quality reports, including the 2019 Progress Report, have however been that the council is not required to progress towards a detailed assessment for the city. These conclusions have been formally accepted by DAERA, Defra and the government's technical assessors.
- 3.4** Members will be aware that the council last completed a detailed assessment in 2010 for the purposes of (i) evaluating the effectiveness of structural revisions to the M1 Motorway / A12 Westlink on ambient air quality; (ii) evaluating whether the City centre needed to be declared as a new AQMA for exceedences of the nitrogen dioxide annual mean objective; (iii) evaluating whether the Ormeau Road AQMA could be revoked and; (iv) determining whether the Cromac Street and Albertbridge Road Air Quality Management Area needed to be extended at Short Strand. At the conclusion of this detailed assessment, it was determined that the air quality management provisions in place at that time were appropriate. This conclusion was

formally accepted by DoENI, Defra and the government's independent technical assessors.

- 3.5 Members are advised that exceedences of the nitrogen dioxide annual mean objective within the council's existing AQMAs are being addressed principally via actions proposed by partner organisations such as DfI Roads, Translink, the Freight Transport Association and the Road Haulage Association, as detailed within the council's Air Quality Action 2015-2020.
- 3.6 It should be noted however, that under current LAQM legislative requirements, local authorities are not required to manage fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>), although Members will be aware that PM<sub>2.5</sub> is monitored in Belfast City Centre in order to assess compliance with the standards for PM<sub>2.5</sub> established via Directive 2008/50/EC of 21st May 2008 on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe. The 2018 monitored annual mean was 10 µg<sup>m</sup>-<sup>3</sup>.
- 3.7 Members will be aware that Scotland has already adopted the World Health Organisation PM<sub>2.5</sub> guideline value of 10 µg<sup>m</sup>-<sup>3</sup>, monitored as an annual mean limit and to be achieved by 2020. This obligation was introduced via the Scottish government's 2015 *Cleaner Air for Scotland – the Road to a Healthier Future* Air Quality Strategy. Some of the early actions arising from the Strategy have therefore been to establish a PM<sub>2.5</sub> monitoring network; to design, develop and implement a two-level modelling system for regional and local scales to provide evidence for appraising and identifying potential transport and planning solutions to local air quality issues and; to undertake detailed modelling of all four major cities in Scotland, covering areas associated with highest levels of poor air quality.
- 3.8 Members have now instructed officers to provide a report on how the council could undertake a detailed assessment for air quality for the city for current pollutants of concern; nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) to include monitoring for PM<sub>2.5</sub>. The concentrations of all other pollutants included within the local air quality management regime, such as carbon monoxide, sulphur dioxide and particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>), etc. have over recent years been determined to be consistently and significantly below all health based objectives and limit values to the extent that DAERA and Defra have confirmed that ambient monitoring for these pollutants in many city locations can be discontinued. For example, monitoring for sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) was discontinued in the east of the city in September 2007 and particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>) monitoring was similarly discontinued from March 2010. Moreover, the Belfast south

hydrocarbon monitoring site as discontinued in 2000 and monitoring for polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon was terminated from January 2007.

- 3.9 Having regard to the government's LAQM.TG(16) guidance, it is noted that for nitrogen dioxide, locations of concern include narrow congested streets with residential properties close to the kerb, roads with a high flow of buses and/or HGVs, new roads, roads with significantly changed traffic flows, junctions and bus and coach stations. These sources would need to be considered across the city as part of a detailed assessment. Other sources that would also need to be considered include airports, railways, industrial sources and domestic and / or other biomass burning. Accordingly, as part of any detailed assessment and to enable dispersion modelling to be completed for nitrogen dioxide for the city, detailed activity and emissions data would be required for all of the abovementioned sources. This data would normally be collected, validated and aggregated as part of the development of a detailed emissions inventory for the city. It is understood however, that DfI Roads does not presently have a sufficiently detailed transport model for the entire city and so traffic data for many roads across the city may have to be obtained from direct traffic counts. Typical criteria for screening road, industrial and domestic sources for nitrogen dioxide are provided in tables 7.1 and 7.3 of LAQM.TG(16). Once a detailed emissions inventory has been collated for the city, atmospheric dispersion modelling would need to be undertaken using this data in order to generate a nitrogen dioxide pollution map for the city. This map would facilitate identification of any locations of exceedances of the nitrogen dioxide objectives, together with the geographic extent of the exceedance. The modelled exceedances might however, have to be confirmed by additional monitoring, where no nearby ambient monitoring data exists.
- 3.10 As Northern Ireland councils are not yet required to manage PM<sub>2.5</sub> via the LAQM regime, it is noted that LAQM.TG(16) contains only limited information on PM<sub>2.5</sub> sources and interventions. LAQM.TG(16) highlights that as PM<sub>2.5</sub> is extremely small, it can travel for long distances and so as much as 50% of local concentrations may arise from sources outside the local authority boundary. Nonetheless, direct sources of PM<sub>2.5</sub> within Belfast are likely to include road vehicles, industrial emissions, biomass and domestic and commercial combustion. In addition to these direct emissions sources, PM<sub>2.5</sub> is also formed in the atmosphere from chemical reactions involving gases such as sulphur dioxide, and nitrogen oxides. Measures to reduce the emissions of these precursor gases are therefore often also beneficial in reducing concentrations of PM<sub>2.5</sub>.

