

People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 7th February, 2017

MEETING OF PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Garrett (Chairperson);
Alderman Rodgers, Sandford and McCoubrey; and
Councillors Austin, Beattie, Copeland, Corr, Heading,
Jones, Lyons, Magennis, McCabe, Newton and Milne.

Also attended: Councillor Reynolds.

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

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Alderman McKee and Councillors McCusker, Nicholl and O'Neill.

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 4th, 10th and 24th January were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st February.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor McCabe declared an interest in respect of agenda item 3 (b), viz., Sally Gardens Management Arrangements, in that he was a member of the Sally Gardens management committee.

Committee/Strategic Issues

NIHE Homeless Strategy 2017 - 2022

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

In December 2016 the Council received an invitation from the Housing Executive to contribute to a consultation in relation to its Homelessness Strategy 2017–2022 ‘Ending Homelessness Together’. Full details of the consultation are available at:

http://www.nihe.gov.uk/draft_homelessness_strategy_2017_22.pdf

1.2 The aim of the consultation is to seek views on the strategic direction Housing Executive has set out in its Strategy document.

1.3 The purpose of this report is to:

- inform Members of the Housing Executive's consultation exercise;
- seek approval of the proposed response from Council;
- subject to approval by this Committee, it is proposed that a final response is submitted to Housing Executive by 8 February 2017, with the proviso that this is subject to full Council approval at its meeting in March.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to;

Consider the draft consultation response to the Homelessness Strategy for Northern Ireland 2017–2022, 'Ending Homelessness Together' and agree the response to Housing Executive.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Key Issues

The Strategy sets out key objectives and the associated actions aimed at preventing homelessness where possible, and also to develop long term sustainable housing and support solutions for those households faced with homelessness. The Strategy supports a multi-agency approach to tackling homelessness and recognises the importance of local service delivery.

3.2 The Strategy document has four main areas to be considered, which are:

- Defining the problem of homelessness in Northern Ireland.
- The strategic context in relation to Northern Ireland, the United Kingdom and the European dimension, taking into consideration the Programme for Government 2016 – 2021 and other key policies and strategies.

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- **An evaluation of the previous Housing Executive Homelessness Strategy 2012 – 2017.**
 - **Vision, aims and objectives.**
- 3.3** The document's overarching vision is to 'end homelessness together', specifically aiming to prevent homelessness, ensure that households experiencing homelessness are supported to find suitable accommodation and support solutions as quickly as possible and to ensure a cross departmental and interagency approach to ending homelessness.
- 3.4** The Strategy sets out five key objectives with recommended short, medium and long term actions as follows:
- **To prioritise homelessness prevention.**
 - **To secure sustainable accommodation and appropriate support solutions for homeless households.**
 - **To further understand and address the complexities of chronic homelessness across Northern Ireland.**
 - **To ensure the right mechanisms are in place to oversee and deliver the strategy.**
 - **To measure and monitor existing and emerging need to inform the ongoing development of appropriate services.**
- 3.5** The draft consultation response welcomes the continued drive to prevent homelessness by addressing significant challenges which aim to provide sustainable housing solutions for everyone in need. Additionally, it reflects Council's desire to work as part of a multiagency team at every opportunity and to integrate our resources where practicable to ensure effective and collaborative delivery across Belfast. There are however key areas we would welcome greater detail on, to provide further clarity and inform how best we can become involved. These areas are fully detailed in the consultation response. The following points summarise the key areas Committee may wish to consider:
- **Council recognises that the Housing Executive has adopted a Housing First Model approach to support homeless people with chronic needs. Council welcomes this approach, which offers permanent, affordable housing to vulnerable people in our communities as quickly as possible whilst providing intensive support appropriate to their needs in order to create sustainable tenancy and avoid recurring homelessness.**

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- **The Strategy acknowledges that each client is unique and therefore has individual and, often complex needs to address homelessness. This is a crucial factor in effectively addressing homelessness and repeat homelessness. Council welcomes the Housing Executives proposal to tackle this difficult issue through the development of multidisciplinary teams. There is a specific need to support those homeless people with mental health issues and chronic drug and alcohol addictions to achieve better life outcomes. Council would welcome the provision of services which target these specific issues, through collaboration with medical health experts such as Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and Public Health Agency, thus supporting the long term prevention of homelessness.**

- **The Council understands that the housing waiting list in Belfast is 10,000 with a high number of those households experiencing housing stress. It is recognised that a sustainable housing solution will differ from household to household. A key aspect of finding the right solution will be identifying a supply of housing that is sufficiently flexible to prevent households from becoming homeless and to ensure permanent, long term accommodation can be found for those that find themselves homeless. The Council is aware that the Housing Executive is in the process of reviewing its points allocation system and looks forward to commenting on this when the proposals are put out to public consultation. The strategy will need to specifically address these points.**

- **In early 2016, Members will recall that a multi-agency action plan was developed to address many of the city centre issues, which included addressing the problem of rough sleepers and homelessness. This multi-agency team, which includes Belfast PCSP has developed a short to medium term Street Management Strategy. This strategy was agreed in June 2016 and the delivery of programmes, directly contributing to addressing the issue of homelessness and in particular rough sleeping has now commenced which includes:**
 - **Supporting the Lord Mayor’s interagency approach to tackling the issue of homelessness and the associated problems. The Lord Mayor Homeless Stakeholder forum was held in**

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November 2016 with a range of representation from across the voluntary, community and statutory sectors. Some actions included a health and homeless workshop, training and a homeless Christmas lunch. This group is due to convene again in February 2017.

- Working with key community and voluntary sector organisations to develop a media campaign, led by the community and voluntary sector groups, to raise awareness of issues relating to begging. The Begging for Change Working Group continues to meet and has planned further work around the issue of begging. The Group has agreed to commission a piece of research that will explore the reasons for and the impact of begging on the streets of Belfast. This research will support wider conversations in terms of effective intervention around the issues of begging ASB and alcohol / drug misuse.
 - Developing links with key community and voluntary sector organisations to raise awareness with rough sleepers and homeless clients about public health and safety issues.
 - Belfast PCSP continues to work with a range of community and voluntary sector organisations on the issues of rough sleeping and homelessness. Belfast PCSP is currently supporting work with the Welcome Organisation, Extern, PSNI and the Housing Executive that will enhance working relationships within the sector. Belfast PCSP is funding Extern and the Welcome Organisation to deliver rough sleeping multi-disciplinary support and outreach services. Further work is being explored with street pastors and the night-time volunteering group.
 - Engage with Belfast City Centre Management to help improve areas of the City Centre that have become hotspots for rough sleepers and homeless people.
- The Strategy states that it supports a multiagency approach to tackling homelessness that recognises the importance of local delivery. Council welcomes an unambiguous commitment to end homelessness and recognises the need for the development and delivery of a properly resourced, time bound, interdepartmental government strategy with clear priorities and outcomes. Whilst a fully coordinated approach is welcomed, there is no detail in relation to how partners will deliver on the actions set out in the Strategy.

