

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 20th September, 2019

MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members present: Alderman Kingston (Chairperson);
Aldermen Haire and Spence;
Councillors Beattie, Black, Carson, Dorrian, Garrett,
Graham, Hargey, Heading, Long, Lyons, McAllister,
McDonough-Brown, Murphy, Pankhurst and Walsh.

Also attended: Councillor Hutchinson.

In attendance: Mrs S. Wylie, Chief Executive;
Mr. R. Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources;
Mr. J. Walsh, City Solicitor; and
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillors Groogan and Nicholl.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 23rd August were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 2nd September.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Beattie declared an interest in relation to item 2a – City Centre Investment Fund-Presentation, in that he was a member of the Board of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners.

Restricted Items

The information contained in the reports associated with the following 2 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 of 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 (NI) 2014.

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City Centre Investment Fund - Presentation

It was reported that Mr. T. Prior and Mr. E. McClean were in attendance to provide a presentation in relation to proposals for a City Centre Investment Project and they were welcomed to the meeting. Mr. Prior and Mr. McClean then provided a detailed presentation to the Members of the Committee on proposals for a major tourist offering in the city.

After discussion, the Committee:

- Agreed, in principle, that the Council would invest up to £2.5 million of CCIF money on an equity basis in the major tourist offering located in Belfast as presented to the Members; and
- Agreed also to officers carrying out a due diligence exercise in conjunction with Belfast Harbour on the investment. The outcome of this exercise would then inform the Committee when making the final decision on the investment.

Motion: Removal of Paramilitary Flags and Banners

The Committee was reminded that, at the special meeting of the Council on 1st July, the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Beattie and seconded by Councillor D. Baker had, been passed by the Council

“This Council is alarmed at the increasing number of offensive displays of banners and paramilitary flags across Belfast.

Paramilitary flags and banners supporting British regiments are being used to divide, offend and cause hurt to victims.

The British Ministry of Defence and the Parachute Regiment do not endorse these flags or banners and have stated they should only be displayed in certain circumstances.

Re-traumatising victims with offensive displays is wrong and should have no place in our society.

Standing by and allowing our citizens to be divided and hurt is no longer an option.

This Council agrees to take legal action against the Department for Infrastructure enforcing it to remove:

1. all Paramilitary flags, unless permission is granted by the Department for Infrastructure with protocols that protect citizens; and

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2. all banners without planning permission on Department for Infrastructure property, unless permission is granted with protocols that protect citizens.”

The Committee was also advised that, at the meeting of the Council on 2nd September, Members had been advised that the decision had subsequently been called-in and that an external legal opinion had been sought. A copy of the Barrister’s legal opinion had been tabled to all members at that meeting and circulated again for information.

The City Solicitor pointed out that the Council had agreed to refer the decision back to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to consider the legal advice.

He pointed out that in respect of the call-in, the Barrister’s opinion found that there was merit in relation to the decision insofar as it related to the removal of banners. Essentially the opinion reflected that banner is broad enough to include a flag and that, as the flying of the Union and Ulster flags are associated with a cultural tradition of the PUL community, any such decision would be required to be equality screened. The opinion took account of the fact that the relevant legislation to be applied by the Department for Infrastructure makes no differentiation between a flag and a banner.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Beattie,
Seconded by Councillor Long,

That the Committee agrees that a consultation be undertaken with the public in relation to flying of the flags in the City and for the report on how such a consultation may be undertaken being brought back to a future meeting of the Committee.

On a vote by show of hands, twelve members voted for the proposal and five against and it was declared carried.

Matters referred back from Council/Motions

Motion – EuroPride

The Committee was reminded that, at the Council meeting on 2nd September, the following motion had been proposed by Councillor S. Baker and seconded by Councillor McAteer:

“This Council recognises the significant impact that Belfast Pride has on our City. It makes our City a more diverse and welcoming city for all.

We also recognise the economic impact that Belfast Pride creates within the city, generating income for business and creating employment.

This Council will task our officers to work with Belfast Pride and assist in their bid to bring EuroPride to our City.

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EuroPride will have a huge economic and social impact to Belfast and showcase to the world on how progressive and open our City is.”

After discussion, the Committee agreed to work with Belfast Pride and the LGBT Community to support their bid to bring EuroPride to the city.

Motion - Silver Poppies of Remembrance

The Committee considered the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor T. Kelly and seconded by Councillor Graham, and which, in accordance with Standing order 13(f), had been referred to the Committee:

“With the 75th Anniversary of the end of the Second World War approaching, this Council wishes to recognise the contribution of those who fought in that war from Belfast.

It notes that every year the number of surviving veterans is reducing and time to provide appropriate recognition is running out. The Council, therefore, should come together to provide all surviving veterans of WW2 (including those in the Merchant Navy) with a silver Poppy of Remembrance, to mark their service in the fight against Fascism and Nazism.

These poppies will be presented to all surviving veterans who live in the Belfast Council area week commencing 4th November 2019.”

After discussion, the Committee agreed that the matter be referred in the first instance to the Party Leaders Consultative Forum, with a report to be brought back in due course which would provide information on the costs associated with providing Silver Poppies of Remembrance.

Motion - Transgender Day of Visibility

The Committee was advised that, at the Council meeting on 2nd September, the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Flynn and seconded by Alderman Copeland, had been referred to the Committee in accordance with Standing order 13(f):

“This Council recognises the contribution that our Transgender community makes to the city of Belfast and Northern Ireland. This Council notes that many within the Trans community still suffer discrimination and that visibility of the community is a hugely important part of raising awareness and overcoming discrimination.

As a statement of our solidarity with the Trans community, this Council agrees to illuminate the City Hall in the colours of the Trans flag to coincide with the Transgender Day of Visibility every year on 31st March; as a continuation of our solidarity with the community, this Council also agrees to fly the Transgender flag over the City Hall from dawn to dusk on 31st March every year to coincide with Transgender Day of Visibility.”

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The Committee agreed to support the motion to illuminate the City Hall in the colours of the Trans flag and to fly the Transgender flag from dawn to dusk to coincide with the Transgender Day of Visibility every year on 31st March.

Motion - E-Petition Mechanism

The Committee was reminded that, at the Council meeting on 2nd September, the following motion had been proposed by Councillor O'Hara and seconded by Councillor Hutchinson:

“E-petitions are an opportunity for citizens of the City to bring forward issues of concern over which this Council has authority. They widen access to the democratic process and bring governmental structures closer to the citizens we represent. Similar processes are in place across these islands and Europe at a variety of administrative levels. In the continuing absence of a local Assembly and the democratic deficit it creates, it is imperative that this Council does what it can to enhance and broaden access to the democratic process.”

In accordance with Standing Order 13(f), the motion was referred without debate to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

The seconder of the motion, Councillor Hutchinson, was in attendance, and he addressed the Committee and sought its support for introducing an E-Petition Mechanism.

The Committee agreed that officers research the issue and bring back a report on how this would be facilitated, resourced and managed.

Motion - Economic Future Planning

The Committee was reminded that the following motion which had, in accordance with Standing Order 13(f), been proposed by Councillor Beattie and seconded by Councillor Hargey had been referred by the Council at its meeting on 2nd September to the Committee for consideration:

“This Council recognises that economic future planning is crucial in the period ahead, particularly given the impending withdrawal from the European Union.

This Council should plan for, and bring forward an economic plan for the future of this Council area in the event of the north of Ireland retaining membership of the European Union, following a referendum on Irish Unity.

The economic plan should draw on the numerous existing reports of an all-island economy, including, but not limited to: ‘Modelling Irish Unification’ by Dr Kurt Hubner, ‘The Economic Effects of an All Island Economy’, by Paul Gosling, ‘The Economic Case for Irish Unity’, by Michael Burke and the Joint Oireachtas Committee Report, ‘Brexit and the Future of Ireland – Uniting Ireland & Its People in Peace & Prosperity’.

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This Council should be prudent in planning for the future to maximise our potential and secure future economic growth and to compete effectively with other Cities across the Island of Ireland.

The economic plan should examine how this Council would prepare for this scenario and how this Council area could position itself within this potential new constitutional arrangement, in order that Belfast maximizes all opportunities for city growth in this context.”

After discussion it was

Moved by Councillor Beattie,
Seconded by Councillor Murphy,

That the Committee agrees to adopt the motion and that Council officers research the issue and then bring back a report on how such a plan would be developed, resourced and led.

On a vote by show of hands, nine Members voted for the proposal and five against and it was declared carried.

Governance

Amendments to Standing Orders

The Committee was advised that Standing Order 47 in relation to call-in did not (as currently drafted) reflect the Council’s statutory obligations arising from the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014, Section 41(1), which requires Council’s to make provision for reconsideration of decisions, with such a “decision” to include a decision of the Council. Therefore, Counsel has recommended that Standing Orders be amended to include “a decision of the council” in the list of decisions which may be subject to call-in.

In addition, Section 41(4) requires that Standing Orders specify the section of the inhabitants of the district who may claim to be adversely affected under Section 41(1)(b). The statutory requirement is not that the persons seeking the call-in of the decision specify the section of the inhabitants of the district, rather, the statute requires that standing orders do that in advance. The Council’s Standing Orders do not appear to do so as currently drafted.

In order to rectify this situation, the City Solicitor recommended that, as a minimum, the Council specify at least those categories of persons set out in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 in standing orders. It was of course open to the Council to specify further sections of the inhabitants of the district, subject to the usual public law boundary of Wednesbury reasonableness.

Whilst the Act is not prescriptive as to the sections which should be specified, the Draft Standing Order Regulations 2016 (which have not yet been ratified by the NI Assembly) do provide a legislative interpretation of sections of the district which is wider than just the Section 75 groups: “section of the inhabitants of the district” means any section of the inhabitants that is clearly identifiable by location, interest or other category.

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Therefore, it was recommended that the Council amend Standing Order 47(3)(b) to incorporate the wording from the draft Standing Order Regulations with reference to the Section 75 categories as one of the “other” categories.

This approach would appear to reflect the intention of the legislation as originally drafted and would prevent call-in being limited to just those section 75 groups.

The Committee agreed:

- that Standing Order 47(a)(1) be amended to include “a decision of the Council” in the list of decisions which may be subject to call-in; and
- after Standing Order 47(3)(b)(3) part 4 be included and in this part it should read that “section of the inhabitants of the district” means any section of the inhabitants that is clearly identifiable by location, interest or other category (including those categories identified in Section 75(1) of the NI Act 1998).

Area Working Groups - Terms of Reference

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 12th April, it had agreed that officers would review the role of the Area Working Groups and update the Terms of Reference. It was reported that, previously, five Area working Groups (North, South, East, West and Greater Shankill) had been established in 2012 and the Terms of Reference were agreed at that stage. Following the Local Government Elections in 2014, the Area Working Groups were reconvened on a North, South, East and West Belfast basis, with Greater Shankill being incorporated within the West, using the existing terms of reference.

One of the key priorities of the Belfast Agenda was to deliver better outcomes for our Neighbourhoods, through inclusive growth, and building sustainable capacity within communities.

The Corporate priorities recognised the importance of Neighbourhood Regeneration and advocate a place shaping approach to drive the effective use of resources by the Council and other partners/stakeholders within specific areas where opportunities exist to maximise impact. The proposed approach will include:

- Council service and facility provision;
- External or multi-agency service and facility provision;
- Agreed local area plans to improve outcomes for local people;
- Longer term regeneration and investment plans (including capital, revenue or other projects with multiple funding sources).

