

People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 8th September, 2020

MEETING OF PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Alderman Rodgers (In the Chair);
The High Sheriff, Councillor Verner; and
Councillors Baker, Black, Bunting, Cobain, Michael Collins,
Corr, de Faoite, Garrett, M. Kelly, Magee, McAteer,
McCusker, McReynolds, Mulholland, Newton, Pankhurst and
Smyth.

In attendance: Mr. R. Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services;
Mrs. S. Toland, Director of City Services;
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer; and
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

Also In attendance: Alderman Dorrian and Councillors Heading and McKeown.

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor Flynn.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 11th August were taken as read and signed as correct. Members noted that these minutes had been adopted at September's Council meeting with the following addition - under the heading "Priorities during Covid Recovery – Verbal Update", the Council agreed that a report be submitted to the Committee providing an update on the work which has been undertaken by the Heads of Service Group of Environmental Health on the resumption/reinstatement of services.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were recorded.

Presentation

Northern Ireland Housing Executive - Housing Investment Plan

The Committee was informed that representatives of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive were in attendance remotely to provide the Committee with its first annual update in respect of the 2019-2023 Housing Investment Plan for Belfast.

Accordingly, Mr. C. Bailie, Chief Executive, together with Mr. A. Hannaway, Deputy Regional Manager, and Ms. R. Taylor, Acting Head of Place Shaping (Belfast), were welcomed to the meeting.

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Mr. Bailie submitted for the Committee's consideration the Belfast Housing Investment Plan 2020, which reported on the Housing Executive's progress over the previous twelve months and presented its programmes for the coming year. He explained that the plan was aligned to the outcomes of each Community Plan to show how the Housing Executive planned to support the work of the Council. He detailed that it reflected four high level outcomes, as identified by the Housing Executive, namely, helping people to find housing support and solutions, delivering new and better homes, fostering vibrant sustainable neighbourhoods and delivering quality public services.

Mr Bailie then drew the Members' attention to the following key issues for Belfast, which had been identified within the Plan during 2019/20:

- there were 10,819 applicants on the waiting list, with 8,143 of those in housing stress;
- 5,270 households presented as homeless between March 2019 and March 2020;
- the Housing Executive made 1,664 placements into temporary accommodation in the city;
- 319 new social homes had been completed in Belfast and 975 units were on-site at 31st March 2020, 328 of which started in the last year; and
- the five-year assessment for 2019-24 showed a need for 4,778 additional social units in the city.

Mr. Bailie also drew the Members' attention to the long-term Tower Block Strategy as follows:

5 Year Life	6-10 Year Life	10+ Year Life
Ross	Mount Vernon	Cuchulainn
Oisin	Finn	Eithne
Moylena	Fianna	Maeve
Breda	Belvoir	Grainne
Kilbroney		Divis
Clarawood		Moveen
		Willowfield
		Woodstock
		Whincroft
		Carnet

A number of other key housing issues were also identified, issues around chronic homelessness, land availability, the continued growth of the private rented sector, affordable housing/City centre opportunities, the impact of Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic.

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Mr. Bailie advised that the Covid-19 outbreak had made it necessary for the Housing Executive to make changes to the way it delivered its services, to ensure that both its customers and staff were protected whilst continuing to ensure that key essential services were maintained. He explained that the Housing Executive had originally intended to deliver investment of £227 million across all improvement and maintenance activities in its stock in 2020/21, however, as a direct result of the ongoing pandemic, other than emergency situations and the undertaking of statutory inspections and servicing, these activities had been suspended in late March 2020.

Mr. Bailie concluded by confirming that the Housing Executive would regularly monitor progress against the objectives set out within the Housing Investment Plan and would report to the Council on an annual basis, however, advised that he would be retiring within the next year.

In response to a number of issues that had been raised during discussion, the representatives confirmed that:

- the Housing Executive was examining ways of boosting housing supply in areas of high demand. It recognised that there was a high level of demand for housing coupled with a shortage of housing in North Belfast which continued to be a popular place to live but noted that land availability in the area was also a problem;
- the Housing Executive was putting in place measures to mitigate against climate change and also in trying to address fuel poverty. Cavity Wall insulation research was due to commence to establish its efficiency and effectiveness;
- the Housing Executive noted that in respect of low housing stock there had been some discussion in respect of the future possible change of use of city centre premises, given that it was anticipated that businesses would suffer a fall out from the Covid 19 pandemic; and
- noted that, whilst it was often difficult to encourage older people to move to smaller (more suitable properties), it was necessary to ensure that these properties became available for reallocation.

A Member thanked the representatives for the hard work and effort of the Housing Executive staff over the past few difficult months.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, concluded by thanking Mr. Bailie for his work and commitment over the years and wished him a long and healthy retirement.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

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Restricted

The information contained in the reports associated with the following 4 items is restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

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

Finance Update

The Committee was reminded that, the Strategic Policy and Resources at its meeting on 31st July, had received an update on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Council's financial position and a strategy to address the forecast deficit and the mitigation measures, which had and would be taken as the situation evolved. It had agreed to continue to provide Members with a monthly update on the financial position and that the same report would be presented to the subsequent standing Committees for noting and to provide further information on ongoing work in the following areas:

1. Updated forecasts
2. The financial impact of recovery plans
3. The financial impact of the member agreed decision to invoice rents for all tenants from Quarter 2
4. Employee savings arising from the review of vacant posts

The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee had also agreed at its July Committee meeting to receive the Quarter 1 financial report in August. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the quarterly finance reports to Committee incorporated both the quarterly financial performance and the year-end forecasts. With the requirement for monthly forecast updates as part of the financial strategy agreed with Members in June, the Quarter 1 finance report had also been included as an appendix to this report rather than a separate report, providing a comprehensive overview of the overall financial position in one report.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services advised the Members that, as updated at the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its July meeting, further funding from the Department for Communities (DfC) had been predicted through the local Council Community Support Fund to support the COVID-19 response. The Members were reminded that had been agreed, also at this meeting, that it would be allocated to the Micro Grant Scheme. The Director advised that the Council was now in receipt of the letter of offer and the amount allocated to Belfast was significantly more than had been anticipated, a further £485,700 of funding was to be released to Belfast to support communities in the COVID-19 response, with the same general themes as before food, connectivity and

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finance. He advised that, whilst a percentage of this funding would be allocated to the Micro Grant Scheme, officers now intended to submit to the October People and Communities Committee a more detailed report, which would include proposals in relation to the additional funding. In the meantime, officers would engage with the relevant community and voluntary stakeholders in respect of the proposals.

Additionally, he also advised that DfC were in the process of providing further financial assistance which was to be ring fenced to two work programmes around Financial Inclusion and Access to Food, the Council was currently exploring how this funding could be delivered/allocated.

The Committee:

- noted the contents of the report, including the August forecast update and Quarter 1 finance report; and
- noted that an update report would be submitted to the October People and Communities Committee which would provide further proposals in respect of the additional funding from DfC.

**Update Report 'Wild Lights' Show –
Botanic Gardens December**

The Committee was reminded that, at the July Council meeting, it had been agreed that the decision of the Chief Executive of 9th June, under the heading “‘Wild Light’s Show’ – Botanic Gardens, December 2020 – January 2021”, be amended to provide that an environmental assessment be carried out before the September 2020 meeting of the People and Communities Committee and reported back to Committee.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services advised that the decision taken had been communicated to the applicant, who had subsequently advised that the request had created potential operational and contractual difficulties and as a result the organisers had decided to cancel the event for 2020.

Officers reported that they would continue to liaise with the applicant to try and resolve any difficulties for future years.

Noted.

**Request for the use of Ormeau Park –
Ballynafeigh Apprentice Boys Flute Band**

The Committee noted a request from Ballynafeigh Apprentice Boys Flute Band Cultural Day at Ormeau Park on Saturday 26th September 2020, subject to completion of the Council’s Open Spaces and Activating Living processes.

It also noted that, due to the current Covid-19 Regulations, the Council required the event organisers:

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- to complete an event management plan and risk assessment for the associated activities to ensure effective and safe delivery of the event and to ensure compliance with current legislation and Northern Ireland Executive guidance. This would include adherence to any conditions around the maximum number of people to be gathered at any one time and social distancing requirements; and
- to confirm that they would have a nominated individual who would gather the contact details of all attendees which would be made available if track and trace was required.

Waste Collection Update

(Mr. J. McConnell, City Services Manager (Resources and Fleet), attended in connection with this item).

The Director of City Services submitted a report, which provided an update for the Committee in respect of the current position concerning the waste collection service.

The Director reminded the Members that, the People and Communities Committee at its meeting on 5th March, had considered a report in respect of ongoing service issues. She continued that, as a result of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, many of the planned initiatives had been temporarily set aside to enable efforts to be concentrated on restoring and delivering the core functions and services of Waste Collections and Waste Management in the current environment of restricted resources and finances. She explained that, it was now envisaged, subject to approval, that the proposed improvement activities could be incorporated with the resumption of the Fleet and Resources Transition and Improvement Programme, subject to additional resources being made available.

The City Services Manager then provided the Committee with a comprehensive overview and update in respect of recovery of the services as follows:

- 25th March – restriction to black bin general waste only;
- 30th March – reintroduction of brown bin collections for food and organic waste;
- 31st March – reintroduction of blue bin collections for dry recyclables;
- 6th April – reintroduction of Commercial Waste Services;
- 27th April – reintroduction of Kerbside Box Pilot collections;
- 11th May – reintroduction of Glass Pilot collections;
- 18th May – reopening of 4 main HRCs;
- 8th June – restoration of Bulky Waste Collections;
- 12th June – reopening of Automated Public Conveniences;
- 1st July – partial restoration of graffiti removal (PBNI partnership suspended);
- 17th August – phased reopening of City Centre Public Conveniences;
- 7th September – resumption of contracted Doorstep Asbestos Collection;
- September 2020 – planned resumption of Abandoned Vehicles Recovery Service; and
- TBC - Civic Amenity Sites.

