

# **People and Communities Committee**

Tuesday, 4th December, 2018

## **MEETING OF PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE**

Members present: Councillor McCusker (Chairperson); Aldermen Copeland, McCoubrey, Rodgers, Sandford; and Councillors Baker, Canavan, Corr, Heading, Lyons, Magee, Magennis, McReynolds, Pankhurst and O'Donnell.

Also attended: Councillors Boyle, Dudgeon, Kyle and Mullan.

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

### **Apologies**

Apologies were recorded on behalf of Councillors Newton, Nicholl and McAllister.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 6th November were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 3rd December.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations were reported.

### **Restricted Items**

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

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

### **Community Support Programme 2018/19: Letter Variance**

(Mrs. C. Taggart, Neighbourhood Services Manager, attended in connection with the following two items.)

The Committee considered a report which provided details in relation to a Letter of Variance (LoV) to the Community Support Programme (CSP) 2018/19, specifically relating

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to additional funding of £42,432 for Frontline Advice Services. The Committee was asked to consider the following two options and to agree the preferred option:

- Option A – to allocate all additional in-year funding to the five area based Advice Consortia; and
- Option B - to allocate all additional funding to the Belfast City Wide Tribunal Service.

Following consideration of the options, it was,

Moved by Councillor Magennis,  
Seconded by Councillor Magee,

“That the Committee accepts the amendment and variation to the contract for funding detailed as in the Letter of Variance and that Option A be adopted as the preferred option, to allocate all additional in-year funding to the five Area Based Advice Consortia using the funding allocation model developed by the Council in 2012 (revised in 2015 to reflect the boundary changes).”

**Amendment**

Moved by Councillor Heading,  
Seconded by Councillor Lyons

“That the Committee accepts the amendment and variation to the contract for funding as detailed in the Letter of Variance and that a new ‘Option C’ be agreed which would see a 50% equal split of the additional in-year funding to the Belfast City Wide Tribunal Service and the five Area Based Advice Consortia.”

On a vote by show of hands, two Members voted for the amendment and thirteen against and it was declared lost.

The original motion standing in the name of Councillor Magennis and seconded by Councillor Magee was thereupon put to the meeting and passed with thirteen Members voting for and none against.

**Community Development Grants**

The Committee considered a report which sought permission to offer contract extensions for 2019/20 across the Community Development Grant Programme (CDGP) categories to funded organisation, pending affordability.

Following consideration, the Committee:

- agreed an intention to offer contract extensions for 2019/20 and noted that any offer of Community Development Grant Programme funding would be dependent upon formal confirmation of the Council’s

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contribution and a stable level of Department for Community income from their regional Community Support Programme grant allocation;

- noted that, following the Committee's approval, officers would engage with funded organisations on this basis; and
- agreed that a report would be submitted to the January meeting that would provide a geographical breakdown in respect of the previous allocation of community development funding grants.

**Burial Provision Update**

The Committee considered a report which provided details in relation to future burial provision and information in respect of a proposal from a private individual for a cemetery at Dundrod. The Committee was advised that the application had been submitted to Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council and it had refused permission on 4th October, 2018. The individual concerned was now considering appealing this decision and the Planning Consultant for the proposal had written to the Council seeking the Council's support should it go to the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC).

The Committee considered a number of options in relation to the request and, following consideration, it was

Moved by Alderman Sandford,  
Seconded by Councillor Corr Johnston,

"That the Committee agrees not to support the appellant's application at the PAC."

**Amendment**

Moved by Councillor Corr,  
Seconded by Councillor Heading,

"That the Committee agrees to support the appellant's application at the PAC (if requested) by making representation on the Council's position in relation to its current supply of burial lands and anticipated need."

On a vote by show of hands, ten Members voted for the amendment and four against and it was declared carried.

The amendment was put as the substantive motion and passed.

**Request for the use of Ormeau Park**

The Committee granted authority for Aiken Promotions to hold an outdoor concert on 22nd August, 2019 at Ormeau Park, subject to satisfactory terms being agreed with the Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services and on condition that:

- the promoter resolves all operational issues to the Council's satisfaction;

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- an appropriate legal agreement is completed, to be prepared by the City Solicitor; and
- the promoter meets all statutory requirements of the Building Control Service, including the terms and conditions of the Parks Entertainment Licence.

The Committee also granted authority to the Strategic Director of City and Neighborhood Services to:

- negotiate an appropriate fee for use of Ormeau Park taking into account costs to the Council, minimising negative impact on the immediate area and the potential wider benefit to the City economy; and
- to write to Aiken Promotions to advise that the Council reserved the right to introduce a 'social clause' into legal agreements at any time (subject to Council approval of such a policy).

**Matters Referred Back from Council/Motions**

**Response from DAERA re: Japanese Knotweed**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> October, the Committee had agreed to write to the Permanent Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) to seek an all-party deputation to meet with him to discuss the ongoing challenges in respect of issues associated with Japanese Knotweed.

The Members were advised that a response had been received. In this response, the Permanent Secretary had outlined in detail within the correspondence the Department's role in relation to the management of non-invasive species. He advised that the Department was not in a position to provide a service to manage non-native invasive weeds on land outside of its own ownership as the responsibility for managing species such as Japanese Knotweed lay solely with the owner of the land on which it was growing.

Subsequently, the Permanent Secretary had declined the Committee's request to meet with an all-party deputation to discuss the matter further.

The Committee noted the response.

**Lighting of City Parks**

The Committee was reminded that, at the meeting of Council on 3rd December, the following motion, which had been proposed by the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor McDonough Brown) and seconded by Councillor Reynolds, had been referred to the Committee for consideration:

*"This Council recognises the importance of our city parks to walkers, runners, cyclists, dogs, and others and appreciates the desire within our communities to use city parks all year round.*

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*Therefore, the Council agrees to consider options for lighting our city parks, with the intention of opening parks for longer during the winter months. The Council will consider a report which identifies the costs and benefits of lighting a range of parks to give citizens equal access to high quality outdoor space at all times of the year.”*

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

**Committee/Strategic Issues**

**Update on Grass Cutting and Horticultural Maintenance  
of Sites Not Owned by Belfast City Council**

The Director of Neighbourhood Services reminded the Members that the Council had previously agreed to enter into an arrangement with Transport NI (TNI) regarding the provision of maintenance at the Michael Ferguson roundabout, Stewartstown Road and on the roadside verges at Kingsway Dunmurry, Knock dual carriageway and the top of the Cregagh Road, all of which were under the ownership and responsibility of TNI.

The Director explained that, whilst this arrangement had now been in operation for three years, it was recognised that the condition of many of these open spaces, rather than contributing to the attractiveness and vibrancy of the City and local neighbourhoods, were unsightly as they were not effectively maintained. She advised that consideration was now being given as to what other options were available to partner agencies and local communities to ensure that open spaces were suitably maintained.

The Director reported that, as part of recent work to develop a Belfast Open Spaces Strategy, an audit of open spaces in the City had been undertaken. The audit had assessed open space provision, accessibility and potential future action based on the City's growth strategy and included parks, playing fields, playgrounds and civic spaces. She advised that this Strategy would be presented to the Committee in the coming months for its consideration.

The Committee noted that a review had also been undertaken of the Growing Communities Strategy and that it too would be presented to Committee in due course. In the context of maintaining non-Council open spaces in local areas, it was felt that there was an opportunity to assess how this area of work might also be addressed through volunteering with the development of increased capacity through communities.

The Committee was advised that, based on the work to date, it was proposed that further work would now be undertaken in each area to assess the need for maintenance of open spaces that were not owned by the Council. The Director advised that it was suggested that Council officers would meet with representatives from the Department of Infrastructure to review the current arrangements and to discuss opportunities to improve or enhance these arrangements. Any further discussion would be set in the context of the Council's significant financial constraints and would recognise that the Council alone could not resolve the issues.

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Following consideration, the Committee:

- agreed that, in order to test feasibility and to grow capacity, some pilot projects would be undertaken in 2018/2019. A further report on the scope and detail of pilots would be submitted at a future meeting;
- agreed that officers would undertake a review of the grass cutting arrangements already in place with Transport NI and seek to establish, in conjunction with Transport NI, how these could be enhanced or improved for the year 2019/2020, this would also give consideration to the McKinstry Road Roundabout; and
- noted that a report would be submitted to a future meeting which would include recommendations for the 2019/2020 financial year.

**Minutes of Strategic Cemeteries and  
Crematorium Development Working Group**

The Committee was advised that at the meeting of the Strategic Cemetery and Crematorium Working Group held on 21st November, the following key items had been considered:

- update in respect of the permanent memorial to mark Z1 in the City Cemetery; and
- Update in respect of new Burial Lands.

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Working Group held on 21st November 2018.

**Physical Programme/Asset Management**

**Proposed Relocation of Moyard Playground**

The Director of Neighbourhood Services reminded the Committee that the Council currently held a site at Moyard Crescent from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) on a 10,000-year lease, for the purpose of providing a standalone playground and small kick about area. She detailed that the location, which was isolated from the main body of the Moyard Estate, had been used as a gathering point for local youths who engaged in anti-social behaviour.

The Committee was further reminded that, at its meeting held on 14th August, 2014, it had granted approval to relocate the playground from Moyard Crescent to the Vere Foster Primary School site and to surrender the Moyard Crescent site to the NIHE. The playground had subsequently been closed and the equipment removed but the Council had retained ownership of the site. The Belfast Education and Library Board (now the Education Authority) had indicated a willingness to transfer part of the land at the Vere Foster Primary School to the Council for the relocation of the playground and kick about area. It had been considered that this proposed location would provide improved access due to the proximity to the housing and to the Matt Talbot Youth Club.