- 3.11 It is likely therefore that to undertake a detailed assessment for PM<sub>2.5</sub> for the city, an emissions inventory would need to be assembled for the above-mentioned PM<sub>2.5</sub> sources so that dispersion modelling could be undertaken for the city. It is likely also that additional monitoring for PM<sub>2.5</sub> would need to be undertaken at a number of residential and other locations across the city as part of any detailed assessment in order to assess monitored compliance with the annual mean targets for PM<sub>2.5</sub> and to assist with the validation and verification of the dispersion modelling. As highlighted previously, dispersion modelling would enable the locations of any exceedances of PM<sub>2.5</sub> targets, together with the geographic extent of the exceedance to be determined.
- 3.12 Members are reminded that the recent UK Environment Bill contains a clear commitment for government to set a legally binding target for PM<sub>2.5</sub> and that DAERA will shortly commence consultation on a Clean Air Strategy for Northern Ireland. The Clean Air Strategy and the challenge of improving ambient air are both referenced and referred in the wider Environment Strategy for Northern Ireland Public Discussion Document.

**Financial implications, timelines and options.**

- 3.13 As previously advised, any decision to undertake a detailed assessment of air quality for the city would require significant investment in both staff resources and funding. It is anticipated that a suitability competent consultancy or consultants would need to be appointed via a competitive tender process. A detailed specification would also need to be agreed to inform the tender. At this time, we have sought an initial guide to the indicative costs of engaging this piece of work and have been advised that it would cost in the region of £145,000- £215,000, depending on the extent and quality of the monitoring and modelling deployed.
- 3.14 These costs are reflective of the detailed analyses that we would have to undertake for the sources highlighted in preceding paragraphs, e.g. surveys to obtain appropriate source activity data over a representative sample period, supplemented by ambient monitoring for a period of at least 12 months in order to determine compliance with annual mean targets, with this data used to inform and calibrate detailed atmospheric dispersion modelling for the city. It is anticipated that the timeframe for this project would therefore be in the order of 18-24 months, depending on the

duration of the tender process. Additionally, depending on the final works specification, and on UK Brexit progress, EU procurement thresholds may apply.

- 3.15 Members are reminded that this project has not been budgeted for in revenue estimates for the 2019/20 period or within growth estimates for 2020/21. Members are also reminded that there is no formal requirement currently from DAERA or within UK guidance for the Council to undertake this study or for DAERA to provide funding towards the study. Previous funding to support detailed and updating and screening assessments has been provided via the DAERA local air quality management or Environment Fund grant schemes.
- 3.16 We have advised this Committee, in last month's air quality report that DAERA have prepared a draft Clean Air Quality Strategy for NI, which we believe will be reflective of the direction of travel recently articulated by Members, in that it is likely to include consideration of the assessment of fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>), in line with World Health Organisation standards and the government's air quality commitments articulated within the Environment Bill. We are advised that this Strategy is likely to be released for consultation early in the new year and that it will therefore fall in line with the announcement of the Environment Bill.
- 3.17 It is likely that DAERA will need to consider how it might support councils in undertaking what are understood to be Annual Status Reports. The Council would lobby, in our consultation response, that DAERA must support Northern Ireland councils financially in any new undertakings around local air quality measurement and management. Members will need to consider however, whether the council should formally engage with DAERA in order to encourage the Department to accelerate the Strategy consultation and implementation process, given our interested position. The Council could also choose to lobby DAERA for specific funding to support our aspirations for a detailed assessment of ambient air quality for the city.
- 3.18 **Financial and Resource Implications**
- Estimated costs for completion of the detailed assessments for nitrogen dioxide and fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) for the city have been obtained from an appropriately experienced environmental consultancy. The costs has been estimated to be in the range £145,000-£215,000, depending upon the final scope and complexity of the work undertaken.