Within that context, officers had been working to review the Area Working Groups Terms of Reference to make recommendations to Members on their future role. Taking that into consideration, the Committee would be recommended to agree to the draft Terms of Reference and that the first Area Working Group meetings be held in January 2020.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues

Inclusive Growth Update

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 Members will be aware that officers have been drafting a document outlining the Council’s commitments to inclusive growth, in line with their ambition to create an inclusive city.
- 1.2 At SP&R on 23rd August the range of policy commitments were presented with a commitment to send out the full version of the document to Parties week commencing 26th August for review and comments. Officers subsequently liaised with each Party and have updated the document.
- 1.3 During these discussions it was requested that the Council’s commitment to *‘doing all we can to eradicate poverty and inequality in our city’* was re-emphasised in the concluding paragraph of the inclusive growth statement contained in section 2 of the document. Therefore, this additional text has been inserted.
- 1.4 This report provides Committee with the final document for approval and outlines the next steps that will be undertaken to ensure that a public consultation commences in November, alongside an All-Party launch.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Approve the final document outlining the Council’s commitments to inclusive growth for publication.
- Agree to an All-Party launch of the commitments and public consultation commencing October 2019.
- Agree to testing/engagement of the commitments with key anchor institutions, businesses, CVSE and trade unions commencing October 2019.
- Agree to the establishment of the Inclusive Growth Oversight Group to ensure collaborative working across the organisation.
- Agree to the additional text inserted into the inclusive growth statement of *‘doing all we can to eradicate poverty and inequality in our city’*.

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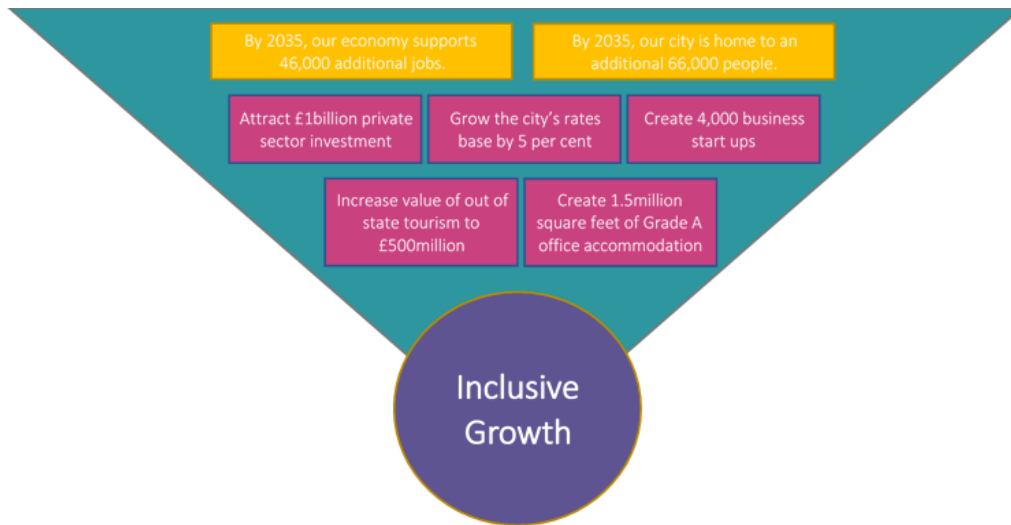
- 2.2 Please note there is a requirement for a full-time permanent Inclusive Growth Policy and Implementation Support Officer to embed the commitments via the development of policy, support for implementation across Council departments and anchor institutions and the ongoing monitoring of implementation.
- 2.3 There is also a requirement for two full-time permanent support officers (policy and data) to further the work on inclusive growth and the wider Belfast Agenda implementation through data analytics and building a strong evidence base that informs decisions at a local level. The above additional resources will be considered as part of the estimates process.

3.0 **Main Report**

- 3.1 At SP&R Committee on 20th April 2018, members agreed to a five step approach to developing an inclusive growth framework for the city. Since then officers from within the Strategy, Policy and Partnerships team have been working with departments to develop the policy commitments.
- 3.2 At SP&R Committee on 7th December 2018, a draft bespoke Belfast City Council inclusive growth decision-making framework was presented and agreed. This framework is designed to ensure that inclusive growth is placed at the heart of policy, capital and programme decisions.
- 3.3 Members also agreed, that in the first instance, our efforts would be focused on the following four target inclusive growth groups:
- Workless residents
 - Residents with low skill levels
 - In work, low earning individuals
 - Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)

The focus of our inclusive growth commitments

- 3.4 The inclusive growth commitments outlined in the attached document sit within the overarching framework of the Belfast Agenda and are closely aligned to its economic growth ambitions.
- 3.5 The Belfast Agenda is an ambitious plan for the city, with a strong economic focus and far-reaching targets for population and jobs growth. In order to address the long term challenges facing people in Belfast such as health and educational inequalities, the need for good relations, ensuring people feel safe and have good living conditions, we need to focus on growing our economy and ensure the benefits are felt by everyone.



- 3.6 Council has therefore rightly set out an ambitious economic growth agenda – this is highlighted by our success and commitment to securing the Belfast Region City Deal, the creation of a range of investment funds and interventions designed to make Belfast a great place to locate and start a business. We are also committed to creating a strong and vibrant city centre – its development is vital for attracting private sector investment, creating revenue and enabling the sustainability of council expenditure and service delivery

Addressing wider inequalities, their causes and consequences

- 3.7 It is accepted that not everyone in Belfast has benefited in the past from economic growth and unless there is a paradigm shift in our policy framework this will continue. The development of our commitments towards inclusive growth is one aspect of the work that is underway with partners to ensure that the ambitions of the Belfast Agenda are met. This includes working with partners to address many of the underlying causes of poverty and exclusion such as health inequalities (specifically mental health), educational underachievement, transport and community infrastructure. Specific detail on these strands of work is included within the paper being presented to the SP&R Committee today titled 'Belfast Agenda - Update on Community Planning'.
- 3.8 It is important that as we consult and engage on our commitments we will also ensure that key stakeholders understand the wider work that the Council is providing leadership on across the City.
- 3.9 The commitments within this inclusive growth document focus strongly on our role as an inclusive corporate body looking at what we do in areas of:

- procurement – social value and sustainability
 - employment – recruitment, fair work and employability & skills
 - investment - decision making framework
 - service design/provision – inclusive
- 3.10 It also focuses on our influencing and civic leadership role, acting as a call to action to others across the City.
- 3.11 This inclusive growth document has been designed to be a living document and to support this the first year action plan has been included within the document. It is intended that an updated action plan be produced for each subsequent year thereafter. Members are asked to note that development of the policies and initiatives required to create an 'Inclusive Belfast' will continue alongside the public consultation.
- 3.12 It is important to note that implementation will require ongoing policy development and operational decisions. With papers on the development of procurement policy, city wide charter, apprenticeship and social enterprise/ cooperatives (etc) being brought to committee on a regular basis.

Consultation and engagement

- 3.13 As part of the consultation and engagement process associated with finalising our commitments to inclusive growth, we will ensure that consultation on the work being undertaken across the council to address the wider inequalities, such as poverty alleviation, will be considered.
- 3.14 A key focus of this engagement will be working together with others across the City, such as anchor institutions, businesses, Community and Voluntary Sector and wider public sector partners to hear their ideas as to how we can develop an inclusive growth agenda for Belfast. It is important that, as well as gathering their views on the overall content of the commitments, that we use this engagement opportunity to focus on how we can work in partnership to co-design and develop key initiatives, such as the development of the inclusive growth city charter.
- 3.15 A key element of the work to inform the development of our commitments was examining and adapting international best practice to meet the specific needs of Belfast. To support this, the Head of Policy, Strategy and Partnerships, Christine Robinson, participated in an All-Ireland Eisenhower Fellowship in May 2019. The purpose of Christine's fellowship was examine approaches to inclusive growth at a city, state, community and business level.

Key aspects of the study trip have been included in this document and will be used to shape the ongoing policy development required to bring the ambition to life. The fellowship was fully funded by the Eisenhower Fellowship programme, however Christine completed the trip as a council employee and therefore retrospective approval for participation in the fellowship is required.

Next steps

3.16 The following steps are recommended:

- October 2019 – All-Party public launch of our commitments to inclusive growth
- October 2019 – January 2020 – Complete public consultation on draft commitments and associated comprehensive equality screening to further inform final document.
- October 2019 – Commence testing/engagement of draft commitments with key anchor institutions, businesses, CVSE and trade unions.
- October 2019 – Establishment of the Inclusive Growth Oversight Group.

Financial/ Resource Implications

3.17 Should SP&R Committee approve recommendations 2.2 and 2.3 above, revenue cost implications of these posts will be calculated and brought to SP&R Committee as part of the estimating process. All other costs will be delivered through existing budgets.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

3.18 The Council’s commitments to inclusive growth, as outlined in the attached draft document, are inherently inclusive and are aimed at bringing about inclusive economic growth to all residents, irrespective of identity. A draft comprehensive screening has been completed and will be consulted on alongside the draft commitments.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Innovation & Inclusive Growth Commission

The Chief Executive submitted for the Committees consideration the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

This paper provides an update to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on the work of the newly-established Innovation and

Inclusive Growth Commission. Regular updates will be provided to this Committee throughout the Commission's lifetime.

2.0 Recommendations

The Committee is asked:

To note the update and in particular the proposed approach to ensuring good governance and oversight of the Commission's work.

3.0 Main report

The Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission was set up to support the Council and city partners in the further development and implementation of the priorities as set out in the Belfast Agenda. A particular focus has been given to the priorities of (1) growing the economy and (2) city development. The Commission will seek to deliver the core objective of inclusive growth. Core membership of the Commission is as follows:

- Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive, Belfast City Council
- Michael Lyons, Chair- English Cities Fund
- Matthew Taylor, RSA (previously led RSA Inclusive Growth Commission)
- Owen Reidy, or nominee, ICTU (tbc)
- Emma Cariaga, British Land
- Alice Charles, World Economic Forum
- Joe O'Neill, Belfast Harbour Commissioners
- Paddy Nixon, Vice Chancellor and President, Ulster University
- Ian Greer, Vice Chancellor and President, Queen's University Belfast
- Rotha Johnston
- Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive, Belfast City Council
- Anne McGregor, NI Chamber of Commerce
- Judith Totten, INI Non-Exec Board Member
- Ed Vernon
- Angela Magowan, Director, CBI Northern Ireland
- Neil Gibson, EY

However, the Commission will also take advice from a wide range of organisations including the Nevin Institute and JRF etc.

Inclusive and Sustainable Growth

At the previous meeting of SP&R, it was agreed that the Commission's membership would be broadened to include a wider range of economic expertise and viewpoints. Since the meeting,

and following invitation to join the Commission, ICTU has confirmed it will nominate a member. The Nevin Institute has also been contacted to provide advice and insight to the Commission. As the Commission's work proceeds, it will also seek advice from Trademark and other similar organisations to ensure that insights and practice on co-operative development inform the Commission's work. We are also seeking insight from social enterprise organisations to provide advice throughout. As agreed, inclusive growth has been re-emphasised in the Commission's terms of reference and its title brief, and Commission members were also briefed on the importance attached to inclusive growth at its first meeting. Specific reference has been made to cities that have developed economic strategies with inclusive growth or 'good growth' as core goals, and officers have been tasked with seeking input and insights from cities that can demonstrate success in this area. As the Commission develops it will align with ongoing work on climate change and sustainable development and seek advice from Leeds Climate Commission, Place based Climate Action Network (PCAN), Friends of the Earth etc

Governance and member engagement

At its previous meeting, SP&R discussed governance and oversight of the Commission's work, and discussed how elected members would engage with the Commission.

