

People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 5th November, 2024

HYBRID MEETING OF THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

- Members present: Councillor R. Brooks (Chairperson);
Councillors Abernethy, Black, Bower, Bradley,
Bunting, Canavan, Cobain, Doherty, R-M Donnelly,
Flynn, Magee, Maghie, Maskey, McKeown,
I. McLaughlin and Verner.
- In attendance: Mr. D. Sales, Strategic Director of Neighbourhood Services;
Mrs. S. Toland, Director of City Services;
Mr. J. Girvan, Director of Neighbourhood Services; and
Mr. B. Flynn, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor M. Donnelly.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 8th October were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that the minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 4th November, subject to the following amendments, that:

- the Council agreed that the decision of the Committee of 8th October, under the heading “Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) – Proposed Annual Schedule of Charges 2025/26” be taken back to the Committee for further consideration; and
- the Council agreed that the decision of the Committee of 8th October, in relation to an application for a second street nameplate at Wellington Park Terrace, under the heading “Proposal for Dual Language Street Signage”, be taken back to the Committee for further consideration, together with other similar applications which had met the threshold for approval but had been previously deferred, following an undertaking by officers to look at international best practice and develop a mechanism to deal with such applications.

Since the decisions referred to above were subject to the call-in mechanism, the Committee noted that both items would be re-considered at the meeting scheduled for 2nd December.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor McKeown declared an interest in respect of item 3 (b), viz., ‘Healthwise and Physical Activity Referral Programme - Six-monthly Update’ in that he was employed by an organisation which was involved in the programme. Councillor McKeown left the meeting whilst the matter was under consideration.

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In respect of item 6 (b) 'Communication Boards in Council Parks', discussion ensued on the provision of a board at the Alderman Tommy Patton Memorial Park, which would be used by pupils at Mitchell House School. The Chairperson declared an interest in that she was a member of the board of governors of the school and took no part in the discussion nor decision-making in the matter.

Committee Schedule 2025

The Committee approved the following schedule of meetings for the People and Communities Committee in 2025 and agreed that all meetings would commence at 5.15 pm:

- Tuesday 14th January at 5.15 pm
- Tuesday 4th February at 5.15 pm
- Tuesday 11th March at 5.15 pm
- Tuesday 8th April at 5.15 pm
- Tuesday 6th May at 5.15 pm
- Tuesday 3rd June at 5.15 pm
- Tuesday 5th August at 5.15 pm
- Tuesday 9th September at 5.15 pm
- Tuesday 7th October at 5.15 pm
- Tuesday 4th November at 5.15 pm
- Tuesday 2nd December at 5.15 pm

Restricted

The information contained in the reports associated with the following three items was 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 items as, due to the nature of the item, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42 (4) and Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

The Committee was advised that content of restricted reports and any discussion which took place during closed session must be treated as confidential information and no such information should be disclosed to the public as per Paragraph 4.15 of the Code of Conduct.

**Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL)
Leisure Management Contract Six-monthly Update**

The Committee considered a report in respect of the above-mentioned matter.

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The Committee noted the information as set out within the report, specifically the following matters:

- the information provided at 3.2.1 in relation to contract compliance,
- the information provided at 3.2.2 in relation to key performance indicators,
- the supporting narrative at 3.2.3,
- the facility asset management monitoring information at 3.2.4; and
- the Health & Safety compliance assurances at 3.2.5.

Healthwise and Physical Activity Referral Programme - Six-monthly Update

The Committee noted the contents of a report in relation to the above-mentioned matter.

City of Belfast Crematorium Income Generation Options

The Chairperson reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 8th October, it had deferred consideration of a report which had outlined a range of options for consideration in respect of income generation at the City of Belfast Crematorium. That deferral had been agreed to enable Members to consider in greater detail the cost implications of the options.

The Committee agreed that the options set out within the report be referred to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for its consideration within the overall rate-setting process for 2025/26.

Committee/Strategic Issues

Committee Plan 2024/25 - Six-month Update

The Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services outlined the principal aspects of a report which provided a six-month update on the Committee Plan for 2024/25.

