

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 19th August, 2022

MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER AND REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor McDonough-Brown (Chairperson);
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor M. Kelly);
Aldermen Dorrian and Sandford; and
Councillors Beattie, Bradley, Bunting, Ferguson,
Garrett, Groogan, Long, Lyons, McLaughlin, McMullan,
Murphy, Pankhurst, Spratt and Walsh.

In attendance: Mr. J. Walsh, Chief Executive;
Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy;
Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes;
Ms. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and
Development;
Mr. D. Sales, Director of City and Neighbourhood
Services;
Ms. C. Sheridan, Head of Human Resources;
Mr. T. Wallace, Head of Finance;
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer; and
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Alderman Haire.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 17th June were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council, at its meeting on 4th July, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Bunting declared an interest in relation to agenda item 5b – Asset Management, on the basis that she acted as Secretary to the Belvoir Area Residents Group, which had applied to lease a portion of Council land at Belvoir Drive, and left the meeting whilst that item was being considered.

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Councillors Beattie, Garrett and McLaughlin declared an interest in respect of agenda item 8b - Requests for Use of the City Hall and the Provision of Hospitality, in that they were on the West Belfast Partnership Board, which was being recommended for the use of the City Hall. However, as those were Council appointments, they were not required to leave the meeting whilst that item was being considered.

Restricted Items

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

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

Financial Reporting – Quarter 1 2022/23

The Head of Finance submitted for the Committee's consideration a report providing information on the financial position for Quarter 1 2022/23, based upon the five step Finance Strategy which had been approved in June, 2020 to protect existing budgets from the impact of Covid-19. The continuation of this Strategy was being recommended throughout 2022/23 to again protect the financial sustainability of the Council, in what was a difficult period of unbudgeted pressures.

He reported that, at the end of Quarter 1, the financial position for the Council had shown an underspend of £2.8m, representing 6.8% of the net expenditure budget. This underspend could be attributed to employee vacancies. The Quarter 1 Departmental forecast was an underspend of £2.5m, representing 1.6% of the net expenditure budget. There was also a forecast underspend of £422k in the Covid-19 reserve fund.

He stressed that the Quarter 1 forecast did not include the significant pressures caused by the current rate of inflation and made specific reference to the 2022/23 pay award, cost of living support and a community centre utility overspend. These, together with the Committee's decision to defer the reallocation of £2.3m from the 2021/22 year-end surplus would, he confirmed, be considered in a separate report on non-recurrent allocations later in the meeting.

He went on to provide an update on the forecast reserves position, rates finalisation and the overall Investment Programme.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and granted approval to continue with the five step Finance Strategy throughout 2022/23.

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**Non-Recurrent Reallocations/
Update on Engagement with Trades
Unions on Cost-of-Living Demands**

(The Committee agreed, given that these two items were closely linked, to consider them simultaneously.)

The Committee:

- i. agreed, in response to a request from the Trades Unions, that cost-of-living payments of £666 be made in September and November to all Council staff below Chief Officer grade, at a total cost of approximately £3.5m;
- ii. agreed, in principle, to also provide cost-of-living payments to agency staff, with a report on how that might be managed to be submitted to its meeting in September;
- iii. approved a request from the People and Communities Committee for £57k to be made available to meet the utility cost increases in community centres and noted the comments of the Chief Executive that any further funding shortfalls would have to be considered in the wider context of the financial challenges facing the Council;
- iv. agreed that any in-year underspends would be set aside to meet the cost of the 2022/23 pay deal;
- v. agreed that no further reallocations or cash flow payments be considered until the Quarter 3 position was presented to the Committee in February 2023;
- vi. agreed, in response to a request from the Trades Unions, to undertake a review of pay and grading, to include the development of proposals on a pay and grading structure and consultation with the Trades Unions on harmonising the outstanding single status matters;
- vii. agreed, in response to a request from the Trades Unions, that annual leave entitlements be harmonised for all staff below Chief Officer grade; and
- viii. agreed, in light of issues which had been raised by Members around the failure by many agency staff to secure posts in the Council, that a report be submitted to a future meeting outlining ways in which they could be supported through the recruitment process.

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**Update on the Work of the Marketing
and Communications Service**

The Committee noted the contents of a report providing an update on the work of the Marketing and Communications Service for the period from January to June, 2022.

City Hall Recovery Plan - Update on Progress

The Committee noted the contents of a report providing an update on the progress being made across each of the operational areas in implementing the City Hall re-opening and recovery plan.

Update on Naming of Lagan Gateway Bridge

The Director of Physical Programmes reminded the Committee that Phase 1 of the Lagan Gateway project in South Belfast had included the construction of an iconic foot and cycle bridge. The bridge had opened officially in September, 2021 and had proven to be extremely popular, with high levels of usage.

She reported that a public competition to name the bridge had been undertaken in 2021, in line with the Council's agreed naming policy, which had been used for other similar projects. She outlined the general principles of the policy and provided details of the eight potential names which had been shortlisted by the panel, at the conclusion of the first stage of the naming process. The second stage of the process would comprise a final vote.

She reported further that a number of returns had suggested names which had fallen outside the scope of the policy. Upon review it had been discovered that, since the criteria had not been included within the communication announcing the competition, those making the suggestions had been unaware of the restrictions governing the policy.

One such suggestion, which had received a significant level of public support, had called for the bridge to be named after Noah Donohoe. Senior officers had subsequently met with Noah's mother and her legal representative to inform them of the outcome of the first stage in the naming process. It had been agreed that the Council would explore a number of options which might be reflective of Noah's life and then present these to his family.

The Donohoe family had since confirmed that they would welcome the proposal to name the bridge after Noah and had expressed their gratitude for the public's support in favour of this option. It had been pointed out that the Lagan Towpath had been a favourite place for the family to visit and that it would be a fitting legacy to name the new bridge there after Noah.

Accordingly, the Committee agreed, in view of the level of support, to set the naming policy aside on this occasion and name the Lagan Gateway Bridge after Noah Donohoe, with the final name to be agreed with the family, without the need to proceed to the second stage of the naming process.

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Complex Lives – Supporting Vulnerable Individuals

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy submitted for the Committee's consideration a report providing an update on the Complex Lives multi-agency approach which had been developed to support vulnerable people in the City.

After discussion, the Committee:

- i. noted the current status of the Complex Lives model;
- ii. agreed to commit £58K towards the Complex Lives programme, which was commensurate to the commitments from other core partners;
- iii. agreed that a further two-year commitment (2023/24 and 2024/25) of £58k be secured, in principle, to be ringfenced in budget forecasts and to be subject to future consideration as part of the revenue estimates process; and
- iv. approved the appointment of a dedicated fixed-term Programme Co-ordinator, for two-years, to help support the Council's direct involvement and leadership of the Complex Lives approach, as well as co-ordinating the strategic planning and required internal and external responses to the wide-ranging vulnerability challenges facing the City centre.

Update on Living Wage Accreditation

The Committee noted the contents of a report outlining the next steps in the Real Living Wage accreditation process and delegated authority to officers to proceed with the application to the Living Wage Foundation.

PEACEPLUS Investment Area 1.4 (Reimaging Communities)

The Committee noted the contents of a report providing an update on the recent launch of a Concept Note process by the Special European Union Programme Board for PEACEPLUS Investment Area 1.4 (Reimaging Communities), which would act as a preliminary means for potential applicants to express an interest in advance of a formal call for applications for funding.

**Recruitment of Post of Director of Finance
and Resources/Interim Arrangements pending
the Retirement of the Deputy Chief Executive/
Director of Finance and Resources**

(With the exception of the Chief Executive, the Director of City and Organisational Strategy, the Head of Human Resources, the Senior Democratic Services Officer and the

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Democratic Services Officer, all officers left the meeting whilst this item was under discussion.)

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 22nd October, 2021, it had agreed to amend the role of Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Finance and Resources, as part of a structural review, and had granted approval for the current postholder to retire on partial efficiency grounds no later than 31st October, 2022.

The Chief Executive reported that, following his appointment, the Committee had, on 15th April, approved the recruitment of a Director of Finance and Resources on a permanent basis. A recruitment exercise had commenced on 28th April, however, that had been halted at Stage 3 of the shortlisting process. He provided details in that regard and explained that, due to the failure to appoint a person, interim arrangements were required to be put in place to ensure that continuity would be maintained after the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Finance and Resources had retired and a review of the Corporate Management Tier had been completed.

Accordingly, the Chief Executive recommended that, in order to support him in his role, the Committee grant approval for the Director of Finance and Resources/Deputy Chief Executive to provide consultancy support, up to a maximum of ten days each month until March, 2023. The arrangement would, he confirmed, be fee based and would be in line with the payment made to other consultants employed by the Council.

He went on to state that a revised proposal for the role of Director of Finance and Resources would be presented to the Committee in September, along with a proposed structure and implementation plan for the Corporate Management Tier.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Matters referred back from Council/Motions

**Motion: Continuance of Hybrid Meetings –
Response from Department for Communities**

The Committee was reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 4th July, had passed the following motion on the Continuance of Hybrid Meetings, which had been proposed by the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor M. Kelly) and seconded by Councillor Bower:

“This Council supports taking measures to encourage a broader demographic to stand for, become elected and remain as local Councillors.

It recognises that hybrid meetings enable easier participation from those with young families and caring responsibilities and disabled people, amongst others, therefore, they are more likely to consider elected roles.

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The Council, therefore, supports maintaining a mixture of online and in-person access to meetings.

Notwithstanding the outcome of the recent call for evidence from the Department of Communities on Remote/Hybrid meetings, the Council will write to that Department expressing its desire for the ability to continue to hold both full Council and Committee meetings in hybrid form.”

The Chief Executive informed the Members that a response had been received from Mr. A. Carleton, Director of the Local Government and Housing Regulation Division, on behalf of the Minister for Communities.

Mr. Carleton had begun by stating that the Local Government (Meetings and Performance) Act (Northern Ireland) 2021 contained an enabling power to allow the Department for Communities to bring forward further Regulations to provide for remote/hybrid meetings, which included making permanent provision for such meetings. The Department was developing proposals for the Minister’s consideration on further regulations for remote/hybrid meetings to be made under the 2021 Act, taking account of the comments received in the recent call for evidence. A working group, with membership comprising Departmental officials and Council officers, had recently been established to assist in developing these proposals.