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The Committee noted that the level of domestic waste presented in bins had shown significant increases year on year and it had seen a substantial increase over 'lockdown'. In simplest terms, in relation to all waste streams, in 4 months, Resources and Fleet had collected in the region of 3806 tonnes of additional waste compared to same period last year. This equated to approximately 406 additional full refuse collection vehicles over the 17 week period (approx. 24 full lorries per week). The additional workload had been absorbed.

In terms of commercial waste arrangements, as businesses across the city had started to reopen, commercial waste collections had been flexible to meet the changing needs and requirement of the customers.

The Committee noted that Bryson House had also experienced significantly more household waste at the kerbside as a result of more people being at home.

Following a recent meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, the Committee also received an update in respect of the Bryson Kerbside Collection Contract Extension. It noted that officers in Resources and Fleet had commenced the process of sourcing independent expertise on waste collections, this would include a feasibility study of potential options with approximate associated costs and timelines. The Members were also asked to note in their diaries that a workshop specifically in respect of Waste Collections was being held remotely on Wednesday, 7th October at 12.00 noon.

On a positive note, the Committee was advised that over the period of the Covid Pandemic, Council officers had worked collaboratively and shared information with both DAERA and other Councils. They had successfully shared solutions, ideas and best practice around health and safety, operations and service recovery. All councils had incurred both extra costs and loss of income as a result of the impact of Covid-19, assistance had been sought from central government on an 11 council collective basis working through DAERA to offset the financial difficulties, although progress in securing financial assistance had been slow. SOLACE had commissioned an Association of Local Government Finance Officers (ALGFO) Sub Group to progress this on behalf of the 11 councils.

The Director also drew the Members attention to the following two consultation papers:

- Plastic Packaging Tax Consultation - From April 2022, the Plastic Packaging Tax will apply to plastic packaging manufactured in or imported into the UK containing less than 30% recycled plastic. Officers contributed comments on the consultation to arc21 and an arc21co-ordinated a response on behalf of its member councils was presented to the arc21 steering group on 18th August 2020 and thereafter was submitted to HMRC; and
- Future Recycling and Separate Collection of Waste of a Household Nature in Northern Ireland –a major consultation paper from DAERA in relation to the shape of recycling from both Municipal and Domestic Waste Collections considering how to achieve the next levels of recycling targets for Northern Ireland. Officers had already contributed to the arc21 and Council Waste Forums proposed submissions. It was recognised that because of differing

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views and collection methods currently being employed across the 11 Councils that there was unlikely to be a consensus on some of the consultation responses. Therefore, in addition to the other responses, BCC officers would present the current Discussion Document on the "Future Recycling and Separate Collection of Waste of a Household Nature in Northern Ireland" alongside the draft Belfast City Council response to the document for approval in September, ahead of the 4th October deadline.

In respect of the pilot Wheelie Box Scheme, the committee was advised that primary conversations had been held with DAERA officials in relation to the appetite to fund the capital requirements of an expansion of the Scheme into the inner city 58000 household area currently being serviced with a two box system by Bryson. An application would be submitted for consideration in due course.

Finally, the Director advised that an invitation had been received from the Bio-Plastics Europe Network inviting the Council to join the Bio-Plastics Europe Network: "Historic Cities against Plastic Waste".

The Committee:

- noted that a workshop in relation to Waste Collections was being held remotely on Wednesday, 7th October at 12.00 noon; and
- agreed that the Council would join the Bio-Plastics Europe Network: "Historic Cities against Plastic Waste".

Matters referred back from the Council/Motions

Residents' Parking Schemes

The Committee was reminded that at the Council meeting on 1st September, the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Black and seconded by Councillor McLaughlin, had, in accordance with Standing Order 13(f) been referred to the Committee for consideration:

"This Council recognises the recent changes in commuter travel patterns, including a greater emphasis on connectivity particularly for cycling and walking.

However, this Council is mindful that such changes are a result of decreased traffic volumes due to working from home and are likely to rise again with full re-opening, returns to work and education.

Daily issues facing city centre surrounding communities related to excessive parking levels and dangerous practices remain and are increasing to a pre-lockdown hazardous level.

This issue is prevalent in city centre surrounding communities and causes documented operational problems related to cleansing, access for

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emergency services, road safety for families, street layout, pedestrian access, connectivity, road and pavement surfacing, air quality and daily life.

Belfast City Council, in line with the Belfast Agenda's commitments related to good health and wellbeing, vibrancy, attractiveness and connectivity, must influence action to find realistic solutions to support densely populated urban residential communities.

Flexibility and dynamism have been illustrated during the pandemic related to connectivity. This same level of expediency must be implemented to target this historical and highly contentious problem.

As such this Council agrees to write to the Department for Infrastructure to invite representatives to attend the People and Communities Committee and to advance Residents' parking schemes in urban affected communities".

The proposer of the motion Councillor Black addressed the Committee and outlined the context of the motion.

With the permission of the Chairperson, Alderman Dorrian also addressed the Committee in support of the motion.

The Committee agreed that the Council would write to the Department for Infrastructure inviting representatives to attend a future meeting of the People and Communities Committee to discuss the advancement of Residents' parking schemes in urban affected communities.

Alleygating Programme

The Committee was reminded that at the Council meeting on 1st September, the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor McKeown and seconded by Councillor de Faoite, had, in accordance with Standing Order 13(f) been referred to the Committee for consideration:

"Belfast City Council:

Recognises that the COVID-19 crisis has allowed local communities to develop a greater appreciation of open and green spaces throughout the city and commends those residents who have taken an active role in improving those spaces in their local area, providing an opportunity for their community to enjoy fresh air, activity and socially distanced interaction during the difficult months of lockdown;

Resolves that the Council should do all that it can to support residents and local communities who are proactive in seeking to improve and regenerate open and green spaces in their area.

Believes that, although a review of phases 1-4 of the alleygating programme was agreed earlier this year, the new context of Coronavirus gives cause to

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reprioritise both our approach to the allocation of alleygates and how a new alleygating programme should be funded.

Determines that a new funded alleygating programme is included as part of Council's Recovery Plan, recognising the intrinsic benefit and popularity of existing alleygating programmes.

Agrees that this new alleygating programme, when determining eligible streets, should give equal consideration and scoring to the efforts of communities to develop and maintain their alleyways as is currently given to crime-reduction and anti-social behaviour concerns."

With the permission of the Chairperson, Councillor McKeown, proposer of the motion, addressed the Committee and outlined the context of his Motion which was to try and progress to a new funded alleygating programme.

Several other Members spoke in support of the motion.

Following a query by a Member, the Director of City Services confirmed that capital funding for any potential future scheme was the responsibility of the Council's Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, which firstly had to agree whether it wished to commence a new programme in the context of any discussion around future capital programs . It was further highlighted that there was a number of other outstanding Motions relating to alleygates/alleyways. Following discussion, it was agreed that the Motion needed to be considered generically along with the other Motions.

The Committee agreed that a comprehensive report on Alleygates and Alleyways be submitted to a future meeting, which would consider previous Motions along with the financial resources available and reference any potential external funding opportunities.

Committee/Strategic Issues

Air Quality Update Report

The Committee considered the following report:

"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 Members will recall that at the People and Communities Committee meeting of 3rd March 2020, a paper was presented that provided an overview of preparations and progress at that time towards development of a new Air Quality Action Plan for the city, along with technical and other information relating to a proposed detailed assessment to be undertaken for the city for fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂).**
- 1.2 This report serves to provide an update to the Committee on progress with both of these projects over the intervening time (within the Covid Pandemic) and to provide an overview of the**

outcome of the Belfast City Council Air Quality Progress Report 2020.

2.0 **Recommendations**

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- note contents of this update report.

3.0 **Main report**

Key Issues

3.1.1 **Air Quality Action Plan.**

Members will be aware that the Council's current Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan is scheduled to conclude at the end of 2020. With this in mind, officers have commenced engagement with a range of government Departments, the Public Health Agency, local public transport providers, the Port of Belfast and sustainable environment and transport organisations in order to begin development of a new Air Quality Action Plan for implementation from April 2020. The focus of the new Air Quality Action Plan will be to address the few remaining nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) hotspots across the city, associated principally with road transport emissions and to improve ambient air quality generally for the city.

3.1.2 To assist in development of the new Air Quality Action Plan, an Air Quality Steering Group has been convened and 'Terms of Reference' have been established for both the Group and for development of the new Plan. The Terms of Reference have been designed to ensure that the new Air Quality Action Plan contributes appropriately to the various ambient air quality outcomes detailed within the '*Belfast Agenda – Your Future City*' community plan, as well as linking to the Programme for Government '*Indicator 37: Improve air quality*', where the lead measure is 'concentration of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂)'. In addition, the Terms of Reference highlight that the Council's Living Here Board oversees delivery of the '*Living Here*' component of the Belfast Agenda community plan and that the '*Living Here*' work stream to '*Maximise the benefit of our natural and built environment*' includes a commitment to delivery of the city's Air Quality Action Plan(s).

3.1.3 As a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic, Steering Group meetings to date have been delivered online. The next meeting of the Steering Group is scheduled for 7th September 2020, where Steering Group members have been invited to bring

forward mitigation measures on behalf of their organisations for inclusion in the new Action Plan to address the remaining nitrogen dioxide '*hot spot*' areas across the city and to improve general ambient air quality.