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Following the construction of a mini pitch by the Education Authority, the remainder of the Vere Foster Primary School site had been declared surplus in June 2017 and the Council had expressed an interest in acquiring the site for a new playground and casual multi games area. The NIHE had also expressed an interest in acquiring the site for social housing. The Land and Property Service (LPS) had valued the site at £120,000 to reflect residential development. The Committee was advised that, following discussion with officers, the NIHE had since withdrawn its expression of interest in the Vere Foster Primary School site.

The Director reported that Council had submitted a business case to the Education Authority seeking to acquire the site for a playground and multi games area by way of a 25-year lease. The Education Authority had agreed to the request for the 25-year lease and the LPS had assessed the value at £800 per annum.

The Committee noted that the Council was now in a position to agree to the NIHE's request for the Council to surrender its leasehold interest in the Moyard Crescent site. The Committee was advised that the NIHE intended to transfer the site to Choice Housing for the construction of 12-14 social housing units to address the identified social housing need in the area. The LPS had assessed the value of the Council's leasehold in the Moyard Crescent site at nil, given that the site was restricted to that of a playground and also that the NIHE had reserved the right to take possession of the frontage of the site on giving the Council one-months' notice at any time.

The Committee:

- authorised the disposal of the existing Moyard Crescent playground site to the NIHE by way of a surrender of the lease; and
- agreed to the acquisition of a new site at the former Vere Foster Primary School from the Education Authority, subject to the approval of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to the terms of the Deed of Surrender to the NIHE and the new lease with the Education Authority in accordance with standing orders.

**Finance, Procurement and Performance**

**Quarter 2 Finance Report**

The Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services summarised the contents of the report which presented a Quarter 2 financial position for the People and Communities Committee, including a forecast of the year end outturn. He advised that the detail included the Quarter 2 position for the Committee which showed an under-spend of £476,845 or (1.2%) of the budget, with the forecast year end position being an under-spend of £98,000k (0.1%) which was well within the acceptable variance limit of 3%.

The Director advised that the forecast year end position for the Council was an underspend of £1.225m which was 0.9% of the budgeted net expenditure. The Quarter 2 forecast from the Land and Property Service was a clawback of £1.201m. The Committee was advised that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its

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meeting on 23rd November, had agreed that no budget reallocations would be considered until the year end given the considerable financial challenges that faced the Council.

The Committee noted the report and the associated financial reporting pack.

**People and Communities Committee Plan**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a mid-year update on the People and Communities Committee Plan 2018/19 outlining progress on key actions, achievements and risks (as at 30th September 2018).
- 1.2 The People and Communities Committee Plan 2018/19 was approved by Committee on 12th April 2018, following a Members planning workshop held on 27th February 2018 and a feedback report was tabled for consideration on the 6th March 2018.
- 1.3 The Committee Plan provides an overview of the various priorities and key activities that this Committee will oversee in the 2018-19 financial year to help deliver on the priorities and ambitions in the Corporate Plan and Belfast Agenda.

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the progress to date against the agreed actions within the Committee Plan.

**3.0 Main report**

**Key Issues**

- 3.1 The People and Communities Committee Plan provides an overview of the priorities and key activities the Committee will oversee throughout the 2018-19 financial year to deliver the ambitions in the Corporate Plan and Belfast Agenda. The Committee Plan actions contribute towards the City's strategic direction and long-term vision.

The Committee Plan supports the delivery of the Belfast Agenda, working towards the delivery of inclusive growth across all four priorities of Living Here, City Development,

**Growing the Economy and Working and Learning led by an organisation fit to lead and serve, and aiming to leave no one behind. The Living Here priority makes a significant contribution to improving life at a local level.**

**Committee Plan Update**

**3.2** Over the last six months a range of strategies, policies, programmes and projects have been developed and implemented aimed at improving the quality of life and well-being at a local level, working with partner organisations and communities to realise the City's vision and achieve its potential. Lead officers have provided status and progress updates measured against the projects, programmes and activities as laid out in the Committee Plan. A detailed update is outlined is available on Mod.gov with some key highlights summarised below against the relevant priorities of the Belfast Agenda.

**3.3 *Living Here -Improve Neighbourhoods highlights:***

- Our work in partnership with Early Years Organisations with pre-school children is reaping benefits; the opportunity to train staff with new techniques embeds skills which benefit all child age groups.
- We are re-enforcing our commitment to leave no one behind by solidifying closer relationships with Family Support Hubs. We continue to extend outreach services in hard to reach communities. We have delivered a number of single identity sessions in our Community Centres to newcomers and ethnic communities, and increasingly children are participating in our mainstream services which are drawn from a wide range of ethnic minority communities including the Roma and Traveller community.
- We are continuing to deliver the Belfast PCSP Action Plan exceeding our targets aiming to ensure our neighbourhoods are safe.
- Officers are meeting regularly with the PSNI to improve front line services by tackling Anti-Social Behaviour in our Parks and Open Spaces, prioritising resources and programming activity to areas most in need.
- We have earned two new accredited Green Flag Awards for Connswater Greenway and Half Moon Lake achieving a total of nineteen as we successfully retained our seventeen existing sites across the city; Botanic Gardens also successfully achieved the Green Flag Heritage Award.

- The Connswater Community Greenway (CCG) is thriving with 337,402 people using our new and improved facilities. Our animation plan is well established with 23,918 people attending CCG events actively engaging in a wide range of cultural, active and sporting activities. A multi-activity programme of events has been delivered comprising Walking, Yoga, Cycling activities including Market Fayres, Festivals and Park Runs.
- We are finalising the Belfast Open Spaces Strategy ready for committee approval prior to a period of public consultation to maximise the council's commitment to improve the city's natural and built environment.
- We have completed and submitted the Air Quality Plan to DAERA fulfilling our commitment to protecting and improving the city's environment.

**3.4    *Living Here – Improve the City Living Experience highlights:***

- We successfully organised and delivered the Spring Fair, Rose Week and Autumn Fair to an audience over 86,000 visitors maximising the benefits of our local assets and green spaces.
- Our investment towards the development of sports in the city is making good progress with the recent approval of the Sports Development Strategy terms of reference.
- We are continually working at a local level with our residents to deliver the Stadia Community Benefits programme with GAA coming on board and joining the initiative.

**3.5    Living Here - Improve Community Relations highlights:**

- We have received a Letter of Offer for £506K to deliver our Good Relations Action Plan which continues to be rolled out via a range of programmes across Belfast.
- We allocated Grant Aid Funding to 69 projects across the City for a range of Good Relations and Summer Intervention activity.
- We successfully rebid for £5.5M under the Peace IV Programme themes of Children and Young People, Shared Spaces & Services and Building Positive Relations.
- We have completed the public consultation on The Springfield Dam Park Masterplan aiming to foster greater levels of social integration and engagement; the project will reconnect the dam and park creating a new signature civic space improving access, recreational facilities and environmental enhancements.

**3.6 *Living here - Reduce Life Inequalities highlights:***

- We continue to work with our key partners in the Belfast Strategic Partnership (BSP) –supporting the development of a revised draft strategic framework with identified themes.
- Innovative and collaborative approaches towards tackling drug use in the city is helping to develop a joined-up approach to address drug, alcohol and mental health issues.
- We are collaborating with partners working towards establishing the crisis de-escalation service pilot which is on track for opening in January 2019 together with secured funding; and a tender process is underway.
- An animation and outreach programme has been delivered in Marrowbone which is linked to Care Zone to support the approach towards suicide prevention, well-being and emotional resilience.
- Financial support of £73K of has been allocated to deliver the Every Body Active programme. The Clubmark scheme has now awarded 88 clubs with accreditation or achieved higher progression.
- We continue to manage the GLL strategic partnership under the Active Belfast Ltd business plan, delivering year on year growth and efficiencies. The Olympia Leisure Centre continues to be a successful operational model and pre-paid membership is increasing.

**3.7 *Living Here - Enable Active, Healthy and Empowered Citizens highlights:***

- A cross council steering group has been established to lead on the Corporate Volunteer Policy with an internal communication plan developed to promote the policy.
- Volunteer activity continues across a range of projects and services including Summer Scheme programmes, Age Friendly Belfast, Positive Ageing month, our Sail Training programmes and the Tropical Ravine. Over 5000 volunteers supported the delivery of community and play programmes amounting to over 31,500 volunteer hours contributed to date.

**3.8 *Living Here - Provide fit for purpose city services highlights:***

- We continue to work on projects as part of the CNS Change Programme. In relation to service integration, structural change and efficiency, four workstreams have been prioritized : Customer Focus, Waste Management,

**Frontline Regulatory and Open Spaces & Streetscene.**  
The Tier 4 management structure is complete with 5 management appointments in place by end of Sept (the final post was recruited in November).

- Work is continuing on the Bereavement Improvement Programme with a recent risk zoning exercise taking place facilitated by a national expert.

**3.9 Living Here - Support young and older people highlights:**

- The Age Friendly Plan has been agreed and approved by Committee ready for public consultation.
- There is continued engagement with the Youth Forum campaign programme with 40 recently recruited young people.
- The Belfast Youth Forum and Children's Law Centre worked together on the collaborative project 'Elephant in the Room' to help inform and promote mental health issues in young people.

**3.10 City Development – Protect and Enhance our Environment and Built Heritage highlights:**

- Our work progressing HLF funding applications in support of the restoration and animation of city assets has transformed the Tropical Ravine which has received 142,000 visitors since opening until September 2018. The upgrade achieved 'Project of the Year' at RICS Awards 2018; this award is testament to the council's commitment to deliver key strategic physical projects and enhance our environment and built heritage.
- The public consultation of the Waste Framework began in June and is now complete with over 2,000 responses received to date. Nineteen site-specific information roadshows took place across the city.
- Workshops have taken place under the Circular Economy umbrella. A programme of work has been developed identifying four material streams of food waste; electrical & electronic equipment; furniture & clothing and textiles and is currently under consideration as part of the Strategic Framework.