He had then pointed out that the Local Government (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of District Council Meetings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020, which had been made under Section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020, were due to remain in force until 24th September, 2022, as the Department had extended the date of expiry of section 78 of that Act until that date.

Mr. Carleton had concluded by stating that, subject to the Minister’s agreement, the Department for Communities intended to further extend the expiry date of Section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020, allowing the current regulations to remain in force beyond 24th September. That would allow time for the proposals for the Regulations under the 2021 Act, to be fully developed.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Motion: Care Homes and Top Up Fees
- Response from Minister of Health

The Committee was reminded that the Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 28th June, had passed the following motion on Care Homes and Top Up Fees, which had been proposed by Councillor Heading and seconded by Councillor Lyons:

“This Council notes that Residential Care of Older People is a statutory function of the Department of Health and delivered through a number of private Care Home companies. The Council also notes that costs for standard care is paid from the budget of the Department of Health. Placement in a care home can be means tested and affecting savings and

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property owned by the resident. There are some cases where top up fees are introduced and paid for by either the resident and/or family and introduces a second level of care, which profits the residential care home company. Furthermore, these top fees vary from care home and company to company and is not always reflected in the level of care or the wages of staff employed in care homes. The care of our older people is important to society and accordingly this Council calls upon the Department of Health to investigate the top up costs charged by care homes.”

The Chief Executive drew the Committee’s attention to a response which had been received from Mr. R. Swann MLA, Minister of Health.

The Minister had pointed out that the policy on charging top-up fees, or third-party charges, was set out in Departmental guidance ECCU 1/2010 ‘Care Management, Provision of Services and Charging Guidance’.

That guidance stated that Health and Social Care Trusts must contract for placements at the most competitive rate available, which it considered suitable for meeting an individual’s assessed need, even where this was not obtainable at the regional rate. Where a Trust had contracted at that rate there was no top-up.

He had explained that, should a service user select accommodation which was more expensive than other appropriate accommodation which the Health and Social Care Trust could secure at a lower rate, the Trust would facilitate that choice. However, the additional cost must be met by a third party, such as a family member or friend, which was referred to as a top-up.

The Minister had gone on to state that, whilst the aim should always be to facilitate choice for service users, Trusts had a parallel responsibility to secure the best value for money option and to protect the public funds for which they were accountable.

He had concluded by confirming that these additional charges (top-ups) related to the cost of accommodation provided by independent care providers and were set by them at a level which they deemed appropriate to reflect market prices. As such, it was not appropriate for his Department to investigate the level of these charges.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Motions – Leave Arrangements

The Committee considered the following report:

1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 Three motions were passed by the Council in 2021 relating to leave arrangements for parental bereavement leave and pay, miscarriage leave and fertility treatment leave.

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1.2 This report makes recommendations to the Committee on those motions and seeks approval to consult with Trades Unions on the recommendations set out below.

2.0 **Recommendations**

2.1 The Committee is asked to agree that the Council consults with the Trades Unions on the proposed enhanced leave arrangements as follows:

Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay

To award 10 consecutive days bereavement leave, not solely in the case of a child under 18, but for the death of a close relative.

To award 10 consecutive days full pay, not statutory pay, as a day one right with no qualifying service required.

To award 1 days paid leave to attend the funeral of an extended family member

Paid Leave for Miscarriage:

To treat miscarriage as a bereavement and offer 10 days' bereavement leave on full pay to employees who suffer a miscarriage as a day one right.

Fertility Treatment Leave:

To award 10 days full paid leave following any unsuccessful IVF treatment to employees who have undergone IVF treatment, as a day one right, in addition to the paid time off for medical appointments that already exists.

3.0 **Main Report**

3.1 **Notices of Motion**

3.2 **Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay-** proposed by Councillor Matt Collins on 4th October, 2021 states that:

“This Council welcomes legislation at committee stage in Stormont for Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay (this was in reference to the legislation for Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay which came into effect in Northern Ireland from the 6th April 2022); Notes the Coalition for Bereaved Workers concern that this bill is a

‘missed opportunity’ and ‘does not go far enough’; Will write to the Stormont Economy Committee to urge that they further the legislation on bereavement policy so that everyone who is bereaved of a close relative or partner is entitled to 2 weeks statutory bereavement leave and pay in line with the Coalition for Bereaved Workers campaign objectives; and will also undertake a review of its own bereavement policy, in conjunction with the unions, that seeks to establish 2 weeks statutory bereavement leave and pay for all Council workers in line with the Coalition for Bereaved Workers “Call to action” document.’

Under the Parental Bereavement (Leave and Pay) Bill introduced in April 2022, working parents are entitled to two weeks’ statutory leave paid at statutory flat weekly rate of £156.66 following the death of a child under 18 or a stillbirth (at least 24 weeks of pregnancy). The 2 weeks of Parental Bereavement Leave will be a ‘day one right’. To qualify for Parental Bereavement Pay, a worker must have at least 26 weeks of continuous service and earnings over the Lower Earnings Limit on the date of the bereavement.

Council employees are currently allowed up to 3 days paid bereavement leave, up to the date of the funeral, for a spouse, partner, mother, father, son, daughter, brother or sister. In other cases, the employee’s Head of Service can grant leave up to a maximum of 3 days if the employee had sole responsibility for the care of the deceased or has sole responsibility for funeral arrangements.

Employees who take sick leave due to bereavement, are sympathetically managed under the Council’s attendance policy, with discretion being considered for such absences.

It is proposed that the Council extend the statutory provisions by offering:

- 10 consecutive days’ bereavement leave, not solely in the case of a child under 18, but for the death of a close relative
- offer the 10 consecutive days’ full pay, not just statutory pay, as a day one right with no qualifying service required
- offer one days paid leave to attend the funeral of an extended family member

3.3 **Paid Leave for miscarriage** – proposed by Councillor Michelle Kelly on 1st July, 2021 states that:

“The Council recognises the emotional trauma and loss suffered by parents as a result of stillbirths and miscarriages. The Council also notes a growing number of employers across the UK and Ireland are offering paid leave to employees who have experienced or been affected by early pregnancy loss and miscarriage.

As such the Council will bring forward compassionate, fair, and progressive proposals for bereavement leave to provide leave for miscarriage and for stillbirth so employees who have been impacted do not have to use sick or annual holiday leave.”

At present, if a miscarriage happens in the first 24 weeks of pregnancy, there's no entitlement to maternity, paternity or parental bereavement leave or pay either in legislation or in the Council.

Council employees who take sick leave due to miscarriage, are sympathetically managed under the Council's attendance policy, with discretion being considered for such absences.

In the case of stillbirth (after 24 weeks of pregnancy), National Joint Council (NJC) full maternity provisions apply entitling Council employees to both leave and pay, as does paternity and shared parental leave for those who have applied for it.

It is proposed that the Council treats miscarriage as a bereavement and offer 10 days' bereavement leave on full pay to officers who suffer a miscarriage as a day one right.

3.4 **Fertility Treatment Leave** – proposed by Councillor Murphy on 21st October, 2021, states that:

“This Council recognises that 1 in 6 couples across these islands experience infertility and that receiving treatment such as IVF can bring with it stress and pressure.

This Council acknowledges that the World Health Organisation recognises infertility as a disability.

This Council further acknowledges that Council staff at present are having to take unpaid leave or annual leave to receive treatment, which is unacceptable.

In view of this, the Council will seek to implement a new leave provision for staff, which caters for those who need leave for fertility treatment and offers the same protections as sick leave.

The Council will include in any such provision a safety net period of two weeks' paid leave following any unsuccessful treatment."

It is proposed that the Council awards 10 days full paid leave to employees who have undergone IVF treatment as a day one right. This is in addition to the paid time off for medical appointments that already exists.

The Fertility Treatment motion was amended at the SP and R Committee meeting on 21st October 2021 to include the consideration of menopause leave. A Menopause Policy has been consulted on and agreed with trade unions and is being presented to Committee separately for approval.

3.5 Financial and Resource Implications

There will be an impact in terms of increased leave entitlement in the case of bereavement, miscarriage and IVF as outlined above.

3.6 Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment

Introducing such proposals should have a positive equality and good relations impact as more favourable terms are being offered to employees in the case of bereavement, miscarriage and IVF.

The Committee adopted the recommendations

Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues

Update on Belfast Region City Deal

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the progress of the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD), including an update on the Funding**

and Governance arrangements for Belfast City Council, as the Lead Authority and Accountable Body for the Deal.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- i. note the update on progress being made to agree the Contracts for Funding which are required for each of the capital projects delivered through the Deal;**
- ii. approve the revised Financial Agreement with the Treasury and Department of Finance, as set out in Appendix 1;**
- iii. note that the work to formalise permanent structures and resources to allow the Council to carry out its role as Lead authority and Accountable Body has been completed;**
- iv. note the overview on key pieces of work in relation to the Social Value, Net Zero and Sustainability elements of the Deal; and**
- v. note the update in respect of the BRCD Council Panel, as provided in Appendix 2.**

3.0 Main Report

Contracts for Funding

- 3.1 Since the last Committee update in June, intensive work has continued with government departments, departmental solicitors and partners on the development of a consistent framework for the Contracts for Funding in order to inform the individual funding agreements. This work has been guided by BCC's legal team and has now resulted in the finalisation of the first individual contract for Studio Ulster. All clauses have been agreed with back-to-back contracts signed between the Department of the Economy (DfE) and BCC as the Accountable Body and then BCC (as accountable body) with Ulster University representing a key milestone for deal delivery.**
- 3.2 Work is ongoing with Queens University Belfast for the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre (AMIC), with the contract for funding and funding agreement nearing completion. Engagement is also now progressing with the**

Department for Communities (DfC) and partners in relation to the Regeneration Projects.

- 3.3 Members are asked to note that subsequent Contracts for Funding will be developed using the same framework and agreed clauses and as agreed by the BRCD Executive Board future agreements will be made between the relevant parties without needing specific individual Board approvals. As part of the regular BRCD update reports, the Committee will be advised of progress to agree the funding agreements for each project (following business case approval).