3.1.4 Members are advised that the new Air Quality Action Plan will have to be developed with regard to the various requirements of the DAERA Local Air Quality Management Policy Guidance – LAQM.PGNI(09). Accordingly, the Air Quality Action Plan is required to include the following components:

- Quantification of the source contributions to the predicted exceedences of the relevant objectives, thereby enabling the Action Plan measures to be effectively targeted;
- Evidence that all available options have been considered;
- How the district council will use its powers and work in conjunction with other organisations and relevant authorities in pursuit of the air quality objectives;
- Clear timescales in which the district council and relevant authorities propose to implement the measures within the plan;
- Quantification of the expected impacts of the proposed measures and an indication as to whether the measures will be sufficient to meet the air quality objectives and;
- How the district council intends to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the plan.

3.1.5 Moreover, the new Air Quality Action Plan will have to be independently appraised by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) technical assessors in order to ensure that the Plan is acceptable in terms of its proposed actions, adequacy and appropriateness, planned implementation, consultation and consistency with statutory guidance. Once the Air Quality Action Plan has been accepted by the assessors, it can then be implemented. Our original intention was that the new Air Quality Action Plan would have been ready for implementation by December 2020 but with the Covid 19 pandemic and allowing for any necessary consultation on the new Action Plan, the anticipated completion date is now April 2021. We have communicated this revision to the action planning timetable to DAERA.

3.2 Detailed Assessment for Fine Particulate Matter (PM_{2.5}) and Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂).

3.2.1 Members are advised that officers have now completed development of a detailed technical specification for the

appointment of a suitably qualified and experienced environmental consultancy to deliver the detailed assessment for fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) for the city. The specification will be issued as local and European tenders in coming weeks.

- 3.2.2** It is proposed that the detailed assessment for PM_{2.5} and NO₂ will involve three specific project components; (i) development of a detailed emissions inventory for the city to include road, rail, shipping, aircraft domestic, industrial and commercial emissions, etc. within the city boundary; (ii) additional ambient monitoring across the city for fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) in order to fill any gaps in existing monitoring data and; (iii) detailed atmospheric dispersion modelling for the city in order to identify geographic areas where exceedances of NO₂ or PM_{2.5} objectives, limit values or WHO guideline values are predicted or known to occur.
- 3.2.3** The environmental consultancy appointed will also be expected to provide prioritised recommendations for achieving the air quality objectives, limit values or WHO guideline values for PM_{2.5} and NO₂ within any areas of exceedance, as well as for the city as a whole. It is anticipated that the duration of the detailed assessment project will be in the order of 2 years, but the project may in exceptional circumstances have to be extended or curtailed as a consequence of any new local or national Covid-19 pandemic restrictions.
- 3.3** Installation of an Ion Chromatogram type analyser at the Belfast Centre Lombard Street monitoring site.
- 3.3.1** As an addition to the detailed assessment for fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}), Council officers are currently liaising with their DAERA counterparts and the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology regarding development of a project to identify and quantify the water-soluble gases and aerosols in air containing different sizes of particulate matter to aid in the better understanding of some of the chemical mechanisms involved in the formation of particulate matter in Belfast and across Northern Ireland. This project was initially proposed by DAERA however the analytical data generated will also help to inform the Council's detailed assessment for fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) for the city.
- 3.3.2** Accordingly, it is proposed that a Monitor for AeRosols and Gases (MARGA) ion chromatogram type ambient air quality analyser be installed at the DAERA managed Belfast Centre site, initially for a period of around 4 months, commencing from early 2021. The MARGA instrument will be able to measure ambient

gases including hydrochloric acid, nitric acid, nitrous acid, sulphur dioxide and ammonia. In addition, it will be capable of measuring aerosol ions including chloride, nitrate, sulphate, ammonium, potassium, calcium and magnesium. As advised previously, this project is to be delivered in partnership with DAERA and the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology. DAERA have however sought support from the Council in the installation and operation of the chromatographic equipment. Further updates will be provided to Committee as necessary as the project is further developed

3.4 Belfast City Council Air Quality Progress Report 2020.

In accordance with the timetable detailed within the government's local air quality management technical guidance document LAQM.TG(16), Belfast City Council provided its

2020 Air Quality Progress Report to the Defra technical assessors on 30th June 2020.

3.4.1 Air Quality Progress Reports are required to include the following types of air quality information:

- An overview of air quality actions being taken in the local authority area;
- A brief discussion of the LAQM regime;
- Actions to improve air quality:
 - A description of currently declared AQMAs
 - A section discussing the progress, and impact of Action Plan measures.
- A summary of air quality monitoring data collated over the past 5 years, and a comparison of the latest available results against the Air Quality Strategy objectives and;
- Additional supporting information including screening assessments for new developments within the local authority area or changes in existing sources of pollution over the past year, or detailed dispersion modelling of emissions to support the declaration / amendment or revocation of AQMAs.

3.4.2 Although the Progress Report is dated June 2020, Members are advised that the monitoring data included within the report relates to the 2019 calendar monitoring year. Accordingly, during 2019, the Council continued to operate its automatic monitoring sites for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particulate matter (PM₁₀) at Stockmans Lane and its automatic monitoring sites for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) at the A12 Westlink, Ormeau Road and Upper Newtownards Road. Annual mean nitrogen dioxide concentrations recorded during 2019 at the A12

Westlink, Ormeau Road and Upper Newtownards Road sites were all less than the $40 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ objective, but the annual mean nitrogen dioxide concentration recorded at the Stockmans Lane site was $45 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$, although this was a $4 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ reduction on the 2018 annual mean concentration of $49 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$. There were no recorded exceedances of the nitrogen dioxide $200 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ 1-hour mean objective during 2019.

- 3.4.3 The Council also continued to operate passive nitrogen dioxide diffusion tubes at 55 monitoring locations across the city during 2019. Exceedances of the nitrogen dioxide $40 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ annual mean objective were recorded at Stockmans Lane ($45 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ in 2019 and $48 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ in 2018); Blacks Road ($42 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ in 2019 and $36 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ in 2018); Great George's Street ($45 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ in 2019 and $44 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ in 2018); $45 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ at a new 2019 monitoring location at the entrance to the RVH at Mulhouse Road on the A12 Westlink and; $53 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ at a new 2019 monitoring location at Henry Place adjacent to the A12 Westlink.
- 3.4.4 Monitoring sites at, or close to the nitrogen dioxide annual mean objective during 2019 included Short Strand $40 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$; Albert Clock $40 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$; Chichester Street $40 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$; Peter's Hill $40 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$; Balmoral Avenue $39 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ and; Glenmachan Street $38 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$.
- 3.4.5 This 2019 nitrogen dioxide monitoring data has already been communicated to the Air Quality Action Plan Steering Group in order to help inform the development of targeted mitigation measures for the new Action Plan.
- 3.4.6 Annual mean particulate matter (PM_{10}) concentrations at the Belfast Centre, Lombard Street and Stockmans Lane monitoring sites were 15 and $18 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ respectively during 2019; significantly below the $40 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ annual mean objective. No exceedances of the 24 hour mean PM_{10} objective were recorded at either monitoring site during 2019.
- 3.4.7 The annual mean $\text{PM}_{2.5}$ concentration recorded at the Belfast Centre, Lombard Street site in 2019 was $11 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$. This concentration is similar to that recorded in 2018 - $10 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$, 2017 - $9.0 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ and 2016 - $10 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$; and significantly below the $25 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ annual mean target value to be achieved by 2020.
- 3.4.8 There were no exceedances of any objective for sulphur dioxide (SO_2) recorded at the Belfast Centre, Lombard Street site during 2019.
- 3.4.9 The Council has not yet received a response concerning the appraisal of its 2020 Belfast City Council Air Quality Progress

Report. However, once the Report has been formally accepted, an electronic copy of the report will be provided for the Members' Library.

3.4.10 As an addendum, Members are advised that the various travel and other movement restrictions associated with the Covid-19 pandemic have resulted in reduced roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations during 2020. For example, the nitrogen dioxide mean value at the Stockmans Lane site during January – August 2019 was $44.8 \mu\text{g}\text{m}^{-3}$, whereas for the same period in 2020, the mean nitrogen dioxide concentration is $30.8 \mu\text{g}\text{m}^{-3}$. Similar reductions have been observed at other nitrogen dioxide roadside monitoring sites across the city. It is presently unclear whether nitrogen dioxide and other ambient pollutant concentrations will recover to their pre Covid-19 levels as Belfast and Northern Ireland continue to emerge from the pandemic.

3.5 Financial & Resource Implications

Permission for the public advertisement of Tender T2044 for ambient air quality assessment within the Council boundary for $\text{PM}_{2.5}$ and NO_2 ambient pollutants was obtained at the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee meeting of Friday 24th January 2020. Funding of up to £125,000 to support delivery of the detailed assessment project has been secured from the DAERA Local Air Quality Management grant scheme for 2020-2021. It is proposed that the tender documentation will be issued during the week commencing 7th September 2020 and that the tender will remain open for a period of 30 days. The various submissions will be assessed thereafter, and the tender is likely to be awarded towards the end of October 2020.

3.6 Equality or Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessments

None.”

Following a number of queries in relation to the consultation response, the Director of City Services provided clarity and undertook to liaise with the Member directly if he had any further queries.

A further Member suggested that engagement should include communities and the West Belfast Taxi Consortium as a public transport provider.

The Committee agreed the consultation in respect of the new Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan and noted the comments to include engagement with communities and the West Belfast Taxi Consortium.

Affordable Warmth

(Mr. I. Harper, Building Control Manager, attended in connection with this item).