In response to a Member's query in relation to the delay which had been encountered in the recruitment of a Bio-Diversity Officer, the Strategic Director acknowledged that there had been a delay experienced in the recruitment of that post. He explained that the recruitment of the post had been subject to additional funding being secured and would be considered within the context of the overall corporate vacancy control mechanism in 2025/26.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and agreed also that representatives of the Council's HMO Service would be invited to provide a presentation at a future meeting in respect of its ongoing work.

Belfast Boxing Strategy 2024/25 – Update

(Mr. P. McGrattan, Leisure Development Manager, attended in connection with this item).

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The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting in March 2024, it had agreed to extend the Belfast Boxing Strategy to enable the delivery of an action plan for the year 2024/25. Accordingly, the Committee considered the contents of a mid-year progress report which provided details on the key performance indicators within the action plan.

In response to a question from a Member, the Leisure Development Manager undertook to provide further clarity in respect of the number of international events which had been supported through the action plan in the current year.

The Committee noted the progress to date of the annual action plan for 2024/25.

Stadia Community Benefits Initiative - Update

The Committee considered a report which outlined the six-month progress of the Stadia Communications Benefits Initiative for 2024/25.

During discussion, the Chairperson referred to the figure reported for the number of disabled participants that had partaken in the programme as set out within the section of the benefits realisation plan overseen by the Irish Football Association. In response, the Leisure Development Manager clarified that the reported figure should be considered within context, since a majority of the sessions delivered by the association in this regard would take place over the winter and spring periods.

Moved by Councillor Brooks,
Seconded by Councillor Black and

Resolved – that the Committee agrees to note the contents of the report and agrees that an invitation be extended to representatives of the Irish Football Association to present at a future meeting in respect of its work in increasing the number of disabled persons participating in the Stadia Community Benefits Initiative. In addition, the Committee agrees also that the IFA be requested to present an overview of the criteria, standards and regulations as applied for intermediate clubs in local leagues.

2026 European City of Sport – Application

The Committee considered a report which outlined proposals for Belfast to be designated 2026 European City of Sport. The Director of Neighbourhood Services explained that the bid for recognition would be made to ACES, which was a Belgian-based non-profit association which assigned such recognition in accordance with the principles of responsibility and ethics, together with improvement in the quality of life and well-being for all social classes.

The Director explained that the overall cost of the bid would be approximately £30,000, which included the bid, evaluation costs and branding rights, 50% of which would be met by the Council's leisure provider, Greenwich Leisure Limited. He added that, should Belfast be designated as European City of Sport, it would provide an opportunity to showcase the sports and leisure facilities/services provided by the Council and highlight the rich sporting heritage of the city.

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The Committee agreed that officers would progress the application and agreed further that a 'letter of intent' be submitted in advance of a formal bid submission in 2025.

All-Party Reference Group on Older People

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided an overview of the most recent work of the All-Party Reference Group on Older People and agreed that Members be authorised to nominate a party colleague to attend future meetings should they be unable to attend.

Northern Ireland Local Government Partnership on Traveller Issues

The Committee noted a report in respect of the above-mentioned matter and noted further that Councillors Bower and R-M Donnelly had been nominated to represent the Council on the Partnership for 2024/25.

Operational Issues

**Integrated Advice Partnership Fund
Additional Funding for Debt**

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The main purpose of this report is;

- To advise members of communication received from Department for Communities in relation to a proposed Integrated Advice Partnership Fund which will provide additional funding for debt advice.
- To ask members to consider the proposed approach for seeking proposals and awarding funding.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 Members are asked to note the contents of the report and approve the recommended approach for seeking and approving proposals for funding.

3.0 Main Report

Background information

3.1 Members will be aware that Council provides significant funding for advice services through the Community Support Programme (funded by Department for Communities - DfC) and through direct council funding. In September 24, DfC contacted council officials informally to provide information about a proposed Integrated

Advice Partnership Fund which will provide additional funding for debt advice.