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Further clarification is needed regarding accountability, roles and responsibilities.

- **The Strategy refers to actions which aim to achieve the Strategy objectives that have been set out. There is a need to have clear outcomes and indicators for these actions against which they can be monitored and evaluated. The Council would welcome regular updates through its Committee structure from Housing Executive senior officials in relation to progress.**
- **The actions identified in the Strategy should seek to clarify the full extent of work and programmes planned to tackle homelessness, in the short, medium and long term. The Council would welcome further opportunity to respond to the full Implementation Plan and Local Action Plans which are referred to in the Strategy.**
- **There is a need to recognise and further emphasise the important role Community Planning has in relation to the other Government departments and agencies who will need to develop and deliver targeted resources for agreed outcomes. It is recommended that multi-annual budgeting, with 3 to 5 year budgets which facilitate pipelines to programmes and increase effectiveness are considered.**
- **Following the implementation of Local Government Reform, Councils now have responsibility for the Planning function in their local areas. It will be essential that strong links continue to be forged with Council's Planning function, to ensure the most effective use of local land development is achieved to support the prevention of homelessness.**
- **It is recognised that hidden homelessness remains an issue and it is suggested that a baseline study is undertaken to fully determine the extent of homelessness in Northern Ireland. It is recommended that further commitment is encouraged through the Strategy, to capture, record, report and share data effectively in order to provide accurate, meaningful statistics which will ensure the problem of homelessness can be fully addressed.**
- **It is recognised that there is increased reliance on the private rented sector to support a reduction in homelessness. The Strategy should reflect the need for increased regulation of the private rented sector to**

protect tenants' rights and to reduce the rate of homelessness.

- Whilst there is a significant and concerning problem in relation to chronic homelessness and rough sleeping, evidence suggests that there are less than ten people in Belfast who are rough sleepers. Destitute asylum seekers have no entitlement to any accommodation however it is noted that this issue is not referred to in the Strategy. Given this, there is therefore a need to ensure that people who are here entirely legally, are not allowed to become homeless, as a direct result of Government policy.

3.6 Housing Executive has developed a Housing Solutions and Support model that aims to provide person centred services, which are tailored to meet the needs of individual customers and supports them to achieve sustainable housing solutions. It is understood that the Housing Executive has been invited to attend a future meeting of the Council's People and Communities Committee to provide information on the model and its practical operation in local service delivery.

3.7 HR Implications

There are no HR implications to report.

3.8 Financial & Resource Implications

There are no financial or resource implications to report.

3.9 Equality or Good Relations Implications

There are no equality or good relations implications to report."

A Member raised a significant number of amendments which she asked the Committee to consider.

Following consideration the Committee agreed not to accept the amendments as it felt it had not been given adequate time to consider the detailed submissions within the context of the consultation response.

The Committee endorsed the draft response, available on the Council's website [here](#), to the Housing Executive in relation to its Homelessness Strategy 2017-2022 'Ending Homelessness Together'. It was noted that, in order to meet the deadline of 8th February, it would be submitted with the codicil that it would be subject to ratification by the Council.

**Children's and Young People's Strategy
2017 - 2027 - consultation response**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to make Members aware of the Department of Education's consultation on the Children and Young People's Strategy and to seek Members' approval of the Council's draft response.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to;

- **Consider the draft response and approve its submission to the Department of Education, subject to any comments or amendment provided, with the proviso that the response is subject to full Council approval at its meeting in March 2017.**

3.0 Main report

Background

3.1 The Department of Education is currently consulting on the Children and Young People's Strategy; the consultation period commenced on Monday 19th December 2016 and will run until 5pm on Monday 27th February 2017.

3.2 Members are also advised that officers from the Children and Young People Unit have had ongoing discussions with representatives from the Department of Education during the development stage of the draft strategy.

Summary of draft strategy

3.3 The draft strategy is designed to improve the well-being of all children and young people living in Northern Ireland.

3.4 The Programme for Government (PfG) identifies that a key desired outcome is 'giving our children and young people the best start in life' - the Strategy states that it is a key component to achieve this and that it sets out a direction of travel for how it wants the lives of children and young people to improve.

- 3.5** The Strategy seeks to build upon the many positive outcomes children experience whilst also focusing on areas of concern where outcomes are poorer or specific groups of children and young people face barriers to positive outcomes.
- 3.6** PfG has established the budget priorities which will reflect and drive the Executive's improvement agenda. Within this context funding for this Strategy will come from within departmental budget allocations.
- 3.7** The Strategy proposes the following eight outcomes:
- Children and young people are physically and mentally healthy
 - Children and young people enjoy play and leisure
 - Children and young people learn and achieve
 - Children and young people live in safety and stability
 - Children and young people experience economic and environmental well-being
 - Children and young people make a positive contribution to society
 - Children and young people live in a society which respects their rights
 - Children and young people live in a society in which equality of opportunity and good relations are promoted
- 3.8** For each of the eight outcomes, the consultation response asks:
- Based on evidence, where is the greatest effort needed?
 - How do we know if we are achieving the outcome? (Proposed indicators)

Draft Response

- 3.9** A summary of the key issues are outlined below. As the closing date for responses is prior to the March Council meeting it is proposed that the response, subject to any comments or amendments from Members, be submitted with the caveat that it is still subject to ratification at the full Council meeting.
- 3.10** The Council welcomes the strategy and agrees with its proposed aim, key principles and the new structures that will oversee its delivery. We demonstrate how it fits closely with the Belfast Agenda and the work we are doing in the area and highlight the work of the Youth Forum. We suggest that further detail on how the strategy will be reviewed and

clarification around how Councils will fit into new structures would be useful.

Children and young people are physically and mentally healthy

- 3.11 We agree with all of the areas and indicators proposed under this outcome. We highlight the work and programmes we are delivering in these areas through our Play, Community and Leisure Centres and Leisure Development Unit.

Children and young people enjoy play and leisure

- 3.12 We agree with all of the areas and indicators proposed under this outcome. We highlight the work and programmes we are delivering in these areas and in particular initiatives to support children and young people with a disability and those living in poverty.

Children and young people learn and achieve

- 3.13 We agree with all of the areas and indicators proposed under this outcome and again highlight the work we do in this area. One of the areas highlighted is children and young people in custody, which the Council does not have a direct remit for but we indicate that we support the focus on this area.