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 **Belfast City Council has been engaged in a partnership with the Department for Communities (DfC) and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) in the delivery of the Affordable Warmth Scheme (AWS) since 2014.**
- 1.2 **The scheme aims to address fuel poverty for the most vulnerable households in the city by targeting those households that meet certain criteria, as identified by Ulster University to provide home improvement measures such as loft and cavity wall insulation, replacement boilers and new double glazed windows. While it is a targeted scheme, self-referrals are also considered. To qualify for the scheme occupant’s income must be below £20,000 (gross).**
- 1.3 **The purpose of this report is to give Members an update on the AWS, and outline a request from DfC regarding Belfast City Council’s ongoing commitment to the scheme.**

Key issue: DfC request

- 1.4 **Following the update report to Members in June there have been ongoing communications between DfC and councils regarding the scheme and resuming operations as lockdown eases. David Polley, DfC Director for Housing Supply Policy, wrote to councils on 14th August requesting that councils confirm their commitment to working on the scheme by 21st August 2020, based upon certain conditions. While no Service Level Agreement has been provided, the conditions for ongoing participation for councils (which Belfast City Council has concerns with) are as follows:**
 - **They have confirmed scheme funding for 2020-2021 of £12M (across NI).**
 - **They have set a revised referral target of 44 referrals per month for BCC**
 - **They will continue with the payment per referral model**
 - **They suggest reducing the targeted ratio to 60:40**

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- 1.5** BCC and other councils have continued to outline the ongoing issues with the funding model, changing operations due to COVID-19, and the targeted approach. DfC requested on 17th July that councils move to provide 44 referrals from 1st August, on a pay per referral basis. This funding model provides no certainty for councils. With only one member of staff employed to work on the AWS, this target cannot be met without recruiting additional staff. Councils have made DfC aware that recruitment would need to take place, and therefore a lead in time required. However, with payment per referral, councils would recruit staff with no guarantee of funding to cover the staffing costs, and then bear all the risks if referrals cannot be successfully made. Therefore, it is essential that DfC commit to a guaranteed level of funding to give councils certainty.
- 1.6** A further relaxation on the targeted approach is also needed to allow self-referrals for residents in need to be processed.
- 1.7** DfC have made note of a Service Level agreement, but are awaiting feedback from councils before this is released. The full detail should be provided in an SLA for councils to consider.
- 1.8** SOLACE met on 17th August and discussed this letter. They have written to the DfC permanent secretary and a meeting is to be arranged to discuss the scheme and the ongoing issues.
- 1.9** The Director of Planning and Building Control wrote to David Polley on 21st August outlining that this matter would be brought to committee for consideration.
- 2.0** **Recommendations**
- 2.1** Members are asked to consider the request from DfC to confirm ongoing commitment to the scheme and the following recommendation:
- Belfast City Council will continue to participate in the scheme subject to DfC providing a fully revised Service Level Agreement for 2020-2021 for consideration which includes:
- a) **Guaranteed full funding for covering the full costs on an annual basis to be provided by the DfC to BCC for the Scheme (removing the pay per referral proposal); and**

- b) Greater flexibility in the percentage of referrals that can be submitted which are not from the targeted list to assist in meeting the target number of referrals as necessary.

Subject to approval, Members are asked to agree the Director of Planning and Building Control will respond to DfC to confirm the BCC position.

3.0 Main report

Key Issues and current position

Background to scheme

- 3.1 Following initial pilot exercises, DfC opened the scheme to all councils to work in partnership and further develop the scheme and play a role in its delivery. The Scheme was to be of no financial burden on councils, but would bring benefits to most vulnerable citizens.
- 3.2 The Council's role has been to engage directly with the citizens and provide referrals to the NIHE.
- 3.3 Over the years, the number of referrals has fluctuated, and funding reduced, making it difficult for councils to maintain staffing levels and provide continuity of service delivery. In addition, there have been ongoing issues with the targeted nature of the scheme, with BCC receiving significant numbers of self-referrals, in many cases urgent in nature. At times during the scheme, Councils have also been asked to take on additional tasks, for example additional financial checks and most recently a pilot for engagement with boiler manufacturers, with no additional funding to cover these costs.

Current position

- 3.4 An update report was provided to Members in June to outline the changes that had come into force due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 3.5 This included:
- Only urgent referrals being sent through to NIHE
 - Funding for Q1 2020-2021 would match that provided for the same quarter in 2019-2020, approximately £10,900. This was sufficient to cover the salary for the Affordable

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Warmth Co-ordinator, who is the only staff member currently employed for the scheme.

- 3.6 Below are the referrals submitted to NIHE (urgent only being provided up to 1st August):**
- April – 1**
 - May - 9**
 - June - 9**
 - July - 6**
 - Aug – 12**
- 3.7 COVID 19 has affected our society and will affect those most vulnerable, and who are likely to avail of the AWS. Officers are now conducting interviews remotely, by electronic means and on phones, and any on-site work will involve maintaining social distancing. This is not easy with some of the most vulnerable and can mean additional engagement with family members, or longer contacts to establish if they meet the Scheme criteria.**
- 3.8 Following the June update there has been ongoing communication with the DfC regarding the scheme, and council officers have responded and engaged on each matter.**
- 3.9 On 25th June DfC wrote to councils asking when they would be in apposition to reopen the scheme on a more normal basis. The target number of referrals was not provided at that stage, as the budget had not be confirmed. However DfC stated that they would return to the payment per referral model. They also confirmed that councils should work to the 80:20 ratio for targeted referrals.**
- 3.9 BCC staff responded by confirming that Health and Safety risk assessments were being carried out to ensure staff safety in carrying out all site duties, including those for the AWS which involve engaging with residents and collecting the required information. As such, site visits would not be possible at that stage, likely to recommence around the start of August. It was requested that DfC provide detail on the ongoing funding to be provided and continue with the Q1 funding approach and provide guaranteed funding for the scheme. The concerns regarding the pay per referral funding model and the targeted ratio were raised.**
- 3.10 BCC received an email from DfC on 17th July, confirming funding of £12M for the overall scheme and a referral target for councils of 44, required to be met from 1st**

August. A meeting involving DfC, NIHE and council managers convened on 5th August at which the ongoing issues were discussed and councils again outlined the need for secure funding.

Funding

- 3.11 There have been ongoing issues with scheme funding. The scheme was initially designed to be cost neutral to councils, fully funded by the DfC. However, given the changes to the scheme over the years, fluctuating referral numbers, reduced funding and staffing levels, and the practical out workings, BCC has had to use its own Building Control staff to deal with the significant amount of communications for self-referrals from residents interested in the scheme, effectively subsidising the scheme. This is exacerbated by COVID and with only one staff member employed to work on the AWS. We are receiving increasing numbers of requests about the scheme, which is placing additional burden on existing building control staff.

Payment per referral

- 3.12 DfC have confirmed a change to the payment methodology, and will now only pay per referral made, rather than set annual funding. This change moves the financial risk substantially from DfC to the councils, as providing referrals is not wholly within the gift of councils. There is significant work in engaging with citizens which may not lead to a referral. This affects the ability to recruit and retain staff. Members wrote to the Minister in February requesting a meeting to discuss this matter, but with COVID-19 this has not taken place.

Targeted approach

- 3.13 The methodology for the scheme is a targeted approach, using an algorithm to identify addresses where it was likely those most in need and in fuel poverty may live. The DfC dictate that 80% of referrals must be from the targeted list. This approach involved significant cold call door knocking and has not proved to be workable, given issues with the accuracy of the targeted address lists given, the success rate of the door knocking exercises, and due to the high number of self-referrals received. The 80:20 ratio for targeted referrals has not worked for BCC and while it is welcome that the DfC have moved to change this to 60:40 in the most recent correspondence, this will not allow for many self-referrals for people in need to be considered, who

will be left on a waiting list. It would entail further door knocking to be carried out, without any guarantee of uptake, subsequent referral and therefore funding.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.14 DfC provided funding for Q1, but have now returned to the payment per referral model, therefore the financial risk falls to the councils. The Building Control service is using already stretched staff to subsidise the scheme to deal with the queries and self-referrals currently being made.**
- 3.15 The DfC provided funding for Q1 of £10,900, matching the same quarter for last year, which covered the current direct staffing costs for the scheme (Affordable Warmth Co-ordinator).**
- 3.16 The DfC will only pay per referral submitted to NIHE from 1st July 2020. The financial risk therefore falls to the councils to cover staffing costs.**
- 3.17 Given the current levels of queries and self-referrals being received, the Building Control Service have had to ask already stretched staff to assist the coordinator. This is an ongoing subsidy the council has put into a scheme which was set up as cost recovery for councils.**

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

- 3.18 There are no equality, good relations or rural needs issues.”**

The Committee confirmed its ongoing commitment to the Affordable Warmth Scheme with the Members unanimous in respect of the need for guaranteed funding from the Department for Communities (DfC) to ensure that the Council had adequate resources and the necessary staffing levels to service the number of referrals. They agreed that the payment per referral model of the proposal should be removed from the scheme.

In an attempt to progress, the Committee agreed an all-Party deputation request to meet with the DfC to discuss the overall scheme and the funding issues.

Update - Proposal to have regular health briefings to the P&C Committee

The Committee considered a report that referred to a number of Notice of Motions that had previously been submitted to Committee on issues such as drug and alcohol misuse, mental health and suicide and homelessness. The Committee was reminded that a report had been submitted to the People and Committees Committee, at its meeting held

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on 3rd December 2019, where it had been agreed that officers would engage with the 'health family,' the Public Health Authority (PHA), Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) and Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSC), to establish if a bi-annual written 'health briefing' could be submitted to the People and Communities Committee, this would outline the latest statistics in relation to the aforementioned issues and also highlight the work being undertaken to address priorities and emerging needs at a local level.

The Committee was advised that officers had subsequently met with representatives from the PHA, HSCB, BHSC and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE). At this meeting a draft-reporting template had been circulated to aid discussion and the views of representatives had been sought on whether they felt their organisations would be able to provide information/participate in providing health briefings to People and Communities Committee on a bi-annual basis.