**3.11 Organisation Fit to Lead and Serve – our enablers**

- Presentations have been delivered to Area Working Groups and updates provided to Community Planning Partnership/Living Here Board.
- Four Area Neighbourhood Service Managers have been appointed.

- The plan to transfer the Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) regulation to Council is progressing. A draft budget has been prepared for the new service and is currently under review.

### **3.12 Corporate Risk Actions Update**

- There has been good progress in relation to the two corporate risk actions. The risks are regularly reviewed and assessed.
- Regular monitoring and reporting of existing waste contracts takes place within the business area. Next steps in relation to overturn DAERA's award of planning for arc21 Residual Waste Treatment project remains with the Secretary of State NI. Public consultation of the Waste Framework is now completed together with the strategic Outline Cases for relevant capital investments.
- The Safeguarding All Ages risk is progressing with a Safeguarding Panel established and training being delivered. An internal audit has supported the development of a responsibility matrix which is the basis of a continuous improvement plan which will report findings to the Safeguarding Panel.

### **3.13 Financial & Resource Implications**

The Committee Plan 2018-19 has been developed and delivered in the context of the resources available to Committee.

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

Where necessary all projects, programmes and activities contained within the Committee Plan have and will be subject to equality and rural needs screening, which are dealt with at project level and in line with the Council's processes.”

The Committee noted the progress to date against the agreed actions within the Committee Plan.

### **Operational Issues**

#### **Street Naming**

The Committee approved the naming in respect of Castlehill Wood, off Castlehill Manor, BT4 and Napoleans Gate, off Shore Road, BT15.

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**Dual Language**

The Committee approved the applications to erect second nameplates in Irish at Powerscourt Place, off Essex Grove, BT7 and Essex Grove, off Ormeau Road, BT7.

**Waste Collection - Quarterly Update**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

**1.1 To provide Members with an update in relation to:**

- (i) the processes and procedures that continue to be implemented to enhance the waste collection service;
- (ii) the actions included in the high level Waste Collection Improvement Plan, which has been developed to address productivity and performance issues; and
- (iii) the call handling procedures used in relation to waste collection requests for service -and in particular call, waiting times during August 2018.

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to**

- note the continued interventions implemented to maintain the performance improvements of the waste collection service, together with progress in relation to the actions included in the Waste Collection Improvement Plan, and the Organisational Development Unit review of the commercial waste function.

**2.2 Members are also asked to note the processes and actions that have been implemented to improve call handling in relation to waste collection calls and the proposed future, enhanced and innovative approach to customer focus across the council.**

**2.3 As Members will be aware, it was previously agreed that future update reports would be provided on a three monthly basis. Given the positive impact interventions introduced to date have achieved to improve the performance of the Waste Collection Service, the Committee is asked to approve the recommendation that, future Waste Collection update reports be presented to Members on a six monthly basis.**

**3.0 Main report**

**Key Issues**

**Waste Collection Customer Call Handling and Management Interventions**

- 3.1** The volume of waste collection calls directed into the Customer Contact Centre have returned to normal levels (approximately 11,000 calls per month) as a result of the management interventions and improved processes which have been implemented during the past fifteen months.
- 3.2** Over the course of a full year the Council completed 8.5 million domestic waste collections. Of these collections, around 12,000 can be attributed to missed collections which were due to a number of reasons, including unpresented waste receptacles, restricted vehicle access, vehicle breakdowns and unforeseen circumstances such as snow and ice.
- 3.3** Management information reports continue to be generated, which enable targeted and timely operations to be carried out and proactively deal with service requests in relation to missed bins and missed assisted lifts.

The production of comprehensive daily waste collection analysis reports by assistant managers and operational squads continue to provide accountability, improved communication and increased productivity, which supports prompt resolution of customer enquiries.
- 3.4** Resolving accessibility problems on some waste collection routes remains an issue. Given the access difficulties of certain locations it will take some time to achieve sustainable solutions. Discussions are ongoing with the Transport NI Enforcement Team to explore viable possibilities which include installing double yellow lines, enforcement action and adjustments in collection times. Additionally, options in relation to using smaller RCVs on specific collection routes are being considered, as these vehicles have the ability to manoeuvre more easily on challenging routes, but this is dependent upon the availability of the limited number of these types of vehicles.
- 3.5** Members will be aware that the current waste collection fleet is aged, frequently resulting in vehicle breakdowns, which will impact negatively on collections. Options are being explored, where possible, to replace vehicles on a like-for-like basis with modern alternatives, and will include hybrid vehicles in due course.

- 3.6 Regular communications between the senior management forum, the waste collection management team and the trade unions continues to take place, which ensures that priority issues are considered and addressed in a timely basis. This process supports the delivery of a high quality, responsive and flexible service which meets customer need.

**Waste Collection Improvement Action Plan**

- 3.7 Having started in the Council over the summer, the Logistics Manager continues to focus on the waste collection improvement plan. An update in relation to the key actions required to address productivity and performance issues, is detailed in the following points.
- The review in relation to the administrative support arrangements for waste collection operational staff, is continuing. Time spent on the ground supervising waste collection operations by operational staff remains at an increased level and will continue whilst the squad productivity initiatives are implemented for the remainder of 2018-2019.
  - The information gathered in relation to waste collection squad productivity is now being discussed with individual squads and improvement plans have been identified on an individual squad basis for many of the squads. This review covers all types of waste - general, recyclable and food/ organic. This phase is due to complete in January 2019. Where possible incremental improvements are being introduced immediately, with a final improvement plan to balance all routes to follow. Thus may necessitate some further changes to collection timetables in order to maximise efficiencies.
  - A review of Commercial Waste productivity is underway. Base data is being collected and sent to the route optimisation software provider for input. The results will be analysed by the Waste Collection Management team and an action plan will be drawn up to implement any agreed efficiency improvements.

**Customer Contact Centre Call Handling August 2018**

- 3.8 Following a query raised at the August 2018 Committee in relation to waste collection customer call waiting times, enquiries have been completed to explore the reasons attributing to increased call handling times.

- 3.9 Members should note that, during the period April to August 2018, the Customer Contact Centre received an exceptionally high number of calls in relation to bulky waste collections, and wasps. During this period, the volume of bulky waste collection calls increased by 57% and the volume of calls regarding wasps increased substantially, resulting in call answering delays.
- 3.10 It is acknowledged that requests for service regarding wasps are seasonal, generally peaking in August and therefore can explain the significant escalation in such service requests during this period. Additionally, the particularly warm weather during the 2018 summer period, is likely to have contributed to a greater increase in wasp -related calls this year.
- 3.11 The call duration time in relation to dealing with wasp related service requests is considerably longer than other types of service requests, with an individual call duration lasting up to ten minutes. As a result, during August 2018, call durations were of considerable length, with the Customer Contact Centre operatives being occupied for longer periods of time than normal, subsequently leading to longer call handling times for all calls.
- 3.12 At this point, immediate corrective action was taken and a voicemail was activated explaining to customers that, potentially the call waiting time could be up to twenty minutes. To proactively improve customer call experience, customers were invited to leave a voice mail message or where appropriate, directed to Council's website, to access their service request.
- 3.13 This issue has subsequently been resolved, with the volume of all calls received by the Customer Contact Centre and call handling times returning to normal levels (as outlined in 3.1).
- 3.14 In order to proactively avoid similar delays recurring in the future, from 15 October, all calls in relation to wasps have been transferred to the Pest Administration Team.

**Proposed Future Customer Focus Approach**

- 3.15 Members will be aware of the Corporate Customer Focus Project established to review current customer contact channels and structures, with a view to defining a future corporate approach to customer contact and ultimately enhance customer experience.

**3.16 An extensive programme of internal and external engagement, as well as wide-ranging research, has informed the development of draft guiding design principals, which if agreed will be used to shape options for delivery and will provide a frame of reference for future decision making in relation to customer focus. These design principals focus on a consistent joined up corporate approach, underpinned by customer service standards which are customer centric to enhance customer experience, whilst improving the efficiency of our processes to support the scale of growth required to meet the Belfast Agenda.**

**Financial & Resource Implications**

**3.17 At this time there are no negative financial or resource implications associated with this report. Any future route optimisation rebalancing exercises and asset implications arising from the implementation of the Waste Framework may however result in financial and resource implications at a future date.**

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

**3.18 At this time there are no equality, good relations or rural needs assessment implications associated with this report.”**

The Committee noted the update provided and agreed that future Waste Collection update reports would be presented to the Committee on a six monthly basis.

**Request for the use of Parks and Facilities (Combined Report)**

The Director Neighbourhood Services advised that requests had been received from a number of organisations seeking permission to use various Council parks and facilities.

The Director then provided an overview of each of the proposed events and following consideration, the Committee granted permission to:

- the Apprentice Boys of Derry for its “Annual Easter Monday Demonstration” at Alderman Tommy Patton Playing Fields on Monday 22nd April, 2019;
- the Belfast Junior Orange County for its “Annual Easter Tuesday Parade” at CS Lewis Square on Tuesday 23rd April, 2019; and
- the Grand Opera House to enable it to hold a Family Festival on Saturday 25th and Sunday 26th July, 2020 at Botanic Gardens and also for a Big Top Circus event, restricted to a maximum of 7- 8 days between 31st July – 16th August, 2020 (also at Botanic Gardens).

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The Committee agreed that all events would be subject to the completion of the appropriate Event Management Plans and satisfactory terms being agreed by the Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services 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
- consult with adjoining public bodies and local communities as necessary.

Specifically in relation to the Grand Opera House Event, the organisers would be required to:

- obtain the necessary permission for pyrotechnics;
- obtain a sale of alcohol license;
- enter into an appropriate legal agreement; and
- process the timely payment of the agreed charges and bonds as required in the legal agreement.