- 3.2 DfC has a statutory requirement to provide debt advice to individuals and households in need. The debt advice levy provides the Department funding to deliver free debt advice in NI. Additional, one-off funding has become available due to HMT revisiting previous years debt levy allocations and applying a revised calculation for all the devolved nations. Therefore, this is temporary funding which will not continue beyond 2025/26.
- 3.3 At the time of writing, no formal award has been made to Council. However, in the interests of progressing this work, members are asked to consider the contents of this report which are based on the draft MOU for the Integrated Advice Partnership Fund and indicative allocation for Belfast.
- 3.4 The draft MOU outlines that the objective of the fund is to 'improve the uptake of free, independent regulated debt advice through a collaborative partnership approach'. The aim is to reach a broader section of the community who would benefit from debt advice but have not yet presented themselves to any advice services. This could include having advice partners in non-traditional advice settings to break down the barriers people have before coming forward for debt advice.

To achieve this project must:

- deliver holistic (income maximisation, debt and welfare) advice in community accessible settings such as health, education, faith-based locations.
- be a collaborative partnership with two or more organisations, one of which can supply the free, independent, FCA regulated debt advice. Projects can be led by a single organisation with the planned collaboration evidenced in their proposal.
- demonstrate improved outcomes (financial and wellbeing) for people accessing the service.
- include an aspect of face to face/in person delivery.

Proposed approach

- 3.5 Members will be aware that advice services in Belfast are currently provided through funding agreements with five area consortiums to deliver generalist advice services across all geographies (n,s,e,w, central) within the city. Council has an existing funding relationship with the 5 lead partners in each consortia which are listed below;

North – Vine Centre

South – Ballynafeigh Community Development Agency (BCDA)

East – Advice Space (East)

West – Falls Community Council

Central – Advice Space (Central)

- 3.6 Members will also be aware that CNS completed an independent review of Belfast City Council Advice Services in December 2023 which included several recommendations which members accepted and agreed that officers would work with the Belfast Advice Group to implement. This review recommended that Council retain the Consortia Structure for the delivery of generalist advice services.
- 3.7 Given the review recommendations and that the aim of this fund is to support partnerships and open new access routes for referrals, officers recommend that activity is delivered through the current consortia model and that lead organisations are asked to submit proposals that meet the outcomes of the fund. The current partners are well placed to use this funding to enhance their reach, develop new programmes and increase awareness and opportunities for people to access advice.
- 3.8 Each consortia has members from different community and advice organisations within their area and there are strong referral networks and pathways between partners. Organisations who currently deliver advice services have expertise and existing staff who can deliver appropriate advice to those in need. In addition, some partners, such as Advice Space, have relationships with organisations whose members can be particularly impacted by issues that require advice support, including Macmillan Cancer Support, Chest, Heart and Stroke and Cedar.
- 3.9 Over the past 4 years, Council has supported Social Supermarkets and delivery of recent Hardship Programmes. There has been support from officers to increase connections across different programmes and the organisations involved in delivery of activity. An event held on 29th October in City Hall, was organised in response to request from organisations that council facilitate awareness raising of existing services and promote collaboration. Our advice partners participate in this work and will use these connections to develop proposals for the Integrated Advice Partnership Fund.
- 3.10 Members should also note that the likely delivery timeframe will be from February 25 – March 26. This provides further rationale for using the existing model since development of other delivery models would impact on actual delivery time.

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- 3.11 Officers recommend that council should seek proposals from existing Lead partners within each advice consortia that will meet the aims of this Fund. These proposals will then be assessed against agreed criteria and a further report on the outcome of assessments will be brought back to committee for consideration in January 25. Once council approval has been given, funding can be issued to groups in February 25. This timeframe is based on receipt of the official MOU from DfC by end of November 24.**
- 3.12 Members are asked to note that proposals may include both area and city-wide project delivery. This is based on initial feedback from all advice leads and the fact that partner organisations must have a staff member qualified to provide regulated debt advice, this will impact on the project proposals which are developed.**

The suggested allocation for Belfast is;

24/25	25/26	Total
£160,804.82	£87,448.66	£248,253.48

DfC have confirmed that any unspent allocation in 24/25 can be carried forward to 25/26, all funds must be spent by 31st March 2026.

Members may recall that a further recommendation from the Review of Belfast Advice Services was that council consider its funding allocation towards advice services in the city. A significant issue in relation to funding advice services in the city is that there is no dedicated budget for the Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service which has been funded through in year council underspend since 2013.