The Committee noted that potential information suggested for inclusion within the template had included the following:

- current waiting list timeframes i.e. referral to first appointment for Drug and Alcohol Services (Statutory Community Addiction Team, Substitute Prescribing Team, PHA-funded Adult Step 2 Service, PHA-funded Youth Treatment Service) and Mental Health Services (Community Mental Health Team and average for PHA-funded MH Services);
- numbers of (suspected) drug related deaths in-year to date (inc. geographical breakdown);
- numbers of deaths by suicide in-year [SD1 figures] to date (inc. geographical breakdown);
- notable trends and issues/areas of concern in relation to above;
- prescribing data/NSES data;
- homelessness figures;
- brief update on work of key services directly supporting most vulnerable;
- brief update on work of key partnerships;
- key actions/initiatives planned for next/upcoming 6-month period; and
- key messages/asks for Elected Members – how could they support.

At the meeting, most of the representatives in attendance, had not felt that there would be any benefit in providing regular updates to the Committee and they agreed to discuss this further internally with their own management.

The PHA had subsequently confirmed that 'neither the HSCB nor the PHA would be in a position to provide written reports on the range of datasets requested.' Furthermore, the letter had also outlined that Council officers were members of a number of health-focussed partnerships and structures and therefore recommend that 'Council staff at an appropriate level continue to engage in such discussions and consequently feed back to your Elected Representatives as appropriate through the relevant Council committee structure.'

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The Members considered the response and agreed that, in an attempt to avoid duplication of work, the most effective way of progressing the outstanding and ongoing health issues in respect of drug and alcohol misuse, mental health and suicide and homelessness was through the Community Planning Partnership. Officers would be asked to co-ordinate this work and to feed in the previous Motions raised by the Members in an attempt to address priorities and identify emerging needs at a local level.

Discussion Document on the "Future Recycling and Separate Collection of Waste of a Household Nature in Northern Ireland"

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

To notify Committee of the current discussion document on the 'Future Recycling and Separate Collection of Waste of a Household Nature in Northern Ireland' and to present the draft Belfast City Council response to the document.

- 1.2 The Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs (DAERA) is seeking views on a public discussion document on the 'Future Recycling and Separation of Waste of a Household Nature in Northern Ireland'.
- 1.3 The document sets out the current position of recycling in Northern Ireland, and the regulatory, climate change and market drivers that will influence policy in the future. It seeks views on a range of proposals, which will help shape the landscape of waste management in Northern Ireland.
- 1.4 Over the next year, there will be an introduction of a range of new requirements relating to the management of waste as part of the Circular Economy Package. This includes requirements around recycling and the separate collection of waste.
- 1.5 In particular, businesses who produce mixed waste and waste which is similar in nature and composition to waste from households will be required present their waste for recycling. As with households, businesses will be required to facilitate the separate collection of the main household waste streams such as paper, metal, plastic and glass. These measures do not extend to waste resulting from production.

This discussion document as stated by DAERA does not introduce any new policies (at this stage), but rather seeks views on steps towards improving the quality and quantity of household and non-household recycle in Northern Ireland whilst having minimal impact on businesses and householders.

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- 1.6 The proposals presented within the document are separated into various sections covering a range of topics that DAERA would like to receive views on. Given the large number of questions posed, which cover a wide range of issues and stakeholders, respondees are encouraged to complete the sections in the response that are of interest or relevance to them.
- 1.7 The Discussion Document should be read in conjunction with the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) report on Municipal Recycling Potential in Northern Ireland 2020

The Consultation opened on 26 June 2020. The closing date is 04 October 2020.

During August and September 2020, DAERA have been arranging a series of virtual workshops aimed at different sectors affected by the proposals, including businesses and local authorities. These workshops, facilitated by WRAP and NILGA, included a targeted session for key elected members (on 27th August 2020) to provide a strategic overview of all proposals within the document.

- 1.9 Belfast City Council Waste Officers have drafted up responses to the questions posed within the discussion document.
- 1.10 Arc21 will also be drafting up a separate response to the Consultation. Given there is such a range of waste collection methodologies across the arc21 region, it is likely that the arc21 response will focus on the objectives and issues needing addressed, in order to support the circular economy, rather than on the specifics of collection.
- 1.1 Subject to the outcome of this Discussion Document there will be a further consultation in 2021 on regulatory changes to implement these measures and on potential supporting guidance.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the Discussion Document on the ‘Future Recycling and Separate Collection of Waste of a Household Nature in Northern Ireland’; and
- Consider and adopt the draft Belfast City Council response to the Discussion Document (available here).

Main report

- 3.1 The Discussion Document sets out the current position of recycling in Northern Ireland, and the current and new regulatory, climate change and market drivers that will influence policy in the future. It seeks views on a range of proposals, which will help shape the landscape of waste management in Northern Ireland.

Background

- 3.2 A recent WRAP study, has looked at the feasibility of Northern Ireland reaching the 65% recycling targets for the new definition of municipal waste which will now include business waste of a household nature.
- 3.3 The study identified that in order to make this feasible, there would be significantly more business recycling required.
- 3.4 The study also indicated that the most appropriate collection models for household collections were those which include the full range of dry recyclable materials that could be collected at kerbside (paper, card, glass, cans, glass, and plastic containers), where food waste would be collected weekly, garden waste collections would remain and some form of further residual restriction could be implemented.
- 3.5 The study showed that higher capture of food waste and corresponding restriction in residual waste were the most important design factors particularly in being the least costly, complementary and higher performing scenarios.
- 3.6 For wider municipal collections the optimum scenarios were for businesses and the public sector to have regular collections of dry recyclables (paper, card, and drink containers), a separate glass collection where this material was generated, food waste collections for all businesses and a residual collection for any remaining non-recyclable waste material.
- 3.7 Since March 2020, the Covid-19 virus has resulted in significant changes in the operations of businesses and other organisations, including an increase in the number of people working from home or furloughed. These changes have and will continue to impact waste arisings and composition for the foreseeable future.
- 3.8 Long term impacts on recycling and waste arisings and operations are unknown and it will take a while to properly understand data to determine the cross sector impacts. WRAP

will undertake an initial review of the impacts of Covid-19 on the sectors affected in this study to identify any early trends in results and implications on resource management for the next few years.

3.9 Notwithstanding the impacts of Covid-19, DAERA is progressing with seeking to address how best achieve the changes outlined above.

3.10 In summary, views are being sought on how to:

- **improve the quality of recycled materials as well as increasing the quantity collected;**
- **ensure there is a strong linkage between waste management and the local economy as opposed to the historical emphasis on solely meeting the EU Directive targets;**
- **assist in realising the potential economic benefits to the local economy, thus supporting Northern Ireland move towards a circular economy;**
- **help Northern Ireland improve our ‘municipal waste’ recycling rates and reduce the amount of materials going to landfill: and**
- **help reduce carbon emissions, greenhouse gases and pollution in NI.**

3.11 The specific measures that views are being sought on to increase non-household and household recycling are provided below.

Business and other organisations producing municipal waste

3.12 WRAP estimates that between 30-40% of municipal waste which is similar in nature to household waste produced by businesses and other organisations, is currently recycled. Given that the waste composition profiles of these sectors suggest high proportions of recyclable products, this represents an opportunity to increase recycling in this sector and a significant step towards a more circular economy.

3.13 Proposal 1: To review the food waste regulations to ensure obligated businesses segregate food waste for collection

3.14 Proposal 2: To require businesses and other organisations to segregate their recyclable waste from residual waste so that it can be collected and recycled by waste collectors.

3.15 Proposal 3: To review the impact on businesses in rural communities so that they are not disproportionately affected by

laws introduced to increase recycling of non-household municipal waste.

- 3.16 Proposal 4: To review options to maximise business recycling whilst alleviating cost burden on businesses
- 3.17 Proposal 5: In advance of implementing changes to business recycling, to work with waste producers and waste collectors to improve reporting and data capture on waste and recycling performance of businesses and other organisations. Any requirements will be subject to further consultation.

Improving recycling from households in Northern Ireland

- 3.18 WRAP estimates that households have the potential to achieve 58% waste recycling by 2030. The challenge is to develop recycling collection systems that can capture increased quantity at the right quality, be economic and at the same time reduce confusion about what can be recycled.
- 3.19 DAERA suggests that these goals could be supported by non-binding performance indicators to help Councils to deliver high quantities of good quality recycling and are consulting on what the indicators might look like and whether this approach would assist Councils to help deliver recycling ambitions.
- 3.20 DAERA acknowledges the fact that the current weight-based recycling targets may favour the collection and recycling of heavy materials, for example garden waste, over measures to promote dry recycling.

Carbon intensity is one metric that has been used widely as an alternative for measuring recycling performance.

- 3.21 Reforms to producer responsibility may drive further changes in product design and make weight-based metrics less effective at driving environmentally sustainable behaviours.
- 3.22 DAERA is seeking views on how best to apply supplementary targets to weight-based targets and metrics:
- 3.23 Proposal 6: That all Councils in Northern Ireland should be required to restrict capacity for residual waste from households to help divert more materials into the recycling waste streams.
- 3.24 Proposal 7: By 2023 to legislate for Councils to provide all kerbside properties and flats with access to at least a weekly collection service for food waste.