The Commission is a collaboration between four city institutions-Belfast City Council, Belfast Harbour, Queen's University and Ulster University. Each organisation will take part in the Commission as per its own system of governance.

The following approach is being proposed for Belfast City Council:

1. That SP&R remains the primary committee through which the Chief Executive will report on the Commission's work. SP&R will ultimately approve early and final drafts of outputs produced by the Commission, for formal ratification by Council. City Growth and Regeneration Committee will also be consulted.
2. Three events, attended jointly by BCC members and Commission members, will be held throughout the Commission's work. The first will take place in the autumn to inform the Commission's early thinking; the second in early 2020 when some initial themes have begun to emerge and the third to inform draft conclusions.
3. Party briefings will take place in the normal way to ensure parties are informed continuously throughout.

4. A summary note of each Commission meeting will be produced for SP&R.

Summary note of the Commission's first meeting

- The first meeting was a general introduction and context setting meeting- held on the evening of the 9th and all day on the 10th September.
- The meeting included presentations from local SME sector and large local and global businesses based in Belfast. It also included an overview of the UK Industrial Strategy – to ensure alignment with wider policy goals. Data was presented on Belfast's existing economic and 'good growth' performance and how it compares with other cities across Europe and globally, as well as presentations and discussion on cities as drivers of inclusive economic growth.
- Some critical issues emerged in the discussion:
 1. Belfast has an immense opportunity to align its economic ambitions with its social and environmental goals. For example, the transition to a low-carbon economy must be an equitable one, and this therefore presents an opportunity to significantly reduce and perhaps eradicate fuel poverty over time. Recent successes by industry (e.g. exceeding our targets on renewables) must be learned from and scaled up.
 2. The Commission's eventual conclusions/outputs must ensure that Belfast builds on its strengths- where it has already proven to succeed. However, its work will be impacted by national (UK) policy and we must be cognisant of that—an example is UK government policy on visa restrictions for international students.
 3. The Commission does not intend to work 'behind closed doors' for a year, and then produce a report. It wants to focus on practical solutions to drive city growth in the interests of communities, and will be looking for ways that the four anchor institutions (BCC, Belfast Harbour, QUB and UU) can work collaboratively to deliver 'good growth'.
 4. Belfast has significant advantages given its proximity to Dublin and London. Both cities will continue to be successful in a post-Brexit environment, and therefore we must find ways to better leverage this connectivity and proximity, given the scale and nature of growth in both cities.
 5. The major issues remain those we've been debating for years- how to build skills among those furthest from the labour market and those economically inactive, so that they feel there are opportunities for them, as well as ensuring

that we do not lose talent from the city. Skills already emerging as a major challenge.

6. The city has many strengths but we are one of many cities that is promoting our distinctive 'offer'. Belfast has yet to really 'hone' what makes us unique. For example, the fact that the city is a leader in cyber security and food security is little known outside of these niche sectors. Generally speaking, there's a perceived lack of strategy on our economic future- other successful cities are clearer about their assets (economic, social and environmental) and focused on what they are going to do with them. A grand vision is needed- e.g. the Oxford/Cambridge corridor has a vision to be the R&D Centre for the UK.
7. A focus on inclusive growth and/or 'good growth' (term used by Edinburgh) is an example of how we can be competitive and distinctive... Glasgow has done this by stressing its quality of life and really pursuing a strong environmental agenda- which is increasingly being sought by people visiting the city and those investing in the city- both companies and workers.
8. Several presenters/contributors emphasised the importance of focusing on the current drivers of growth – investing more in them rather than trying to do too many things.

Future meetings/themes/areas of focus:

- Transition to a low-carbon/carbon neutral economy, and how we do this in an equitable way
- Learning from economic shocks and how the poorest and most economically vulnerable have been impacted- including across the generations
- Opportunities from energy transition- retro-fitting our existing stock and possible job opportunities for this/next generation

Financial & Resource Implications

None

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

None.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Belfast Agenda - Update on Community Planning

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy submitted for the Committees consideration the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 The report provides an update for Members on key priority strands of work being taken forward, in collaboration with community planning partners, to deliver the Belfast Agenda and sets out proposals to further enhance the involvement of partners and key stakeholders in supporting delivery.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- a) note the work currently underway across community planning partners to deliver the Belfast Agenda;
- b) note the proposed establishment of a ‘Growing the Economy and City Development Board’ and a ‘Sustainability and Resilience Board’ as part of the Belfast Agenda city governance arrangements;
- c) consider and approve that a Members’ Belfast Agenda Reference Group be formed comprising the Party Group community planning nominated leads; and
- d) consider and approve the implementation of measures to strengthen the representation and involvement of the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sectors in community planning.

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

- 3.1 The Belfast Agenda, the city’s first community plan, was published in November 2017 and was led by the Council in partnership with its community planning partner organisations and shaped through a substantial engagement and consultation process. It is a long term framework outlining how the Council and its community planning partners will work collaboratively to deliver an ambitious and inclusive vision that will create a better quality of life for all citizens in Belfast.
- 3.2 Following the publication of the plan, the community planning team undertook a series of engagements with partners across the Belfast Agenda’s four priority areas. The purpose of which was to identify and define the specific range of activity underway/planned

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across partners in support of the Belfast and to consider and identify key strategic gaps or opportunities to deliver collaborative gains from working in partnership under community planning. Action plans had been developed and approved by the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) in October 2018 and are now being implemented through the agreed governance structures including a series of delivery focused boards, comprising CPP partners, formed on a phased basis linked to the priority pillars of the Belfast Agenda. Boards focused on Living Here and Working and Learning have been established and giving focus to the following priority areas for collaborative gain. Appendix 1 provides more detail on the specific work underway.

3.3

Living Here		
Initial Priority Areas for Collaborative Focus	Design and deliver an integrated city programme to address health inequalities , including enhancing mental wellbeing and reducing social isolation.	<p>There has been significant partnership working and related programmes of work targeted at reducing health inequalities over many years in Belfast. However, Partner engagement has identified that deeper systemic change is required to achieve the Belfast Agenda Ambition of a 33% reduction in the life expectancy gap between the most and least deprived neighbourhoods.</p> <p>Partners have highlighted the opportunity to use Community Planning as a vehicle for driving whole system change across all partners in ensuring a more joined up approach to tackling health inequalities in Belfast. It is recognised that this presents a vast and complex challenge, and CPP partners agreed the initial focus would be alcohol, drugs and mental health challenge(s) facing the city. Intended that this approach would help develop a partnership model and capture learning opportunities which could be applied more widely to other health inequality challenges.</p>
	Collaborative planning to address winter pressures on health services and communities.	Lead by the Health and Social Care Board and supported by the community planning partners, work is underway to develop and deliver an integrated programme to reduce the number of avoidable deaths caused as a result of winter/cold weather.

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	Planning for housing that meets the needs of everyone.	Focus on delivering the social and affordable housing ambitions set out within the Belfast Agenda alongside creating the conditions to attract an additional 66,000 people in Belfast by 2035.
	Integrated approach to neighborhood regeneration & improvement.	Transforming local neighbourhoods and maximising the social, economic, environmental and regeneration benefits from physical and revenue investment in local areas and helping to build greater connectivity in the city.
	An integrated, inter-agency approach to early intervention, early years and family support.	Improving outcomes for children and young people and their families with a focus on early and preventative interventions throughout an individual's life.

3.4

Working and Learning		
Initial Priority Areas for Collaborative Focus	Deliver an integrated city programme to address educational underachievement	Develop an integrated programme to help alleviate educational inequalities across the city and reduce the education attainment gap which exists, particularly between those entitled to free school meals and those who not.
	Improving outcomes for children and young people.	Area-based demonstrator pilot brought forward by the Education Authority and Greater Shankill Partnership and agreed by the Community Planning Partnership and Working and Learning Board. The focus is to apply an evidence based approach to assessing local service needs and challenges and considering possible service delivery model options to improve the life chances and outcomes for children and young people. Intended that this approach would help develop an inter-agency approach and capture learning opportunities which could be applied more widely across the city.
	Deliver a Belfast Employability & Skills Pathway (Belfast Workplace)	Working alongside employers and service providers to identify, plan and prepare for emerging job opportunities and to develop effective pathways for individuals (including those furthest from the labour market) to

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	enter into and progress through employment.
Harnessing collective recruitment powers of CPP partners & anchor institutions	Targeted programme of work underway with CPP partners and anchor institutions to identify future workforce needs, and associated skills required, and to maximise opportunities to connect and support individuals to specific employment or training opportunities (including possible placement or apprenticeship opportunities).

3.5 Growing the Economy and City Development

Given the clear synergies between the Growing the Economy and City Development pillars of the Belfast Agenda it is proposed that a single board is established in October 2019 to give focus, build momentum and act as a catalyst for collaborative action across city partners/stakeholders in key areas such as, for example:

- **Inclusive Growth**
- **Sustainable Transport and Connectivity**
- **Sustainable Infrastructure for the City**
- **Enterprise & Business Development and Growth**
- **Cultural and Tourism Development**

3.6 A key focus of the Board will be the delivery and mainstreaming of inclusive growth and widening the engagement with and consideration of the emerging BCC Inclusive Growth Framework (NB. separate paper included on the Committee agenda). It is important that we create the right conditions to enable the widest range of people to both contribute to and benefit from economic growth and development within the city. It is also important that we maximise the social impact of our economic and physical investment in terms of, for example, creating additional jobs and providing pathways to employment, supporting income generation and distribution across the city and delivering social value for local communities. The establishment of this Board will provide a collective focus across and help build momentum with community planning and key city partners.

3.7 Notwithstanding the formal establishment of the combined Growing the Economy and City Development Board, there is a significant programme of work underway in collaboration with city partners to support the delivery of the Belfast Agenda priorities, examples of which is included in Appendix 1.

3.8 Sustainability and Resilience

Members will be aware of the significant environmental and sustainability challenges and chronic stresses facing the city and their potential to constrain future city growth. It is proposed that a Sustainability and Resilience Board be formed as part of the wider Belfast Agenda governance arrangements to give collaborative focus across city partners/ stakeholders to such challenges and bring forward a programme of work specific work around, for example, climate change, city energy, waste and sustainable development.

3.9 Community Planning Partnership

The next meeting of the Belfast Community Planning Partnership is scheduled for 30 September 2019. As part of its business, the partnership will consider the proposal to amend the Belfast Agenda governance structures to combine the Growing the Economy and City Development board and create a separate board focused on Resilience and Sustainability.

3.10 VCSE Sector Engagement Model

At SP&R in June a report was tabled seeking agreement to move forward with the implementation of arrangements to strengthen representation of the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sectors in community planning. During the committee session, members requested that approval be postponed to enable a workshop with Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships to be completed. This workshop was carried out on 5th September – the feedback from this session, along with the wider engagement with the sector in June, continue to inform the proposed structures and forms of engagement. By way of reminder a short overview of the mechanism for improved engagement is outlined in Appendix 2. Members will note that these mechanisms will continue to be developed in association with the sector and will, when implemented, greatly improve the involvement of the voluntary and community sector in community planning.