Members have agreed to consider a growth bid for advice funding that will create ongoing funding for the Tribunal Service and an enhancement to existing generalist advice funding from 25/26. Council will agree the required resource and outputs for generalist and tribunal advice when the outcome of this bid is known. This growth bid is separate to the funding explored in this report as the funding in this report is for an additional area of work over a short time frame.

Officers are completing work with the Belfast Advice Group (BAG) (a consortia of all 5 lead partners) to formalise BAG governance. This will ensure accountability for advice services that are delivered collaboratively and enhance opportunities to share staff and other resources across BAG, another recommendation from the review.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.13 The administration of this fund will be conducted by existing staff, there is no financial impact for council as 100% funding is being provided by DfC.

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

- 3.14 Belfast City Council will conduct a screening exercise for this programme.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations as set out in 2.1 of the report.

Request for Events in Parks

The Committee considered the following two requests which had been received seeking permission to host events in parks:

- CIYMS Boxing Day Fun Run by Orangegrove Athletics Club at Belmont Park on 26th December 2024; and
- Belfast Photo Festival at Botanic Gardens from 5th to 30th June, 2025.

The Committee granted authority for the hosting of both events, subject to the completion of the appropriate event management plans and satisfactory terms being agreed by the Strategic Director and on the condition that the event organisers:

- resolve all operational issues to the Council’s satisfaction;
- meet all statutory requirements, including Public Liability Insurance cover, Health and Safety, and licensing responsibilities; and
- will consult with adjoining public bodies and local communities as necessary.

The Committee noted that the above decision was taken as a pre-policy position in advance of the Council agreeing to a more structured framework and policy for events, which was currently being considered in conjunction with the Council’s commercial team.

Council Litter Bin Infrastructure

The Committee considered the following report:

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

- 1.1 To update members on the litter bin infrastructure review and improvement project.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 Members are asked to note:

- (a) the update on the street litter bin improvement projects.**
- (b) that a report will be brought back to the committee on the outworkings of the various pilot initiatives (Dog Fouling bin options & smart technology option for City Hall) detailed within this report, with recommendations for next steps.**

3.0 Main Report

- 3.1 Over the past year Officers have been working to improve our street litter bin provision across the City, including rolling out pilot initiatives aimed at improving recycling. As part of this work, Officers have put in place a new litter bin provision contract which provides the Council with a wider range of options for bin provision, including access to replacement metal litter bins, a single and double polyethylene option, recycling options, replacement provision for greenways, and a post mounted option. Within the contract, the Council also reserved the right to 'add or remove items from the Contract in line with the Council's requirements. Following a procurement exercise, Safety Solutions NI were successful and were awarded the contract which has been operational since May 2024.**
- 3.2 Alongside this, Officers have been conducting a litter bin condition survey. It is hoped that data collected through this will help to inform the roll out of a full litter bin replacement programme, subject to resources being available. This programme will also consider the best options for litter bin placement throughout the city and has been designed to support the new In Cab technology programme. Officers aim to complete this survey by the end of the financial year, subject to resource availability. Final data will include a GPS map of all litter bins within the city.**
- 3.3 Members will be aware that many of our current street litter bins are either in a poor state of repair, or have been completely removed due to having become a health and safety risk. In the first instance, the Council will prioritise replacement of those bins that have been removed due to having become a health and safety hazard.**
- 3.4 Following that, those bins that are in a very poor state of repair will be replaced. Requests for new bin placement will be**

considered but will be subject to operational considerations and resource availability.

3.5 In an effort to try to minimise waste and extend the life of all of our litter bins, Officers are hoping to put in place a dedicated operational team that would have responsibility for city wide litter bin maintenance. This, along with a proposed bin replacement budget enhancement, has been submitted for consideration as part of a service growth proposal.

3.6 Litter Bin Pilot Initiatives:

(a) **Dog Fouling Waste Bins:** Members had asked Officers to considering a pilot initiative aimed at tackling Dog fouling through the provision of specific dog waste bin options. Prior to roll out, officers are undertaking a benchmarking exercise looking at best practise and operations within other Councils. A paper will be brought back to a future committee to consider the outworkings of this work, proposal areas to be included and next steps.