- Members are reminded that this project has not been budgeted for in revenue estimates for the 2019/20 period or within growth estimates for 2020/21.
- The duration of this detailed assessment project for nitrogen dioxide and fine particulate matter is anticipated to be in the order of 18-24 months.
- It is anticipated that in addition to the abovementioned financial resources, a significant staff contribution over the full duration of the study would be required from council, DfI Roads and DAERA staff. It is further anticipated that staff resource commitments and engagement would have to be formally obtained from these government Departments.

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

**None”**

After a lengthy discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor D. Baker,  
Seconded by Councillor Black,

That the Committee agrees to defer consideration of the matter until enable it to considered in conjunction with a Motion on the Introduction of a City Tree, which was being submitted to the Council meeting on 2nd December.

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

Accordingly, the Committee adopted the recommendations and agreed also that the Steering Group, to develop the next Air Quality Action Plan, include representatives of sustainable transport, public health and environmental groups, rather than freight transport and road haulage associations.

**Department for Infrastructure response to a Council proposal to designate Belfast as ‘car free’ 20-22 September 2020**

After discussion, the Committee agreed that the matter be referred to the Working Group on the Climate Crises, given the need to ensure the interconnectedness around these agendas, with a recommendation that it host a meeting, to which all Members of the Council would be invited, to commence initial discussions with representatives of the Department of Infrastructure and other relevant organisations/stakeholders on the designation of a car free day in 2020, with such discussions to consider the impact on residential areas close to the city.



### **Positive Animation of Parks - Open Spaces**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

- 1.1 For Members information, previous People and Communities Committee requested regular updates on ongoing work to encourage positive animation of Council parks/open spaces as a way of deterring anti-social behaviour and vandalism.
- 1.2 This emerged as a result of ongoing concerns raised with Elected Members about the impact of anti-social behaviour and vandalism in parks/open spaces and the impact of this on the positive use and animation of these spaces in communities.
- 1.3 Ongoing review of reported anti-social behaviour and feedback from Elected Members identified a small number of parks, open spaces where it was agreed a co-ordinated focus with other statutory organisations, and communities would add value. These were Falls Park/City Cemetery, Orangefield Park/Avoniel Park, Marrowbone Park, Dunville Park and Ballysillan Park.
- 1.4 Additionally, at full Council in March 2019, Elected Members requested regular updates to future People and Communities Committee on the ongoing work to positively animate these parks/open spaces and how Council managed ongoing vandalism.

#### **2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to
  - note the contents of this report and support the ongoing work to positively animate parks/open spaces

#### **3.0 Main report**

##### **Key Issues**

- 3.1 Ongoing review of local, regional and national best practice indicates that one of the most effective ways of addressing anti-social behaviour and vandalism is to positively animate parks/open spaces by creating a sense of ownership and empowerment amongst users. This includes young people, who often gather in parks/open spaces as a way to positively socialise. It is however, recognised that young people are often gathering in parks/open spaces at times when they are

closed and particularly after dark which can create additional vulnerabilities for those young people.

- 3.2 Ongoing review of reported anti-social behaviour, input from Elected Members and Council Officers has identified that the parks/open spaces, which are causing most concern in relation to serious anti-social behaviour at present, are Marrowbone Park, Falls Park/City Cemetery and Girdwood.

3.3 General Animation

Council Parks Outreach and Open Spaces and Active Living Teams work closely with local schools, youth and community groups throughout the year running positive events and activities in our parks/open spaces. This work helps create a positive relationship between participants and the parks/open spaces and increased respect and civic pride. Examples include:

- Outdoor Education Sessions
- Biodiversity Sessions
- Park Life Schools Programme
- Park Life Saturday Club
- Family Fun Days
- Growing Workshops
- Historical and Cultural Guided Walks
- Community Clean Ups

Council also works with a range of external organisations who support Councils' objective of positively animating our parks/open spaces. These include community and cultural events, Park Runs and music events.

Targeted Animation at Current Priority Sites

Marrowbone Park Millennium Park

- 3.4
- City and Neighbourhood Services provides ongoing co-ordination to animate Marrowbone Park, with recent animation taking place over four consecutive weekends in late summer 2019. Combined efforts involved Ardoyne Youth Enterprises (AYE), Ulster Rugby, Sustrans, Council Parks Outreach, Ardoyne GAA, Council Community Development and Council Sports Development. The event was called the 'Bonehills Takeover' and was aimed at promoting positive use of the park and to encourage families and young people to enjoy the park in a safe way.