Children and young people live in safety and stability

- 3.14 We agree with all of the areas and two of the indicators proposed under this outcome and again highlight the work we do in this area. There are two of the indicators that we neither agree nor disagree with, these are the victims of crime and child contact order indicators. The reasons for these are that in the case of the first we know that a high proportion of crimes where young people are the victim are not reported and in relation to the second we are not involved in this area of work and therefore unable to comment.

Children and young people experience economic and environmental well-being

- 3.15 We agree with two of areas identified as requiring greatest effort but neither agree or disagree with the one around rural young people. The rationale for this is that Belfast is primarily an urban environment. There are two indicators under this outcome: Percentage of children living in absolute poverty before housing costs and Number of 16-24 year olds in education, employment or training. Whilst we agree with both indicators it is important to note that they both have

limitations and these are highlighted in the response with suggestions for strengthening them.

Children and young people make a positive contribution to society

- 3.16 We agree with the areas identified and highlight that it can be challenging for many organisations to ensure participation by children and young people, we highlight the Council's Youth Forum as an example of best practice. We neither agree nor disagree with the two proposed indicators, the rationale for this is we feel that further work is required on both to ensure they fully capture how the outcome is being achieved.

Children and young people live in a society which respects their rights

- 3.17 We agree with all of the areas proposed under this outcome. We agree with one of the indicators but disagree with two of the proposed indicators. We feel that just having heard of the UNCRC is not useful in terms of ensuring that the principles of the UNCRC is embedded in the policies and practices of organisations. The second indicator relates to the percentage of young people who feel they can give their views on issues that affect them, we suggest that this should be expanded to 'and acted on'.

Children and young people live in a society in which equality of opportunity and good relations are promoted

- 3.18 We agree with all of the areas and indicators proposed under this outcome and again highlight the work we do in this area. We reference the potential of Peace IV to assist in achieving this outcome.

3.19 **Financial & Resource Implications**

None associated with this report.

3.20 **Equality or Good Relations Implications**

There are no relevant equality considerations associated with this report. Department of Education have completed an associated equality and human rights policy screening exercise."

The Committee endorsed the draft response, available on the Council's website [here](#), to the Department of Education's consultation on the Children and Young People's Strategy. It was noted that, in order to meet the deadline of 27th February, it would be submitted with the codicil that it would be subject to ratification by the Council.

**PHA Corporate Plan 2017 - 2021 –
Consultation Response**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 The purpose of the report is to present the draft response to the Public Health Agency’s (PHA) corporate plan for Members to consider and agree.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to;

- **Consider and agree the draft response to the PHA corporate plan.**

3.0 Main report

3.1 The PHA is seeking views on its draft Corporate Plan 2017 – 2021.

3.2 In summary its purpose, vision and values are to ‘protect and improve the health and social wellbeing of our population and reduce health inequalities through strong partnerships with individuals, communities and other key public, private and voluntary organisations’ by placing individuals and communities at the heart of it who we will listen to and involve openly and honestly whilst working in partnership to improve the quality of life of individuals and communities. Valuing and empowering staff to deliver evidence led and outcomes-focussed services.

3.3 We welcome the high level direction of travel and outcomes prioritised in it and its straightforward presentation in the draft corporate plan. Our full response provides the specific commentary we encourage for the best fit to our aspiration in the draft Belfast Agenda and in response to the latest Programme for Government consultation.

3.4 The consultation seeks feedback to the corporate plan vision generally and any gaps or opportunities for incorporation. It names 4 main priority outcomes for action in the corporate plan as:

- **Outcome 1: All children and young people have the best start in life**

- Outcome 2: All older adults are enabled to live healthy and fulfilling lives
- Outcome 3: All individuals and communities are equipped and enabled to live long healthy lives
- Outcome 4: All health and wellbeing services should be safe and high quality

3.5 A summary of specific feedback follows in the key issues section of the report:

3.6 Key issues

We agree generally with the direction of travel in the corporate plan to promote health and social wellbeing where everyone is the heart of it and there is a focus on addressing health inequalities. We recommend going further to add a value in it to aspire to 'local people shaping and co-producing the services they require'. We encourage PHA that when listening to individuals and communities that this should also cover families/ or agreed advocates/ appointed professional representatives (e.g. educator, social worker, hub co-ordinator etc) for individuals to be effectively represented.

3.7 The main question in the consultation is whether or not you agree with the direction of travel, each outcome and any gaps or suggestions. Table 1 summarises the main feedback in our response to the suggested outcomes:

Table 1: Summary of main feedback on each Outcome

1. All children and young people have the best start in life?

We welcome that CYP getting the best start in life is a prioritised outcome and reflects our thinking in the Belfast Agenda. We recognise the items which promote the best start in life are generally the *universal rights of the child and worth referencing in this way. Furthermore we reinforce the need to recognise:*

- There is an evidenced need to prioritise CYP with *complex needs, experiencing 'multiple adversity' or those most at risk*, particularly when assigning services or tailoring intervention or funding streams.
- The evidence of the impact of child poverty *and* key transition stages in a child's life.
- A flexible approach to commissioning and programming to reflect the diverse 'family' experience to enable other 'informal kinship' arrangements e.g. grandparents or in cases where

there are child carers to be effectively addressed in service provision.

- *Building on our existing relationship with PHA to broaden collaboration with the Department of Education in the next PHA corporate.*

2. All older adults are enabled to live healthy and fulfilling lives? If not, what alternative do you suggest?

We welcome the prioritisation of this outcome and the focus on dementia and using technology based approaches to promote independent lives throughout older age. Furthermore we recommend the outcome references 'active' ageing i.e. 'All older adults are enabled to live healthy, *active* and fulfilling lives'.

- We support the activity listed like healthy ageing programmes, mental health interventions, immunisations and screenings to deliver the outcome. The Belfast Health ageing action plan and key priorities remain current and we recommend are a key focus for this investment.
- We seek an agreed definition of an older person is applied and support prioritising the needs of individuals with complex needs, dependencies and/ or multiple adversities and the right for an older person to be free from elder abuse.
- Prioritising and promoting timely interventions for adults to manage or maintain their health or implications of life choices at the optimum time using evidence to identify this and flexibly target when interventions are made.