The Committee also granted authority to the Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services to:

- negotiate an appropriate fee for use of Botanic Gardens taking into account costs to the Council, minimising negative impact on the immediate area and taking into consideration the potential wider benefit to the City economy; and
- to write to the promoters and advise that the Council reserves the right to introduce a 'social clause' into any future legal agreements at any time (subject to Council approval of such a policy).

**Pride of Place 2018**

The Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services explained the purpose of the Pride of Place competition, which recognised and celebrated community partnerships' contribution to society. Entry was by Council nomination and the Council had supported the competition for over twelve years. The Council's Community Service officers took the organisational lead in the selection and preparation of entrant groups.

The Director reminded the Committee that, this year, the Council had nominated five groups, as follows:

- Bloomfield Community Association – Urban Neighbourhood with population under 1,000;
- Markets Development Association – Urban Neighbourhoods with population between 1,000 – 2,000;
- Benview Community Centre – Urban Neighbourhoods with population over 2,000;

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- The Maureen Sheehan Centre – Community Wellbeing Initiative; and
- The Three Faiths Initiative – Communities Reaching Out Initiative.

Four of these had progressed to the judging stage in August, with Benview Community Centre subsequently having withdrawn from the process. At the Gala Awards Ceremony held in Cork City Hall on 17th November, two of the Council nominees had been successful, the Markets Development Association were the overall winners in their category and Bloomfield Community Association were runners up in their category.

The Director detailed that the nomination programme required a very quick turnaround between receipt of the nomination forms and return of the completed application to Co-operation Ireland, usually six weeks. He also advised that the Council had been finding it increasingly difficult to source organisations willing to participate in the competition. Given these difficulties, officers felt that it was an opportune time to develop a more robust process across a number of Council services.

The Committee noted that the process had yet to be developed but it was suggested that the selection criteria would entail a short expression of interest form to be completed by the nominated group, development discussions with the group and an assessment panel.

The Committee approved the development of a new nomination and selection process for participation in the 2019 Pride of Place Competition and agreed that a report would be submitted to committee in due course which would detail the proposed options.

### **Winter Preparedness**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline the multiagency arrangements in place to support rough sleepers and other vulnerable individuals over the winter period and to bring to Committee’s attention the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust’s intention to establish a homeless support hub in Belfast.
- 1.2 On 6th November, the NI Housing Executive undertook an annual overnight street count of people sleeping rough in Belfast. Sixteen people were encountered on the street between the hours of 2.00am and 5.00am. Street counts provide a snapshot of people who are bedded down or about to bed down on the night of a count.
- 1.3 All of the sixteen people encountered were known to services. One had their own home and of the remaining 15 people, all were either known by or engaged with staff conducting the street count with only two accepting an offer of temporary accommodation on the night.

1.4 Many of the people identified as chronically homeless, including people who sleep rough, are characterised by chaotic lifestyles and poor health and well-being. It is typically difficult for these individuals to engage with services and they often decline offers of assistance.

**2.0 Recommendations**

2.1 Committee is asked to;

- Note the existing services provided for homeless people and rough sleepers in the city and the additional arrangements in place to support these individuals during winter months, in the form of shelter and associated services.

**3.0 Main report**

**Key Issues**

**Existing Services**

3.1 Services either offered or funded by the NI Housing Executive within Belfast for tackling homelessness include:

- The provision of day-time and night-time street outreach services;
- A day centre that can provide support services for up to 100 vulnerable people;
- The provision of 26 crash beds and a night time reception service;
- A wet hostel for up to 23 people;
- 70 units of intensively managed emergency accommodation;
- The provision of 11 direct access hostels comprising 348 units;
- 10 hostels of family accommodation with 237 units;
- Almost 400 private let properties

**Winter Preparedness**

3.2 The Housing Executive's Supporting People team is taking a lead in winter preparedness for the homeless sector and has put in place the following arrangements:

- Distribution of specific winter warmth packs for those on the streets through Council for the Homeless

- Established communication networks with community and voluntary service providers (NIHE led) raising awareness of weather warnings and requesting preparedness
- Enhanced outreach services if needed (with support from other frontline organisations including Council) to encourage those on the street to take shelter in the facilities provided.
- Enhanced tolerance levels in crisis accommodation and hostel accommodation to ensure those with more challenging behaviours (who may have been excluded from hostels for past behaviour) have access to shelter during severe weather
- Crisis accommodation (Annsgate, etc.) have the ability to provide temporary beds to provide shelter for all those wanting to access it

**City Centre Animation Project**

- 3.3 Council Officers are liaising with NIHE regarding rough sleepers, with a view to preventing further vulnerability.

**Additional Services**

- 3.4 The Policing and Community Safety Partnership and Public Health Agency continue to fund the Street Injectors Support Service and the Dual Diagnosis Service, both of which, alongside the Drug Outreach Team, support individuals with complex addiction and mental health needs. BCC's Community Safety team continues to work closely with these services and the Safer Neighbourhood Officers working patterns have been extended to cover 11.00am-7.00pm, with a focus on the city centre and supporting vulnerable individuals.

**Healthcare Hub for the Homeless**

- 3.5 A new hub providing health and social care services for the homeless is to be opened in the near future in Belfast. It will be led by Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT). The aim of the Hub is to bring services out of the clinic setting and into the community and on to the streets, to wrap care around the people who need it most, where they need it. This will include physical and mental health care and addiction services for those sleeping rough or in hostel accommodation. The pilot will run for an initial 18 months with an investment of £225,000 from the Department of Health's transformation fund and will build upon the existing BHSCT homeless public health nursing service and services provided by the voluntary sector. A senior nurse with considerable experience of working in the homeless

sector is leading the initiative, designed to help inform future service development. The location of the new hub has still to be decided, however the Trust is continuing to work on this and is endeavoring to have it up and running as early as new year.

- 3.6 These extended services will include a GP and an outreach nurse coming into the hub two days a week, a dentist and a podiatrist on site for half a day and a senior outreach nurse employed for an additional day. It is understood that a bid has also been put in for funding for a mental health nurse practitioner to be located in the new hub.

**Service Development**

- 3.7 Belfast City Council is working with the Public Health Agency and other partners on a targeted co-ordinated short-term (6-9 months) piece of work to address the needs of injecting drug users, particularly within the city centre. This work will have a particular focus on improving communication and co-ordination amongst services funded to work with these individuals and the wider homeless / at risk of homelessness population within the city and is connected to longer-term strategic actions to tackle health inequalities under the governance of the Living Here Board.

**Financial & Resource Implications**

- 3.8 The cost of the extended hours worked by the Safer Neighbourhood Officers in the city centre is included within the emergency budget established to support recovery from the Primark fire. All other work with partners is within existing revenue budgets.

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

- 3.9 There are no particular equality or good relations issues associated with this report.”

The Committee noted the update provided.

**Belfast Youth Forum Update**

The Committee was provided with a comprehensive overview of the ongoing work of Belfast City Council's Youth Forum and the Children and Young People Unit's 'Ur City2' fund, in particular it noted the main developments in relation to:

- the Belfast Youth Forum recruitment and induction process;
- the Elephant in the Room Project;

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- formalising youth participation structures; and
- the Ur City 2 Fund.

The Committee agreed:

- that Belfast Youth Forum members could present its mental health research report findings and recommendations to the January monthly People and Communities Committee meeting; and
- to support NI Youth Forum's funding application to Children in Need for an 'Elephant in the Room' project worker by acting as a referee in this process and committing £10,000 over the next three years to support this project.

**Control of Graffiti**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

- 1.1 **The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the Motion that was brought to Council on 3rd September 2018 with regard to the Council's approach to dealing with the control and removal of graffiti throughout the city. The Motion was proposed by Councillor Boyle and seconded by Councillor Dudgeon called for as follows:**

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

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

***(To be referred, without discussion, to the People and Communities Committee).***

- 1.2 **In taking into consideration the above motion, this report outlines:**

- (i) current operational practices;
- (ii) research on approaches by other councils;
- (iii) cost implications;
- (iv) legal powers to deal with graffiti; and
- (v) proposed future approach to deal with graffiti.

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 Members are asked to:**

- (i) Note the complex issues and significant costs associated with tackling graffiti removal across Belfast and the responsibilities of property and site owners to carryout maintenance at their own expense.
- (ii) Approve the future approach, outlined in paragraph 3.20 of the report, to further progress the issue of graffiti removal, including:
  - re-engagement with external partners, statutory agencies and utility companies to raise the profile of problematic graffiti within their organisations, highlight their responsibilities in relation to graffiti removal on their properties and sites, and to agree actions for them to address the issue of graffiti, including site monitoring and graffiti reduction and removal programmes;
  - following engagement with statutory agencies and utility companies, officers within the enforcement team will undertake a proactive monitoring regime by identifying hotspot areas and engage with the respective statutory agencies and utility companies to achieve removal of the graffiti;
  - where appropriate, the use of FPNs and Defacement Removal Notices;
  - continued engagement with PBNI to further develop the existing MOU and support, where appropriate, the effective removal of non-contentious graffiti in all areas of the city;
  - develop a Graffiti Removal Policy; and
  - in response to reported contentious or offensive graffiti, Council will continue to obliterate this type of graffiti from private property following completion of the relevant disclaimer form.
- (iii) Note that a progress report will be presented to Committee in approximately six months.