Financial Agreement

- 3.4 The tripartite Financial Agreement between BCC, the Department of Finance (DoF) and HM Treasury sets out the financial commitments and protocols in relation to funding the BRCD. The agreement formalises arrangements between the governments and the Accountable Body that have been set-out in other deal documentation. A copy of this agreement was presented to Members at the June Committee meeting. Subsequently DoF proposed an amendment to Annex A which now contains the total financial contributions over 15 years rather than the annual profiles set out in the previous version. This will help with flexibility in financing the deal over the period to enable matching of BRCD profiles as much as possible. Members are asked to approve the updated Financial agreement attached at Appendix 1.

BRCD Programme Office

- 3.5 Members will be aware that, following the signing of the deal, Belfast City Council (BCC) took on the role of the Accountable Body ensuring that the partnership makes decisions in accordance with all legal, financial, and administrative requirements. At its June meeting the committee noted that the Programme Management Office (PMO) had been working with partners to formalise permanent structures and resources for the delivery of the deal. The committee delegated authority to the Director of Finance and Resources to formalise these structures and members are asked to note that this has now been completed.

Social Value

- 3.6 Work is continuing on the delivery of the Employability and Skills Action Plan including the social value approach for BRCD projects which will follow the Strategic Investment

Board (SIB) new 'points-based model'. To support the integration of this requirement within relevant contracts training sessions facilitated by SIB have been delivered with Project Sponsors with nearly 50 individuals completing the training to date and further sessions scheduled for late August 2022. A process for integrating and managing social value, in line with BRCD monitoring arrangements has also been developed, engagement has taken place to inform this process with BRCD sponsors and contract managers which will ensure mechanisms exist to manage social value delivery at a project, pillar and programme level. In specific reference to employability and skills related social value delivery, work is underway to provide through the BRCD Employability & Skills team a social value co-ordination service which will essentially work with contractors to connect them with appropriate interventions available through councils, colleges and universities assisting them to source the people to meet social value obligations in this area.

Sustainability / Net-Zero

- 3.7 Work has commenced on strengthening the environmental sustainability of the Deal and Members are asked to note that partners have commissioned an assessment of the decarbonisation priorities for the region. Professor Andy Gouldson, Leeds University has been appointed to produce a Belfast Region Mini Stern to develop a robust evidence base for the Belfast City Region Partners. Members will be kept updated as this work progresses.
- 3.8 The PMO has also continued to examine how Net-Zero consideration can be more effectively integrated into programme and project development and engagement has been ongoing with the Climate Commissioner and with colleagues in the Scottish Government where Net-Zero proposals are more developed. The Scottish Government City Deal Sustainable Development Manager has agreed to lead an awareness session for BRCD Partners at the end of September.

BRCD Council Panel

- 3.9 A hybrid meeting of the BRCD Council Panel was held on 22nd June, hosted by Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council. Panel Members were updated on the development of the key documents underpinning the deal and the key governance and assurance processes being put in place to support delivery. Members also discussed the emerging investment

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opportunities and contribution to tourism recovery in Northern Ireland. The minutes of the February meeting hosted by Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council were approved and are attached at Appendix 2.

- 3.10 The next meeting is to be hosted by Mid and East Antrim Borough Council on 28th September.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.11 All costs associated with the BRCD are within existing budgets.

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

- 3.12 The approach taken to develop the City Deal has been subject to independent equality screening and rural proofing and states that:

'BRCD is inherently inclusive, affording an opportunity for the region to grow in a way that will benefit the economy of Northern Ireland as a whole, thereby enhancing the lives and well-being of its citizens. If during further development of the programme it becomes apparent that there may be an adverse impact on certain groups or communities then the partnership commits to carrying out further Section 75 work and including screening and EQIAs as and when appropriate.'

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Corporate Plan 2021/22 – Year End Report

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 20th March, 2020, it had approved a new four-year Corporate Plan, covering the period from 2020 to 2024.

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy reported that, following the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, resources had been redirected towards the Council's and the City's response efforts. The focus on the delivery of the Corporate Plan had, however, been re-established in April, 2021 and an Annual Delivery Plan had been agreed by the Committee on 18th June, 2021.

He went on to explain that, whilst updates on specific priorities were presented to the appropriate Standing Committees throughout the year, it had been agreed that a year-end progress report, comparing organisational performance against the priorities committed to in the Annual Delivery Plan, would be presented to this Committee for approval. He pointed out that substantial progress had been made across the priority programmes of work and that more data driven performance targets would, in future, be

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presented to the Committee for agreement. Work was underway to develop a revised performance management framework, which would underpin the Corporate Plan, which would also be presented to the Committee prior to agreement and implementation.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and approved the year-end report for the Corporate Delivery Plan 2021/22.

Belfast Agenda Refresh – Update on Progress

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the progress of the Belfast Agenda review, including the plans to commence Phase 2 engagement in September, beginning with a proposed Members workshop on 7th September.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- a) note the progress of the development of the refreshed Belfast Agenda and supporting four-year Delivery Action Plans as set out in this report;**
- b) note the planned Phase 2 engagement, subject to endorsement by the Community Planning Partnership;**
- c) agree to commence the Phase 2 engagement with a Member Workshop to be held on 7th September, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. in the Assembly Buildings, City Centre; and**
- d) note the timeline for progressing the revised Belfast Agenda to public consultation.**

3.0 Main Report

Background

3.1 In November 2021 and March 2022, Members received an update on the emerging findings and recommendations following the Phase 1 of Belfast Agenda: Continuing the Conversation engagement process which has help inform the refresh and focus of the Belfast Agenda (BA) for the period 2022-2026. As reported at the November meeting, there was

broad agreement that the existing long-term vision and outcomes of the BA remain relevant, and the proposed priorities for focus were the things that stakeholders and communities believed community planning could help address over the next 4-year period.

- 3.2 At the SP and R Committee meeting in March, Members noted an early draft of the strategic intents and stretch goals that were being developed in collaboration with our community planning partners for each priority. Since the March meeting, a significant amount of collaborative effort has gone into further developing and refining these priorities. These are now approaching a state of readiness for wider engagement on the strategic intent, stretch goals and actions for each priority.

Refreshed Belfast Agenda – Citywide Strategy Document

- 3.3 Since it was launched in 2017, the Belfast Agenda has been a city leadership document, coalescing partners beyond the core legislative requirements of community planning with a focus on addressing key city challenges. The approach adopted has enhanced the relationship between the public, voluntary and community private sector to drive forward real change addressing inequalities and improve quality of life within and across the city.
- 3.4 The refreshed Belfast Agenda will maintain the same level of ambition and collective leadership commitment to deliver the long-term vision and outcomes previously agreed. It will be delivery and outcome focused and will be positioned as a City Strategy which will identify the major transformational programmes and investment opportunities for the city.

Community Planning Priority Actions

- 3.5 Work continues with community planning partners and wider stakeholders to unpack and understand the scope of the agreed priority areas for focus over the next four years. Underpinning and composite delivery action plans are being co-designed and agreed with partners. A core set of guiding principles have been applied in developing the action plans to test and identify the most appropriate interventions to deliver greatest impact. These include:
- *Adding clear value.* We can achieve significant gains by collaborating across our partnership and sectors in

a way we cannot through our existing single agency or thematic 'business as usual'.

- ***Impact for Belfast's people, place, economy.*** The work we deliver together will be felt in practical ways by individuals, families, communities, residents and businesses in Belfast, delivering tangible outcomes.
- ***With Belfast's Communities.*** The work we do will fully engage Belfast's residents, communities and businesses, building on their strengths and ensuring their voice is central to planning and delivery. We will work 'with and alongside' our communities, not 'To or For' them.
- ***Intelligence led priorities and action.*** We will focus our collaboration on the things that data, evidence and community insights tell us matter most to Belfast and we will deliver together in ways that evidence tells us will make a real difference.
- ***Resourcing.*** Delivery will require joint resourcing and effort, (i.e. staff time, services or investment). Should be a leadership commitment to jointly resource the initiative.

- 3.6 The draft emerging action plans remain live documents and will be subject to further discussions and refinement with Members and wider stakeholders as set out below.

Phase 2 Engagement

- 3.7 Phase 1 engagement, as previously reported, provided an opportunity for citizens and the wider voluntary and community sectors to shape the emerging strategic framework and priorities of the Belfast Agenda for the next four years. We now intend to move to phase 2 engagement with a greater focus, discussion and input around the strategic intent and scope of the priority areas, how success would be measured in terms of stretch goals and the high-level delivery action plans.
- 3.8 A cross-sectoral Belfast Agenda Review delivery subgroup had been reconvened to help develop the approach to phase 2 engagement. The group has proposed that a multi-layered approach should be adopted with a series of area, thematic, sectoral and communities of interest events scheduled. The following events are proposed and will be publicised online, via the VCSE panel network and via posters in local community-based assets and facilities.

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EVENT	DATE & TIME	VENUE
All Member Workshop	7th September 5pm – 7pm	Assembly Buildings
Community Planning Partnership	15th September 3.30pm-5.00pm	2 Royal Avenue
East Belfast	20th September 10am-1pm	Skainos Centre
Business workshop	21st September 10am-1pm	Belfast Chamber (TBC)
West Belfast	22nd September 10am-1pm	St. Comgall's Centre
City Centre Workshop	26th September 5pm – 7pm	2 Royal Avenue
Communities of Interest	29th September 5pm-7pm	City Hall, Banqueting Hall
North Belfast	11th October 10am-1pm	Girdwood
South Belfast	13th October 10am-1pm	Crescent Arts Centre
Belfast Agenda Delivery Boards	August-September	On-line

3.9 In addition, two online and facilitated engagement sessions will be organised for those that are not able to make the above events or would feel more comfortable attending an online session. Dates for these are currently being finalised. We will also continue to use a range of engagement tools, including Your Say Belfast platform, to extend the reach and enable people to input into the process.

3.10 An independent facilitator is being procured to help host the engagement events and to prepare an independent report with an analysis of the main issues raised during the sessions and how this is reflected in the refreshed Belfast Agenda and action plans.

Phase 3 Engagement - Formal Consultation

3.11 Feedback from the phase 2 engagement will be reflected in the draft strategy document and action plans. These will be brought through the Community Planning Partnership, established CPP Delivery Boards and the SP and R Committee for consideration and approval in advance of being published for a 12-week formal consultation period. Members are asked to note that an easy read version will also be created to help make the document more accessible.