3.5

- AYE supplied Outreach Youth Workers to engage with young people in and around the park to promote positive use of the park and address some of the risk taking behaviours. There was a range of events and activities planned including sports coaching; inflatables and a bicycle maintenance stand supplied by Sustrans to promote bike safety.

Falls Park / City Cemetery

3.6

- Council continues to coordinate the ongoing multi-agency response to Anti-Social Behaviour issues in the Falls Park and City Cemetery. This involves ongoing liaison with Elected Members, outreach/detached youth workers, PSNI and Translink to plan high visibility operations aimed at deterring anti-social behaviour. Additionally, Council has supported two requests from youth organisations to access the 3G football pitch to animate the park and divert young people into more positive activity such as a soccer tournament. This culminated in a football match between BCC Officers, youth workers and PSNI Officers to highlight the ongoing partnership approach to addressing ASB in the Park and Cemetery. This work all takes place at the times anti-social behaviour is most likely to happen.

3.7

- A recent request for use of the pitches over the next 6 weeks has been supported resulting in usage of the pitch on Friday/ Saturday evening by local youth providers.

3.8

- Members will be aware of the ongoing damage caused to War Graves in the City Cemetery. Council officers have met with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to discuss more proactive measures to deter such damage happening again. These measures have been discussed with senior PSNI Officers and will involve continued high visibility foot patrols (Council and PSNI) and maximising positive animation opportunities. Mobile CCTV has been deployed in the last two weeks and this will continue. Additional CCTV and lighting is also being considered but may not be feasible given the nature of the site. A site meeting with BCC's mobile CCTV contractor to scope out the work required will take place this week. Education

Authority and community/voluntary youth workers have been briefed on the Councils' serious concerns about damage to the graves and are proactively working to ensure young people in the area do not become involved in this activity.

#### Girdwood Community Hub

3.9

- Girdwood remains one of our priority areas of focus with Council Officers providing high visibility patrols, including with PSNI (along with other priority sites). The site remains complex, however Council Officers continue to work with our colleagues within the PSNI, DFC, EA and community partners to review and evaluate interventions being delivered in and around the site.

3.10

- Council also continues to provide a physical security presence with the purpose of deterring and dealing with ASB incidents inside the hub building. At present, this service is delivered 3 nights per week and we are currently engaging with the operator with a view of providing additional security across the Girdwood Site for additional visibility outside of the building and around the pitches.

3.11

- A site visit has been facilitated with the Department for Communities & PSNI to explore opportunities to design out areas being use as a 'run through' by planting additional mature trees to close these key areas. A landscape plan is currently being developed and costed and we hope to be in a position to progress this as a matter of urgency.

3.12

- Additional CCTV is currently being procured to provide additional coverage across the Girdwood site. The additional provision will be in the form of wireless CCTV and locations points have been identified in conjunction with the PSNI. The proposed solution will also allow for new CCTV cameras to be re-located should other areas around the site be identified as 'hot spot' or 'blind spots' areas.

#### Partnership Working

- 3.13 Promoting the positive use of parks/open spaces and reducing anti-social behaviour/vandalism is not something the Council can achieve in isolation and requires extremely high levels of partnership working. Partners involved include Council, PSNI, Education Authority, Youth Organisations, Community Organisations, Translink, local

schools and other revenue programmes (e.g. Urban Villages, Fresh Start, and PEACE IV).

3.14 Officers continue to work with all partners to maximise effectiveness of interventions, reduce duplication, protect Council assets and improve the quality of life for park/open space users and communities in the wider vicinity. Some further examples of how that partnership working is being progressed are detailed below:

3.15

- Ongoing serious anti-social behaviour in the Springfield Park, Springfield Dam and Invest NI Site was causing serious concerns for residents in the area and presented a risk to the success of the PEACE IV Shared Spaces and Services capital investment in the area ('Springfield Necklace'). Officers from across the Council worked to develop a co-ordinated plan of operations and community support in the wider area which included:

3.16

- A pilot civic engagement project commissioned by PEACE IV and delivered by Clonard Youth Centre and Forthspring Inter-Community Group. Both groups are delivering on site outreach work to identify those involved with the anti-social behaviour and are engaging them in cross community programmes to reduce the risk those young people will become involved anti-social behaviour again. The pilot project will run until January 2020 and if evaluated as an effective model, is likely to be commissioned for a longer period.