3. All individuals and communities are equipped and enabled to live long healthy lives?

We positively reinforce the need to ensure adults with complex needs or differing abilities to be prioritised in this section. We are keen to highlight the priority need for drug and alcohol misuse to be prioritised in the actions underpinning this outcome to ensure there is co-ordinated information and materials and interdependence its impact has on behaviours or life choices and overall personal or community impact. Members recent concerns around the investment and delivery of mental health services and drug and alcohol addiction services in the Belfast trust areas particularly resulting in long waiting time for referrals or the adequacy of wraparound community support services in neighbourhoods that need it most is referenced and our

ambition to work better in partnership to achieve joint service delivery in NHB settings

- We welcome the opportunity to consolidate partnership work to plan and enable healthier communities. Achieving this collaboratively through the planning processes to improve the city's environment specifically our green spaces and using our services as a mechanism to disseminate messages on healthy lifestyles.
- We repeat the need for specific references as in outcome 1 and 2 for priorities to be identified within of those with disabilities, those at risk of harm or abuse, with complex needs, dependencies and/ or multiple adversities for access to universal and intervention services.
- The wider impact of poor health or inequalities is reflected and that the range of initiatives we already have in place like 'Belfast Works', Belfakes or community gardens and allotments as part of our Growing strategy may be scalable to fit the integrated whole life approach to person centred services to positively impact lives.
- Building resilience is key particularly as we reinforce the need to address the *interdependent nature of drugs and alcohol misuse particularly as it impacts, the individual, families, communities and the public safety.*

3.8 Generally comments reinforce the need for proportional investment in services through integrated business planning to overcome Trust/ Council boundaries. We encourage ongoing collaboration connecting with our social and community engagement models e.g. Neighbourhood Renewal; Youth Forum or the Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership etc and through our strategic partnership with GLL to improve the health outcomes for our citizens.

3.9 In applying an outcomes based approach and person centred services these should identify those in greatest of need irrespective of age however we urge caution to ensure the needs of all the groupings under section 75 of which age is a single identity are addressed too.

3.10 We have drafted an ambitious 'Belfast agenda' as our community plan which is based on our belief that we will invest to save through inclusive growth (via City Deal or other opportunities) which benefits everyone. Through the regeneration of our city centre, building jobs and employability and a thriving economy we aim to have a vibrant

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and attractive city with safe and well connected neighbourhoods. We are lobbying to ensure the necessary powers are devolved for us to achieve this and successfully build local growth in our neighbourhoods.

3.11 We have set an ambitious target to reduce the life expectancy gap by 50% in Belfast by 2035 from the most and least deprived wards which requires us to think and operate differently to achieve it. It means tackling the root causes of poverty and its impact on the individual, family or community. We recognise that sustainable regeneration of people and the place in which they live needs to be delivered successfully. We are currently considering how the complex interdependent nature of these issues that compound poverty are addressed through a future neighbourhood regeneration model and welcome an integrated approach with our partners to deliver this.

3.12 We seek to strengthen existing joint working arrangements (e.g. Belfast Strategic Partnership through the Making Life Better' strategy etc.) and with PHA to deliver these priorities with the trust and PHA and other key partners for co designed resource allocation which invests in preventive models for health inequalities, particularly for mental health and wellbeing.

3.13 Next steps

Members are asked to consider and agree the draft response to the PHA corporate plan.

3.14 Financial & Resource Implications

None associated with this report.

3.15 Equality or Good Relations Implications

None associated with this report."

The Committee endorsed the draft response, available on the Council's website [here](#), to the Public Health Agency's (PHA) on the draft PHA Corporate Plan 2017 – 2021. It was noted that, in order to meet the deadline of 17th February, it would be submitted with the codicil that it would be subject to ratification by the Council.

**Minutes of the Strategic Cemetery and Crematorium
Development Working Group**

The Assistant Director advised that, at the meeting of the Strategic Cemetery and Crematorium Development Working Group held on 3rd February, the following key issues had been considered:

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- update on the Economic Appraisal and Future Cremation Facilities;
- update on the new tender arrangements for the café at Roselawn Crematorium;
- update on the Cemetery opening hours; and
- Memorandum of Understanding with Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council; and
- discussions with neighbouring Councils regarding future Cremation and Cemetery Provision.

The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services advised that at the meeting the Members had supported the recommendation for officers to engage neighbouring councils in a strategic conversation to better understand needs and demand in respect of cremations and burials across Northern Ireland.

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes and the specific recommendation of the Working Group in respect of officers being granted authority to initiate discussions with neighbouring Councils regarding Belfast City Council's plans in relation to cemetery and cremations provision, to take into consideration the needs and plans of those neighbouring Councils.

Physical Programme and Asset Management

Restricted Item

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

**Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council
Cemetery Subsidy**

The Committee was updated on discussions that had taken place with Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (LCCC) regarding the arrangements put in place to provide a subsidy for former Lisburn and Castlereagh residents in relation to burial charges.

The Assistant Director advised that LCCC had requested that Belfast City Council (BCC) review its existing process. She detailed that with the current arrangement BCC treated LCCC customers as non-residents when making burial arrangements and the bereavement administration team then forwarded correspondence to the relevant customer inviting them to contact LCCC regarding a subsidy to enable them to receive a refund.

The Committee was informed that LCCC had requested that this policy be amended to provide the LCCC residents with the subsidy at the start of the process, that is, when booking and paying and that the subsidy could then be recouped by BCC from LCCC.

The Committee:

- agreed that Belfast City Council (BCC) would enter into a legal agreement with Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (LCCC) to provide a subsidy scheme for residents wishing to use BCC's cemetery services which would be managed by BCC Bereavement Services; and

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- agreed that the fees outlined would be recharged to LCCC and noted that this agreement would be subject to an annual review to ensure the scheme was administered by the team without impacting the service and to ensure the customer received a high quality service.

Sally Gardens - Management Arrangements

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Committee on the Management Arrangements at Sally Gardens. The Committee is reminded that at its meeting in April 2016 it agreed to operate a 3 month pilot scheme with Poleglass Community Association. The 3 month pilot scheme operated from 5th September 2016 and the association has been paid a monthly fee of £3666.67. The Committee further agreed at its meeting on 6th December 2016 to extend the pilot for a further 3 months. This report reviews the current arrangement and makes recommendation as to future arrangements.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to;

- **Agree to formalise the agreement until September 2017 at which time it will be reviewed after a full year of operation**
- **Convey delegated authority to the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services to extend the arrangement on a year to year basis subject to a satisfactory review and agreement of Poleglass Community Association.**

3.0 Main report

3.1 The Committee is reminded that, at its meetings in April and December 2016, it agreed to operate a pilot management arrangement at Sally Gardens. Essentially the Poleglass Community Association would carry out a range of duties as associated with opening and closing of the facility, reporting any damage; ensuring there was no unapproved use and facilitating casual bookings as necessary; and keeping the facility clean and tidy by removing litter from the pitch area.