Financial and Resource Implications

3.12 Any financial implications arising from this report will be covered from existing budgets.

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

- 3.13 It is recommended that the consultation and engagement activities to review the Belfast Agenda will take account of the draft Audit of Inequalities and include specific sessions with targeted harder to reach groups to ensure that equality implications are considered as part of the review process. The refreshed Belfast Agenda and action plans will also be subject to an equality screening exercise.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

All-Party Working Group on the City Centre

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Committee on the draft Terms of Reference for establishing an All-Party Working Group on the City Centre, within the context of the emerging wider city centre governance structures.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- I. agree the draft Terms of Reference for the All-Party Working Group on the City Centre, as set out in Appendix 1, and membership of Party Leaders or their nominees; and
- II. note the emerging wider city centre governance structures in the context of various independent priorities including the long-term regeneration and diversification of the city centre and vulnerability, cleanliness and safety issues.

3.0 Background and Context

- 3.1 The City Growth and Regeneration Committee at its meeting in June 2022 approved the establishment of an All-Party Working Group on the City Centre, with further details to be brought back on the Terms of Reference and membership. A further update was brought to the that Committee in August

2022 and the draft Terms of Reference were discussed at Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum on 11th August.

3.2 At the same time as this proposal coming forward for an All-Party Working Group on the City Centre, it is of relevance and to provide context to the emerging wider city centre governance to highlight the following:

- Current challenges facing the city centre focused on vulnerability, safety and cleanliness, were becoming increasingly prevalent. In response to this there has been various meetings between Council Elected Members and officers, statutory partners and various city centre stakeholders including BCTC, BIDs etc. It is recognised that it is difficult to totally separate these often-interdependent issues, however, to effectively address the significance and severity of these issues dedicated and focused governance groups are required.**
- In June 2022, the People and Communities Committee adopted a motion in relation to Cleansing Task Force, put forward at the Standards and Business Committee and agreed to establish a Cleansing Task Force, made up of Elected Members from each Political Party and Council officers. The first meeting of the Task Force took place on 29th June.**

3.3 Members will be aware the Council has been leading on a Future City Centre (FCC) Programme - a multi-faceted framework to take forward the long-term regeneration and diversification of the city centre across a number of pillars, as enclosed with the report to the CG&R Committee attached at Appendix 2. This six-pillar approach has also been considered by the Community Planning Partnership – City Development Board under the priority area of the Future City Centre. As reported through the People and Communities Committee, the City and Neighbourhood Services Department have also led on a Clean, Green, Inclusive and Safe (CGIS) City Centre Study. An emerging CGIS action plan is in draft, with city centre governance highlighted as a key immediate priority action.

Main Report

All-Party Working Group on the City Centre

- 3.4 As discussed at the City Growth and Regeneration Committee meeting on 10th August and the Party Leaders' Consultative Forum on 11th August, it is proposed that the Group be convened to provide a forum to allow, as appropriate, public and private city stakeholders, including representatives from business and community organisations, the development, tourism and cultural, housing and education sectors and BID's, to engage with Members to address the short- and longer-term challenges facing the city centre.
- 3.5 The proposed overarching role of the All-Party Working Group on the City Centre is to identify and prioritise issues and opportunities to address specific needs of the city centre with the aim of regenerating and improving the vibrancy of the city centre, linked to the council's growth aspirations and the Community Planning Partnership – City Development Board. The Working Group will not have a decision-making function, rather it will make recommendations and report to the City Growth and Regeneration, People and Communities and Strategic Policy and Resources Committees as appropriate.
- 3.6 Given the important role of the city centre as a hub for investment, culture, tourism, learning and employment, it is felt that an All-Party Working Group could help to ensure it can continue to perform these important roles for the benefit of all areas of the city to derive the benefits. Given the importance of continued public /private partnership working it could also serve as a useful forum to consider some of the matters raised via various fora such as the Renewed Ambition (public/private) Partnership; specific developer/BCC regeneration focused Reference Groups etc and seek input of Members as appropriate.
- 3.7 Members are asked to agree the draft Terms of Reference for the All-Party Working Group on the City Centre, a copy of which has been circulated, and to agree that membership will be via Party Leaders or their nominees.

Emerging wider City Centre Governance

- 3.8 In response to the emerging city centre issues and ongoing related work strands, as highlighted in Background and Context of this report, a review has been undertaken of existing mechanisms for engagement and improved

governance to bring together the various city centre related facets and ensure synergy whilst avoiding duplication and silo approaches. An overview of governance proposals was discussed at the August meeting of the CG and R Committee.

- 3.9** Members will note that the emerging governance seeks to give focus to each of the city centre priority areas to ensure that the structures and processes are in place to address the immediate challenges whilst simultaneously ensuring the long-term strategic regeneration and development of the city centre. A separate report is on the Committee Agenda in relation to a key priority within the wider city centre governance, **Complex Lives – Supporting Vulnerable Individuals**.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.10** None directly associated with this report. A separate report is being brought to this Committee in relation to **Complex Lives – Supporting Vulnerable Individuals**.

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

- 3.11** None associated with this report.”

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

Stratagem Conference

The Committee was informed that the Council had received an invitation from Stratagem to sponsor a forthcoming conference entitled ‘Future of Politics: Delivering Effective Government’, being held in Belfast on 16th September.

The Chief Executive explained that Stratagem was a public affairs consultancy firm based in Belfast which provided advice, support and services to help inform policy/strategy development and decision-making processes. It drew upon expertise and experience from across a range of sectors to inform its work.

Stratagem had stated that the conference would provide an opportunity to reflect on how the political system operated, its relationship with policy development and the wider political framework and to consider workable solutions which could deliver better outcomes for people and communities. This was the inaugural annual conference and would feature international speakers and provide a platform to showcase the City’s leadership.

The Chief Executive pointed out that the Council had been asked to consider providing sponsorship of £5k for the event, which would, if approved, be met from existing

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Departmental budgets and be commensurate to that being provided by similar organisations. The Council would, in return, receive:

- five places to attend the conference;
- a speaker place on one of the panel discussions;
- an invitation to the pre-conference dinner event on 15th September; and
- acknowledgment of its sponsorship and a promotion opportunity.

He stated that, should the Committee agree to the Council sponsoring the conference event, it was proposed that:

- i. the five places be offered to Elected Members, via Party Group Leaders;
- ii. the opportunity to participate on panel discussions be offered to the Chairperson of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee (or his nominee); and
- iii. the invitation to the pre-conference event be offered to the Chairperson of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee (or his nominee).

After discussion, the Committee agreed, in light of the financial challenges being faced by the Council currently and the limited outcomes to be derived, not to sponsor the conference. It did, however, grant approval for Council officers to discuss with Stratagem the potential for offering in kind support.

Review of Invest NI – Call for Evidence

(Mrs. L. Toland, Senior Manager (Economy), attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the following report:

1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the review of Invest NI which is currently underway, chaired by Sir Michael Lyons, and to provide details of the proposed input to the review on behalf of the Council.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- **note the ongoing review of Invest NI, including the scope and timelines**

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- **endorse the proposed Council response, as agreed by the City Growth and Regeneration Committee on 10th August and attached below; and**
- **note the likelihood of further engagement between the Review Team and the Council as the review progresses and in advance of its October 2022 publication.**

3.0 Main Report

Key Issues

- 3.1 The Independent Review of Invest NI was announced by the Minister for the Economy, Gordon Lyons, on 26th January 2022. The objective of the Independent Review is “To provide an independent assessment of Invest NI’s efficiency and effectiveness and, looking forward, its capacity to strategically align with and operationally deliver the 10X Economic Vision”.**
- 3.2 The Review Panel is chaired by Sir Michael Lyons. He is joined by Dame Rotha Johnston and Maureen O’Reilly, an independent economist. Members will recall that Sir Michael Lyons previously chaired the Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission which produced its “Reset for Growth” report in June 2021. He will re-engage with Commission members for a year one review session in September 2022.**
- 3.3 Sir Michael has significant experience across the public sector, including local government. In 2007, he undertook an extensive inquiry into the functions and funding of local government: “Place-shaping: a shared ambition for the future of local government”. He is currently Chair of the English Cities Fund.**
- 3.4 The Panel has been taking views from a range of key stakeholders since its establishment, meeting with more than 280 stakeholders through 70 engagement sessions. They have also undertaken a public consultation on the review. The current timetable for completion of the report is October 2022.**
- 3.5 As part of its engagement work, the Panel met with Party Group Leaders in early July 2022. They had an extensive discussion on a number of key areas, principally focusing on the efficiency and effectiveness of Invest NI in its role as the main economic development agency in NI and also looking at whether Invest NI was appropriately and adequately resourced and structured to support the delivery of the 10X strategy.**

3.6 In addition to the engagement with Members, the Review Panel has confirmed that it would be keen to receive further written responses from key partners. Given the importance of the working relationship with Invest NI and the need to ensure that the organisation is structured in a way that can support the future economic growth of the city, it is proposed that the response be submitted to the Review Panel, reflecting the Council's views on key areas of opportunity and challenge. It covers a number of key points, namely:

- a need to consider current budget alignment – supportive of focus on FDI but need to enhance support for entrepreneurship and innovation in support of 10x ambitions
- a commitment to building a stronger collaborative engagement between councils and Invest NI in order to enhance the referral process for businesses seeking to access support across both organisations
- a need to enhance commitments around sustainable and inclusive growth – and ensure that these are reflected in overall budget allocations as well as in ways of working – using influence to encourage positive behaviours among client businesses
- a need to explore place-based approaches to investment – good examples of how this works in other locations
- concerns at impact of recent budget cuts and apparently arbitrary approach to how these have been implemented – specific areas of concern around support for accelerator and proof of concept support that will have a detrimental impact on local businesses.