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**3.0 Main Report**

**Key Issues**

- 3.1** Graffiti continues to be prevalent and obvious environmental problem in many areas of our city, appearing on a range of public and private property, often linked to antisocial behaviour. Graffiti can sometimes be offensive and contentious, can be unsightly, influencing the visual appearance of local areas and ultimately could have a degrading impact in our neighbourhoods. Although it is recognised that graffiti is widespread, most graffiti does not appear on Council owned property.
- 3.2** Belfast City Council does not have a legal obligation to remove graffiti from any property, however, under the existing provisions of Article 18 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 (removal of graffiti and fly-posters), there are discretionary powers which allow the Council to remove or obliterate any graffiti, which in the opinion of the Council is detrimental to the amenity of any land within its district. Council's current approach, which is in line with Councils and Local Authorities across the UK is to:
- (i) remove graffiti from Council owned property;
  - (ii) in the case of contentious or offensive graffiti, following a request for service, remove from private property with the owners signed permission through a disclaimer;
  - (iii) refer requests for graffiti removal from property owned by other statutory agencies, to the relevant statutory agencies; and
  - (iv) work in collaboration, through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Probation Board Northern Ireland (PBNI) to remove, where practicable, nuisance graffiti.
- 3.3** In all other cases, removal of graffiti forms part of the normal maintenance responsibility of the person or organisation responsible for the upkeep of the property or site. This includes public and private landlords, other statutory bodies, business owners, private householders, education authorities, utility companies etc.
- 3.4** In the period April to November 2018, 217 service requests for removal of graffiti were received and actioned. Of these, 139 related to contentious or offensive graffiti. Table 1 below

**provides a breakdown of service requests in relation to the removal of graffiti over the past five years.**

**Table 1: Service Requests – Removal of Graffiti 2013 to 2018**

Year	Number of Graffiti Removal Service Requests			Annual Variance %
	Contentious	Non-Contentious	Total	
2017/2018	255	139	394	+19.8%
2016/2017	222	94	316	-19.6%
2015/2016	329	64	393	-14.6%
2014/2015	323	137	460	-28.3%
2013/2014	429	212	641	n/a

- 3.5 The City and Neighbourhood Services Department has limited resources to remove graffiti and, under current resources is unable to assign a dedicated team to this function. At present, one team undertakes graffiti removal as part of its multidisciplinary functions, which includes power washing streets, gum removal, land clearance, fly-posting removal and bulky household waste collections. Currently this team can manage the current workload generated by the requirement to remove graffiti from Council properties and service requests to remove contentious and offensive graffiti elsewhere. This approach is reflective of other Councils in Northern Ireland and across the UK in relation to contentious or offensive graffiti.
- 3.6 Members will be aware that in 2017, Council developed a partnership arrangement with PBNI and subsequently signed an MOU to support Council, where practicable, with the removal of non-contentious graffiti through a graffiti bus initiative. Council assisted in establishing this project, by providing guidance on the vehicle and equipment specifications, as well as delivering training on graffiti removal operations and the use of equipment. Since the commencement of the service in March 2017 and November 2018, 424 non-contentious graffiti incidents have been allocated to the initiative. It should be noted however that, from commencement of the project, the service has encountered several operational difficulties, resulting in the graffiti bus being out of service for a significant period of time. PBNI has put in place additional measures to mitigate against future difficulties and currently the bus is operating two days a week.
- 3.7 The Council has limited enforcement powers available to deal with the perpetrators of graffiti and its removal from all property types. The introduction of powers under the Clean Neighbourhoods & Environment Act 2011 in Northern Ireland

provided Councils with enhanced powers to tackle the issue of fly-posting and the enforcement of these powers has proved effective in controlling the level of flyposting activity within the city council area. Conversely, the legislative control to deal with graffiti was weakened by the removal of any enforcement powers to control graffiti on privately owned property. In the absence of any enforcement powers, it is difficult to effectively tackle this issue and the removal of graffiti by private landowners is dependent on their voluntary co-operation and good will.

- 3.8 In 2015 Council highlighted the need for stronger powers concerning the control of graffiti to the Department of Environment Regulatory and Natural Resources Division. However, in a response dated September 2015, the Department indicated that a change to the legislation was unlikely. In any event, given the ongoing absence of a Stormont Assembly, Council is unable to progress this matter further at present.

**3.9 The Councils enforcement powers in relation to graffiti include:**

**(i) Fixed Penalty Notices:**

A £80 Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) can be issued in certain circumstances to anyone who is caught in the act of graffiti.

**(ii) Removal Notices:**

A two-day removal notice can only be served on any individual who is identified as being responsible for the graffiti asking them to remove the graffiti. Failure to comply with the notice may result in the removal of the graffiti by the Council and the recovery of debt as a civil debt.

**(iii) Defacement Removal Notices:**

A Defacement Removal Notice can be served on the owners of utilities and statutory undertakers in certain circumstances to request that they remove graffiti from their properties. The Guidance suggest that Councils should seek to achieve co-operation through a partnership approach and that the use of these Notices should be a last resort.

- 3.10 As stated previously, the responsibility for removal of graffiti should form part of the responsibilities of the person or organisation accountable for maintaining the property or site. It

would be a considerable burden on the rates if Council decided to undertake graffiti removal on sites which are the responsibility of other individuals or organisations.

- 3.11 By way of example, in 2013 the former Cleansing Services participated in a three month, multi-partnership regeneration initiative, in an area comprising 74 streets in the Lower Falls area. Cleansing Services deployed one priority waste team which removed graffiti from 150 sites in the area. The graffiti ranged in size and type and was removed from all properties following completion of the necessary disclaimer. Several issues evolved during the project which included, problems obtaining the necessary signed disclaimer from property owners, access difficulties and staff being threatened. On occasions staff had to be accompanied by local representatives during the graffiti removal process. In 2013 the cost to remove graffiti in this 0.3452km<sup>2</sup>, over a three month period, amounted to £30,000 which was funded from non-recurring monies. A subsequent review of the same area identified that new graffiti had occurred, despite attempts by local communities to control it
- 3.12 In 2016, a graffiti removal blitz aimed at private and publically owned property in a number of streets within the Holyland and Stramillis area was undertaken by the Council. There are a number of techniques deployed in the removal of graffiti including the most common method of obliteration using masonry paint which is the most cost effective and quickest method. The use of gels/chemicals followed by power hosing is a more expensive and time consuming technique and can only be used to remove small quantities of graffiti within a limited budget. This project highlighted that some property owners refused to allow obliteration of graffiti on their property using paint and insisted on the use of gels, which could cost up to £200 for a sufficient quantity of gel to remove large-scale graffiti from a gable wall. This highlights that the Council's duty to obliterate graffiti in a cost effective manner will not necessarily meet with the expectation of private land owners. After a number of weeks, the graffiti started to emerge again in the area and remains an on-going challenge which many land owners do not pro-actively address.
- 3.13 In addition to the ongoing operational activity to remove graffiti, Council has, over a number of years, implemented several alternative community initiatives aimed at tackling graffiti problems.
- 3.14 Additionally in 2015, Council engaged with key external partners, statutory organisations and utility companies to

address the issue of graffiti, engagement with a view to ensuring that all organisations and companies were working proactively to remove graffiti from their properties. With current technology advances, the street scene now accommodates a wide range street furniture belonging to the various utilities, which is also prone to graffiti activity. In many cases, the owners of the street furniture is neither displayed nor obvious and would require an additional resource to map and investigate the owners to pursue any form of action. During previous engagement with utilities, it was acknowledged that the issue of graffiti is challenging and there was a limited resource available to deal with the issue with some indicating that it was reactive approach rather than a proactive programme.

- 3.15** Any future decisions on allocating additional resources around this function would need to be considered in detail, and appraised, in terms of the impacts on the rate setting process. It is estimated that the cost of graffiti removal throughout the UK exceeds £1 billion. It should be noted that other UK Local Authorities have responsibility for the functions of housing, education, roads etc. therefore are accountable for much of the public realm. In Northern Ireland responsibilities are divided between local and central government resulting in fragmented lines of accountability which do not support a straightforward approach to the removal of graffiti.
- 3.16** Recent research undertaken across other Councils and Local Authorities in relation to the removal of non-contentious graffiti from privately owned property demonstrates that a wide and varied approach is adopted. Some Local Authorities charge for graffiti removal, whilst others do not provide any service and place the onus on the land owner to make arrangements for removal. In Northern Ireland, there is a similar varied approach with most Councils prioritising the removal of contentious graffiti from private property. Those Councils who provide non-contentious graffiti removal services free of charge from private property provide a reactionary service following a request for service and this is delivered within a limited budget.
- 3.17** Glasgow City Council takes a proactive approach to graffiti removal by removing graffiti from all Council owned sites as well as removing contentious and non-contentious graffiti from public and private property. At present it has seven dedicated, two person teams, which operate across the city based on a general neighbourhood approach. The annual cost of this service to Glasgow City Council is £500,000. The work of the service is predominately driven by service requests made by the public, to the Council's Customer Care Centre. In addition,

the service also undertakes graffiti removal based on observations throughout individual multi-member wards, to ensure all areas of Glasgow benefit from the service. Glasgow City Council has a similar approach to Belfast City Council in that it will only remove graffiti from privately owned property following receipt of a signed disclaimer from the property owner.