3.2 As previously reported the Association has aspiration to extend the use of the facility beyond the core use of sports clubs. This would mean greater use during the day time and sustained use over the summer when soccer is in recess, such as using the facility to support summer schemes etc.

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To date the Association has not been able to increase day time use but it remains committed to the concept and is currently working on a summer scheme programme which will incorporate use of the facility.

- 3.3 A brief summary of the figures from September and October are given below:**

	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan
Bookings	77	72	91	85	51	118
Full Pitch	50	40	46	44	30	65
Half Pitch	22	32	45	41	21	53
Adult	28	22	29	25	19	24
Concession	41	50	62	60	32	94
Income £	3,875	2,924	3,766	3830	2,125	4459

- 3.4 Members will note that the usage levels are positive and during January we have seen an increase in usage and income generation, indications for February and into March suggest that the levels of use will be sustained. Figures for December were low but this can be explained by seasonal variation given the run up to the Christmas holiday period.**
- 3.5 In relation to the upkeep of the facility, it is kept clean and tidy in accordance with the agreement.**
- 3.6 Members are asked to note that although the figures show that the income generated exceeds the monthly payment to the Association, the Council is responsible for the routine maintenance of the pitch such as the weekly brushing regime.**
- 3.7 The Committee is reminded that a changing pavilion is currently under construction on the site. This has been funded jointly by the Council and the Department for Communities and is scheduled to be completed August 2017. This will enable matches to be played on the facility and will make it more attractive to users, existing and potential.**
- 3.8 Members are also asked to note that proposed reduction in the fee for pitch use may result in the facility operating at a deficit each month with the management fee potentially exceeding the ability to generate sufficient use to compensate for the reduced income.**

3.9 Financial & Resource Implications

The monthly cost of supporting pitch management will be £3,667 per month which is allocated within existing budgets.

3.10 Equality or Good Relations Implications

There are no equality or good relation implications at this time.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Balmoral Bowling Club

The Committee considered a report in relation to the lease of Balmoral Bowling Club.

With the permission of the Chairperson, Councillor Reynolds addressed the Committee. He circulated pictures of the bowling greens at the facility and proceeded to outline a proposal on behalf of the club, whereby the Council would provide funding of £5,000 per annum for a three year period to the Bowling Club to assist them in undertaking the maintenance of the bowling greens.

The Assistant Director confirmed that she was unaware of this proposal and she undertook to investigate the details further with the Council's Legal Services Section and to update the Committee in due course.

The Committee:

- noted the existing lease arrangements and agreed to defer consideration of the matter to enable officers to liaise with the Council's Legal Services Section to explore options for a separate agreement to provide £5,000 per annum for a period of 3 years to contribute to the refurbishment of the Bowling Green. Thereafter responsibility for the maintenance would transfer to the Bowling Club for the term of the lease; and
- agreed that an update report would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

River Terrace Community Garden

The Assistant Director reminded the Committee that, at its meeting held on 13th September 2016, it had agreed to surrender the River Terrace Site back to the Department for Communities as it was no longer deemed to be a viable site due to contamination issues and undulating ground conditions. This agreement had been subject to the South Belfast Area Working Group (SBAWG) agreeing how the £20,000 funding for the proposed project would be spent.

The officer advised that at a recent meeting of the SBAWG it had been agreed that a Community Garden should proceed in the area adjacent to the original River

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Terrace Department for Communities site. She reported that door to door house surveys had been undertaken and these had indicated that 86% of householders had been interested in participating in a community garden, with the proposed location being their preferred choice.

The Committee noted that, should they give approval to proceed, officers from the Parks Section would proceed to allocate £20,000 of capital funds to purchase the necessary equipment and materials in order to assist the local community in establishing a Community Garden.

The Committee:

- approved the recommendations of the South Belfast Area Working Group to proceed with a Community Garden in the area adjacent to the original River Terrace Department for Communities site; and
- agreed to allocate the remaining £20,000 Capital Fund to develop the site.

Football Pitch Maintenance at Brantwood

The Assistant Director advised the Committee that Brantwood Football Club was a Football Club based in Jellicoe Avenue, North Belfast. She reported that at the former Parks and Leisure Committee, held on 11th March 2011, approval had been given for the Council to enter into a legal agreement with the Club to carry out routine football pitch maintenance on their pitch subject to a full recovery of the cost. She advised that the agreement had been put in place for five years and this had now expired and the club was seeking to extend the existing arrangement.

The officer outlined the details of the previous agreement and confirmed that this had worked successfully. She reported that a legal opinion had previously been obtained regarding the additional works which had advised that the works could proceed under Article 10 of the Recreation and Youth Service (Northern Ireland) Order 1986.

The Committee approved an extension to the legal agreement with Brantwood Football and Recreation Club for the Council to carry out routine football pitch maintenance on the pitch at the agreed rates at no cost to the Council.

Environment

Recycling - Update on Real Nappy Scheme

(Mr. T. Walker, Head of Waste Management, attended in connection with this item).

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 11th August 2015, it had agreed that a 'Real Nappy Scheme' would be developed within Belfast.

The Head of Waste Management summarised the report which outlined the results from the scheme, which had commenced in November 2015. He advised that, in Belfast, uptake of the scheme had been very positive with 94 applications. Of the 94 applicants received, four had been from outside the Council boundary, and had therefore

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been excluded. Of the remainder, there had been 53 eligible applications of which 22 households converted to reusable nappies on a more permanent basis. This represented a 42% conversion rate which had exceeded the expectations of the Service. Out of the initial £3,000, a total of £2,462 had been allocated. He reported that the scheme would continue until either all the funding had been used up or to the financial year-end.

The committee agreed:

- to approve regularising the current scheme within the Service's existing budget; and
- to write to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs making a case for them to provide additional funding to support the implementation and promotion of this, or a similar, scheme across Northern Ireland.

Boundary Change at Grow Waterworks

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 8th November 2016, it had agreed to renew the licence to use agreement with Grow to provide a community garden at the Waterworks Park.

The officer reported that in subsequent discussions with Grow it had requested an alteration to the existing boundary. She drew the Members' attention to the boundary map and explained that they wished to include a small grassed area and she highlighted that this proposal did not include the woodland area adjacent to the additional area.

The Members noted that Grow had also requested permission to create an earth oven on the site and advised that officers had no objection to this request.

The Committee noted the report and agreed to extend the boundary on condition that any proposed use would be agreed in advance with the Park Manager, and that it would not extend into the adjacent Woodland Area.