(b) **Smart Technology (BigBelly) Bins:** Members will have noticed that some of our traditional black metal litter bins within the grounds of city hall have been replaced with new smart technology (Bigbelly) litter bins. These bins have been installed free of charge, including maintenance, for a trial period. One general waste bin was installed within the grounds of City Hall, and a double being (general waster plus recycling) installed at Cathedral gardens, with the. Photos below of bins in situ.



- 3.7 **Benefits of Big Belly Bins and the smart technology include the elimination of windblown litter. This, along with seagulls removing litter from bins, has been an issue for some time at City Hall. They will also help to reduce collections as bins communicate ready-to-collect status and can hold 5x the capacity for traditional litter bin. Smarts and added capacity can reduce collections by over 80%. The fully enclosed bin eliminates a major food source for rats and other pests. This will be particularly welcome during the Christmas Market period. As well as these operational benefits the bins aim to enhance public space recycling options, reduced GHG Emission due to fewer collections reducing fuel consumption and GHG emissions. Crucially, these bins have great potential advertising / data revenue source which would make them a more viable option for appropriate spaces longer term.**
- 3.8 **Officers plan to extend the pilot to include a further eight bins installed with the grounds of city hall in time for the start of the Christmas market set up.**

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.9 **There are no financial or resource implications within this report. All actions to date have been covered within existing service revenue budgets.**

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

- 3.10 **There are no Equality or Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessments associated with this report.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendation as set out in section 2.1 of the report.

Proposals for Dual Language Street Signage

The Committee agreed to the erection of a second street nameplates, in Irish, at the following streets: Glenveagh Drive, Glenbawn Link, Mount Eagles, Knutsford Drive, Mill Valley Lodge, Rosapenna Drive, Hawthorn Glen and Brenda Park.

In respect of the application for a second street nameplate at Marlborough Park North, the Committee, at the request of Councillor Bunting, agreed, despite the application meeting the threshold for approval within the policy, that it be deferred to enable further consultation to be undertaken with residents.

It was noted that the aforementioned application would be re-submitted, in accordance with the Council’s decision of 4th November, as part of an overall report, together with other similar applications which had met the threshold for approval but had previously been deferred,

following an examination by officers of international best practice and the development of a mechanism to consider such deferred applications.

Renaming of a Section of Durham Street

(Councillor Kelly attended in connection with this item).

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 To consider a request to rename a section of Durham Street between Glengall Street and Hope Street

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 Based on the information presented, the Committee can either:

- grant the renaming of the section of Durham Street between Glengall Street and Hope Street to Boyne Bridge Place or
- refuse the request.

3.0 Main Report

Key Issues

3.1 The power for the Council to name streets is contained in Article 11 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (NI) Order 1995. Belfast City Council’s Street naming policy also considers requests to rename streets.

3.2 A request has been received from Blackstaff Residents Association to rename the section of Durham Street between Glengall Street and the junction with Hope Street. The proposed name is Boyne Bridge Place.

3.3 In line with the street naming policy any request for the renaming of a street must consider the impact on occupiers who reside on the street and who would be affected by the subsequent change to their address. The policy indicates that any application/request for re-naming of a street should be accompanied by an initial petition of not less than one third of residents of the street showing a positive interest in changing the street name. Following a review of the section of road being considered, the Building Control Service has concluded that there are no residents who occupy this part of the Durham Street and who would be affected by this name change, including the businesses which have access from Durham Street. Therefore, no petition is possible in the specific circumstances of this request.

- 3.4** In addition, the policy requires two thirds of the residents of the street who appear on the electoral list to be in support of the renaming. No survey has been conducted as indicated by the policy as there are no residents residing in this portion of the street and who would be affected by this proposal.
- 3.5** Officers have spoken to businesses in the Murrays Exchange building who have confirmed that while access to the building is provided from the section of Durham Street under consideration, none use this for addressing purposes.
- 3.6** The new Grand Central Station is addressed off the section of Durham Street between the Grosvenor Road and Glengall Street and is therefore not affected by the proposed renaming. Officers have also consulted with Royal Mail who have confirmed that they have no objections to the proposed name, which is not contained in the Council's Streets Register and does not duplicate existing approved street names in the city.
- 3.7** Blackstaff Residents Association have advised that the name is proposed for this section of Durham Street to preserve and promote the history of the area, due to it being the site of the Boyne Bridge, which is due to be demolished as part of the ongoing construction work at Grand Central Station.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.10** There are no Financial, Human Resources, Assets and other implications in this report.