- 3.18** If a similar approach to the Glasgow model was applied in Belfast, significant additional resources would be required. It is estimated that, to introduce two dedicated graffiti removal teams working across the city, the initial annual cost would be £275,743, which would include the purchase of necessary plant and equipment. Thereafter, an annual budget of approximately £209,703 would be required to maintain the service throughout the city. Funding for Council to introduce this model and undertake graffiti removal on a range of sites and properties across the city would have a significant burden on the rate, as these funds could not be found within existing budgets.
- 3.19** A further consideration in the context of providing an approach similar to the Glasgow City Council model is that Councils in Northern Ireland do not have the have discretionary powers to remove or obliterate graffiti on any property owned by another statutory agency. As a result, each statutory agency is responsible for the removal of graffiti from its own property. It has been explained previously that, unlike UK Local Authorities who have wider responsibilities for functions such as roads, housing etc. and are responsible for graffiti removal from these properties, the responsibility for removal of graffiti on such properties in Northern Ireland is fragmented between a number of statutory organisations. This presents a challenge in terms of achieving an effective, proactive graffiti removal programme for the city through one body such as the Council.
- 3.20** In further developing this work, it is recommended that Belfast City Council's future approach could include the following:
- (i) re- engagement with external partners, statutory agencies and utility companies to raise the profile of problematic graffiti within their organisations, highlight their responsibilities in relation to graffiti removal on their properties and sites and to agree actions for them to address the issue of graffiti, including site monitoring and graffiti reduction and removal programmes;
  - (ii) following engagement with statutory agencies and utility companies, officers within the enforcement team will undertake a proactive monitoring regime by

- identifying hotspot areas and engage with the respective statutory agencies and utility companies to achieve removal of the graffiti;
- (iii) where appropriate, the use of FPNs and Defacement Removal Notices;
  - (iv) consider the use of new HMO licence powers to deal with Graffiti on Houses In Multiple Occupation;
  - (v) continued engagement with PBNI to further develop the existing MOU and support, where appropriate, the effective removal of non-contentious graffiti in all areas of the city;
  - (vi) develop a Graffiti Removal Policy; and
  - (vii) In response to reported contentious or offensive graffiti, Council will continue to obliterate this type of graffiti from private property following completion of the relevant disclaimer form.
  - (viii) Should include action to write to Department again re new legislation to assist enforcement.
- 3.21 All future work in respect of graffiti removal must support and align with the Belfast Agenda and Community Planning.**
- Financial & Resource Implications**
- 3.22 The City and Neighbourhood Services Department has a limited budget to deal with graffiti removal. At present resources are sufficient to deal with graffiti removal from Council properties and sites together with the removal of reported contentious graffiti from public places. Any increase in the scope of the current service provision for graffiti removal will have significant cost and resource implications, which will be a considerable burden on the rates if Council decides to undertake graffiti removal on sites which are the responsibility of others.**
- Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment**
- 3.23 Incidents of reported contentious graffiti include political, sectarian and racist remarks. Council recognises the importance of removing such graffiti, where possible, as quickly as possible to reduce interface and community tension.**
- 3.24 All graffiti removal is undertaken in line with Council's equality and good relations policies and procedures."**

With the permission of the Chairman, Councillors Boyle and Dudgeon the proposer and seconder of the original motion, respectively, addressed the Committee and reiterated their growing concern regarding the unsightliness and lack of control in respect of graffiti

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across the City. Councillor Boyle stated that he felt that the proposed measures, as outlined in the report, were inadequate.

The Director of City Services detailed that the issue of tackling graffiti was complex given that it often involved engagement with external partners, statutory agencies, property/site owners and utility companies. She also stressed that there was often significant costs associated with its removal.

Following discussion, the Committee approved the future approach, outlined in paragraph 3.20 of the report, to further progress the issue of graffiti removal and noted that a progress report would be submitted to Committee in approximately six months.

**Update in respect of Transfers of Houses in  
Multiple Occupation (HMO) Regulations**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

- 1.1 The new legislative control, the Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Act NI 2016 completed the Final Stage on 15th March 2016 and received Royal Assent on 12th May 2016. On commencement of this Act HMO regulation will transfer to local Councils.
- 1.2 The committee will recall an update paper presented at the meeting on 4th September 2018, and the papers of 10th April 2018 and 8th May 2018.
- 1.3 This paper provides a further update on the progress with the transfer of Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) function from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) to Councils.

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:

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

**3.0 Main report**

**Key Issues**

**Fees**

- 3.1 During the summer of 2018, the three cluster lead Councils developed a fee calculator, which considered the costs of the

**new scheme transferring to the Councils, and the necessary fee that would be required to ensure the scheme could be administered at no cost to the councils.**

**The fee calculator has subsequently been reviewed by external consultants.**

- 3.2 The consultants, working closely with the finance teams in the Councils, concluded that, the assumptions underpinning the anticipated costs and income for the new scheme were reasonable, while the overriding premise is that the Councils' delivery of the scheme would be cost neutral i.e. no public sector subvention required.**
- 3.3 It is intended to bring a further report to the Committee regarding the fees once the Department of Communities (DfC) engagement (see below) has been completed and the feedback from stakeholders has been fully reviewed.**

**DfC engagement**

- 3.4 On 14th November 2018, the DfC launched a stakeholder engagement, which included the issuing of 2607 letters to landlords and agents registered under the current scheme, and the publication of the new scheme's details on the DfC website.**
- 3.5 The letter detailed that whilst the Houses in Multiple Occupation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 has been granted Royal Assent and introduced into law, most of the Sections contained within have not yet been enacted. This means the Act exists, but at this stage, in name only. Following on from the introduction of the primary legislation, DfC officials have been working alongside Council and Housing Executive representatives, to prepare a significant programme of subordinate regulations and a landlords Code of Practice which will give effect to the HMO Act with the aim to introduce a new licensing scheme from 1st April 2019. DfC are on track to meet the deadline for transferring the HMO function and introducing the licensing scheme for 01 April 2019.**
- 3.6 The communications also provided additional information on the new HMO licensing scheme and included a copy of the draft HMO Regulations (Northern Ireland) 20XX, the Landlords Code of Practice and a Regulatory Impact Assessment. The communications also outlined the new registration fees for the scheme. The engagement advised interested parties to contact the DfC for any clarification, and with any questions or comments. The engagement will close on 30 November 2018.**

**ICT**

- 3.7 BCC's Digital Services has lead on the process to procure a regional ICT solution for the new scheme. The contract has been awarded, subject to completion of a call off contract, to undertake this work. Considerable work is required to build the new ICT system, and to prepare for the transfer of data from NIHE files to the new ICT platform. Costs associated with the new ICT system will be paid for by DfC as transition costs. Digital Services have developed a SLA for ICT across all the Councils.

**Governance**

- 3.8 On advice from Legal Services, given the licensing/regulatory nature of the 2016 Act and the expertise gained by the Licensing Committee in terms of assessing similar type issues, a report was taken to the Licensing Committee on 20th November 2018, recommending that it assumes responsibility for determining all matters under the Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Act NI 2016, with the exception of those which are proposed to be delegated to the Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services Department, i.e.
- applications for the grant, renewal, transfer or variation of licences where objections are received;
  - applications where officers believe there may be an issue in relation to the fitness of the applicant to hold a licence;
  - approving any guidance documents;
  - setting of licence fees;
  - revocation of licences, except where in the public interest the Director, in consultation with the City Solicitor, considers that there are particular circumstances which make it necessary to suspend a licence immediately.
- 3.9 A subsequent report on 23 November 2018 to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee recommended amendments to Standing Order 37 (d) Duties of Committees – Licensing Committee to give effect to the Licensing Committee having delegated authority to determine those applications for a house in multiple occupation as set out in paragraph 3.6. The report also confirmed that the Licensing Committee had agreed to the amendments to the Scheme of Delegation, as outlined in paragraph 3.28; subject to the approval of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

- 3.10 It is proposed to hold a training workshop in January 2019 and bring proposed amendments to the Licencing Committee's Operating Protocol on February 2019.**

**Transferring staff**

- 3.11 Consultation with staff transferring from NIHE to BCC continues. Two members of NIHE staff continue to work in BCC offices each week to prepare a procedure manual and other relevant documentation. It is anticipated that an awareness session for transferring staff will take place in December, which will include a tour of the proposed office space and facilities in Cecil Ward Building, an opportunity to meet future colleagues in the City & Neighbourhood Services Department, and a tour of City Hall. A similar process will take place for transferring staff who will be based in the offices of Causeway Coasts and Glens Borough Council. A review of training needs prior to transfer is also ongoing.**

**Financial and Resource Implications**

- 3.12 The cost of administering the new licensing regime has been included in the draft estimates for 2019/20.**

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

**There are no equality, good relations or rural needs implications associated with this report.”**

The Committee noted the update provided.

**Resourceful Belfast**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

- 1.1 Waste Management has continued to develop and refine the Council’s approach to the Circular Economy under the banner of ‘*Resourceful Belfast*’. This has involved consideration of how the Council can use procurement and its contract base. We are also considering the policy landscape that could be created and benchmarked against the actions of other cities.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 Members are requested to**

- note the contents of the report and approve holding a Members' workshop in the New Year to report work to date and inform future steps.