3.11 Members' Engagement

It is important to note that each Political Party had previously a nominated elected Member lead to be represented on the Community Planning Partnership and help inform the identification of initial priority areas for collaborative gain. Following the recent elections, each political party has been asked to renominate a lead member onto the Community Planning Partnership. In order to enable members to have focused consideration and input into the ongoing work and future planning

around the Belfast Agenda, it is proposed that the Party nominees form a reference group which are brought together in lead up to CPP meetings as well as at other key milestones. Regular updates on the Belfast Agenda will also be brought into Committee for Members' consideration.

3.13 Key Next Steps

Key strands of work to be progressed over coming months:

- VCSE Sector Engagement Model – planned establishment of VCSE Advisory Forum and wider sectoral network (Oct/Nov 2019)
- Inclusive Growth Strategy – securing Council approval and launch strategy for public consultation and engagement (Oct/Nov. 2019)
- Establish combined Growing the Economy and City Development Board (Oct/Nov. 2019)
- Establish Sustainability and Resilience Board (Oct/Nov. 2019)
- Publish Belfast Agenda 'Statement of Progress' (Nov. 2019)
- Establishment of the Members' Area-Based Working Groups.

3.14 Financial & Resource Implications

There are no additional resource implications as a result of this report. Alignment of resources to the delivery of the Belfast Agenda is part of the ongoing organisational and financial planning processes.

3.15 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

The Belfast Agenda has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment at a strategic level and a Rural Needs impact statement at the time of its publication.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Physical Programme and Asset Management

Leisure Transformation Programme: Assets Update

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 This report updates Members on the development and implementation of the £105m leisure assets capital programme.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and

- note the programme level update in respect of the new facilities under the leisure programme as outlined at 3.1-3.5
- note that site visits to the three new centres have been arranged for Tuesday 25th September and that all Members are encouraged to avail of this opportunity (see 3.6)
- note the update on communications around the opening of the new centres (see 3.7)
- note the update on employment opportunities as arising from the new centres (see 3.8)
- note the update on the Social Responsibility Plan which is being delivered (see 3.9)
- note the update around the next phase of the Programme with respect to proposed closure and start dates for Avoniel and Templemore (see 3.11 & 3.12)
- note the update with respect to a further leisure development at the Girdwood site as outlined at 3.13 and agree the request from DFC that the Council acts as Delivery Agent for the project under the current LTP Governance structures. Members are further asked to note that the next steps will include working up options (further options can be added), appointing Integrated Consultancy Team (ICT) and developing concept designs before carrying out public consultation. Members are asked to note that DFC are funding the appointment of the ICT
- agree that a feasibility study is undertaken on the rest of the Council's leisure estate with a focus on Ballysillan, Whiterock, Shankill and Loughside with further detail to be brought back to Committee in due course

3.0 Main report

Programme level

- ### **3.1 Members will recall that they have agreed the design cost limits and the citywide USP strategy for the Council's £105m leisure programme, which will ensure that the city has a unique offering in terms of its leisure provision and minimises any duplication of provision ensuring both balanced investment and value for money. A high level summary of the current status of all the projects is outlined below –**

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CENTRE	USP	BUDGET	STATUS
Olympia	Sports Village	£19m (£21.75m total - £2.75m DfC)	Centre opened January 2017. Continues to exceed performance indicators Phase 2 (outdoor space) officially opened at the end of May 2018
Andersonstown	Family fun leisure water	£25m	Works well underway. See images at Appendix 1
Lisnasharragh	Aquatic Centre	£20m	Works well underway. See images at Appendix 1
Brook	Outdoor Centre of Excellence	£15m	Works well underway. See images at Appendix 1
Avoniel	Outdoor Centre of Excellence	£8m	Centre will close and works will begin once Lisnasharragh opens
Templemore	Spa and heritage	£12m (£17m total - £5m HLF)	Heritage Fund funding secured. Planning secured. Detailed designs being developed
Girdwood	TBC	£6m	Discussions continuing with DfC

Project Updates

Current builds

- 3.2 Works are well underway on the three new builds. All are currently on schedule and are moving towards construction completion. Members are asked to note that each new centre requires a period of commissioning following construction completion – this is to allow for testing of equipment etc. Following this period of commissioning each centre will have a ‘soft opening’ during which the centres will be open to schools, community groups etc. for**

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taster sessions before the centre is officially opened to the public. A summary of the status is outlined below and photos showing ‘the current status of the builds are attached at Appendix 1.

Centre	Construction complete	Opening
Lisnasharragh	Mid October	Soft opening – December Official opening – January 2020*
Brook	End October	Soft opening – December Official opening – January 2020*
Andersonstown	February 2020	Soft opening March Official opening – April 2020*

** All centres will have an official opening – the dates of these are to be agreed and will be brought back to Committee in due course.*

- 3.3 Lisnaharragh- Tiling to the main pool hall and changing rooms has been completed, the diving board structures have been installed and the flooring to the gym and sports hall is currently being fitted. Externally all utilities connections are in place and the 3G pitch and installation of fencing is almost complete. In addition, the community facility is now completed. The finished centre is due to be handed over to Council in mid-October. Following this there will be a period of approximately 6 weeks of mobilisation during which the centre will be furnished, machines installed, staff trained and systems tested. The centre itself will then undergo a ‘soft opening’ in December where various groups will be invited to use the facility before it formally opens to the public at the start of January 2020. Members will be aware that discussions are ongoing regarding the proposed facilities at the rear of the site and Members will be verbally updated on this at Committee.**
- 3.4 Brook- Tiling to the ground floor is almost complete and the timber floor is being fitted in the sports hall. Third fix M&E is now underway with pool lights now installed. Externally groundworks continue with pathways being formed and 3G pitch carpets laid. The centre is due to be handed over to Council at the end of October. Following mobilisation period of approximately 4 weeks it is then envisaged that the centre will undergo a ‘soft opening’ in early December before opening to the public at the start of January 2020.**
- 3.5 Andersonstown- The slides and tower are now in place and internally the building is continuing to be fitted out with the children’s splash adventure area and surf machine now installed.**

The underfloor heating is currently being installed and tiling to the main changing areas has been completed. The building is about to be made watertight which will allow completion of the main pool hall. Externally the 3G pitch is currently well underway. The centre is currently on schedule to be handed over to Council in February 2020 and following mobilisation will undergo a soft opening in late March 2020 before opening to the public in mid-April 2020.

- 3.6 **Site Visits-** visits to the three new builds have been organised for Members for next Tuesday, 24th September. A bus will leave City Hall at 10am for Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre and return at 12.30pm. The bus will then leave for Andersonstown and Brook Leisure Centres at 1.00pm and return to City Hall at approximately 4.30pm. All Members are invited to attend these site visits and are encouraged to take up this opportunity. Further visits can be arranged if these dates do not suit Members and if this is required then Members can contact the Physical Programmes Department.
- 3.7 **Communications-** Members are asked to note that a full communications plan to promote the opening of the three new centres is in place and BCC officers are working closely with GLL to coordinate its delivery. Regular updates on the progress of the builds are being provided on the Council website, Facebook and via social media and are receiving extremely positive feedback. In addition, information stands promoting the centres will be appearing in the Kennedy Centre, Victoria Square, Castle Court, Connswater and Forestside shopping centres over the coming weeks. GLL will also shortly be launching their formal 'pre-sales' offering allowing people to join the new centres prior to opening. An extensive outdoor advertising campaign will also be rolled out across the city.
- 3.8 **Employment-** The opening of the three new facilities will create up to 75 new permanent jobs and up to 100 casual positions for the city. This represents another very positive impact for the Leisure Transformation Programme and feeds directly into the ambitious job creation targets within the Council's Belfast Agenda. To date GLL have recruited all the management posts for the new centres, including General and Duty Managers and are now focusing on some of the more customer facing posts such as Customer Service Staff, Recreation Assistants and Fitness Instructors. Many of these posts will be recruited through the Council's newly established Leisure Academy (see below).
- 3.9 **Social Responsibility – Economic and social benefit clauses -** In line with Council policy our leisure contractor, Heron Brothers, have developed a Social Responsibility Plan which maximises the social, economic and environmental benefits of the contract through focusing on a number of areas including employment,

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promotion of local businesses and community and social initiatives. Members are asked to note the following key outcomes which have been delivered to date under the Social Responsibility Plan –

- **Employment** - The creation of **employment opportunities** was a central component of the Social Responsibility Plan including employment opportunities for the long term unemployed, apprentices and tertiary level students. Employment outcomes are principally measured in employment weeks although additional indicators are also being monitored in terms of the number of jobs created, salary levels, duration of employment etc. In regards to the employment opportunities targeted at the unemployed and economically inactive, the Employability & Skills Team have co-designed and delivered a **Construction Employment Academy** targeted at supporting the contractor to fulfil the employment and employments weeks, ensuring optimum outcomes in specific relation to those unemployed, economically inactive, apprentices/trainees and higher-level students. As of September 2019 Members are asked to note that the following employment opportunities have been delivered as part of the Council’s leisure contract and **that the overall target number of weeks for employment, apprentices and paid placements has now been exceeded by over 35%.**

	Target	Weeks Delivered	Individuals Recruited
Employment for long-term unemployed or economically inactive	620	700 (up from 489 in Feb 19)	12
Apprentice	620	1435 (up from 1196 in Feb 19)	34
Paid Placement/Work Experience	1100	1040 (up from 746 in Feb 19)	15 (up from 14 in Feb 19)
TOTAL	2340	3175	61

- In addition to the Construction Academy the Council’s Economic Development Unit have recently launched a Leisure Employment Academy to provide support for those out of work or currently working under 16 hours to compete for the 75 new permanent jobs and 100 casual positions that

will be created as part of the current phase of LTP. This Academy will provide participants with job specific skills and the relevant qualifications required to access the employment opportunities identified. GLL have recently been awarded the contract to deliver this training and the academies have been split into a number of different occupational areas as follows:

- Wetside Employment Academy (National Pool Lifeguard NPLQ)
- Wetside Employment Academy (STA Swimming Teachers)
- Dryside Employment Academy (Fitness Instructor)
- Dryside Employment Academy (Customer Service)

The investment per person involved in the Academy will be approximately £1,700 and each successful participant is guaranteed an interview with GLL. It is envisaged that approximately 40-50 permanent and casual posts will be filled through this route. The Academy has been widely publicised through a series of roadshows, radio ads and press articles and will commence delivery in late September.

- 3.10 In addition to this Heron Bros Ltd. have also taken forward a range of other initiatives under their Social Responsibility Plan including promotion of local suppliers and businesses, community initiatives and engagement, sports development and skills and health initiatives. Further details of these are attached at Appendix 2.