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- 3.25 Proposal 8: That all Councils in Northern Ireland should be required to collect a core set of dry recyclable materials at kerbside from houses and flats.**
- 3.26 Proposal 9: That the core set of materials will be glass bottles and containers, paper and card, plastic bottles, plastic pots tubs and trays, and steel and aluminium tins and cans.**
- 3.27 Proposal 10: To review this set of core materials regularly reviewed and, if appropriate, expand over time.**
- 3.28 Proposal 11: To review the separate collection of materials in Northern Ireland and supporting guidance to help clarify the position on current and future collections assisting Councils and waste operators in decision making on separate collection.**
- 3.29 Proposal 12: To provide national guidance for Northern Ireland to help establish greater consistency in recycling and waste collection services and reduce confusion for households.**
- 3.30 Proposal 13: To continue DAERA support for 'Recycle Now' campaign and the tools produced by WRAP to help Councils and other campaign partners to communicate effectively on recycling.**
- 3.31 Proposal 14: To work with Councils and others to improve transparency of information available to householders on the end destination for household recycling.**
- 3.32 Proposal 15: To introduce statutory legislation in line with the other three UK nations requiring Material Recovery Facilities to report on input and output materials by weight to determine the average percentage of target, non-target and non-recyclable material.**
- 3.33 Proposal 16: To develop an updated set of recycling and waste indicators to monitor performance and cost efficiency as well as to highlight where services may be improved. To work with Councils to develop these and other indicators to reflect areas such as quality or contamination levels and service delivery.**
- 3.34 Proposal 17: To look at metrics that can sit alongside weight-based metrics and to work with stakeholders to develop these to better measure reductions of carbon emissions associated with waste in Northern Ireland.**
- 3.35 The Councils draft response to the questions posed within each proposal category is available on mod.gov.**

3.36 Financial & Resource Implications

There are no financial or resource implications in responding to the consultation.

3.37 Equality or Good Relations Implications

There are no Equality or Good Relations implications in responding to the consultation.”

The Committee adopted the draft Belfast City Council response to the DEARA discussion Document ‘Future Recycling and Separate Collection of a Household Waste Nature in Northern Ireland’.

Community Response - Closing Report

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

1.1 Council had produced two previous summary reports outlining the activity and achievements undertaken as a result of funding made available (via Council/DfC) to local community and voluntary groups as well as the development of Belfast City Council’s Covid 19 Community Response Hub (food distribution, helpline, contact centre and area support).

1.2 Given that committees were not meeting at this time these previous reports were presented to Party Group Leaders before being shared with stakeholders inside and outside of the organisation.

1.3 Council officers have now produced a closing report which details all of the significant outputs and outcomes achieved by Council and its statutory and community and voluntary partners in terms of leading on the Covid 19 response efforts in Belfast during the 16 week period (Apr-Jul 2020).

1.4 The report itself is included as an Appendix – available [here](#) and will be promoted and circulated widely internally & externally with our partners as a formal acknowledgement to all that was achieved collectively and how we intend to build on that going forward.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The committee is asked to

- Note the content of the report.

3.0 Main report

BCC Community Response Hub

- 3.1 31 March 2020 – Department for Communities requested that each Council develops a local response hub. By the 8th April 2020, Belfast City Council’s helpline is live and the food distribution hub based within the Ulster Hall is making its first food parcel deliveries to Belfast residents. Staff from across Council were redeployed to work in the distribution hub, the contact centre and in the North, South, East and West area teams to link residents in with relevant and timely support services available close to them. And organisations such as SOS Bus and Red Cross to name but a few assisted us in delivering the food parcels.**

VCSE Response and Council Funding to Support Local Efforts

- 3.2 At the same time community and voluntary groups had already mobilised and were leading the local response efforts. Council was able to provide £120k emergency response funding to 9 strategic C&V partners at an early stage, followed by a further £635k a few weeks later which enabled these groups to expand their services and reach more and more residents in need of help and support. An additional £210k was awarded to 12 organisations providing support at a thematic level e.g. mental health, domestic violence, LGBT needs, etc.**

Key Achievements during the 16-week Period (report itself goes into more detail)

- 107,407 food parcels and hot meals were delivered to Belfast residents (50,533 via Council’s hub and 56,874 via funded VCSE partners).
- 9,770 calls were handled by the BCC Helpline/contact centre whilst local C&V Helplines handled a further 5,115 calls.
- 9,320 deliveries or prescription pick-ups were made on behalf of residents.
- 1,273 resilience packs were provided.

Recovery Phase

- 3.4 As lockdown restrictions eased, Council and its statutory and VCSE partners shifted focus to recovery. A further £486k recovery funding has been allocated to the 9 C&V strategic partners to be spent between now and the end of March 2021.**

At the request of Councillors, officers have also developed a relatively simple and quick response 'Summer Funding' programme (currently live) whereby over 150 grassroots organisations have been awarded grants of up to £1,000 (£150k initially allocated) to enable them to take forward initiatives under the themes of; Children and Young People, Civic Pride, Preventing Isolation, Emotional Wellbeing and addressing Anti-Social Behaviour (taking account of government and council restrictions or guidance in relation to Covid 19 in terms of what they plan to deliver and with each applicant being assigned a Council officer to support them in the development and delivery of their project).

Next Steps

- 3.5 Over the coming months, Council officers will continue to work closely with stakeholders to develop citywide and local area recovery plans which will build on both the knowledge and learning, as well as the relationships and partnerships, that have developed or further developed as a result of the collective effort that went into developing and implementing the response to Covid 19 in Belfast.

3.6 Financial & Resource Implications

There are no financial or resource implications contained within this report.

3.7 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

There are no Equality or Good Relations Implications and no Rural Needs Assessment required for the recommendations outlined above."

The Members thanked the officers and staff for their invaluable work and commitment over the ongoing pandemic and noted the positive update report.

2020 Plastic Packaging Tax Consultation

The Committee considered the following report:

"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with an update on HMRCs Plastic Packaging Tax and to present the arc21 draft response to the proposals.

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- 1.2 From April 2022, the Plastic Packaging Tax will apply to plastic packaging manufactured in or imported into the UK containing less than 30% recycled plastic.
- 1.3 At Budget 2020, the government announced key decisions it had taken for the design of Plastic Packaging Tax in light of stakeholder responses to the previous consultation in 2019. This latest consultation provides more information on these announced areas, as well as asking for views on areas of the tax design which have been further refined as we move closer to the implementation date.
- 1.4 The responses to the government's Call for Evidence on single-use plastic waste in 2018 highlighted that using recycled plastic is often more expensive than using new plastic. At Budget 2018, the government proposed to use a new tax to encourage the use of recycled plastic and has taken the responses from the first consultation, published in 2019, into consideration to develop the latest proposals.
- 1.5 The tax will apply to packaging which is less than 30% recycled plastic and will be paid by the 'taxable person' (whether the manufacturer or importer) above the de minimus threshold of 10 tonnes per year. The tax thresholds in terms of de minimus and plastic percentage are not part of this consultation.
- 1.6 The 2020 Plastic Packaging Tax Consultation sets out 35 separate actions for comment. The document takes the form of a series of questions and, where possible, the joint councils that form arc21 has provided response.
- 1.7 The Consultation opened on 11th March 2020, with an extended closing date of 20th August 2020.
- 1.8 Belfast City Council Officers contributed comments on the consultation to arc21. arc21 co-ordinated a response on behalf of its member councils. The draft response was presented to the arc21 steering group on 18th August 2020 and the draft was submitted to HMRC.
- 2.0 **Recommendations**
- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:
 - note the 2020 Plastic Packaging Tax consultation document; and
 - to note the joint Council response, prepared by arc21, response to the consultation document.

Main report

- 3.1 Building on the 2019 Plastic Packaging Tax Consultation this new document provides more information on these announced areas, as well as asking for views on areas of the tax design which have been further refined.

Background

- 3.2 At Budget 2018, the government announced that it will introduce a world leading tax on plastic packaging from April 2022. The tax will encourage the use of recycled plastic instead of new plastic within packaging. It will create greater demand for recycled plastic, and in turn stimulate increased levels of recycling and collection of plastic waste, diverting it away from landfill or incineration.
- 3.3 At Budget 2020, the government announced that Plastic Packaging Tax will apply at a rate of £200 per tonne of plastic packaging which does not contain at least 30% recycled plastic. This will apply to plastic packaging which has been manufactured in, or imported into, the UK. The government will keep the rate of the tax and the 30% recycled plastic threshold under review to ensure that the tax remains effective in increasing the use of recycled plastic.
- 3.4 At Budget 2020, in response to feedback from the previous consultation, the government announced that it will:
- Extend the scope of Plastic Packaging Tax to imported filled plastic packaging that does not contain at least 30% recycled plastic content, rather than just imports of unfilled plastic packaging.
 - Exempt businesses that manufacture or import less than 10 tonnes of plastic packaging in a 12 month period from the requirement to pay the tax. This will ensure the administrative burden and cost of collecting the tax are not disproportionate to the environmental harms the tax seeks to address
- 3.5 The response is broadly supportive of the proposals contained within the consultation. A number of suggestions and improvements are offered and the response highlights that there are opportunities to be sought, in terms of the Government's approach to financially incentivise manufacturers to take greater ownership and responsibility for the materials they market to consumers.

- 3.6 The response encourages the Government to consider what other items might benefit from a similar approach – introducing a tax upon items such as furniture, mattresses and textiles could add considerable momentum to the Circular Economy and showcase ambitions to be amongst the leading world economies in terms of environmental and economic performance.
- 3.7 The response raises the issue of the recent collapse in the price of oil which has worsened the differential between new and secondary plastic and added further pressures on the plastic recycling industry. Government is encouraged to support the indigenous plastic recycling industry to ensure that this remains a viable reprocessing sector.
- 3.8 the response seeks clarity on a number of issues raised within the consultation, including specific reference to the Packaging Producer Responsibility Regulations review and how this, when combined with the proposed tax, will demonstrate and support increased levels of collection and recycling and an increased demand for secondary plastic.
- 3.9 Clarity is also sought on how additional costs associated with an increased collection of plastic packaging by councils will be covered. We ask if this issue will be clearly outlined within the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) consultation document due out shortly.
- 3.10 With particular reference to councils, the response recognises that Government wishes to establish a degree of consistency across waste collection systems. However, arc21 raises the issue that collection arrangements are based upon local circumstances and are a matter for individual councils.
- 3.11 Whilst waste collection is being addressed through a separate consultation, the response takes the opportunity within this paper to seek details around the redistribution of funding. It recognises that the prospect of direct hypothecation or funding for councils has been excluded but in relation to the calls for ‘more sustainable waste infrastructure’ asks for clarity as to what that might entail and how Government foresees local government providing appropriate responses to deliver this.