**3.0 Main report**

**Background**

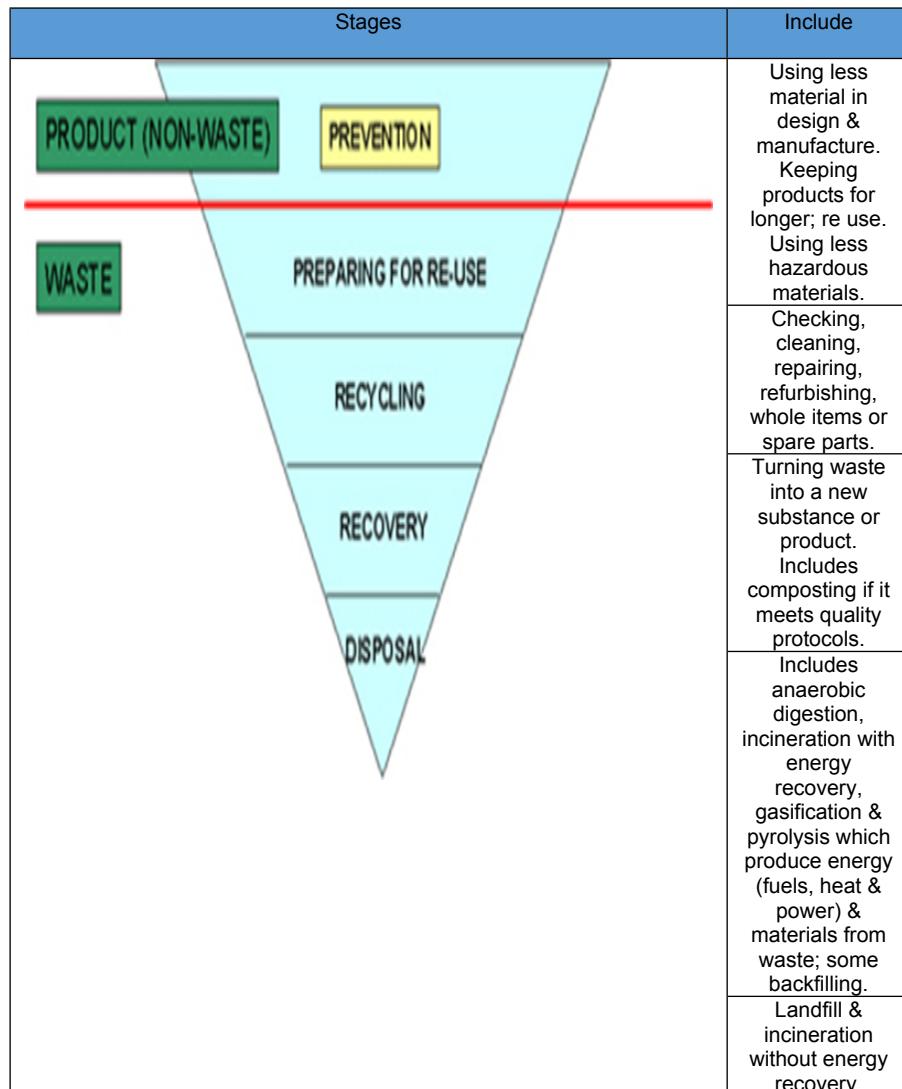
- 3.1 Members will be aware that the results from the Waste Collections consultation exercise was presented to Committee last month, and briefings on these are being scheduled for January 2019. These amount to a proposal to improve the quality of materials collected which can then be used locally for reprocessing and remanufacture.
- 3.2 In addition to the proposals around waste collections, which form part of the Council's draft Waste Framework strategic framework, a further series of actions are being developed to improve the Council's waste operations specifically around (i) waste infrastructure and treatment (ii) residents' behaviour change and (iii) the use of ICT and other technologies and new equipment to support these changes. The focus of the Framework is to effect a paradigm shift waste management in Belfast in order to add value to what is currently thrown away and, in the process, to create jobs in Northern Ireland.
- 3.3 To assist in this transition away from a treatment and disposal operation, Waste Management has been collaborating with other internal/external partners to develop *Resourceful Belfast* (a sister document to the Waste Framework) to articulate what these jobs may be, and in which sectors. The aim of a Circular Economy is to minimise the extraction of natural resources through the reuse and recirculation of goods and materials in order to gain maximum value from them. By extending a product's life through repair/recirculation, a Circular Economy enhances 'waste' to being a material or commodity, while minimising the residues sent for disposal. In such a way, the opportunities created are not just environmental, but economic and social and supports the Belfast Agenda. This means the focus of Resourceful Belfast is not on managing waste, but on identifying the sectors/creation of jobs which could use the materials resulting from working higher up the waste hierarchy (see Diagram 1). As this work is emerging in response to recent Circular Economy legislation, there are no ready-made templates or best practice within cities or regions which the Council can readily adopt so this is a discovery piece. Like many proactive councils, Belfast has been collaborating and working with others to inform and develop its thinking and approach.

- 3.4 At the People & Communities Committee meeting in August 2016, Members approved formation of an Advisory Board to develop a Circular Economy (CE) strategy or framework. That framework was formerly referred to as the '*materials strategy*' but is now known as *Resourceful Belfast*. At this meeting, Members also approved a collaborative arrangement with WRAP. Following this meeting, Waste Management created a cross-Departmental *Resourceful Belfast* Board to identify what actions could be taken.

**Circular Economy Advisory Board**

**Emerging agendas**

- 3.5 Since the first report there have been a number of game changers as highlighted in last month's report, particularly with David Attenborough's Blue Planet II highlighting the scale of the problem of escaped plastics, and the Chinese Government's implementation of *Operation National Sword* which reduced China's acceptance of low quality recyclates (8M tonnes per annum approx.), and a resultant global weakening of these materials' prices.
- 3.6 Also, the EU Circular Economy Package was passed. As this was ratified before March 2019, it is part of the legislative bundle which the UK will adopt prior to Brexit and national legislation should be drafted within the next couple of years to enact this. This legislation is of note because it is principally concerned with facilitating increased waste diversion through recycling and reuse, in addition to designing out waste at source, and the promotion of new business models.
- 3.7 There are higher targets for household waste recycling – 55% by 2025, 60% by 2030 and 65% by 2035, along with a 10% maximum allowance to landfill for municipal waste. This emphasises the need to achieve the significant behavioural change outlined in the Council's Waste Framework, and highlights the importance of completing the present consultation exercise.



**Diagram 1: Applying the waste hierarchy**

- 3.8 In parallel, or as part of the Package, several national and international plastics strategies have been proposed or launched focusing on preventing or increased recycling. This has generated many calls for partial or total bans of single use plastics, for example, cotton buds and straws as recently covered locally. As outlined to Members recently, one of the key objectives of the Waste Framework is to improve the quality of materials collected to create/support local jobs by introducing new collection arrangements of which one of the most obvious waste streams is plastics. The specific aim of this proposed revision to collections is to collect better quality

materials to be used locally in remanufacture, as opposed to offshoring and recycling elsewhere, which is also likely to minimise the Council's future spend on waste. Such an approach will increase NI's sustainability and economic resilience. Discussions have been held with the universities and with organisations like the NI Polymers Association (NIPA— which represents over 50 plastic processors across the region) and some limited research using students has been conducted. Many are interested in increasing the amount of recyclate used in plastic polymer production locally although financial support may be needed to progress this further. A recent application to the ESPRC to progress some of these elements involving some Council support has been successful.

- 3.9 Recently, the Collaborative Network which, in 2016, identified that it could reprocess locally most of the glass, plastic and paper which would be available in NI through better quality recycling and would be worth £47M per annum. These findings contributed considerably to the draft Waste Framework. This Network has now been re-established to explore how to realise these local improvements.
- 3.10 For over a decade, the Council has been extremely active in NI in moving waste thinking beyond simple collection, treatment and disposal. Initiatives, such as Business Improvement through Environmental Schemes (BITES); European Week for Waste Reduction to NI; securing funding for a Carbon Card (foundered due to Great Recession), collaborating on ReNEW project (with WRAP); introducing waste prevention schemes (the Fashion Souk, Stitch & Style, &c); and developing contracts to encourage expand the waste and resources management marketplace in NI were all achieved.
- 3.11 From this background, the Council developed *Resourceful Belfast* to explicitly link waste/resources management with local material supply and, in the process, what contribution could be made to the Belfast Agenda and job creation. The Council (Waste Management) and WRAP established a collaborative agreement to help develop a Circular Economy framework and, working with the Advisory Board (comprising officers from Waste Management, WRAP NI, DAERA Policy Unit, Procurement Unit, and Economic Development Unit), we have identified what might be possible for Belfast.
- 3.12 This identified that, through (i) policies and procedures, (ii) procurement exercises and (iii) market engagement/interventions, the Council could influence how circular economy thinking developed in Belfast. Members of the Advisory Board have also engaged with Strategic Planning

and Property & Projects to get this included in other Council documents, such as the Local Development Plan, and with Members.

- 3.13 In 2016, Waste Management joined the Eurocities Circular Economy taskforce and contributed to a Position Statement at their Annual General Meeting (see [http://nws.eurocities.eu/MediaShell/media/Final\\_Stmt\\_towards\\_circular\\_cities.pdf](http://nws.eurocities.eu/MediaShell/media/Final_Stmt_towards_circular_cities.pdf))

**Strategy Development**

- 3.14 The Circular Economy has proven to be dynamic with considerable focus upon manufacturing and resource efficiency, and new business models. Over the past two years, some clarity of councils' role in supporting this has become clearer (as shown by the Eurocities Position Statement). An underlying principle was that waste provided a starting point, the circular economy element means the focus is not only about cataloguing how many jobs are supported by the Council's recycling activities though, but also how additional steps stimulate new sectors/ businesses and thereby create opportunities additional to those from managing waste.
- 3.15 Rather than merely treating waste, the circular economy addresses the entire process of consumption, production and disposal in a way which conserves natural resources and generates local economic benefits. Adopting this approach over a decade ago supported the steps Bryson Charitable Group took in establishing some of its recycling activities and more recently similar backing has been provided to Extern (WEEE), East Belfast Mission (Bulky Goods) and Ulster Supported Employment Ltd (USEL – mattresses). Building on these approaches, the Advisory Board has been working consistently to develop simple steps in the *Resourceful Belfast* framework, the objective of which stated that '*if we implement targeted interventions and support (1) to stimulate Circular Economy solutions (2) at key points in the local economy (3) we can generate significant economic, environmental and social benefits for the city (4).*'
- 3.16 These elements underpin the framework documents and are available on Mod.gov:
- A summary concept diagram providing a high-level explanation of the framework and their interaction; and
  - A slide pack outlining the initial work; as a 'living' document it considers how to implement the framework

**and how actions can be delivered (a copy of this is available within the Members Library)**

- 3.17 These are now being used to engage with businesses, community and voluntary sectors, and other public sector stakeholders. Learning from Glasgow City Council (supported by Zero Waste Scotland), the Board recognised that longer-term a sectoral analysis of the local economy would identify where the most impactful opportunities exist. Glasgow's results helped inform their approach to developing relevant interventions and, posing this question, highlighted that the Council did not have this data and, as a next step, the Board proposes to work with WRAP to commission a similar exercise for Belfast.