Next Phase

Plans are well developed to progress the next phase of the Programme as follows:

- 3.11 Avoniel – Members agreed in April 2016, that Avoniel would become a ‘dry’ centre with a focus on outdoor soccer facilities and that Templemore would become the ‘wet’ centre for inner east Belfast. Members will also be aware that a comprehensive consultation and engagement process was held in relation to the development proposals for Avoniel and Templemore between November 2017 and January 2018. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive with 97% of respondents expressing support for Templemore and 85% expressing support for Avoniel. As part of the planning process for Avoniel a further consultation event was held in Avoniel Leisure Centre on Wednesday 20th March from 3pm - 8pm. This event produced 31 individual responses with 49% expressing support for the project and 32% expressing opposition. There was significant representation at the event from the Avoniel

‘Over 50s’ group with 66% of respondents coming from the 55+ age group. Several clubs also attended the consultation including Glentoran FC, East Belfast FC and two local hockey clubs, all of whom expressed strong support for the plans. The main comment from those opposed to the plans was a request to keep Avoniel open until the redevelopment of Templemore is complete. Members have previously considered and rejected this request, as any deviation from the previously already agreed phasing would have serious financial and contractual implications on the delivery of the Programme. Members had also previously reflected that officers relook at the design and cost implications to see if it would be possible to incorporate a café within the new Avoniel. Members are asked to note that officers have looked at this and given that the facilities mix has been signed off and ‘design freeze’ is in place that the costs of this and the wider impact on the design would be prohibitive within the budget envelope. The development of a café would also compromise the design in that it will require losing one of the two multi-purpose rooms which has been designed in to ensure that the building is as flexible as possible and can deliver a range of activities and classes.

It is planned that works will commence at Avoniel in January 2020. Council officers are working closely with GLL on their demobilisation plans for Avoniel. As agreed, there will be no disruption to the continuity of swim provision in East Belfast and Avoniel will not fully close until Lisnasharragh is fully operational.

- 3.12 Templemore – Following the decision by the ‘Heritage Fund’ (HF) (previously the ‘Heritage Lottery Fund’) to fund the project, officers have been working closely with HF to secure formal ‘Permission to Start’. Planning Permission for the project was granted in June and the formal paperwork has just been received. This completes HF’s requirements and Permission to Start notification is expected before the end of September. The Design Team are now working on Stage 4 designs and these should be completed before the end of this year. Contractor procurement (PQQ) is due to commence before the end of September with the ITT then going out before Christmas. It is expected that the contractor will be in place by mid-April 2020 and following mobilisation construction will commence in June 2020. In order to maximise leisure provision in East Belfast and ensure the building remains operational as long as possible it is proposed that the current facilities Templemore remain open until May 2020.**

Council officers and GLL are currently liaising with the Templemore Users Trust (TUT) to help ensure they have access to facilities to provide continuity of provision of their services for the period that Templemore Baths is under development. These discussions are ongoing and a further update will be brought to

Members in due course. As with previous centres, a full demobilisation plan for Templemore will also be developed in due course.

- 3.13 **Girdwood Phase 2** – Members will be aware that officers have been in discussions with DfC, as the land owners of Girdwood Park, around options for a further leisure development at the Girdwood site. A high-level options paper has been developed by DfC, which outlined 3 options with regard to the facilities mix. These options included (i) Indoor Basketball Arena + community pool, (ii) High performance boxing facility + community pool and, (iii) Specialist Climbing Facility + community pool. These options were presented to a cross-party (political) group in December 2017 and the Girdwood Community Forum in May 2018; no issues or constraints outside of financing and statutory approvals were identified. It is therefore proposed that these options are taken forward for viability assessment. This will involve the engagement of an Integrated Consultant Team (ICT) to further test the options and develop concept designs, which will then be subject to consultation. It is important to note that at this stage DfC have not ruled out the potential to explore further options should these emerge during the development process, providing they still reflect the broad objectives for the site as outlined in the options paper. The proposed facilities mix for this facility must also take into account the Council's other facilities across the city (both current and planned), particularly in terms of USPs, usage, catchment area and revenue implications.

Given the Council's capacity and experience with respect to the delivery of leisure facilities, the current governance structures already in place for LTP, and its current £6m commitment to the project, DfC have now formally requested that Council act as the Delivery Agent for this project. DfC have ring-fenced budget to cover the costs of ICT engagement and have requested that Council lead this procurement. The estimated costs for the new indoor sports facility are currently projected at £14m and consideration for DfC to fund the balance of the project (£8m) will be subject to the outcomes of the Business Plan process, budget priorities and availability of Ministerial approvals. A high level timeline for the new Girdwood facility which is indicative only at this stage is - Concept design 2020/21, Planning and detailed design 2021/2022, Construction 2022/2023-2024 (18 months build).

- 3.14 **Other leisure facilities** – Members will be aware that there are a number of other leisure facilities across its estate which have not been part of the Leisure Transformation Programme. A number of these are aging and to ensure that leisure continues to be looked at on a city-wide basis it is proposed that a feasibility study is undertaken on the rest of the leisure estate with a focus on

Ballysillan, Whiterock, Shankill, Loughside given the age of these facilities. Members are asked to agree that a feasibility is now undertaken with further detail to be brought back to Committee. The costs for this feasibility will be met from the Feasibility Fund.

3.15 Financial & Resource Implications

Financial – The design costs limits for each centre were agreed by Committee in April 2015 as part of the overall £105m leisure programme.

Costs for taking forward the feasibility studies for the

Resource- relating to Council acting as Delivery Agent for the designs development stage of Girdwood II using the existing LTP Governance structures

3.16 Equality or Good Relations Implications

There are no direct equality implications.”

During discussion, a Member requested that the Committee consider the erection of dual language signs in English and Irish at the Brook and Andersonstown Centres.

In response to a question, the Director of Finance and Resources confirmed that there would be no additional cost associated with the request as the signs had still to be produced. He also advised the Members that the final recommendation in relation to a feasibility study should also have included the Ozone Centre.

After further discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Walsh,
Seconded by Councillor Carson,

That the Committee agrees to the erection of dual language signage, in Irish and English, in the Andersonstown and Brook Centres, subject to an equality screening being undertaken.

Amendment

Proposed by Councillor Long,
Seconded by Councillor Dorrian,

That the issue of dual language signage be referred in the first instance to the Party Leader’s consultative forum for discussion.

On a vote by show of hands five Members voted for the amendment and nine against and it was declared lost.

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The original proposal standing in the name of Councillor Walsh and seconded by Councillor Carson was put to the meeting, when nine Members voted for and five against and it was declared carried.

The Committee adopted the remaining recommendations in section 2.1 of the report and agreed that the Ozone Centre be added to the list of Centres for which a feasibility study would be undertaken.

Physical Programme Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The Council’s Physical Programme covers over 150 live regeneration projects across a range of funding streams including the Capital Programme, Leisure Transformation Programme, Belfast Investment Fund, Local Investment Fund, Social Outcomes Fund and the projects which the Council is delivering on behalf of other agencies. This report highlights projects recommended to be move through the approval stages.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is requested to –

Proposed movement

- **agree that the Boodles Dam abandonment and redevelopment project is moved to Stage 3- Committed on the Capital Programme. It is however recommended that this be held at Pre-Tender Stage pending planning approval and the tender return price at which stage the final budget will be brought back to Committee. Members are further asked to agree that the necessary procurement processes be initiated as required with contracts to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver**

Externally funded programme

- **agree to the request by DFC to administer its Access and Inclusion Capital Programme 2019/20 in the Belfast City Council area.**

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3.0 Main report

Key Issues

3.1 Proposed Movements – Capital Programme

Members have previously agreed that all capital projects must go through a 3 Stage process where decisions on which projects progress are taken by SP&R. This provides assurance as to the level of financial control and will allow Members to properly consider the opportunity costs of approving one capital project over another capital project. Members are asked to agree to the following movement on the Capital Programme

Project	Overview	Stage
Boodles Dam Abandonment and Redevelopment	To safely decommission Boodles Dam and develop the site for amenity use (located at Ligoneil Park – off the Ligoneil Road)	Move to Stage 3- Committed Recommended to be held at Pre- Tender stage pending tender return

Any project which is being moved from Stage 2 to Stage 3 under the Capital Programme is required as part of the Council three stage approval process to complete an Outline Business Case (OBC).

3.2 Project Update – Boodles Dam

Moved to Stage 2- Uncommitted on the Capital Programme	19 August 2016
Senior Responsible Owner (SRO)	Nigel Grimshaw
Client Department	City & Neighbourhood Services

Members will be aware that in August 2016 the Committee agreed to move Boodles Dam project to Stage 2- Uncommitted. Members have been previously updated that a Section 10 safety report has set out a recommendation for Boodles Dam to be abandoned due to the risk of a landslip from the landfill and park on the adjacent western slope. The Dam has a heavily populated urban development downstream, and as a result is defined as a Category A reservoir and as such carries requirements for the Council under

the Reservoir Safety Act. The most recent monitoring survey (Ligoniel Park - 2019 Ground Movement Survey) undertaken in July 2019 provides evidence of ongoing movement of the ground uphill of the dam and therefore in order to ensure that the Council complies with its statutory requirements under the Reservoirs Safety Act works to Boodles Dam must now be undertaken.

- 3.3 Members are asked to note that the OBC for the Boodles Dam project has been completed and reviewed internally and found to be consistent with the required abilities (feasibility, affordability, deliverability, sustainability, strategic fit. The proposed scope of the project includes works to address Section 10 Report requirements along with some wider environmental improvements and upgrades including paths, landscaping and new fencing. This ensures the council meets its statutory obligations with respect to the management of reservoirs. In addition it will open up the site up for community use as an amenity.
- 3.4 Members are also asked to note that this project is linked to the Reservoir Safety Programme (currently at Stage 2- Uncommitted project) a city wide initiatives which look at the council's responsibility for the management of reservoirs that retain over 10,000m³ of water above natural ground level. These reservoirs includes the Waterworks Upper and Lower, Alexandra Park and Half Moon Lake. Monitoring of these reservoirs is ongoing in line with our requirements under the Act. Following these monitoring regimes, future works and requirements will be identified and an OBC will be prepared.
- 3.5 In order to comply with its statutory requirements under the Reservoirs Safety Act it is therefore recommended that the Boodles Dam project be moved to Stage 3- Committed on the Capital Programme. It is however recommended that this be held at Pre-tender stage pending planning approval and the tender return price. At this stage the final budget will be brought back to the Committee for sign-off and confirmation that is within the affordability limits of the Council. Members are further asked to agree that the necessary procurement process be initiated as required with contracts to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.
- 3.6 Delivery of externally funded programme – DfC Access and Inclusion

All local councils in NI have been approached again by DfC to request that they administer the DfC Access and Inclusion Capital Programme 2019/20 within their respective local council areas. The Council acted as the lead management partner for the 18/19

Access and Inclusion Fund within Belfast. This programme supports small-scale capital investments up to £30,000 and aims to improve access to arts and cultural activities, including leisure and recreation facilities, by people with disabilities. The Council is eligible to apply for support as well as community groups and arts and cultural venues, where demonstrable need is evidenced. The available budget across the 11 council areas is £500,000. The Belfast programme will be administered by the Place and Economy Dept, in line with the process initiated in 2018/19, with support from the Physical Programmes Dept.

3.7 Financial & Resource Implications

Financial – Boodles Dam abandonment and redevelopment – as above

DFC Access and Inclusion Fund - There is no requirement for match-funding from Council. The funding will be provided by DfC up to a maximum of £30,000 per eligible project. The total available funding across NI is £500,000.

Resources – Officer time to deliver as required

3.8 Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment

All capital projects are screened as part of the stage approval process

DFC Access and Inclusion Fund – working closely with the Council’s Equality Unit and DfC to ensure positive equality implications which is the central component of the Fund.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Finance, Resources and Procurement

**Belfast City Council Statement
of Accounts 2018/19**

The Director of Finance and Resources submitted for the Committee’s consideration the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, the Statement of Accounts of the Council, including the Annual Governance Statement, for the period ending 31 March 2019.