3.7 The Council has a strong working relationship with Invest NI. This is focused on a number of areas, namely:

- **Collaboration on FDI and positioning:** we work closely with Invest NI on key target markets and showcase the city as an investment location to prospective investors. The Council takes the lead (with other public and private sector partners) on the physical infrastructure investments to support FDI

- **Supporting the indigenous businesses:** the council has developed a good referral process with Invest NI. This means that companies progressing from our start-up and early-stage growth support can move into a more formal relationship with Invest NI as a client business, thereby accessing a suite of support to help in their future growth. We also work collaboratively with Invest NI and other partners (e.g. Catalyst) on joint initiatives such as Way to Scale – our targeted scaling intervention for companies that have significant growth potential
- **Reframing start-up and growth support:** one of the key areas of work at present for the council is our plan to significantly rescope the support for business starts. The ambition is to increase the overall number of start-ups as well as increasing the number of growth-focused, job-creating companies, including those that have the potential to scale. Invest NI has traditionally match-funded this activity (alongside council and ERDF resources). Our collective view is that this support needs to be revamped, with better outreach and engagement for potential entrepreneurs, moving towards a strong support offering that is commensurate with the potential of the business to grow and create jobs. Both Invest NI and the Department for Economy (DfE) have worked closely with the councils to date and consider that this new approach aligns with the 10x ambition and is in keeping with their wider plan to overhaul the support system for local businesses, based on the REAP (Regional Entrepreneurship Acceleration Programme) model that has been developed at MIT
- **City Deal development:** Invest NI is DfE's lead agency on the City and Growth Deals. It has established a team to support the progress of the business cases for key investment projects.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.8 No specific financial and resource implications associated with this report.

Equality and Good Relations Implications/ Rural Impact Assessment

- 3.9 No specific equality or good relations implications/negative rural impact.

Council Response to Invest NI Review

Draft Response

Belfast City Council is delighted to have been engaged in the consultation process to inform the Invest NI review. This has provided us with an opportunity to discuss key areas relating to the efficiency and effectiveness of Invest NI in its role and also to consider if Invest NI is appropriately and adequately resourced and structured to support the delivery of the 10X Economy. Following internal discussions relating to these matters we wish to highlight a number of key areas for opportunity and challenge through the review.

While ongoing engagement with Invest NI and Belfast City Council has been positive, the current approach to engagement is largely transactional, there is limited sense of a shared view of priorities and an associated allocation of resources to bring this forward. There is also a need for greater role clarity, there is an opportunity to use this review to reframe the roles and responsibilities across the economic development support system, in order to ensure clarity both for businesses and for delivery partners. This should also include a focus on common goals and objectives related to supporting inclusive and sustainable economic development.

Through the review there is an opportunity to reflect on how Invest NI intend to support the “inclusive growth” ambitions set out in Programme for Government and emerging 10X. There is a need for Invest NI to enhance commitments around sustainable and inclusive growth and ensure that these are reflected in overall budget allocations as well as in ways of working. There are also opportunities for Invest NI to use their role to encourage positive behaviours among client businesses.

This also presents an opportunity for Invest NI to review the need to explore place-based approaches to investment. While Invest NI has local contacts, there is no clear approach to shared planning on a local level. With falling levels of government finance, we believe a concerted effort is required to move to a new partnership between central and local government to design and resource an economic recovery plan which prioritises investment in critical local/regional infrastructure such as water, waste, roads, telecoms, skills and innovation. This investment in physical infrastructure must sit alongside the development of an ambitious and outward looking

industrial strategy, offering incentives for firms to innovate and invest in new technology, facilitating supply chain collaboration, stimulating local demand, focusing on high value sectors and incentivising employees and employers to reskill and upskill. Together, these measures have the capacity to shape the long-term resilience of Northern Ireland's firms and our regional economy.

The current budget alignment should be a key consideration through the review process. In recent years FDI investment has been a key part of jobs growth and investment, and while we are supportive of Invest NI's focus on FDI we would suggest that there is a need to review the balance and potentially enhance the level of resource and support for entrepreneurship and innovation aligned with the ambitions of 10X Economy. Consideration should also be given to the level of resource to support activity to drive export sales, the levels of businesses exporting in Belfast is relatively low and the current volume of activity is significantly lower than other regions.

In relation to budgets, we would also wish to take this opportunity to raise our concerns relating to the impact of recent budget cuts and the apparent arbitrary approach to how these have been implemented. Our specific areas of concern around support for accelerator and proof of concept support that will have a detrimental impact on local businesses, and it is unclear that 10x has been a consideration in this decision making, therefore through the review there are opportunities to better align the organisational structure to the 10X ambitions.

In more recent times councils have been progressing work to significantly rescope support for business start-ups. Our ambition is to increase the overall number of start-ups as well as increasing the number of growth-focused, job-creating companies, including those that have the potential to scale. Invest NI has traditionally match-funded this activity (alongside council and ERDF resources). Our collective view is that this support needs to be revamped, with better outreach and engagement for potential entrepreneurs, moving towards a strong support offering that is commensurate with the potential of the business to grow and create jobs. Both Invest NI and the Department for Economy (DfE) have worked closely with the councils to date and consider that this new approach aligns with the 10X ambition and is in keeping with their wider plan to overhaul the support system for local businesses, based on the Regional Entrepreneurship Acceleration Programme model that has been developed at MIT.

Belfast City Council would like to use this opportunity to highlight the need for Invest NI to commit to working in partnership with councils

to overhaul current delivery models to enable the development of an ecosystem which creates an environment in which innovative local start-ups can flourish. We would also request that Invest NI through the review maintain their commitment to match-funding shared priority investments and support ongoing discussions with DfE to revisit the funding settlement for councils in the delivery of local economic development activity. Invest NI's role in relation to this programme of work should be a key consideration through this review.

We welcome the opportunity to provide an official response to the review and in doing so wish to highlight the strong working relationship Belfast City Council has with Invest NI and the ongoing willingness to work together to support future delivery across a range of areas including:

- Collaborating on FDI and city positioning in key target markets to showcase the city as an investment location to prospective investors
- Providing support for indigenous businesses through ongoing referrals to enable new businesses to progress through supports and delivering joint initiatives such as Way to Scale in partnership with Invest NI and Catalyst
- Reframing start-up and growth support to develop a new approach which aligns with the 10X ambition and is in keeping with wider plans to overhaul the support system for local businesses
- Ongoing work to develop the City and Growth deals through the provision of support to progress of the business cases for key investment projects.

Belfast City Council is keen to continue to work with Invest NI to build on the strength of our ongoing relationship to deliver sustainable and inclusive economic growth across the City and wider region.

Should you wish to pick up on any of the issues identified within this response, please do not hesitate to get in contact.

The Committee noted the contents of the report and endorsed the foregoing response.

Menopause Policy and Guidance

The Committee was reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 3rd February, 2020, had passed the following motion on menopause awareness, which had been

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proposed by the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor M. Kelly) and seconded by Councillor Long:

“This Council resolves to work with organisations, such as Trade Unions, to ensure that Belfast City Council and its staff are Menopause Aware, have an understanding of the support available should they be concerned over symptoms which they might be experiencing, and recognises menopause as a workplace issue.”

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy reported that, in response to the motion, it had been agreed that the Council should develop a Menopause Policy and associated guidance. A subgroup of the Council’s Women’s Network Group, which had been established to progress that work, had undertaken a benchmarking exercise to assess good practice in other organisations. It had also consulted widely with the Women’s Network Group and Women’s Steering Group.

He drew the Members’ attention to the final draft policy which was being presented to the Committee for approval and confirmed that it had been agreed by both management side and the Trades Union side of the Joint Negotiation and Consultative Committee. The aims and objectives of the policy were to:

- break the stigma surrounding the menopause;
- ensure increased awareness of menopause issues among employees and managers;
- outline how employees could be supported by their managers;
- set out what employees needed to do if they are experiencing menopause symptoms that are impacting on their health, wellbeing and work;
- provide guidance on facilitating conversations between managers and staff about menopause related symptoms impacting and what managers can do to provide the necessary support;
- create an environment where women feel confident enough to raise issues about their symptoms and ask for reasonable adjustments at work, if necessary; and
- promote a greater understanding of the menopause and how employees are affected.

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy confirmed that a communication and training plan would be developed to implement the policy, when fully agreed, and an informal menopause support network would be set up, via the Women’s Network Group, to facilitate ongoing support for employees.

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He went on to remind the Committee that, at its meeting on 21st October, 2021, it had amended a motion on Fertility Treatment Leave to include menopause leave. He explained that, where an employee was absent from work due to menopause symptoms, sickness absence was dealt with sensitively through the Attendance Policy. Furthermore, through consultation with the Trades Unions, it had been agreed that the list of potential reasons for the use of discretion would be amended in the Attendance Booklet to include menopause specifically.

After discussion, the Committee approved the Menopause Policy and accompanying guidance, with:

- i. the wording in part 8.1 of the policy, requiring Council employees to *“be open and honest with their managers/HR or Occupational Health if they are struggling with menopausal symptoms and need support, to enable them to continue to be effective in their job”*, to be reviewed to correspond with the advice for managers provided within the guidance document, where the emphasis was on sensitivity, privacy and support; and
- ii. a link to be inserted at the end of the guidance document to the Menopause Support Toolkit for Employers, which had been developed by the Trades Union Congress.

France - United Kingdom Local Government Forum

The Chief Executive informed the Committee that the city of Nancy would, on 24th and 25th October, be hosting the next meeting of the France – United Kingdom Local Government Forum. The Committee, at its meeting on 24th September, 2021, had granted approval for a deputation from the Council to attend last year’s event. However, it had been cancelled.

He pointed out that the Forum would focus upon the common values linking local and regional government, in the new European and international context, as well as green transition, global challenges and local solutions. NILGA, which was involved in developing the overall programme, had confirmed that the costs of attendance of Elected Members would be recoverable. However, officer costs would be required to be met from existing Departmental budgets.

Accordingly, he recommended that, given the subject matter, the Committee approve the attendance at the event of the Chairperson and the Deputy Chairperson of the Climate and City Resilience Committee and the Director of City and Organisational Strategy, or another senior officer.

After discussion, the Committee agreed, in light of the financial challenges being faced by the Council currently, not to participate in this year’s France – United Kingdom Local Government Forum.

Ban the Box Campaign

The Committee considered the following report:

1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 To seek approval for the Council to sign up to Business in the Community's (BITC) 'Ban the Box' campaign, which lets applicants with criminal convictions know that they have a fair chance when competing for jobs in the Council.