Operational Issues

Landlord Registration Scheme

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 This report is to update Members on the Landlord Registration scheme as requested at the November Committee meeting.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to;

- **Note the contents of this report.**

3.0 Key Issues

- 3.1** The Landlord Registration (Northern Ireland) 2012 became operational on 25th February 2014. The regulations has created a register of all private landlords that can be accessed by councils, tenants and members of the public to check if a landlord has registered under the scheme. It has also given the Department for Communities (DFC) and local councils the means to communicate and work with private landlords, allow them to ensure that landlords comply with the law and where necessary take enforcement action.
- 3.2** Landlords register with the DFC and pay one fee regardless of the number of properties they own. The fee is £70 on-line and £80 for paper/non-electronic applications. A registration lasts for 3 years.
- 3.3** The DFC appointed a Landlord registrar who is in charge of the information and may disclose it, on request, to:
- a district council to enable or assist it to carry out its legal duties;
 - the Department of Finance and Personnel Northern Ireland to help it to carry out its legal duties for rating purposes;
 - the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, for the purposes of administering housing benefit, and the regulation of Houses in Multiple Occupation.
- 3.4** The offence of failure of a landlord to register carries a maximum fine on conviction of £2,500. If a landlord is found guilty of providing false information it carries a maximum fine on conviction of £2,500. If a landlord fails to provide evidence of registration it carries a maximum fine on conviction of £500.
- 3.5** Payment of a fixed penalty will discharge any liability for prosecution. These penalties must be determined by the Council and cannot exceed £500 for the offence of non-registration and providing false information, and £100 for the offence of failing to provide evidence of registration.
- 3.6** The register can be accessed on-line via <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/services/landlord-search>
- 3.7** It is estimated that there are currently 106,126 properties in the Private Rented Sector in Northern Ireland with over a quarter of them 28,676 in Belfast. The numbers of landlords registered in Northern Ireland is currently 50,884.

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- 3.8** 30,011 landlords registered in relation to 65,532 properties in the first year (2014/15) of the scheme. A further 16,354 registered in relation to a further 16,354 properties in the second year (2015/16). So far this year 4,526 landlords have registered in relation to 8,319 properties.
- 3.9** From April 2015 until present the City Council has completed over 1907 Landlord Registration checks and sent 557 warning letters to and served 18 fixed penalties on non-compliant landlords.
- 3.10** A press article in September 2016 highlighted that 738 rented properties in the Holylands did not have a landlord registered with the scheme. Since then we have undertaken an extensive exercise in the area including a mailshot to all known landlords, door to door visits and various land web searches. This has identified that 550 of the 732 identified in the press article needed further investigation. Interventions by the Council have reduced this number to 336 cases and these are being investigated at present on a case by case basis.
- 3.11** Councils receive no income from registration fees paid to the Department. We are allowed to keep the income for fixed penalties served. All enforcement activity in this area is therefore carried out within existing budgets.
- 3.12** All registration income is held by the DFC and they use the funding to cover the costs of the following:
- Maintenance of landlord registration system capable of both electronic and non-electronic registration;
 - Advice and guidance on how to register and how the registration system works provided by NI Direct;
 - Preparation and issue of quarterly newsletter to all registered landlords/agents;
 - Salary costs for Landlord and Deputy Landlord Registrar;
 - System enhancement payments for BT;
 - Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) Level 2 Award for Private Landlords – part-funding over a three year period;
 - Housing Rights – Landlord Helpline – funding for one year pilot project to provide advice and guidance to registered Landlords on the private rented sector.
- 3.13** The Department is currently exploring the potential for councils to receive funding from the fee to enable them to promote the scheme. These conversations are at an early stage and updates will be brought to Members as these

progress. The DFC recently launched a consultation on the review of the private rented sector and one aspect of this is proposed changes to the landlord registration scheme. Officers are currently preparing a response for future consideration by this committee. This consultation can be accessed via the following link. <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/consultations/private-rented-sector-northern-ireland-proposals-change>

3.14 Financial & Resource Implications

The Council receive no landlord registration income. All additional and investigative enforcement work in relation to the scheme is carried out within current budgets.

3.15 Equality or Good Relations Implications

There are no relevant equality considerations associated with this report.”

The Committee noted the update report.

Public Access Defibrillator Pilot Programme Update

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 To provide further update report to the Committee on the progress with the public access defibrillator pilot programme.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- note the update on the pilot programme;
- approve a second phase of the public access defibrillator programme for nine further Council sites – Botanic Park; City of Belfast Playing Fields; Grove Playing Fields; Cherryvale Playing Fields; Blanchflower Stadium; Wedderburn Playing Fields; Woodvale Playing Fields, Henry Jones Playing Fields and Woodlands Playing Fields. This is subject to the identification of a suitable location with an electrical supply and confirmation with the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) that there are no other public access defibrillators within a short distance;

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- approve the proposed installation of a publicly donated public access defibrillator at the Lock Keepers Cottage site;
- approve the registration of the existing Council workplace defibrillators on the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service database.

3.0 Main report

Background

3.1 In considering a Notice of Motion moved by Councillor Garrett regarding defibrillators, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on the 20 November 2015 agreed to extend the Council's deployment of defibrillators to a number of additional Council premises and also, on a trial basis, installing public access defibrillators in a number of Council parks / playing fields. This report provides an update on this pilot programme.

3.2 At the same Committee meeting (item 5b – non recurring expenditure), Members also agreed to the allocation of £15,000 funding for defibrillators at Council sites during 2016/17.

3.3 Update on pilot public access defibrillator programme

In accordance with the Committee's instructions, public access defibrillators were installed in the following parks in May 2016:

- Victoria Park
- Waterworks Park
- Fullerton Park
- Tullycarnet Park
- Boucher Road Playing Fields
- Falls Park

3.4 In addition, two mobile defibrillators were also deployed in May 2016. One is carried by a Safer Neighbourhood Officer Team and the other by a Parks Warden Team.

The following is the status of these units as at 12 January 2017:

- Deployment - there are no records of any of these defibrillators having actually been used in the first eight months of the pilot programme.
- Vandalism – there has been no vandalism reported to the defibrillators installed in Victoria Park, Tullycarnet

Park, Waterworks Park or Boucher Road Playing Fields. The Fullerton Park defibrillator had been tampered with twice in the initial few months but remains in place with no further reports. After initial vandalism to the Falls Park defibrillator cabinet, this was relocated to the reception area of the pavilion building and no further instances have been recorded.

- Management - there are ongoing arrangements in place for the monitoring of the equipment and refresher training for a number of local staff.

3.6 Potential second phase of public access defibrillator provision

It is proposed that a second phase of public access defibrillators be installed using the funds allocated in November 2015. During this pilot programme, the focus for public access defibrillators on Council sites has been on recreational facilities and those sites with significant public access or high footfall.