Financial & Resource Implications

- 3.12 There are no financial or resource implications in responding to the consultation.

Equality or Good Relations Implications

- 3.13 There are no Equality or Good Relations implications in responding to the consultation.”**

The Committee noted the joint Council response, prepared by arc21, to the 2020 Plastic Packaging Tax consultation document, available [here](#)

Belfast one million trees programme

(Ms. G. Long, Commissioner for Resilience, attended in connection with this item).

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 In March 2019, Belfast City Council referred to Committee a motion by Cllr Heading with an ambition to plant one million trees in Belfast. In June, the People and Communities Committee received a proposal from the Belfast Metropolitan Residents Group seeking Council support in coordinating an initiative, which would see one million trees planted over a 15-year period. The committee agreed to be lead partnership facilitator for the project, working with key stakeholders with a report to be brought back to a future Committee regarding next steps.**
- 1.2 Separately, following citywide engagement on possible opportunities to build climate resilience across Belfast, the draft Resilience Strategy includes a recommendation to plant one million trees and for growth in afforestation and urban tree cover, over time. This reflects the Committee on Climate Change recommendation that afforestation must play a critical role in building climate resilience across Northern Ireland.**
- 1.3 Following the committee’s decision that BCC acts as a convener, a steering group for the programme was established, with meetings chaired by the Commissioner for Resilience. Coordination is undertaken jointly by officers from the Resilience Team, and officers from City and Neighbourhood Services Department. The coordinating officers have also convened internal discussions with colleagues in the Planning Service, City Regeneration, the Strategic Hub and Physical Programmes to raise awareness of the proposal.**
- 1.4 To date, officer involvement has focused on steering group coordination, acting as a broker between all stakeholders. We have made good progress, and have arrived at a point where**

tree planning at scale can commence shortly, and Committee agreement on next steps is necessary. This paper sets out this update, and makes a number of recommendations.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Committee are asked to review progress to date and consider the recommended next steps, specifically:

- **Agree to continue Council coordination of the Belfast One Million Trees Programme with a progress report and next steps plan to be provided on a regular basis.**
- **Authorise Council officers to review BCC sites with the aim of providing a number of pilot sites for tree planting using the process agreed by the One Million Trees Steering Group.**
- **Endorse the principle of integrating the One Million Trees Programme into current, planned, and forthcoming BCC projects, including capture of data on previous planting.**
- **Note that the Belfast One Million Trees Programme will deliver on aspects of the Council Climate Plan, in particular relating to adaptation planning which is ongoing through an adaptation subgroup of the Council Climate Plan Programme Board.**

3.0 Main report

3.1 There are multiple objectives associated with a tree-planting programme at scale. It will contribute to several Belfast Agenda priorities on sustainability, liveability and inclusive growth. The Mini Stern, undertaken to inform a roadmap to decarbonise the city, concluded that Belfast will use up its carbon budget in nine years. Tree planning at scale provides a cheap and safe approach to carbon capture and storage within a city, and to boost biodiversity. Furthermore, designed in the right way, using the right land, tree planting at scale can support sustainable urban drainage, reduce flooding through rainwater capture and protect the city from the impacts of climate change, as rainfall increases. Afforestation in cities is increasingly accepted as an economic driver – boosting property values and contributing to place-making and tourism. Several cities in Europe are citing tree planting as core to their economic recovery post-Covid 19, and we understand DAERA is considering afforestation as a core pillar of a future approach to ‘green growth’ in the region. While more trees in Belfast will improve air quality overall, we are not proposing that this programme will be a major contributor to better air quality, due to the number of trees which would need to be planted in

particular locations, to have a material impact on air quality. The programme helps to deliver the Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan, the Open Spaces Strategy, the Resilience Strategy, and the Belfast Climate Mitigation and Adaptation Plan as it progresses.

- 3.2 Since establishing the steering group, Minister Poots has announced a significant tree-planting programme for Northern Ireland, with an intention to fund the planting of £18m trees in a decade. This would amount to a major increase in forest cover across Northern Ireland, and would meet the recommendations of the Committee on Climate Change, when it prioritised tree planting as a way to reduce Northern Ireland's CO2 emissions. BCC officers have met the Deputy Permanent Secretary at DAERA and the Chief Executive of the Forest Service to ensure alignment between both programmes and mutual support and has encouraged DAERA to adapt funding streams to support urban tree planting. Two BCC officers will sit on the recently established DAERA Forests for the Future Forum, which brings together delivery partners for the project.
- 3.3 It should be noted that the One Million Trees programme proposed for Belfast will overwhelmingly consist of tree-planting at scale on strategic sites (e.g. woodland), and is not a 'street tree' planting initiative. However, we are keen to encourage DAERA to fund tree planting to support greater city liveability by making communities, arterial routes and the city centre more attractive, and healthier places for people, encouraging mobility and the positive use of public space. The Steering Group is seeking creative ways to green the city such as green roofs, wildflower meadows, rewilding derelict areas and will approach this on a site-by-site basis.
- 3.4 Furthermore, a forthcoming review by City and Neighbourhood Services of our existing assets, and future maintenance obligations needs to be complete before BCC could commit additional resources to tree planting and maintenance in our own parks and other assets.
- 3.5 Progress to date:

BCC officers have convened a number of meetings with project to discuss the One Million Trees programme and how best to proceed.

The Steering Group has engaged in a series of positive discussions, agreeing a phased approach to the programme, and that planting would be recorded and collated by partners as of January 2020 onwards.

The Steering Group agreed that site selection should be guided by a set of principles including the following:

- Air quality management areas
- Flood risk areas (pluvial and fluvial)
- Nature conservation sites/wildlife corridors/watercourses
- Areas lacking green assets (e.g.: city centre/inner urban) – consider pocket parks with trees (maybe in large planters) in prominent city centre and local/district areas
- Opportunities for more street trees
- Vacant/derelict sites, including ‘rewilding’ opportunities
- Repurposing of part of areas of extensive cut grass open space (e.g. BCC parks, NIHE amenity grassed areas, roadside verges, etc)
- the countryside/hills around the city (including upland water management measures)
- sites that buffer and connect to existing woodland

3.6 Planting one million trees in Belfast over 15 years requires approximately 30 hectares of land per year - equivalent to approximately 30 football pitches. The cost has been estimated by the Belfast Metropolitan Residents Group as £100,000 per year for planting (£3,000 per hectare, 2000 trees per hectare).

3.7 On this basis, the Steering Group has agreed to work according to four phases:

- Stage 1 – Site identification (May 2020 – June 2020);
- Stage 2 – Site assessment (July 2020 – September 2020);
- Stage 3 – Planting (November 2020 – March 2021);
- Stage 4 – ongoing site identification, assessment and planting

3.8 A site assessment team has been established which is coordinated by the Resilience Unit with support from CNS, and includes the Woodland Trust, Belfast Hills Partnership, Conservation Volunteers and QUB.

3.9 The above process is a rolling programme, which delivers a pipeline of projects for consideration. Where a site is not suitable for woodland creation the team consider alternative options that will enhance green and blue infrastructure, biodiversity and liaise with landowners accordingly. Work is ongoing to develop design principles and a framework for sites that are not suitable for woodland creation but which could support our targets in relation to carbon reduction, enhanced biodiversity, flood alleviation, urban cooling, and improved health among others. Sites could also be utilised as tree nurseries to support the objectives of the project and a request

has been made to BCC regarding this from the Conservation Volunteers which is currently under consideration. Sites received and assessed to date include:

- Belfast Harbour/Titanic Quarter
- Department for Communities – 7 sites in the Poleglass area, 1 site in the Ligoniel area
- Education Authority – 1 secondary school in East Belfast, 3 primary schools in N&W Belfast
- Belfast Trust – Forster Green Hospital
- Woodland Trust – potential site acquisition at Cavehill
- National Trust – Lisnabreeny

3.10 Discussions are ongoing with other landowners at present regarding potential sites and it is proposed that we undertake a scan of BCC land for suitable sites for inclusion. Initial discussions have taken place with Peace IV team, CNS Parks, City Centre Regen Team, and Planning, placing this initiative firmly in the context of the Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan and Belfast Open Spaces Strategy, whilst delivering on the aims of the Belfast Resilience Strategy and the Belfast Climate Plan, which sit within the Belfast Agenda.

3.11 A number of workstreams are in development through the Programme including communications and marketing, mapping and research, community, public and business engagement.

Finance and Resource Implications

3.12 At this stage, it is not anticipated that Council is required to commit financial resources however, a budget of 40k has been allocated within the Resilience Team to support part funding of a woodland creation post, a data/research workstream, and design activity. It is proposed that BCC undertake a site scan utilising Million Trees site identification and assessment process that partners are undertaking. Options for site use include additional tree planting, nursery provision (as mentioned above), enhanced maintenance and upkeep of existing woodland, as well as other potential site uses such as the development of green infrastructure, biodiversity and other uses as determined through the assessment process. One of the key principles we are promoting is integration of the initiative within existing and future programmes and projects.