1.2 To seek approval for the Council to demonstrate its commitment to the 'Ban the Box' campaign by publicly announcing it on relevant social media feeds.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to agree:

- that the Council signs up to BITC's 'Ban the Box' campaign and that the Chief Executive or the Head of HR provides a quote explaining why the Council has "banned the box"; and
- that the Council demonstrates its commitment to 'Ban the Box' by publicly announcing it on BCC social media and other relevant feeds.

3.0 Main Report

Background information

3.1 Belfast City Council has, for over 15 years, been committed to the fair recruitment of applicants with criminal convictions. The Human Resources Section has worked closely with the Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO) to develop detailed guidance for dealing with applicants with convictions to ensure our recruitment policies and procedures follow best practice in terms of fairness and equity for applicants with convictions.

3.2 For the past 15 years, in line with best practice from NIACRO, the question regarding applicants' criminal convictions has been removed from the Council's jobs application form and only asked of applicants who are recommended for appointment as part of the pre-employment checking process when they are required to complete a Council Disclosure of

Criminal Convictions Form. This means that any information provided by the applicant in respect of conviction(s) is not considered by the short-listing and interviewing panels and the applicant is recommended for appointment solely based on the merit principal and their ability to do the job as demonstrated at interview.

- 3.3** If a conviction is disclosed at this stage, a structured 'risk assessment' process takes place which involves a meeting with the applicant to gain additional information on the precise nature, context, and date of the conviction so that an informed decision can be taken in terms of whether an appointment should be made. It also gives the individual the opportunity to state their case and offer any mitigating circumstances that they feel should be taken into consideration. The formal risk assessment process is then documented assessing the risk and relevance of the offence against best practice guidelines.
- 3.4** If an applicant has an unspent conviction relating to a period of imprisonment of more than 6 months, the matter is escalated to a Recruitment Assurance Panel comprising a balanced panel of BCC Chief Officers. A fair and objective assessment takes place in terms of whether the conviction is materially relevant to the post that the applicant has been recommended for appointment to.
- 3.5** As well as reducing barriers to employment for applicants with convictions, the Council has participated in various outreach programmes as part of its overall commitment to employability / inclusive growth by visiting prisons and young offenders' centres to try to encourage job applications from applicants with convictions.
- 3.6** Business in the Community's (BITC) Ban the Box campaign is a public campaign that calls on employers to create fair opportunities for ex-offenders to compete for jobs, by encouraging companies to ask the conviction question at a later point in the application process. Companies that sign up to Ban the Box commit to:
- removing any tick box from job application forms that asks about criminal convictions;
 - considering applicants' skills, experience and ability to do the job before asking about criminal convictions;

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- reviewing their recruitment processes to ensure that when a candidate discloses a criminal conviction, they are given a full opportunity to explain the situation; and
 - ensuring that the circumstances of any conviction are fairly assessed against their relevance and potential risk within the role before a decision is made.
- 3.7 Business in the Community (BITC) has confirmed that the Council's recruitment processes meet all the criteria and is requesting that the Council formally signs up to their campaign. This will enable the Council to gain recognition for the work it has done over the years to reduce barriers to employment for those with convictions by providing fair access to work.
- 3.8 So far, nine employers in Northern Ireland have signed up to Ban the Box, including other public sector bodies such as the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and the NI Civil Service.
- 3.9 If the Council agrees to sign up to the Ban the Box campaign, it will be the first NI Council to do so. The Ban the Box logo will be included on the relevant section of BITC's websites for both Northern Ireland and UK. For the signing up process the Council has to provide a quote from a senior officer. The following quote from the Chief Executive will explain why the Council has "banned the box". *"At Belfast City Council, we believe that everyone deserves a second chance. Our recruitment process focuses on a person's skills, experience and ability to do the job. Having a conviction does not debar an applicant from obtaining employment with us unless, via a fair and structured risk assessment process, we feel that the conviction is manifestly incompatible with the role."*
- 3.10 This will not be used on the website but may be referred to in case studies or literature about the campaign; but only after BITC has sought permission from the Council for it to be used in the context and material that it is planning.
- 3.11 The Council also has the option of undertaking additional publicity. BITC would like the Council to promote that it has signed up to 'Ban the Box' on social media which may encourage other employers to sign up and adopt similar practices. This publicity would further encourage applicants with convictions to apply for posts within the Council and support our approach to employability/inclusive growth.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.12 There are no financial implications to this report.

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

- 3.13 There are no specific equality or good relations implications. All Council recruitment is and will continue to be based strictly on the merit principle.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Sustainable Period Products - Phase 2

The Committee considered the following report:

1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update on proposals to build on the success of the initial Period Waste Pilot Initiative (March - May 2022).

- 1.2 An update report was presented to the People and Communities Committee on 10th May. It agreed that, given the success of the initiative, a request be submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to find the budget to enable the provision of reusable sanitary products to continue to be funded and, where possible, that these products should continue to be offered free of charge or for a nominal charge at a minimum.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- i. note the contents of the report, consider the options presented within it and make a recommendation on whether the initiative should run again in-year at a smaller scale (£25,000 budget available) or whether it is content to recommend to Council that the budget be increased, on a non-recurrent basis, to run it again at a similar level (£50,000 budget – additional £25,000 required); and
- ii. consider and make a recommendation on whether a future scheme should continue to provide products free of charge on a first come, first served basis or

whether a notional charge of £5 per applicant should be applied to enable more people to avail of the scheme.

3.0 Main Report

Background

- 3.1 The aim of the Period Waste Pilot initiative was to raise awareness and encourage increased use of reusable period products. More people using sustainable rather than disposable products will have an environmental benefit as it will reduce the amount of period waste that is entering our waste stream and being landfilled, and it will also reduce plastic waste. Disposal of single use menstrual products i.e. tampons, pads and applicators generates 200,000 tonnes of waste per year in the UK¹. In addition, sanitary waste can be made of up to 90% plastic.
- 3.2 In the most recent BCC Waste Composition Study (2014) it was found that 1.87% of all miscellaneous combustible waste (the largest category of waste we collect) was of a sanitary waste nature (including other absorbent hygiene products but excluding nappies). This means each household was producing on average 3.38Kg of this type of product waste per year.
- 3.3 This project was primarily focused on waste reduction but also had the benefit of offering a sustainable and therefore more affordable choice for those who might be affected by period poverty which is an added pressure on individuals and families as a result of the current cost of living pressures.
- 3.4 The pilot scheme was launched on 30 March 22 to unprecedented applications and in less than 24 hrs demand had exceeded capacity in terms of the budget that had been identified within Council and thus had to close to further orders. Council had worked with the social enterprise, 'Hey Girls'. (www.heygirls.co.uk) to deliver the scheme, where participants could register and order reusable sanitary products online. As a result of the project we provided reusable period products to 3,159 people in the Belfast area at no cost to the individual.

¹ Calculation by Natracare 2018

- 3.5 Such was the level of demand within the 24 hour period of it going 'live' that the notional budget officers had allocated to the scheme actually had to be increased five-fold (from £10,000 to just under £50,000). Social media coverage and feedback on the scheme was also very positive. Commentary praised Belfast City Council for bringing the initiative forward. Over 95,000 people were reached through Council social media on the topic with over 225,000 people having viewed Twitter posts promoting the scheme.
- 3.6 Officers are currently evaluating the scheme and this process will likely be completed by October 2022. This will include results from a follow up questionnaire issued to those who received the items asking whether the products were used, how frequently and asking users to give a rating for both the service and the products.

In-year Funding Options

- 3.7 Officers have identified the options for members' consideration and approval:
- Option A: Run the initiative for a second time in 2022/23 financial year but at a reduced level with a smaller budget and smaller number of recipients.
 - Option B: Enhance the available budget by £25,000 to be able to run the initiative at the same level for a second time in-year.
 - For both options Members should consider and advise whether the products should continue to be offered free of charge on a first come, first served basis or whether a notional charge of £5 per applicant should be applied to enable more people to avail of the scheme.
- 3.8 Running the scheme for a second time will allow us to expand on the consultation findings and consider how we resource and deliver this, or a similar initiative, on a more longer-term basis – with a further report then brought to committee/council outlining the findings and recommended way forward later in the year (Qtr 4 period 22/23).
- 3.9 Officers have commenced early discussions with DEARA and there may be a future collaborative funding opportunity to develop and deliver the scheme in partnership with them, however whilst encouraging, conversations are at a very early stage and Officers have not been able to identify any other

external funding opportunities to support the project at present.

Financial and Resources implications

Option A:

- 3.10 Council budget - £25,000 would be made available within the existing 2022-23 Waste Awareness Budget. This level of funding would enable approximately 1,320 people to access sustainable period products if they were provided free of charge again, or if each individual was asked to pay a £5 contribution then approximately 1,845 people could participate (an additional 525 people).

Option B:

- 3.11 Add an additional £25,000 to Option A budget and match the original scheme's scope. Therefore, enabling approx. 2,700 people to participate if provided free of charge or 3,690 people to participate, if residents paid £5 toward the products. This may incur a potential overspend of £16,000 - £25,000 in the Waste Awareness Budget, unless the funding could be found elsewhere.

For reference, participants can either choose to order a Full Cycle Pack (containing 1 x reusable pantyliner, 2 x day reusable pads and 2 x night reusable pads) to the value of £21.40 per pack or a Period Cup Combo approximately £12.99 (including all associated costs).

*Assuming £25K total spend, notionally split at £20k spend Home Pack and £5K spend cups.

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

- 3.12 The pilot scheme was designed to be accessible to as many residents in the Belfast area as possible. Officers will review uptake and consider any ways to address imbalances in uptake either through education or design (e.g. applying additional criteria and/or targeting) of future programmes.

After discussion, the Committee agreed:

- i. to adopt option B, as set out within the report, that is, to enhance the available budget by £25,000 to enable the initiative to operate at the same level for a second time; and

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- ii. that products should continue to be provided free of charge on a first come, first served basis.

Physical Programme and Asset Management

Update on Physical Programme

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The Council’s Physical Programme currently includes 170 capital projects with investment of £150m+ via a range of internal and external funding streams, together with projects which the Council delivers on behalf of external agencies. This report requests a movement on the Capital Programme.