**Associated Programme of Work**

- 3.18 One of the successes in terms of tackling problem wastes has been working with USEL. From a 2015 pilot, the Council contracted for a novel recovery operation which, last year, resulted in 14,000 mattresses being recycling or reuse. This scheme resulted in other councils and institutions getting involved and through its expansion, USEL created 22 jobs. Further materials are being considered including carpets and soft furnishings. In May, Waste Management was selected as USEL's '*Partner of the Year*'.
- 3.19 Extending this approach, the Board considered how it could contribute to the Belfast Agenda and identified that, in addition to policy and procurement approaches, four material streams offered the strongest opportunity to create new jobs through developing projects '*on the ground*'. The four were:
- Clothing & textiles
  - Electricals & electronics
  - Food & drink
  - Furniture (Priority Waste provides a great opportunity for the reuse of bulky waste)
- 3.20 To date, two workshops have identified seven projects as having potential and, currently, they are being assessed for deliverability given resources and timescales.
- 3.21 By way of example of actions of circular economy underway, a resource-matching community outreach/hub exercise run by International Synergies at South 13 Belfast happened in June to swap materials between organisations, many of which were manufacturers. Interested parties included North Belfast Men's Shed and several local waste management companies which

identified new materials for repair and recycling. This prolonging material use, or repairing items is similar to the pop-up Repair Café which has established itself in Belfast and occurs at a different venues across the city. It shows that businesses and third sector organisations are identifying circular economy opportunities and how to realise its benefits. There is a prospect that some may approach the Council to collaborate and maximise local impact.

- 3.22 In terms of increasing employability and skills, as part of the Circular Economy the Economic Development Unit (EDU) has been identifying where there is a significant employment need. As this sector develops and employment opportunities emerge around things like light fabrication, facilities management, &c the prospect of accelerating this transition by establishing relevant employment academies may become an option.
- 3.23 EDU are working with a range of employers across the city to establish these employment academies in a wide range of sectors to provide residents with the skills and qualifications needed to apply for job opportunities. All the Council's employment academies are employer-driven to meet demand issues, and underpinned by sectoral employment needs and intelligence. Regular links are maintained with employers and business stakeholders, such as NIPA and EDU are currently focused on engaging with small businesses on a range of programmes and are promoting the Circular Economy message and *Resourceful Belfast* activities. In particular EDU has established a Circular Economy pilot programme for cafés and restaurants in Belfast.
- 3.24 Members may also care to note that a couple of social enterprises have expressed an interest in the North Foreshore, and proposals to develop facilities here or provide alternative approaches for Council services may be in preparation.

#### **Waste Framework**

- 3.25 As highlighted in 3.4 above, currently the Council's wastes have secure treatment and disposal markets but with developments like the Chinese import restrictions, there is an increased emphasis upon maximising quality of recyclables which can be used locally (in NI) and create jobs. This adds weight to the Waste Framework and the paradigm shift needed in householders' behaviours improving the flight to quality of materials collected, rather than the simple approach – chasing ever-increasing weight based goals but relying on these lower grade materials being sorted somewhere else.

- 3.26** Top grade papers collected at the kerbside are selling well to local re-processors, such as Huhtamaki. On the other hand, recently the Council's contractor (Bryson) had to get a new market for the comingled (blue bin) collections' mixed papers, the price of which has fallen. Similar to *Resourceful Belfast*, the Waste Framework considers how waste collection changes could mitigate market volatility, optimise income and maintain jobs in line with the Belfast Agenda.
- 3.27** An application for DAERA funding for a pilot wheelie-box collection service has been submitted and the Council anticipate being informed shortly if this is successful.

**Internal Actions**

- 3.28** In addition to delivering the Waste Framework and *Resourceful Belfast*, there are other actions which the Council can take/is taking to set the circular economy agenda within the city through leading by example by adopting corporate policies, and further opportunities exist around purchasing, albeit to be fully effective the Standing Orders may need to be amended to provide greater clarity for the Procurement Service to manage environmental and social considerations within capital and revenue tender exercises. Examples from Eurocities and other progressive associations show that this is developing rapidly for councils and alongside enhanced procurement practices, there is scope to explore how circular economy can support SMART city aspirations.
- 3.29** Members have also been looking at what the Council could do and, at a recent meeting of the North Foreshore Working Group, they were keen the Council lead by example. Recent Notice of Motions on '*Water Refill Points*' and '*Single Use Coffee Cups & Plastic Items*' were considered supportive of the direction of the Council to reduce environmental impact, improve performance and demonstrate civic responsibility. When the issue of probable increased cost to deliver some of these approaches was highlighted, some Members felt this needed recognised but should not be the determining factor. Committee reports responding to Members' Notices of Motion are addressing such issues.
- 3.30** Members may care to note that following discussion between Waste Management and canteen staff, single-use cups are now being charged for in the Cecil Ward Building.

Risk

- 3.31 The requirement to create and support local industry to use (reprocess) the materials collected has become more acute in recent months. As mentioned above, the Chinese '*Operation National Sword*' has introduced restrictions on certain wastes; the most relevant are (i) banning post-consumer plastics and mixed/unsorted paper (ii) setting a 0.5% tolerance level for sorted paper from 1 March 2018 and (iii) restricting import waste licences to China next year. Additional restrictions were announced in April which will come into effect in 2019/20 and will further impact income and processing capacity for certain materials.
- 3.32 To date, the UK (in addition to the EU and US) has been reliant on exporting paper and plastics to China but with these restriction, alternative markets in Turkey, Indonesia and Vietnam (and elsewhere) are developing. In the meantime, income for these materials has fallen (e.g. in the past 6 months, mixed papers have fallen from £100/t to £35/t (or lower)). Nationally, there are concerns that these measures may lead to stockpiling of materials and mid-term create an increased need for landfilling or incineration of these materials.

Financial & Resource Implications

- 3.33 Discussions with the Services involved in the *Resourceful Belfast* Board indicate that there are considerable benefits to be gained from the Collaboration Agreement with WRAP in that it provides the Council with access to expertise and resources which it otherwise would not have. The initial agreement ended on 31st March 2018 but included provision to extend with the agreement of both parties. We plan to use this arrangement for a further three years to support the Waste Plan and *Resourceful Belfast*. Members are reminded that this agreement falls under regulation 12(7) of the Procurement Contracts Regulations 2015 which exempts contracts between contracting authorities which establishes or implements co-operation between those two contracting authorities.
- 3.34 It is envisaged that Waste Management would commit approximately £90K over the life of this agreement to progress projects of benefit to either delivery of the Waste Framework or *Resourceful Belfast*. This will be accommodated within the Service's Revenue Estimates.
- 3.35 As circular economy thinking evolves, some travel is likely to be needed for the purposes of exploratory visits and learning

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**opportunities – it is proposed that these will be accommodated within the relevant Service’s revenue budget.**

- 3.36 As this work develops, resources to deliver this work will need to be kept under review and proposals will be developed if required.**

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

- 3.37 Resourceful Belfast has potential to contribute to the Belfast Agenda by providing an opportunity for retraining and job prospects for the long-term unemployed and others distanced from the world of work.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Issues Raised in Advance by Members**

**Pedestrian Access, Cherryvale**

In accordance with the notice on the agenda, Councillor McReynolds raised safety concerns regarding the lack of a pedestrian crossing at the entrance to the Cherryvale Playing Fields and requested that the Committee write to the Department for Infrastructure requesting that, given that the last survey had been undertaken in 2017, it agree to undertake a resurvey of the crossing point.

With the permission of the Chairperson, Councillors Mullan and Boyle also addressed the Committee and reiterated the serious health and safety concerns in respect of the crossing point. They highlighted that the volume of vehicle traffic and pedestrian footfall had both increased following the refurbishment of the pitches and that the pitches were now open until much later in the evening.

The Committee agreed to write to the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) highlighting the health and safety concerns of the Committee and requesting that it undertake a new survey of the pedestrian access at Cherryvale, given that the most recent survey had been carried out in 2017.

**Seabins**

In accordance with notice on the agenda, Councillor O'Donnell raised the following matter:

*“This Council is committed, through its Environmental Policy, to set a good example and contribute positively to protecting and improving the environment through promoting an environmentally responsible approach to using natural resources.*

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*The Council recognises that more than a third of marine litter comes directly from the public and half the plastic we use is single use. In an attempt to address this problem, the Council agrees to work collaboratively with the Harbour Commissioner's Port of Belfast and the Rivers Agency in establishing and procuring Sea bins, to be placed strategically at points along the River Lagan and Belfast Lough. Each bin can capture three tons of litter a year and 70 per cent of each unit is made of recyclable plastic. They use low energy motors and operate at an approximate cost of a pound a day.”*

The Committee agreed that a report would be submitted to a future meeting which would investigate the Council working collaboratively with the Harbour Commissioner's Port of Belfast and the Rivers Agency to investigate the feasibility of procuring seabins to be placed strategically at points along the River Lagan and Belfast Lough.

**SOS Bus**

In accordance with notice on the agenda and with the Permission of the Chairperson, Councillor Kyle raised:

*“This Council recognises the outstanding work of SOS NI and the SOS Bus over the past ten years. They have created safe spaces on the streets of Belfast during weekend nights, caring for vulnerable individuals, often with complex needs, with teams of experienced and highly trained volunteers.*

*They provide crisis intervention, medical support, counselling, emotional care, a listening ear, signposting to statutory providers and transport to hospital, home or other places of safety. It is not an exaggeration to say that many lives have been saved through their care and interventions.*

*The economic benefit they provide to the City is substantial by preventing harm to many vulnerable individuals but, like other third sector organisations, they face the challenge of financial sustainability.*

*Recognising the importance of the work they do, this Council, working with other statutory agencies, will consider how it can best support the future sustainability of this invaluable organisation.”*

The Committee agreed that a report would be submitted to the January meeting of the People and Communities Committee which would give consideration as to how the Council might financially assist with the future sustainability of the SOS Bus.

Chairperson