3.13 It is anticipated that landowners who submit sites for consideration will retain ownership of the site and responsibility for costs attributed to planting and maintenance. However, resources are available to support woodland creation namely:

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- **DAERA provide grant aid for woodland expansion on sites 5 hectares and above (opens in June 2020) This grant does not provide a set amount for establishment costs and is a competitive scheme where projects bid for the funding required against eligible costs i.e ground preparation, plant supply, labour for planting, maintenance etc. Projects tend to be somewhere in the range of £3,500 to £5,000 per hectare depending on the amount of new fencing and how much ground preparation is needed. This will be open to Council.**
- **DAERA are working at present to create a new small woodland grant scheme for sites of 0.2 hectares to 3 hectares (opening in September 2020) The new small scale grant scheme will be a fixed payment of about £3,000 per hectare to plant trees at 2.5m spacing. 80% of the £3,000 payment will be made after planting and the remaining 20% in year 5. This will be open to Council.**
- **DFI are currently developing funding streams that support green and blue infrastructure – BCC submission on greenways includes reference to the One Million Trees Programme.**
- **The Woodland Trust provide tree packs for schools and community groups which provide up to 1000 trees.**
- **In addition The Woodland Trust provide an option for landowners to transfer sites 3 hectares and above, or groups of smaller sites to the Woodland Trust for a 20 year period during which WT would undertake grant aid applications and maintenance.**
- **There is the potential to lever private finance and sponsorship through businesses for tree planting initiatives, conversations that have been delayed due to the pandemic and impact on businesses.**
- **The Woodland Carbon Code is a verification scheme whereby carbon capture can be authenticated to support the sale of carbon to investors. DAERA are currently working with us to explore options to expand this in Northern Ireland.**
- **The Woodland Trust have nominated Belfast through an internal process to be one of a number of UK cities eligible to draw down funding for woodland creation, potentially creating a local fund of between 50k and 300k.**

3.14 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

There are no equality, good relations or rural needs issues.”

Several of the Members, including the proposer of the original motion, Councillor Heading, welcomed and endorsed the principle of integrating the One Million Trees Programme into current, planned, and forthcoming Council projects.

Officers noted a request to plant, where possible, native trees.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Operational Issues

Belfast Healthy Cities - Contract Extension and Phase VII Application

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 At the meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 17th August 2018, Members approved an Expression of Interest for Belfast to participate in Phase VII of the World Health Organisation (WHO) European Healthy Cities Network.**
- 1.2 Members also agreed at the meeting of the People and Communities Committee on 4th June 2019, that a review be undertaken of the City and Neighbourhood Services Department’s ongoing partnership agreements with a focus on alignment with the Belfast Agenda and value for money. Included within this review was the partnership agreement with Belfast Healthy Cities, who facilitate the city’s membership of the WHO European Healthy Cities Network.**
- 1.3 Furthermore, at the meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 21st February 2020, Members approved an extension of the current partnership agreement with Belfast Healthy Cities, until 30th September 2020 to allow for the submission of the application for Phase VII of the WHO European Healthy Cities Network and the completion of the partnership review with the Belfast Healthy Cities, including an initial period for the transition and implementation of recommendations from the review.**
- 1.4 Progress on the above has been adversely impacted due to the Covid-19 pandemic, with both areas of work having to**

be temporarily paused and timeframes revised to provide additional time for completion due to ongoing restrictions. This report outlines action taken in developing the Phase VII application and key priorities to be delivered during the Phase VII period. The report also sets out a revised timeframe for the completion of the partnership review with Belfast Healthy Cities and subsequent next steps.

- 1.5 Members are asked to endorse the attached application and approve a six month extension to the current partnership agreement with Belfast Healthy Cities, to allow for the completion of both the Phase VII application process and the partnership review.

2.0 **Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the content of the report;
- Endorse the Phase VII application and identified priorities and recommend the Lord Mayor formally supports the application on behalf of the city;
- Agree to receive a follow up report outlining the outcomes of the review of Council's partnership agreement with Belfast Healthy Cities; and
- Agree to extend the current partnership agreement with Belfast Healthy Cities to 31st March 2021.

3.0 **Main report**

Key Issues

- 3.1 Members approved the completion of an Expression of Interest for Belfast to re-designate as a WHO Healthy City and participate in Phase VII of the WHO European Healthy Cities Network at the meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 17th August 2018. The Expression of Interest letter was accepted by WHO and Belfast was invited to submit an application as a city that had been active in delivering on Phase VI themes.
- 3.2 The second stage of the application process involved the Lord Mayor hosting a workshop on 22nd November 2019 with key stakeholders in the city to identify the priorities to be included within the Phase VII application for Belfast. There are three overarching goals within Phase VII:

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- **Goal 1: Fostering health and well-being for all and reducing health inequities;**
- **Goal 2: Leading by example nationally, regionally and globally; and**
- **Goal 3: Supporting implementation of WHO strategic priorities.**

3.3 And six core themes:

- Theme 1: Investing in the people who make up our cities;**
- **Theme 2: Designing urban places that improve health and well-being;**
- Theme 3: Greater participation and partnerships for health and well-being;**
- **Theme 4: Improved community prosperity and access to common goods and services;**
- **Theme 5: Promoting peace and security through inclusive societies; and**
- **Theme 6: Protect the planet from degradation, leading by example, including through sustainable consumption and production.**

3.4 A full copy of the application form is available on mod.gov and a summary of the four priority areas identified from the Phase VII workshop and to be addressed during the period of Phase VII (2019-2024) are:

- Greening the City: Intersectoral partnerships for healthy places. The overall goal is to develop and deliver healthier and more equitable urban environments for all citizens and generate global influence.**
- Community Prosperity: Caring places that enhance health and well-being and reduce health inequalities. The overall goal is to change public policy to include interventions to generate prosperity in left behind communities, strengthening community assets, creating caring places and reducing health inequalities.**
- Inequalities Training: Building public health capacity at the local level. The overall goal is to increase capacity at operational and strategic levels across sectors for the greater leadership for health and well-being and to support organisations to shape policy and deliver action that will improve health and well-being for all and reduce inequalities.**
- Promoting Healthy Transport (strengthening partnership and coherence). The overall goals are to**

increase physical and mental well-being through promotion of good quality active travel infrastructure; and generate the evidence to support car reduction, improving air quality and increasing the use of public space for improved health.

- 3.5 WHO require the Phase VII application to be endorsed by Council through the Lord Mayor's office. Members are asked to support the application for Belfast to apply for re-designation to Phase VII of the WHO European Healthy Cities Network (2019-2024). Subject to approval, the attached application would be submitted to WHO by the Belfast Healthy Cities office, on behalf of the Lord Mayor.
- 3.6 Belfast's membership to the WHO European Healthy Cities Network is facilitated by Belfast Healthy Cities, who have led on the development and drafting of the Phase VII application. Belfast Healthy Cities are an independent partnership organisation, recognised as having charitable status by The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland. BHC is governed by a Board of Directors, elected annually and representing the public, university, voluntary and community sectors and funded by a range of partners including Council, Public Health Agency (PHA), Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT) and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE).
- 3.7 In the spirit of 'collaborative gain' the above funding partners agreed to undertake a collective review of funding arrangements with Belfast Healthy Cities, with a focus on alignment to the priorities of the Belfast Agenda and value for money. Independent external consultancy support was secured to undertake the review and a timeframe agreed and presented to the People and Communities Committee on 4th February 2021, noting completion of the review by the late May 2020.
- 3.8 Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, a collective decision was taken by the funding partners of Belfast Healthy Cities, to pause the review while organisational efforts were re-aligned to responding to the emergency situation and to ensure maximum involvement of key stakeholders in the review. The funding partners have now agreed that the time is right to un-pause the review and have set a revised timeframe for the completion of the review and transition and implementation of potential recommendations.
- 3.9 It is envisaged the review will be completed by early January 2021, with a report brought back to the both the

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People and Communities Committee and Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in February 2021, outlining the outcome of the review, recommended actions and implementation timescales.

- 3.10 Members are asked to approve an extension of the current partnership agreement with Belfast Healthy Cities, until 31st March 2021 to allow for the completion of review, submission of the application for Phase VII of the WHO European Healthy Cities Network and to provide an initial period for transition and implementation of the recommendations.**

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.11 Extending the current partnership agreement with Belfast Healthy Cities as recommended, would have a financial implication of £40,647. This has been included within the revenue estimates for 2020/21 and does not represent any growth.**

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

- 3.12 There are no Equality or Good Relations Implications and no Rural Needs Assessment required for the recommendations outlined above.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Boxing Strategy Update

The Director of Neighbourhood Services reminded the Committee that the Council had previously agreed to provide £200,000 in funding to the Irish Athletic Boxing Association Ulster Branch (IABA) in the current financial year for delivery of an agreed action plan which supported the Belfast Boxing Strategy and he then provided an update on the progress in relation to the agreement up to the end of June 2020.

He explained that, in line with the Council's objectives, the Belfast Boxing Strategy Steering Group had met quarterly. The Steering Group was chaired by the Director of Neighbourhood Services and attended by Council officers, IABA officers and officials and Co. Antrim officials.

The Committee was reminded that the Council had previously agreed a total of 37 Indicators with the IABA to monitor delivery of the programmes. The Director reported that the IABA had been compliant with all the reporting matters.

The Committee noted the progress update report regarding the IABA.

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Issues Raised in Advance by Members

Recycling Centre – Councillor Baker

Councillor Baker advised the Committee of ongoing problems in respect of residents of the Colin area not being able to use the Cutts recycling centre. He explained that the Colin had previously been within the boundary of the old Lisburn City Council but had transferred (under the Review of Public Administration) to Belfast City Council and, despite the Cutts being the nearest recycling centre, the residents were no longer able to use it as the Colin area was now with Belfast City Council's boundary.

The Committee agreed that a report would be submitted to a future meeting which would detail potential options, including costs, for Belfast City Council (BCC) to enter into a Service Level Agreement with Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (LCCC) in respect of the disposal of waste by residents of the Colin area of Belfast at the Cutts Recycling Centre within the LCCC District.

Gates at Cherryvale - Councillor Kelly

At the request of Councillor Kelly, the Committee agreed to widen the existing consultation in respect of Cherryvale to include consultation with the residents of Wynchurch, Rosetta, Flush and Cheltenham and also to extend the consultation until 1st October 2020.

Chairperson