2.1 The Committee is requested to:

- **Proposed movement on the Capital Programme: Alleygating Phase 5 project - Agree that the project be moved to *Stage 2 – Uncommitted*.**

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Members will be aware that the Council runs a substantial Physical Programme. This includes the rolling Capital Programme – a multimillion regeneration programme of investment across the city which improves existing Council assets or provides new council facilities. The Council also delivers externally focused funding streams such as BIF, LIF and SOF, as well as numerous capital programmes that we deliver for central government. Our funding partners include NHLF, SEUPB Peace IV, the Executive Office via Social Investment Fund and Urban Villages, DfC, DfI, DAERA, Ulster Garden Villages and others. When appropriate, as per Covid 19 public health guidance, the Physical Programmes Department is happy to arrange site visits to any projects that have been completed.

Proposed Movement – Capital Programme

3.2 Members have previously agreed that all capital projects must go through a Three Stage process where decisions on which projects progress are taken by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. This provides assurance on the level

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of financial control and will allow Members to properly consider the opportunity costs of approving one capital project over another capital project.

Members are asked to agree to the following movement on the Capital Programme:

Project	Overview	Stage movement
Alleygating Phase 5	Next phase of the alleygates programme	Move to Stage 2 - Uncommitted

Alleygating Phase 5

- 3.3 In January 2021, the Committee agreed to add Alleygating Phase 5 as a *Stage 1- Emerging* project onto the Capital Programme in order to allow the project to be developed. A Strategic Outline Case has now been prepared for the project. Members will recall that, in March 2022, long lists of gate locations were referred to the AWGs for prioritisation. This process is now well underway and officers anticipate that the agreed locations for all four areas will be brought back in next month following the conclusion of the AWG workshops. Once locations are agreed, the project can then proceed to *Stage 3 – Committed* under the Capital programme. Members are asked to note that this project will be brought back to the Committee in due course, in line with the agreed three stage approvals process.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.4 *Financial* – £500,000 under the Capital Programme.
Resources – Officer time to deliver as required

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

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

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

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Asset Management

The Committee approved the following:

- i. Parkgate Avenue Car Park**
 - the renewal of the existing Licence Agreement with the Directors of Argento Contemporary Jewellery Ltd. for a right to pass/repass across Parkgate Avenue Car Park;
- ii. John Murray Lockhouse**
 - the variation of the existing Lease Agreement with LORAG, to include additional Council owned land, to facilitate the John Murray Lockhouse project;
- iii. Dr. Pitt Memorial Park**
 - the transfer of land from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive to the Council to facilitate the redevelopment of Pitt Park;
- iv. Cregagh Youth and Community Centre**
 - the grant of a licence to the Irish Rugby Football Union (Ulster Branch) for its occasional use of the overflow car park adjacent to Cregagh Youth and Community Centre;
- v. Blackmountain**
 - the grant of a 10-year lease to Trustees of Springfield Star for their use and occupation of c. 0.613 acres of land, comprising a mini soccer pitch, adjacent to Springmartin Play Area;
- vi. Land at Suffolk Playing Fields**
 - the retrospective grant of a licence to Suffolk Community Forum for the siting of a portacabin, to facilitate a community garden;
- vii. Land at Cregagh Green**
 - the grant of a licence to Cregagh Wanderers FC for the siting of a container for dry changing facilities;

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viii. Dundela Crescent Car Park

- the grant of a Licence to Kelly Brothers Limited for a temporary contractor's compound within Dundela Crescent Car Park; and

ix. Belvoir Drive

- the grant of a lease to Belvoir Area Residents' Group for c. 550 sq. m of open space land at Belvoir Drive for use as a community growing project.

Finance, Procurement and Performance

Update on Contracts

The Committee:

- approved the public advertisement of tenders, as per Standing Order 37a, as detailed in Table 1 below;
- approved the modification of the contract, as per Standing Order 37a, as detailed in Table 3 below; and
- noted the award of retrospective Single Tender Actions, in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions, as detailed in Table 4 below.

The Committee agreed not to approve the award of the Single Tender Actions, in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions, as detailed in Table 2 below, and requested that detailed information on the assessment of those tenders and the tendering process for Single Tender Actions generally be forwarded to Members in advance of the decision being ratified by the Council on 1st September.

The Committee agreed also that, in future, the Committee report would, for each Single Tender Action, be accompanied by the rationale behind it being recommended for approval.

Table 1: Competitive Tenders

Title of Tender	Proposed Contract Duration	Estimated Total Contract Value	SRO	Short description of goods / services
Electrical services insurance/ remedial repairs	Up to 3 years	£250,000	S Grimes	To have an electrical contractor to carry out repairs to electrical installation based on a schedule of rates to control the costs

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Framework for electrical contractors for planned maintenance minor works for electrical services	Up to 2 years	£350,000	S Grimes	New framework is to have an approved list of contractors who can compete on mini competitions over work orders for £10k to £75k
Callouts, repairs and planned maintenance of high levelling lighting	Up to 3 years	£250,000	S Grimes	To have a specialist electrical contractor to carry out repairs and maintenance works to high level lighting based on a schedule of rates to control the costs
Provision of portage services	Up to 3 years	£90,000	N Largey	To provide Council departments with portage services as and when required.
Peugeot, Citroen and Renault Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) approved parts and components, warranty support and specialist repairs	Up to 5 years	£100,000	C Matthews	To ensure that the OEM approved engineering parts and components are replaced and fitted to Peugeot, Citroen and Renault vehicles in keeping with the manufacturer warranty, operational safety terms and conditions
Emerging technology capacity building and access to finance programme for high growth sectors (Immersive, Fintech, Tech)	Up to 18 months	£140,000	J Greer	This service will help support the growth of the emerging tech sector (Immersive, Fintech etc) and provide support to them to build capacity, share knowledge and access new forms of finance such as BCC challenging funding
Sample analytical services at	Up to 3 years	£100,000	S Grimes	The tender is to enable the council to continue to comply with the sampling and

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the North Foreshore site				environmental management requirements of the NIEA Waste Management Licence LN/08/46/C/V3 of 3rd January 2017 for the site. Under Regulation 4 (6) of The Waste and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1997
Belfast City Centre Connectivity Study Phases 2 and 3 *Previously approved May 2022 for 8 months at £40,650 but has now been reviewed	Up to 12 months	£125,983	J Greer	Multi-disciplinary team in place but due to additional requirements an extension to the contract is required in order to deliver the final strategy. Specialist skills are required that are not within Belfast City Council.
Framework to support the delivery of various competitions for Business Support Programs	Up to 4 years	£6,000,000	J Greer	This framework will be designed to provide sufficient support and flexibility for the delivery of Enterprise and Business Growth programmes
T2282 - Provision of press and media photography services *Previously approved April 2022 for 3 years at £90k but has now been reviewed	Up to 4 years	£120,000	J Tully	The council has an ongoing requirement for press and media photography as part of our marcomms delivery on behalf of council
Professional contractor to engagement, management and physical delivery of	Up to 18 months	£160,000	J Greer	The project requires a local delivery organisation to work with BCC producer to identify the 4-5 local locations, partner with local organisation in the area, and oversee and

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the international residency project in partnership with British Council				administer the 5 residencies of the artists visiting NI.
A grants management system providing online application and management of grants streams *Previously approved June 2022 for 4 years at £95,518 has now been reviewed	Up to 4 years	£100,000	R Cregan	A grants management system providing online application and management of grants streams
External consultancy to assist with the development of a new IT strategy	Up to 3 months	£50,000	R Cregan	Support required in developing the Council's new IT strategy
Technical professionals providing in-depth technical research and guidance to help Digital Services advance the initiatives/ projects that support execution of the IT strategy	Up to 2 years	£53,000	R Cregan	Use proven Reference Architecture to develop technology Architecture Receive organisation-specific guidance through calls with analysts Leverage industry best practices to avoid costly mistakes Enables Digital Services to stay current with changing markets and technologies

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Table 2: Single Tender Actions

Title	Duration	Total Value	SRO	Description	Supplier
Fiat Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) approved parts and components, warranty support and specialist repairs	Up to 4 years	£40,000	C Matthews	To ensure that FIAT vehicles being used by the Council have only approved OEM parts and components replaced in all safety related vehicle areas on a like for like basis in keeping with the vehicle manufacturer terms and conditions.	FIAT Donnelly Group
Mercedes Benz Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) approved parts and components, warranty support and specialist repairs	Up to 4 years	£60,000	C Matthews	To ensure that Mercedes Benz vehicles being used by the Council have only approved OEM parts and components replaced in all safety related vehicle areas on a like for like basis in keeping with the vehicle manufacturer terms and conditions.	Mercedes Benz Truck & Van
City Hall Illuminate Replacement Luminaires	Up to 5 weeks	£43,918	S Grimes	A change from the existing manufacturer of the luminaires to any alternative would result in different	Signify Commercial UK Ltd (Phillips Lighting)

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				technical characteristic which would involve compatibility issues. This would cause significant installation, commissioning, operating and maintenance issues	
Procurement of a Local Area Energy Plan for Belfast and Queens Island *Fully funded	Up to 6 months	£110,000	J Tully	The Local Area Energy Plan approach is bespoke to Energy Systems Catapult. Energy Systems Catapult is the only supplier in the market who has the experience, knowledge and capability to provide this service.	Energy Systems Catapult

Table 3: Modification to Contract

Title of Contract	Duration	Modification	SRO	Description	Supplier
T1947 - Delivery of Peace IV Transform for Change	Up to 3 years	Additional 3 months	S Toland	This contract extension will allow the continued delivery of Project development workshops and action plan development for the remaining	The Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action

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				Transformative Leadership Programme cohorts - as part of the Transform for Change Programme (TfC).	
T2032 - Procure group residentials for groups of youth on PEACE IV programme - Lot 1 County Donegal, Lot 2 County Cavan, Lot 3 County Monaghan T2032 (b) (c) Procure group residentials for groups of youth on PEACE IV programme	Up to 6 months	Additional 6 months	S Toland	A contract extension until 31 December 2022 to provide residentials as part of the On the Right Track Sports project.	Gartan Outdoor Education and Training Centre Donegal Adventure Centre Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board Carlingford Adventure Centre Scouting Ireland Services CLG
T1953 - Provision of an employee counselling service	Up to 3 years	Additional 1 month and £30,000	J Tully	Required to enable the expiry date of the existing contract to align with the start date of the new contract	Apheideo Associates Ltd
T1963 - Delivery of a new Social Enterprise and	Up to 3 years 4 months	Additional 4 months	J Greer	In the process of setting up a new Enterprise & Business Growth Framework,	Work West Enterprise Agency