3.17

- In partnership with the Education Authority and PSNI, Council has begun the process of putting systems in place in West Belfast to maximise communication and partnership working between organisations. In practice, this involves weekly joined up planning of resources around priority sites at an operational level to include what quantity of resources are available, what area those resources will operate in, what times they will operate and the sharing of contact details. This has been informed by a very successful model in East Belfast (East Belfast Youth Providers Forum). This model is currently being rolled out for North Belfast with an initial cross-sectoral workshop held on 22 October 2019, which will be followed up in November 2019 with a more detailed planning workshop.

**Supporting Innovation**

- 3.18 Members will recall from Committee in June 2019, Council was in the process of completing an externally funded (Department for Economy) project working with the SME sector (including community/voluntary organisations) on opportunities to use innovation and technology in encouraging positive use and deter negative use of parks/open spaces.
- 3.19 £100,000 was secured for Phase 1 and after a short period of field testing in five parks/open spaces across the city in June 2019 (2 weeks). The field testing for each SME was generally positive and following a multi-agency review process, the Department for Economy has issued a Phase 2 letter of offer for £125K for 20/21 financial year, with further funding available (subject to satisfactory performance during 20/21) for 21/22 financial year.
- 3.20 The overall aim of the project in Phase 2 has been slightly refocussed taking in to account the Phase 1 experience. It revised aim is:
- ‘To help Belfast City Council manage safe, accessible and enjoyable parks and open spaces, whilst continuing to respect the privacy of our users’
- 3.21 As in Phase 1, all SME’s were subject to rigorous Data Protection and Privacy Impact Assessments and full legal compliance was in place throughout ensuring every individuals’ right to privacy was respected and only data directly related to the project aim was gathered. Learning from Phase 1 has resulted in a new work stream within Phase 2, which will involve parks/open spaces users and communities near our parks/open spaces to become more involved with Council and the SME’s at an early stage. The purpose of this early engagement is to better understand any concerns users and communities may have about the type of data, which is being, gathered, which will ultimately inform the Phase 2 Data Protection and Privacy Impact Assessments.
- 3.22 Party Group Briefings will be offered in November/December 2019 if Elected Members would like further detail and a Phase 2 progress report will be provided to Committee at the earliest opportunity after Phase 2 project close down in March 2020.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

3.23 **Staff Resources**

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

### **3.24 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.

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

None have been identified at present, however, this will monitored on an ongoing basis.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations and agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting to include information such as:

- a breakdown of the animation budget for each of the parks;
- who is consulted with in terms of what animation is put on; and
- the targeted animation on key dates throughout the calendar year.

### **City Greenways Workshop**

The Committee agreed to hold an all Members' workshop to discuss Greenways on a city-wide basis on 16th January, 2020 at 5.00 pm, subject to availability of proposed speakers.

## **Finance, Procurement and Performance**

### **Parks Events Small Grants Scheme**

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided information on the decisions taken by the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services, under the Authority Delegated to him, regarding the applications received in Tranche 2 for events taking place in parks between 1st October, 2019 and 31st March, 2020.

### **Update on Committee Financial Position**

The Committee noted a report which provided details on its updated current financial position and the corrective action to support an improvement.

## **Operational Issues**

### **Proposal for naming new streets and the Continuation of an existing street**

The Committee approved the following applications for naming new streets and the continuation of an existing street in the City:

<b>Proposed Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Applicant</b>
Blacks Gate Drive	Off Blacks Road, BT10	Radius Housing Assoc
Blacks Gate Park	Off Blacks Road, BT10	Radius Housing Assoc
Blacks Gate Road	Off Blacks Road, BT10	Radius Housing Assoc
Blacks Gate Green	Off Blacks Road, BT10	Radius Housing Assoc
Blacks Gate Mews	Off Blacks Road, BT10	Radius Housing Assoc
Blacks Gate Avenue	Off Blacks Road, BT10	Radius Housing Assoc
Blacks Gate Crescent	Off Blacks Road, BT10	Radius Housing Assoc

### **Proposal For Dual Language Street Signs**

The Committee approved the application for a second street nameplate in Irish at Slemish Way.

### **Reference Group on Older People**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes and the recommendations from the Reference Group on Older People meeting held on 22nd August, 2019.

### **Community and Play Centre: Seasonal Closure**

The Committee:

- i. approved a request to extend the current seasonal arrangements for BCC Community and Play Centres to be closed to the public for a defined period at Christmas 2019 and Easter 2020, subject to staff taking annual leave for any days that are not statutory holidays; and
- ii. Noted that any staff wanting to work over these periods on the non-statutory holidays would be facilitated.

Chairperson