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

- 3.11** There are no direct Equality or Good Relations implications.”

In accordance with Standing Order 42, the Chairperson invited Councillor Kelly to address the Committee in respect of the proposal to rename the section of Durham Street. Councillor Kelly informed the Members that she and several other locally-elected representatives were in support of the request submitted by the Blackstaff Residents' Association. She pointed out that the section of the street in question had, for many decades, been referred to simply as 'the Boyne Bridge' - and not Durham Street - thus the renaming would be in keeping with past and current practice.

Councillor Kelly added that, should the Committee accede to the request to adopt the name Boyne Bridge Place, it would preserve the historical significance of the Boyne Bridge and safeguard the legacy of the landmark in accordance with the views of local residents.

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Proposal

Moved by Councillor Maskey,
Seconded by Councillor Black,

That the Committee agrees to defer consideration of the renaming of a section of Durham Street to enable an Equality Impact Assessment to be undertaken in respect of the overall context of renaming streets within Belfast.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Bunting,
Seconded by Councillor I. McLaughlin,

That the proposal be amended to provide that no Equality Impact Assessment be conducted in respect of the renaming of the section of Durham Street and, accordingly, the Committee agrees that the section of the street in question be renamed Boyne Bridge Place.

On a recorded vote, ten Members voted for the amendment and seven against and it was declared carried.

For 10	Against 7
Councillors Brooks, Abernethy, Bell, Bower, Bunting, Cobain, Flynn, Maghie I. McLaughlin and Verner.	Councillors Black, Bradley, Canavan, Doherty, R-M Donnelly, Maskey and McKeown.

The amendment was thereupon put to the Committee as the substantive motion and passed.

Arising from discussion, the Director of Planning and Building Control undertook to consult with the Council's Equality Unit in respect of the requirement to undertake an EQIA regarding the renaming of streets.

Issues Raised in Advance by Members

Bryson Charitable Trust (raised by the Chairperson)

The Committee agreed to receive, at its meeting on 2nd December, a presentation from representatives of Bryson Charitable Trust regarding the social benefits which its projects delivered across the Council area.

Communication Boards (raised by Councillor Bunting)

At the request of Councillor Bunting, the Committee agreed that officers re-examine existing budgets with a view to expediting the provision of Communication Boards at the Alderman Tommy Patton Memorial Park and Taughmonagh Play Park.

Women's Safety in Belfast (raised by the Chairperson)

The Chairperson reminded the Committee that there had been a prolonged discussion on the safety of women in Belfast at the meeting of the Council the previous evening. She pointed out that both November and December were the busiest months for the hospitality and retail sectors and suggested that the Council should, in conjunction with a range of other agencies and bodies, take immediate steps to ensure that women feel safer across Belfast. She outlined a range of proposals in this regard, such as the hosting of a joint meeting with the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, to which a range of partners would be invited, to address the matter and to consider what immediate and practical steps could be put in place to enhance safety for women.

The Chairperson pointed out that, for funding to be made available in time for the Christmas period, it would be necessary for officers to examine existing budgets and present a report in this regard to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 22nd November. Such a course of action would enable funding to be approved by the Council on 2nd December, thus ensuring that any agreed plans could be implemented in time for the Christmas period.

Several Members of the Committee concurred with the comments of Councillor Brooks and welcomed the course of action outlined.

After discussion, the Committee agreed that officers would examine existing budgets and funding streams with a view to identifying initiatives to support women's safety in greater Belfast. It was agreed also that a report in this regard be submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 22nd November, for consideration.

In addition, the Committee agreed that a special meeting be convened, in conjunction with the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, to which a range of stakeholders would be invited, to consider city-wide and multi-agency initiatives to support women's safety in greater Belfast.

Chairperson