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Cooperative Programme				which will cover the future delivery of the Social Enterprise and Cooperative Support Programme. It is envisaged to be ready by the end of the year.	
T2203 - PEACE IV Youth Engagement & Civic Education Project	Up to 11 months	Additional 2 months	S Toland	Project delayed due to problems with recruitment of young people, unforeseen issues, tension between some communities, around Brexit and the Northern Ireland Protocol.	Youth Link NI
T1795 Provision of portage services	Up to 5 years	Additional 3 months and £10,000	N Largey	Modification required to extend the current portage contract whilst the new tender process is carried out	Delivery Services and Storage Ltd

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Table 4: Retrospective Single Tender Actions

Title of Contract	Duration	Value	SRO	Description	Supplier
Programming of 2 Royal Avenue	Up to 3 months	£35,000	J Greer	Request to extend the programming operator to continue their daily duties until the current tender process appoints a new venue management operator.	MayWe LLP
Operational management of 2 Royal Avenue	Up to 3 months	£35,000	J Greer	Request to extend the programming operator to continue their daily duties until the current tender process appoints a new venue management operator.	MayWe LLP
T629a - collection, storage, retrieval and destruction of office records	Up to 8 months	£37,000	N Largey	A new tender exercise was planned to be awarded by 01 August 2022 and is currently in progress however, due to the continued home working arrangements, it has not been possible to complete.	Morgan Document Security (previously, John Morgan & Son Ltd)

Equality and Good Relations

Minutes of Meeting of Shared City Partnership

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Shared City Partnership of 8th August, including the recommendations:

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PEACE IV

Secretariat

- to accept the thematic extension and budget modifications from SEUPB, as follows:
 - SSS - an extension from 31st December, 2022 to 30th June, 2023;
 - CYP - an extension from 31st December, 2022 to 31st March 2023;
 - BPR - an extension from 31st December, 2022 to 31st March 2023;
 - CYP5 - the reallocation of £12,995 of funding from external expertise to salaries;
- to uplift the planned contract by up to £5,205, due to increased venue/catering costs;
- to illuminate the City Hall on 21st September in the colours of the United Nations, to mark International Day of Peace; and
- to facilitate a visit to the Forth Meadow Community Greenway by the Causeway Coast and Glens PEACE PLUS Partnership.

Children and Young People

- CYP 1 - to realign 15 participants between lots, with Lot 1 (age 6 - 11) increasing by 15 participants and Lot 2 (age 12-16) reducing by 15 participants; and
- CYP 5 – to reclassify a total of 18 participants (12 from West Belfast 2, and 6 from East Belfast Networks) from core participants to peer participants.

Shared Spaces and Services

- with the commencing of the bridge naming in Springfield Park, there should be support from other Council officers with relevant experience in similar naming processes; and

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- the next steps for the development of the Governance Model to include Senior Managers to meet to discuss and agree the required coordination roles and resources, upon receipt of a final report.

Building Positive Relations

- BPR 6 - to agree, in principle, a further extension to November 2022 to St. Comgall's, as confirmed with the delivery partner.

Good Relations

- to approve funding towards the following projects:

BCC7: Interface Programme

- Upper North Belfast Capacity Building and Engagement Project, with North Belfast Interface Network as the lead partner for Twaddell Ardoyne Shankill Communities in Transition: £9,500; and
- East Belfast Enterprises - towards a large-scale interface engagement programme in Inner East Belfast with a number of local groups and organisations: £15,000.

BCC9: East Belfast Strategic Intervention

- East Belfast Alternatives - Enhancing Community Connections: £8,000;
- Youth Initiatives - Children and Young People Project: £2,000; and
- East Belfast Sure Start - Exploring Heritage and Culture - £2,000.

Quarter 1 Update

- to note the contents of this report, particularly the allocation of £124,275.50 to grants through the Good Relations Small Grant Scheme 22/23; and
- to note the allocation of £4,300 to the City Church Intervention project, and £12,000 to the Falls Community Council Strategic Intervention project under BCC9 by delegated authority, as previously agreed.

Part 2 - PEACEPLUS 1.1 Local Community Action Plan Update

- to agree to the recently appointed consultants Locus Management (with support from Blu Zebra) to further work up the evolving Co-design Framework for developing the PEACEPLUS Local Community Action Plan;

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- to agree that consultants attend Part 2 of the SCP meetings where PEACE PLUS is discussed from September 22 until the Plan was submitted to SEUPB to provide further updates and advice on the codesign and development of the 1.1. Co-Designed Local Community Peace Action Plan for Belfast;
- to approve the amendment to the Terms of Reference for the Shared City Partnership to include the scope of oversight and responsibility relating to the PEACE PLUS Local Community Peace Action Plan with the caveat around inclusion of the terms ‘Co-Production and Co-Design’;
- to note that a Draft Partnership Agreement would need to be drawn up to submit with the Local Community PEACE Action Plan, similar to that drawn up and signed for the PEACE IV Action Plan. Officers will consult with Legal Services regarding the terms of the agreement and this would be brought to a future Partnership meeting;
- to note that a Code of Conduct would be circulated to Members of the Shared City Partnership for signature after the August meeting;
- to note the financial allocation model for the Belfast PEACEPLUS Local Community Action Plan; and
- to note the updates from the recent Public Information Sessions and Shared City Partnership workshop.

Equality and Diversity: Quarter 1 2022-23
Screening Outcome Report/Rural Needs
Annual Monitoring Report 2021-22

The Interim City Solicitor reminded the Committee that the Council was required, under its equality Scheme, to carry out screenings of new and revised policies, to enable any impacts relating to equality of opportunity and/or good relations to be identified and addressed. An Equality Screening Outcome Report was collated on an annual basis and published on the Council’s website.

The Council had a statutory duty also, under the Rural Needs (Northern Ireland) Act 2016, to consider rural needs in the development of new policies, plans or strategies or in any service design/delivery decisions and was required to submit an annual report to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs.

Accordingly, the Committee:

- noted the contents of the Equality Screening Outcome Report for Quarter 1 of 2022/23; and

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- approved the submission of the Council’s Annual Monitoring Return to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for 2021-2022, on a holding basis, subject to it being ratified by the Council at its meeting on 1st September.

Equality and Diversity: Annual Report to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland 2021-22

The Committee was reminded that the Council was required, under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, to provide the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland with an annual report on the progress of the implementation of its Equality Scheme. With that in mind, the Interim City Solicitor submitted for the Committee’s approval the annual report for 2021/22, which outlined the progress on actions identified to promote equality of opportunity and good relations.

The Committee approved the Council’s annual report for 2021/22 for submission to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and noted that equality capacity building on the Council’s Equality Scheme would commence in the autumn and would include details of the Annual Report.

Operational Issues

Minutes of Meeting of Party Group Leaders' Consultative Forum

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

Requests for Use of the City Hall and the Provision of Hospitality

The Committee adopted the recommendations in respect of those applications received up to 6th August, as set out below, and agreed that funding be allocated to the organisers of the North Belfast Interface Network and the West Belfast Partnership Board events to enable them to provide tea/coffee and biscuits upon arrival:

NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED	CIVIC HQ RECOMMEND
2022 EVENTS						
North Belfast Interface Network	8th September, 2022	Challenging Conversations, Promoting Positive Change Award Ceremony for 60 North Belfast residents who have completed	D	No charge - Complimentary as Charity	No hospitality (Option if the Committee wishes to offer funding towards	Approve No charge No hospitality

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		the cross community Challenging Conversations course. Numbers attending - 80			Tea/Coffee and Biscuits)	
West Belfast Partnership Board	6th October, 2022	West Belfast Aisling Educational Bursary Awards Ceremony - celebration of the work of people in the bursary and encourage others into further education to improve their skill sets and the work force for business in the City. Numbers attending - 250	D	No charge - Complimentary as Charity	No Hospitality (Option if the Committee wishes to offer funding towards Tea/Coffee and Biscuits)	Approve No charge No hospitality
Polish Educational and Cultural Association	20th November 2022 <i>tbc</i>	Polish Independence Day 2022 – Celebration event to promote diversity and reflect on positive contribution of Polish community. Numbers attending - 160	C & D	No charge - Complimentary as Charity	No (supply own)	Approve No Charge No Hospitality
N I Tourist Guiding Association	2nd December 2022	Gala Dinner to celebrate 30 years of Professional Tourist Guiding in N Ireland –	C & D	No charge - Complimentary As Not For Profit	Yes, Wine Reception as significant anniversary	Approve No charge Wine Reception <i>£500 given to their chosen caterer for</i>

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		Dinner with speeches and after dinner entertainment. Numbers attending - 150				<i>wine on arrival/ dinner</i>
2023 EVENTS						
The Scout Association, Northern Ireland Scout Council	6th January 2023	Chief Scout's Award and Queen's Scout Award Presentation – 120 young people receiving awards and attending a reception. Numbers attending - 450	B & D	No charge - Complimentary as Charity	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No Hospitality
Now Group	29th March 2023	Now Graduation Ceremony - annual celebration of the work of trainees supported by the Now Group and completion of the training programme. Numbers attending - 300	D	No charge - Complimentary as Charity	No hospitality as annual event not one-off celebration	Approve No charge No hospitality
Ulster Supported Employment and Learning	31st May 2023	SEN Lunch and Graduation and Celebration 2023 for young with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities completing their time on the Training for	B & D	No charge - Complimentary as Charity	No hospitality	Approve No charge No hospitality

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		Success programme.				
		Numbers attending - 150				

Minutes of Meeting of Language Strategy Working Group

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Language Strategy Working Group of 12th August.

Minutes of Meeting of Social Policy Working Group

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Social Policy Working Group of 16th August.

Issues Raised in Advance by Members

Electric Vehicle Charging Points Strategy

At the request of Councillor Long, the Committee agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting examining the potential for increasing the number of electric vehicle charging points on Council properties and for working with the Department for Infrastructure and other relevant Departments to develop a strategy to promote the use of electric vehicles generally.

Chairperson