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1.2 The Statement of Accounts are an important element of the council's overall corporate governance framework as they provide assurance to Members and ratepayers on the stewardship of the council's finances and its financial position.

1.3 The Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2019, as attached, have been prepared in line with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018/19 based on International Financial Reporting Standards and the Department for the Communities Accounts Direction, Circular LG 12/19 dated 29 March 2019.

1.4 I can confirm that the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2019 has been prepared in the form directed by the Department for the Communities and in my opinion the Statement of Accounts give a true and fair view of the income and expenditure and cash flows for the financial year and the financial position as at the end of the financial year.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to

- **Approve the Council's Statement of Accounts and incorporated Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2019.**
- **Agree that this paper should not be subject to call-in (as indicated above) because it would cause an unreasonable delay which would be prejudicial to the Council's and the public's interests given that the statement of accounts must be published by 30th September 2019.**

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

Audit Opinion

3.1 It is the Local government Auditors' opinion that:

- **the financial statements give a true and fair view, in accordance with relevant legal and statutory requirements and the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018-19, of the financial position of Belfast City Council as at 31 March 2019 and its income and expenditure for the year then ended; and**
- **the statement of accounts have been properly prepared in accordance with the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and the**

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Department for Communities directions issued thereunder;
and

- the part of the Remuneration Report to be audited has been properly prepared in accordance with the Department for Communities directions made under the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015; and
- the information given in the Narrative Report for the financial year ended 31 March 2019 is consistent with the financial statements.

Reserves

3.2 General Fund

The credit balance on the General Fund has increased to £25,796,988 (of which £12,957,466 relates to specified reserves). The movement on the reserves balance is summarised in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Summary of Reserves Position

Opening Balance	£24.4m
In year movement in reserves	<u>£ 1.4m</u>
Closing Balance	£25.8m
Specified Reserves at year end	<u>£13.0m</u>
Balance Available	<u>£12.8m</u>

3.3 Capital Fund **£25,288,151**

The Capital Fund is made up of:

- **Belfast Investment Fund (£5,559,723)** -created to support key partnership projects to regenerate Belfast and help lever substantial funds from other sources
- **Local Investment Fund (£1,425,280)** to fund smaller local regeneration projects
- **City Centre Investment Fund (£15,154,012)** to support the Belfast City Centre Regeneration Investment Plans
- **Social Outcomes Fund (£3,149,136)** to support City Centre projects which might not generate a direct financial return but would enhance the overall City Centre offer and support the attraction of investment.

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3.4 Leisure Mobilisation Fund £1,441,702

This fund is to support the Leisure Transformation Programme and will cover programme level costs including communications, engagement and procurement costs.

3.5 Capital Receipts Reserve £5,200,457

These are capital receipts which have originated primarily from the sale of assets and which have not yet been used to finance capital expenditure.

3.6 Other Fund Balances and Reserves £1,063,919

This relates to the Election Reserve (£674,607) which has been set up to smooth the cost of running council elections, the BWUH Subvention Fund (£322,667) to support national and international organisations in bringing their conferences to Belfast and the BWUH Sinking Fund (£66,645) to support planned maintenance and future capital works at the new exhibition centre.

3.7 Debt

The overall level of trade debtors had decreased over the previous 10 years, reducing from £7.5m at 31 March 2009 to £2.5m at 31 March 2019. An analysis of trade debtors, inclusive of VAT, for the last two years is shown below:

Table 2 : Analysis of Trade Debtors

	31 March 2019	31 March 2018
Less than three months	£2,131,221	£2,859,979
Three to one year	£128,050	£154,081
More than one year	£285,208	£736,633
Total	£2,544,479	£3,750,693

3.8 Creditors

The Department for Communities has set councils a target of paying invoices within 30 days. During the year the council paid 61,520 invoices totalling £163,474,395.

3.9 The average time taken to pay creditor invoices was 15 days for the year ended 31 March 2019. The Council paid 39,940 invoices within 10 days, 56,029 invoices within 30 days, and 5,491 invoices outside of 30 days. The council endeavours to process invoices

as quickly as possible and has an improvement plan to support this process.

3.10 Annual Governance Statement (AGS)

The Statement of Accounts include Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for the year 2018/19, which has been prepared in line with the Accounts Directive provided by the Department for Communities, NIAO guidance and is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government'. Specifically the AGS sets out:

- scope of responsibility of the Council in relation to governance
- the purpose of the governance framework
- the governance framework in place
- review of effectiveness of the governance framework
- significant governance issues to be disclosed.

3.11 The AGS is approved by the Chair of the Strategic Policy and Resources, the Chief Executive and the Director of Finance and Resources. It is subject to review by the LGA (NIAO) as part of their annual audit.

3.12 Financial & Resource Implications

None

3.13 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

None.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Medium Term Financial Plan and Efficiency Programme

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 This report provides an update on the priorities and work in progress to establish the efficiency agenda and associated targets for 2020/21 - 2022/23.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the challenges to be taken into consideration in setting the efficiency programme

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- **Agree an interim efficiency target of £3m for 2020/21 subject to review as the rates process progresses.**
- **Note that a further report on progress will be brought to Committee in October/November as part of the Rate Setting timetable.**
- **Agree the work streams needed to support the efficiency agenda going forward.**

3.0 Main report

3.1 Background

Over the past 14 years the Council has delivered over £29m year on year cash efficiency savings. For the 2 year period 2018/19 to 2019/20, Members increased the target from £2m to £3m, the efficiencies to be realised from reductions in spend (£2.5m) and increased income (£0.5m). The potential for securing efficiencies beyond this time frame required transformational change and revised targets would be set in tandem with the priorities of the new Council.

3.2 Current Position

Efficiency targets for 2020/21 and future years have not been finalised. As advised at the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee meeting of 23rd August, a number of factors need to be considered as part of the rate setting process including business as usual risks, existing priorities growth priorities and efficiencies. These can be further considered in terms of uncontrollable and controllable.

Uncontrollable Costs

Employee Related

- 3.3 Employee related costs are one of the major uncontrollable costs faced by the Council. As advised at the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee meeting of 23rd August the National Pay Award and NILGOSC Triennial Valuation will be the key pay pressures. Both are still subject to review.**
- 3.4 A Regional Briefing on the Future Pay Settlement was being held by NILGA on 10th September to allow Northern Ireland Councils to consider the Trade Union Side new pay claim for the year commencing 1st April 2020. Negotiations between the Employer side and Trade Unions are ongoing.**
- 3.5 The Actuary is currently in the early stages of work for the 2019 NILGOSC valuation. However, NILGOSC have advised that by the**

end of September they should be able to provide an estimate of what the Employers' Contribution Rates for the next three years are likely to be. Officers from Finance will be attending a seminar on 9th October and again will report back as part of the rate setting process.

In the interim, for the purposes of medium term financial planning, a 2% pay rise and a 1% increase in pension contribution has been assumed for 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23.

3.6 Other uncontrollable costs

Brexit and the current political climate make it difficult for departments to budget for central government funding streams. CPI is forecast to be between 1.9% - 2.2%. Although inflation may be viewed as an uncontrollable cost, Departments are required to absorb inflationary increases as part of their budget submission for 2020/21. At this stage it has been assumed that there will be no budget increases to support inflationary pressures.

3.7 Waste Plan

Waste related costs are also considered uncontrollable in that contract fluctuations are outside the control of the Council.

A summary of these uncontrollable cost increases is provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Summary of Estimated uncontrollable cost increases

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Pay Rise	£1.60m	£1.64m	£1.67m
Pensions	£1.04m	£1.12m	£1.20m
Waste	£0.67m	£1.01m	£1.20m
Total	£3.31m	£3.77m	£4.07m
District Rate Impact	2.03%	2.26%	2.39%

3.8 Controllable Costs

A summary of other financial risks which officers and Members have more influence over are included in Table 2 below:

Table 2

Other Financial Risks

City Deal	In previous years Members have agreed to include rate supported funding to help build the City Deal fund for Belfast.
Belfast Agenda	Cultural Strategy, Inclusive Growth Strategy and Climate Resilience
Existing Capital Programme	As reported to Committee in August 2019, a capital financing deficit of £526k is forecast for the 2021/22 financial year.
Physical Programmes	There is pressure for additional budgetary support in a number of areas including the Leisure, upgrades to parks and pitches, neighbourhood tourism, neighbourhood regeneration, Climate Resilience and Maintenance, etc.

3.9 Departments will submit growth proposals for the above additional cost pressures as part of the rate setting process. These will be scrutinised by the Chief Executive and the Director of Finance, with approved proposals brought to Committee for their consideration in November.

3.10 **Efficiencies**

As can be seen from the analysis in Table 1, early indications are that extending the previous year level of efficiencies (£3m) to the 2020/21 to 2022/23 would not fully offset the increase in uncontrollable costs. However setting an interim target of £3m for 2020/21, which will be subject to review as further work on priority areas are agreed, will allow most of the uncontrollable costs to be met from this target.

3.11 The Council is committed to ensuring that key priorities will be delivered while at the same minimising the rate burden on ratepayers. Therefore in order to support medium term planning

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and the delivery of future efficiencies, a number of workstreams where efficiency opportunities exist are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3

Work Streams 2020/21 to 2022/23

Workstream	Areas for Review
Organisation / Service Redesign / Voluntary Redundancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Savings generated through employee cost reduction in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Workforce Planning Strategy ○ Business Support & HR Reviews ○ Customer Focus ○ Streetscene ○ Smart Cities ○ Review of overtime and agency
Procurement / Spend Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement support to identify efficiency opportunities from <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tender / Quotation savings through strategic procurement ○ Demand management and challenge ○ Contract management ○ Category management
Commercialisation / Income Maximisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement support to identify efficiency opportunities from <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Maximising income from existing commercial activities ○ Securing additional income streams ○ Review of Zoo, Malone House, Belfast Castle ○ Use of assets

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Rates Maximisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ongoing IRRV reviews of valuation list• SBRI Pilot Project
Budgetary Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of recurring underspends• Reviewing discretionary and non discretionary spend

3.12 A detailed report on this programme will be brought to Committee in October.

3.13 Rate Base

Members will be aware of the non domestic revaluation which will form the basis for the 2020/21 EPP. Officers will work with LPS on the impact for the Council and bring an update to Committee in October. The Acting Director of Valuation will present an overview of the revaluation exercise to Members in October.

3.14 Members will also be aware of the review of business rates. The Director of Rating Policy will make a presentation to Members on 27th September.

Updates on the EPP will be brought to Members as part of the rate setting process.

3.15 Next Steps

Departments will submit their business as usual estimates for 2020/21 with zero increase on 2019/20 estimates by the end of September. They will also submit growth proposals to support the issues identified in Table 2 by the end of September. Departments will undergo a challenge on their budgetary submissions from the Chief Executive and the Director of Finance and Resources with approved submissions being brought to Committee for consideration in November.

3.16 Officers will continue to quantify the financial risks in the above areas, their impact on the revenue estimates for 2020/21 and the medium term and develop the efficiency programme to counter the cost pressures. Based on the information available at present, Members are asked to agree an indicative efficiency target for 2020/21 of £3m which will offset to a large extent the uncontrollable costs shown in Table 1. However this will be subject to ongoing review until the outcomes from the Pay Award and Employers' Pension Contributions negotiations are finally agreed.

3.17 Progress in these areas will be reported to Committee in October and November as part of the Rate Setting timetable.