3.7 Continuing with this focus on recreational facilities and recognising the specific reference to sports facilities within the Community Resuscitation Strategy, the next phase of provision would be proposed for:

- Botanic Park
- City of Belfast Playing Fields
- Grove Playing Fields
- Cherryvale Playing Fields
- Blanchflower Stadium
- Wedderburn Playing Fields
- Woodvale Playing Fields
- Henry Jones Playing Fields
- Woodlands Playing Fields

3.8 The provision of defibrillators at these sites would be subject to the identification of a suitable location with an electrical supply and confirmation with the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) that there are no other public access defibrillators within a short distance.

3.9 For this second phase of the pilot programme, we have excluded those premises not directly managed by Belfast City Council and those which have ready access to a Council supported defibrillator e.g.

Ormeau Park Playing Fields – defibrillator available within the Ozone Centre

Ballysillan Playing Fields – defibrillator available within Ballysillan Leisure Centre

Victoria Park Playing Fields – defibrillator available at Victoria Park Bowling Pavilion

Loughside Playing Fields – defibrillator available at Loughside Recreation Centre

3.10 Request for installation of a publicly donated defibrillator at the Lock Keepers Cottage site

A request has been received from a member of the public wishing to donate a public access defibrillator to the Lock Keepers Cottage site. The donations for this proposed defibrillator (and potentially a further device on the Lisburn and Castlereagh Council section of the Lagan Tow Path) have been raised in the memory of Matthew Thompson who sadly died on the 11 June 2016 when out jogging on the tow path. This potential donation has been welcomed in principle by both the Parks Service and the Lagan Valley Regional Park site management and with the Committee's approval they will work with the family to have this defibrillator installed and maintained in the most appropriate location.

3.11 Registration of Council workplace defibrillators on the NIAS database

As part of the Northern Ireland Community Resuscitation Strategy, NIAS are compiling a database of defibrillators across Northern Ireland. In the event of a relevant 999 call, it is anticipated that this database would enable the Control staff to be able to direct the caller to any nearby defibrillator so that they could commence defibrillation at the earliest opportunity. At this time, the Council's six public access defibrillators have all been registered with the NIAS database. We would now propose that in support of the Community Resuscitation Strategy, the Council register all of its workplace defibrillators on the database and in doing so, make them available for public use.

3.12 It is accepted that there will be some work involved for the Corporate Health and Safety Unit and the relevant premises managers / defibrillator co-ordinator in making these devices available for public use including clarifying the opening hours and accessibility of the defibrillator location; what would happen in the event of a member of the public requesting the defibrillator for off-site use; how the defibrillator would be returned / retrieved etc.

3.13 Alignment of Council approach to defibrillator provision with the Northern Ireland Community Resuscitation Strategy

At a special meeting of the Committee in September, NIAS briefed the Members on the objectives of the Northern Ireland Community Resuscitation Strategy (NICRS).

3.14 The Council's current defibrillator provision supports the following NICRS objectives

- improve the availability of, an access to, the automated external defibrillators that are in place across Northern Ireland;
- encourage members of the public to intervene in the event of an out of hospital cardiac arrest;
- raise public awareness of the importance of early recognition of an out of hospital cardiac arrest and the importance of early intervention;

3.15 Restart a Heart Day

In conjunction with the European Union Restart a Heart Day campaign on Tuesday 18 October 2016, the Corporate Health and Safety Unit hosted two sessions for interested staff to learn CPR (cardio pulmonary resuscitation) skills. Both sessions were well attended and the training initiative well received.

3.16 Further steps

It is important to note that substantive improvements in successfully responding to out of hospital cardiac arrest in the City are heavily dependent on the implementation of the NI Community Resuscitation Strategy. The Committee may therefore, in future, wish to consider, how it receives updates on this Strategy and links any further work, including any additional deployment with this Strategy.

3.17 Financial & Resource Implications

The estimated cost of purchasing, installing and maintaining the second phase of eight externally located public access defibrillators is £15,000. It should be noted that there is no recurrent provision for this funding.

3.18 Equality or Good Relations Implications

The Council's Good Relations Unit have advised that proposals for extending the deployment of defibrillators will have a positive effect on the Health and Wellbeing of people

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who work, live and visit Belfast and that this is a positive equality action.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Request to Consider an Alleygate at Castle Arcade

The Committee considered a report which sought authority for the commencement of formal statutory and community pre-consultation in respect of alleygates proposed at Castle Arcade without prejudice to a final decision by the Council on whether to formally proceed.

Several Members stated that they felt the erection of alleygates at this location would not be a solution to the problem. Whilst they recognised the ongoing concerns of the Council, PSNI and businesses around increasing levels of criminal damage, anti-social behaviour and environmental crime they expressed concern at the displacement of homeless people who used this location.

The Assistant Director advised that officers had engaged with the main service providers in the City (Welcome Centre, Council for the Homeless and St. Vincent de Paul). She reported that they fully supported the wishes of the Members to ensure appropriate support was in place for those individual with vulnerabilities and therefore should a decision be taken in the future by the Council to install alleygates in this area, signs would be erected in the vicinity providing information on support services for vulnerable people and how to access accommodation.

Detailed discussion ensued during which several Members highlighted the impact that the anti-social behaviour in this location was having on local businesses, stating that this had been exacerbated by the closure of the British Homes Store.

The Committee agreed:

- that officers would commence wider consultation in respect of the Castle Arcade and the surrounding area which would not focus entirely on the erection of an alleygate at Castle Arcade;
- that all the alternative options available to regenerate the area would be considered and discussed with the stakeholders in the area; and
- that an update report would be submitted to a future meeting but within a period of three months.

Active Belfast Board - Governance Arrangements

The Committee was reminded that, at its last meeting, clarity had been sought around the Active Belfast Limited governance and reporting arrangements.

The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services drew the Members' attention to the Governance and Accountability framework that had been agreed by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting held on 23rd October 2014.

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The Committee noted the governance and reporting arrangements for Active Belfast Limited.

Vehicle Legislation

The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services advised the Committee that, as previously requested, he had written to the relevant Department Ministers to outline the action being taken by the Council to try and combat this issue on its lands and to offer the support of officers to work with the Departments' and other relevant agencies to consider any potential legislative changes necessary.

The officer reported that further research had been carried out to establish how off road vehicles were legislated for in other jurisdictions and this had highlighted the range of legislation that existed to deal with the misuse of motorised vehicles as follows:

- all motorised vehicles must be registered in the Republic of Ireland following new legislation implemented earlier in the year;
- the situation in the UK was less straightforward in that road activity was regulated by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) and there was only a voluntary registration scheme for off road motorised vehicles. The Minister of Infrastructure had outlined during an Assembly debate on 3rd October 2016 that this needed to be extended to this jurisdiction as it was an excepted matter; and
- in 2015 the Scottish Parliament held a similar debate and they too had to consider adopting the DVLA voluntary off road registration scheme.

The Director advised that he had written to the Minister for Infrastructure, outlining the Council's desire to explore a registration scheme, seeking support to align resources and to provide a practical and purposeful approach over the Christmas period and the longer term as the review of the legal frameworks progressed.

The Director detailed that in response the Minister had provided the following information:

- the remit of the Department of Infrastructure only extended to the use of motorised vehicles on public roads. Motorised vehicles used on public roads must comply with all legal requirements including type approval and must meet necessary safety standards as well as having appropriate insurance;
- they must also be licensed by the DVLA;
- in the case of private roads or land, responsibility lies with the user of the vehicle in question and the land owner;
- at present registration requirements were only attached to motorised vehicles driven on public roads;
- off-road vehicles such as quad bikes and scramblers cannot be driven on public roads and are exempt from vehicle requirements;
- in Britain there had been several attempts to introduce primary legislation to require all off-road vehicles to be registered, however, these had not come to fruition; and
- as vehicle registration was an excepted matter, the Department had no powers to introduce similar statutory registration requirements in Northern Ireland.

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The Director stated that the Minister had expressed his concern about off-road vehicles being used on private land and had welcomed the opportunity to meet to discuss the issue.

The Committee noted the progress in respect of this issue and agreed that the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services and the Chairperson of the Committee would seek a meeting with officials from the Department for Communities in order to try and progress this matter and agreed to keep the Committee informed accordingly.

Chartered Institute of Waste Management Conference and Exhibition

The Committee agreed that an invitation to attend a Chartered Institution of Wastes Management (CIWM) organised exhibition and conference on 29th March, at the Eikon Exhibition Centre, Balmoral Park, would be extended to all the Members of the People and Communities Committee.

Street Naming

The Committee approved the naming of Ishbel Gardens, off Lady Ishbel Avenue, BT8.

**Waste Partnerships - Eco-Schools and
The Conservation Volunteers**

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report is to provide Members with an update on the partnership-working with (i) Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful (KNIB) to deliver several programmes, and (ii) The Conservation Volunteers (TCV).**
- 1.2 Specifically, this report is seeking approval to continue funding the Eco-Schools Programme and to endorse the approach used for the clean-up operations carried out by TCV in Poleglass. The funding for KNIB will be used to ensure that more schools achieve a Green Flag award, thereby ensuring that pupils develop and maintain an excellent knowledge of environmental and recycling considerations which affect schools, Belfast and the planet.**
- 1.3 There are 185 schools in Belfast and, in terms of the Green Flag award they have achieved the following: 38 x Green Flag (excl 23 which have lapsed), 39 x Silver Flag, 22 x Bronze Flag and 63 x no award.**

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to;

- Approve the continued funding of the KNIB Eco-School programme and '*The Wheelie Big Challenge*' at a cost of £18,158 in 2017/18;
- Endorse the Service Level Agreement approach being used by Waste Management to accept waste collected by TCV during daily clean-up operations around Poleglass, inherited under local government reform.

3.0 Main report & Key Issues

Eco-Schools

- 3.1 Eco-Schools is an international programme which seeks to harmonise environmental education and protection across the globe. Since 2012/13, the Service has been using this programme to broadcast its recycling message to all schools in Belfast. Successes to date include having every school now registered as an Eco-School participant, and a continual flow of schools moving through the award system with the ultimate goal of attaining the highest award – the Green Flag.**
- 3.2 Using Eco-Schools allows Waste Management to ensure that the recycling message is delivered consistently to schools, while at the same time the Service's Education Officers can focus on engaging with other community groups and ensuring that there is effective and consistent communication with schools, householders, communities and businesses across the city.**
- 3.3 To date, KNIB and Waste Management have agreed a work programme to ensure that the quality of communication is maintained and progress reports are provided on a regular basis.**
- 3.4 Additionally, working with KNIB, the Service has designed an annual schools competition called '*The Wheelie Big Challenge*' which is a team competition focusing on practical activities to reduce waste and increase recycling in the school. It is aimed to be more inclusive than the usual schools' environmental competitions as entries are not judged simply on how well they deliver a presentation, but on the quality of the recycling actions carried out. Last year, over 35 schools took part.**

- 3.5 In recent years, in June the '*Wheelie Big Challenge*' is held in the City Hall as part of a celebratory event for schools who have achieved their Green Flag.

The Conservation Volunteers

- 3.6 The former Department of Social Development (DSD) now Department for Communities have a contract in place with TCV, to carry out environmental improvement initiatives and ensure fly-tipped waste is collected and disposed of in an environmentally sound manner from DSD lands in the Poleglass area.
- 3.7 As part of the Local Government Reform (LGR) process, in order to ensure service continuity and avoid TCV from being compromised arising from LGR¹, the Council entered into a Service Level Agreement (SLA) to receive these materials². This agreement allows TCV to use Blackstaff Household Recycling Centre to deposit waste and recyclable materials collected from the Poleglass area. In line with their previous agreement with Lisburn City Council, and the Council's current charges applied to charities for the collection/disposal of waste, a discounted gate fee is charged for the use of this site.
- 3.8 The existing DSD-contract with the TCV ends in May next year and, in order to provide continuity of disposal arrangements, the Service is now proposing to enter into a new SLA from 31 Mar 2017 for the 2017/18 year, with an option of a one year extension. A draft copy of the SLA is appended to this report. To date, the SLA has worked well and played a positive role in removing an estimated 560 tonnes of fly-tipped material from this area, contributing to a cleaner, greener city. The SLA also supports a full-time team of five Community Wardens within TCV.
- 3.9 The value of the SLA with TCV is approximately £14,500 and as such the Service is seeking endorsement of its approach in continuing to develop this partnership with the Conservation Volunteers.
- 3.10 **Financial & Resource Implications**

The cost of £18,158 to run the Eco-Schools Programme and '*The Wheelie Big Challenge*' can be met from within the Service's agreed 2017/18 budget.

¹ Lisburn City Council informed TCV that they would no longer accept fly-tipped material collected from Poleglass at their Recycling Centre at Cutts after 1 April 2015.

² It should also be noted that, at that time, it was envisaged that the DSD lands would transfer to the Council in April 2016.

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**3.11 The SLA with TCV generates approximately £14,500 income
for the Council.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Chairperson