3.18 Financial & Resource Implications

An indicative target of £3m efficiency savings for 2020/21 to be agreed by Committee. Monthly updates on estimates and additional efficiencies will be provided to Members as part of the rate setting process.

3.19 Equality and Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs assessment

None.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Belfast Local Full Fibre Networks Procurement

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 Members will recall that the Council applied for and has now been awarded £11.5M from the Department of Culture Media and Sport’s (DCMS) Local Full Fibre Networks (LFFN) Programme. Digital Services has now completed the procurement of gigabit fibre optic network services which will connect and future proof the network connections of 201 Council buildings across the city for the next 35 years.

1.2 This report provides an update on the outcome of the procurement, the potential benefits of a full fibre network for BCC and estimated timescales for delivery.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Approval is sought to enter into a Digital Fixed Line Infrastructure Wayleave Agreement with Virgin Media in respect of the installation of electronic communication apparatus at locations within BCC ownership.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Virgin Media has been awarded the BCC Full Fibre network contract that will connect 201 BCC sites across the city with gigabit fibre optic network connectivity.

The new BCC gigabit fibre network will:

- Meet our network connectivity and digital business requirements for the next 35 years,

- Deliver almost unlimited bandwidth potential of optical fibre,
- Provide a more secure purpose built point-to-point network,
- Open up new possibilities for the underlying fibre infrastructure to:
 - support the development of new 'smart' technology initiatives now and in the future,
 - and enable more efficient delivery of digital services like telephony and CCTV for the Council.

3.2 Virgin Media will utilise their existing fibre optic network to provide a fibre solution to Belfast City Council. 80% of the network will be provided through existing infrastructure, significantly reducing potential disruption caused by street works.

The remaining 20% of the network will be new build, meaning that there will be some requirement for street works. Early engagement with the Highways division and Virgin Media's experience in network deployment will hopefully ensure that disruption to communities and businesses is kept to a minimum.

3.3 The provision of the new BCC network will provide several additional benefits by:

- Allowing Virgin Media to extend its fibre footprint in Belfast to an increased number of businesses and communities,
- Increasing procurement opportunities for Belfast businesses and consumers for digital connectivity,
- Indirectly leading to:
 - increased investment in Belfast,
 - encouraging economic growth,
 - and creating new job opportunities.

3.4 Virgin Media Business' existing network footprint within Belfast ensures that implementation timescales will be much shorter than originally anticipated. It is expected that roll out of the new BCC full fibre network will be completed in under a year, with an estimated timescale for delivery of September 2020.

3.5 Successful delivery of the network will require assistance from several Council departments, including:

- Estates and Legal Services
 - Virgin Media are required to enter into a Wayleave Agreement with BCC to record the locations and terms of the installation of electronic communication

apparatus at sites within BCC ownership. The final destinations of the full fibre apparatus are still to be determined, Members are requested to delegate authority to the Estates Manager and Legal Services to agree the locations and terms of the Wayleave Agreement with Virgin Media.

- Facilities for power, asbestos surveys and other internal works
- Relevant departments to provide key holders for building access
- Planning for any required planning permissions
- Financial planning

3.6 The Virgin Media proposal has also come with offers of free internet service provision and access to Virgin Media's Wi-Fi solution for a period of 5 years. These have the potential to either enhance or replace parts of the Belfast Wi-Fi service and deliver significant cost savings.

3.7 **City Centre Broadband Infrastructure**

A second phase of the BCC Local Full Fibre Programme will attempt to improve broadband infrastructure in the City Centre.

3.8 Improvements to the Street Ahead zone within the city centre have resulted in the area receiving very little investment in fibre broadband infrastructure. This is due to the extremely high cost of civil works in this area as a consequence of the cost of replacing very expensive granite footpaths.

3.9 Some publically owned ducting assets that have never been used before are available in the City Centre. It is BCC's ambition to attempt to survey and repair these ducts so that they can be offered out to commercial broadband providers to make investment in fibre infrastructure in the City Centre commercially viable. This could potentially enable businesses in this area to avail of full fibre connectivity at a cost effective price which currently is not possible.

3.10 Digital Services has procured a contractor to conduct a survey of the ducting infrastructure. Survey work started in late November 2018 but could not be fully completed due to the impact of the Primark fire which sits over some of the ducting infrastructure. It is hoped that the survey can be completed in the next few months to allow planning to begin around how these ducts can be made available to the telecoms marketplace.

3.11 Financial & Resource Implications

A delivery team has already been established within Digital Services to oversee the implementation of both strands of the BCC LFFN programme outlined above.

3.12 BCC will contribute the support and maintenance costs of £450,000 over the lifetime of the project funded from revenue savings released by ceasing the network links that are currently in operation across the Council's ICT network.

3.13 These savings will also allow the Council to employ an additional network engineer in Digital Services who will be needed to support a more complex and diverse network infrastructure.

3.14 The cost to implement the scheme in its entirety is £9.6million.

- BCC has been awarded £8M from DCMS to cover the capital costs of both strands of the LFFN programme
- The overall contribution to the scheme from the Council is £1.6million in staff and revenue costs which represents 16% of the BCC LFFN programme costs.
- Existing Revenue spend for our current network services will now be used to support the LFFN programme meaning that there will be no revenue growth.

3.15 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

None."

The Committee granted approval to enter into a Digital Fixed Line Infrastructure Wayleave Agreement with Virgin Media in respect of the installation of electronic communication apparatus at locations within Belfast City Council's ownership.

Commercial and Procurement Services Update

The Committee noted the activities detailed in the report which had been undertaken to establish the Council's new Commercial and Procurement Services (CPS) function.

Contracts Update

The Committee:

- Approved the public advertisement and acceptance of tenders in Appendix 1, Table 1 through the Council's electronic procurement system;
- Granted delegated authority to the appropriate Director to award the most economically advantageous tender using pre-agreed criteria;

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- Agreed to accede to Standing Order 55 exceptions in relation to contracts detailed in Appendix 1 Table 2;
- Noted the contracts awarded from June to August 2019 inclusive as detailed in Appendix 1 Table 3; and
- Noted that it had delegated authority in relation to the award of contracts.

Appendix 1 –

**Schedule of Tenders and Contracts Awarded
for Consideration/ Notation**

Table 1 - New Tenders

Title of Tender	Senior Responsible Officer	Proposed contract duration
Tender for collection and recycling of scrap metal including abandoned vehicles	Nigel Grimshaw	Up to 4 years
Tender for the Supply of Electric Panel Vans	Nigel Grimshaw	Up to 1 year
Tender for the Supply of Diesel Panel Vans	Nigel Grimshaw	Up to 1 year
Tender for the supply and delivery of protective gloves	John Walsh	Up to 3 years
Tender for the provision of the Bobbin coffee shop franchise	John Walsh	Up to 3 years
Tender for the catering provision at City Hall functions	John Walsh	Up to 3 years

Table 2 - Direct Award Contracts (Single Tender Action)

Title of tender	Supplier	Annual estimate
Giraffe Stock at Belfast Zoo	J&G Fencing	£65,000
Continuity of service of arboriculture services	Clive Richardson Ltd	£700,000

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Table 3 – Contracts Awarded (June to August 2019)

Title of tender	Successful Supplier	Senior Responsible Officer
T1963 – Delivery of a New Social Enterprise and Cooperative Programme	Work West 301 Glen Road	Alistair Reid
T1953 – Provision of an Employee Counselling Service	Apheideo Associates Regus Business Centre, Forsyth House Cromac Street Belfast BT2 8LA	John Tully
T1954 – Provision of Occupational Health Physician Services	OHRD Ltd Princes House, 44-46 Princes Street Belfast BT1 3FP	John Tully
T1966 – Delivery of a New GCSE Maths and English Revision Support Programme	West Belfast Partnership Board 218-226 Falls Road Belfast BT12 6AH	Alistair Reid
T1979 – Proposals for a Creative Lighting Programme for Christmas 2019	Galaxy Facilities Management Ltd 148 Glen Road Drumquin, Omagh BT78 4RD	Alistair Reid
T1961 – Delivery of a New Student Enterprise Programme	Deidre Fitzpatrick & Associates 64 Garland Hill Belfast BT8 6YL	John Geer
T1916 – Tender for Provision of an Asset Management System	Concerto Support Services Floor 1 & 2 Main Street Frodsham Cheshire WA16 7AB	Alistair Reid
T1922 Tender for the Supply and Delivery of Grounds Maintenance Plant and Equipment (17 Lots)	Mr Andrew Ferguson Broderick Grass Machinery NI Ltd 33A Commercial Way Mallusk BT36 4UB Mr David Laird Laird Grass Machinery Ltd 275A Middle Road Islandmagee BT40 3TG Mr Harry Gillespie	Nigel Grimshaw

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	<p>Cyril Johnston & Co Ltd Ballynahinch Road Belfast BT8 8DJ</p> <p>Mr Richard Neill Johnston Gilpin & Co Ltd 7b Lisnoe Road Lisburn BT27 5LT</p> <p>Mr Andy Magowan TBF Thompson (Garvagh) Ltd 6-10 Killyvalley Road Garvagh BT51 5JZ</p>	
T2002 - Tender for the supply of 8 x Loose Waste Collection Vehicles	<p>NI Trucks Ltd 3 Mallusk Road Newtownabbey BT36 4PP</p>	Nigel Grimshaw
T1910 - Tender for the provision of metal fabrication and welding services under general fleet maintenance (multi lot)	<p>Lakeland Recovery 12 Kinglass Road Macken Enniskillen Co Fermanagh BT92 3FJ</p> <p>R.D. Mechanical Services Ltd. Unit 11, McKinney Industrial Estate Newtownabbey Co Antrim BT36 4PX</p>	Nigel Grimshaw

Update for Bobbin Catering Tender

The Committee was reminded that the contract for the Bobbin was due to be re-let following the decision of the Committee on 25th January 2019. At that meeting, the City Solicitor had indicated that he was exploring opportunities to increase revenue whilst enhancing the customer experience at the City Hall. Accordingly, approval was being sought for the inclusion of an outdoor self-contained catering unit in the Bobbin tender to offer small scale catering in the grounds of the City Hall. The unit would be present during events and busy months of footfall in the grounds (the dates to be pre-agreed with the franchisee and Function Management Unit but not including the annual Christmas and Spring Continental Market). The unit would be a welcome addition to the grounds for tourists and locals to avail of tea, coffee and traybakes whilst enjoying the grounds environment. This self-contained unit

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would provide revenue to the Council as part of the franchise tender and would be included as part of the contractual arrangement in respect of the Bobbin.

The Committee approved the recommendation in respect of a self-contained catering/coffee unit in the grounds of the City Hall to be included in the Bobbin tender and noted that the decision at this time was an in principle one and further authority would be sought with further details on the siting, scale and appearance of the unit and operating principles at a later date.

Equality and Good Relations

Minutes of Shared City Partnership

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes held on 9th September 2019 including:

- to note the contents of the 2019 Bonfire and Cultural Expression Programme report, and include the findings and recommendations within the independent monitoring and evaluation report in any deliberations regarding a framework for an approach to bonfires.
- to agree to the rescheduling of the Building Positive Relations 4 (BPR4) Belfast and the World study visit to March 2020.
- that subject to the Legal Services Section confirming that the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy, in conjunction with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and other relevant legislation and policies, was fit for purpose, there was no requirement to adopt a separate definition in this instance, as sufficient protection was afforded to all citizens including those who were Jewish.
- that the Chairperson of the Shared City Partnership would meet with Mr. S. Jaffe, in response to his request.
- in principle, to allocate support costs to assist with storage for donations relating to the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation scheme, including £300 this financial year and £300 the following financial year, subject to the DfC advising why it was unable to cover the costs.
- that funding of up to £5,000 be made available for contributions of up to £500 for a maximum of ten groups to deliver the Goodwill Christmas events at interfaces across the City, with authority given to the Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services to allocate funding awards;
- that a contribution of up to £2,000 from the Good Relations budget be made available to the TASCIT group to develop a programme of Good Relations activity for the proposed Upper North Belfast Confidence Building Forum; and
- that the Shared City Partnership would support the ongoing work of TASCIT, through providing facilitated conversations with members and Council staff, and the provision of a room and small scale hospitality as outlined.

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Rural Needs: Annual Monitoring Report 2018-19

The Committee was advised that the Council had a statutory duty under the Rural Needs (NI) Act 2016 to consider rural needs in the development of new policies, plans or strategies or in any service design/delivery decisions. The rural population of Belfast was approximately 1,484 people comprising the small settlements of Edenderry, Hannahstown and Loughview.

The requirement to monitor and report applied to all Northern Ireland Departments and District Councils from 1st June, 2017. The Council was required under Section 3(1) of the Act to:

- compile information on the exercise of its functions under Section 1(1) of the Act;
- include that information in their annual report; and
- send that information to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs on the Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Return.

The Committee approved the Council's Annual Monitoring Return to DAERA for 2018-19, on a holding basis, subject to ratification by the Council at its meeting on 1st October.

Operational Issues

ONUS Annual Awards Ceremony 2019

The Committee was advised that Onus was a social enterprise organisation offering best practice advice and specialist training on domestic violence and abuse for employers and their staff. The Council had participated in the Onus Workplace Charter since 2013 and last year had been presented with the Platinum Award (the highest award available). The award involved an annual assessment process to ensure that best practice was sustained.

The annual award ceremonies are hosted by participating organisations, in most instances other councils, with last year's event being hosted by Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council. At the meeting of the Committee in June, it had agreed to a request from Onus for the use of the City Hall for this year's award ceremony taking place on 19th November, 2019 and the provision of hospitality in the form of tea, coffee and biscuits. Since that Committee approval, Onus had requested the additional provision of a light finger buffet and it was the understanding that such hospitality had been provided at previous awards ceremonies by the host organisation.

The Committee agreed the provision of additional hospitality at the Onus 10th Annual Awards Ceremony on 19th November.

**Requests for use of the City Hall
and the provision of Hospitality**

The Committee approved the recommendations made in respect of applications received up to 6th September, 2019, as set out in the undernoted appendix:.

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NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED	CIVIC HQ RECOMMEND
2019 EVENTS						
Eastside Partnership	11 October 2019	Launch of Eastside Greenways – strategic Plan to build on Connswater Community Greenway to develop links and networks. Numbers attending – 50	B & D	No (Charity)	Yes, Tea Coffee and Biscuits	<i>Approved by Delegated Authority</i> Approve No Charge Tea and Coffee Reception
Department for Communities	24 October 2019	NI Civil Service Recognition Awards – celebrate the achievements of individuals, team and projects. Numbers attending – 250	C	Charge £300	No Hospitality	<i>Approved by Delegated Authority</i> Approve Charge £300 No hospitality
Du Dance	1 December 2019	Youth Engagement showcase – young people from Belfast, Dungannon and Ballymoney work together in workshops and a performance of Dance for parents. Numbers attending – 60	C	No (Charity)	No Hospitality	Approve 1 in 3 No Charge No hospitality
Translink	4 December 2019	Long Service Awards – celebrate of employees who have attained 35 years or more service with awards and dinner reception.	C	Charge £300	No Hospitality	Approve Charge £300 No hospitality

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NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED	CIVIC HQ RECOMMEND
		Numbers attending – 90				
2020 EVENTS						
Boys Brigade	9 April 2020	Queens Badge Celebration – celebration event to present young people with their Queen's Badge Award, the highest award within the Boy's Brigade. Numbers attending – 450 maximum	C & D	No (Charity)	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality
Irish League of Credit Unions	24 April 2020	Irish League of Credit Unions 60th Anniversary Conference Reception – welcome reception to celebrate 60 th anniversary of organization, linked to conference taking place in ICC. Numbers attending – 250 – 300	A, B & C	No <i>£300 waived due to links with Visit Belfast</i>	Yes, Wine Reception <i>(linked to Visit Belfast and celebrating significant anniversary)</i>	Approve No Charge Wine Reception
BACCN NI	13 May 2020	All Ireland Critical Care Pre-Conference Dinner– Welcome reception and dinner as part of 2 day conference taking place in Assembly Buildings.	A & B	No <i>£300 waived due to links with Visit Belfast</i>	Yes, Wine Reception <i>(linked to Visit Belfast)</i>	Approve No Charge Wine Reception

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NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED	CIVIC HQ RECOMMEND
		Numbers attending – 100				
Accelerate	10 June 2020	Conference Dinner – Welcome reception and dinner as part of 5 day conference taking place in Belfast. Numbers attending – 150	A & B	No <i>£300 waived due to links with Visit Belfast</i>	Yes, Wine Reception <i>(linked to Visit Belfast)</i>	Approve No Charge Wine Reception
The Academy of Pharmaceutical Sciences	2 September 2020	Welcome Reception - Welcome reception as part of 3 day conference taking place in Belfast. Numbers attending – 250	A & B	No <i>£300 waived due to links with Visit Belfast</i>	Yes, Wine Reception <i>(linked to Visit Belfast)</i>	Approve No Charge Wine Reception
BSPED	12 November 2020	Bioscientifica Conference Dinner – Welcome reception and dinner as part of 3 day conference taking place at the ICC. Numbers attending – 120	A & B	No (Charity)	Yes, Wine Reception <i>(linked to Visit Belfast)</i>	Approve No Charge Wine Reception

Requests for use of the Council Chamber

The Committee was advised that two requests had been received for the use of the Council Chamber.

The first was from the British Council for the use of the Chamber on 11th February, 2020 for its Mock Council of the European Union. The event would be two debates for school children, aged 16-18 years and this annual event had been running for fourteen years.

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The British Council had also requested the use of the Banqueting Hall for lunch for the students. If the Committee was minded to approve the application, then there would be no charge applied for the use of the Banqueting Hall due to the charitable nature of the organisation and this function would meet the criteria for the Use of the City Hall as agreed previously by the Committee.

In addition, a request had been received from the Queen's University Belfast Student Union for the use of the Council Chamber on 4th February, 2020 for its monthly meeting. The Student Union Council was made up of local and international students and the event would be tabled motions and exact topics to be debated and would be provided to the Function Management Unit two weeks prior to the event for approval.

The Committee approved the application by the British Council and the application from Queen's University Student Union for the use of the Council Chamber and to the use of the Banqueting Hall for lunch by the British Council.

Report of Audit and Risk Panel and Minutes

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Risk Panel of 10th September, 2019.

Minutes of Party Group Leaders' Consultative Forum

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Party Group Leaders' Consultative Forum of 12th September, 2019.

Minutes of Active Belfast Limited Board

The Committee noted the minutes of the meeting of the Active Belfast Limited Board of 9th September, 2019; and agreed to utilise the mobilisation fund to offer those of an age 16 and under and 5 and over a membership card for leisure facilities free of charge.

Minutes of the Working Group on the Climate Crisis

Prior to consideration of the minutes, the City Solicitor drew the Members' attention to the decision under the heading "Sustainable NI Working Group" agreeing that it be represented on the Working Group by Councillors Smyth and Ferguson.

He pointed out that the Council made appointments to outside bodies based on proportionality using the Saint Lague System and that this had been done at the June meeting of the Committee.

However, the Committee also agreed a process to deal with any additional requests from outside bodies for Council representation during the Council term, in that the Party or Parties who would have had the next available choice(s) under the Saint Lague table would be asked to nominate a representative(s).

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The nominations to that Working Group fell under this policy and therefore the two places should be offered in the first instance to the Parties who had the next two choices, namely Sinn Féin and the Green Party.

Subject to the foregoing amendment, the Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Working Group on the Climate Crisis of 16th September.

Council Declaration of a Climate Emergency

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

Following SP&R discussion in August, to consider next steps towards declaring a Climate Emergency.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 That SP&R considers the actions which should be undertaken in advance of Belfast being in a position to declare a Climate Emergency.

2.2 To consider the recommendation of the All-Party Group on the Climate Crisis that Council should immediately declare a Climate Emergency.

3.0 Main report / key issues

3.1 The August meeting of Strategic Policy & Resources Committee agreed to refer a previous motion to declare a climate emergency to the All-Party Working Group on the Climate Crisis. The Committee also agreed that a report be submitted to its monthly meeting in September, setting out proposed actions to be undertaken in advance of Belfast being in a position to declare a Climate Emergency, with the aim of that being before the end of 2019.

3.2 On 16th September, the All Party Working Group on the Climate Crisis met, and discussed its programme of work and the steps it will take in the coming months to better understand the scale and nature of climate risks for Belfast. It agreed that it would work to produce a substantive report to SP&R by December, which would set out with as much detail as possible a programme of work on climate resilience.

3.3 The December report will be informed by the following:

- Conclusion of the ‘Mini Stern’ – an economic analysis of CO2 reductions for the city

- Conclusion of a high level risk assessment of the city’s infrastructure and the impact of various climate related scenarios
 - Ongoing learning from cities such as Leeds, Manchester and Glasgow in developing a methodology for assessment of climate risks and a mitigation and adaptation strategy
 - An appraisal of the costs associated with developing a climate adaptation and mitigation plan as part of the annual estimates process
- 3.4 This work has been commissioned as part of the ongoing development of the city’s Resilience Strategy.
- 3.5 The All Party Working Group also discussed the matter of whether it should recommend to SP&R to declare a Climate Emergency as soon as possible. It recognised that there is merit in waiting to conclude the work outlined above. However, in the context of a range of recent national and global reports that point to clear and persistent risks to the city arising from climate change, the Working Group felt it should reflect the urgency of the climate crisis, and as other local councils have done, should declare a climate emergency forthwith.
- 3.5 The Working Group reiterated its commitment to undertake the actions outlined in 3.3
- 3.7 **Financial & Resource Implications**
- There are no financial and resource implications at this time. The final report presented in December will include indicative costings as described above.
- 3.8 **Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment**
- There are no Equality or Good Relations/ Rural Needs Assessment implications at this point.”

The Committee approved the recommendation of the All-Party Working Group on the Climate Crisis that the Council should immediately declare a Climate Emergency.

Issues Raised in Advance by Members

Shared Future Proofing decisions - Councillor McAllister

In accordance with notice on the agenda, Councillor McAllister raised the issue of shared future proofing decisions.

After discussion, the Committee agreed that the matter be referred in the first instance to the Party Group Leaders’ Consultative Forum.

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Single Use Items

In accordance with notice on the agenda, the Committee was advised Councillor McReynolds had proposed the following:

“This Council recognises the significant detrimental effect that single use items have in Belfast; calls for the creation of an internal strategy to do away with single use item usage; and, agrees to review our internal waste policies alongside supporting any resulting recommendations with appropriate funding and necessary resources.”

The Committee agreed that a report on single use items be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

Chairperson