

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 23rd October, 2020

MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Black (Chairperson);
Aldermen Dorrian, Haire, Kingston and Sandford;
Councillors Beattie, Bunting, Carson, Garrett,
Groogan, Heading, Long, Lyons, McAllister,
McDonough-Brown, McLaughlin, McReynolds,
Murphy, Pankhurst and Walsh.

Also attended: Councillors Gormley and M. Kelly.

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

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 18th September, omitting those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee, were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st October.

Declarations of Interest

Alderman Kingston declared an interest in relation to item 8e – Request for the use of the Cenotaph for City of Belfast Grand Black Chapter Service, on the basis that he was a member of the City of Belfast Grand Black Chapter and left the meeting whilst the report was being considered.

Restricted Items

The information contained in the reports associated with the following eight 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 meeting during discussion of these items as, due to the nature of the items, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as

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described in Section 42(4) and Section 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Restricted Items

Medium Term Financial Plan and Efficiency Programme

The Director of Finance and Resources drew the Committee's attention to a report which provided an update on the assessment of the key financial factors which would influence the development of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan for 2021/22 - 2023/24 and the rate setting process for 2021/22, together with an overview of the priorities and work in progress to establish the 2021/22 – 2023/24 Efficiency Programme.

The report outlined the six key elements involved in the annual setting of the District Rate and provided details of the main business as usual cost pressures, growth priorities, the capital finance budget, the Efficiency Programme, the Estimated Penny Product, external income and the cost and impact of Covid-19 to the Council. Further analysis was required to assess the effect of Covid-19 on income levels for the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Halls and GLL, in terms of their current management fees.

After discussion, the Committee noted the contents of the report.

Finance Update

The Director of Finance and Resources provided the Committee with an update on the revised financial position which it had received at its meeting on 18th September, together with details of a number of recovery proposals which had been approved as part of the Operational and Organisation Recovery Strategy and of the Northern Ireland Executive's additional financial support package for councils.

He referred to the Council's current staffing arrangements and recommended that, in terms of casual workers, the Committee adopt one of the following options:

1. to apply the Council's terms of engagement, with no contractual obligation either on the Council to offer work or on the casual worker to accept work, meaning that the Council has a contractual obligation to pay casual workers only for the work undertaken; or
2. to make payments from 1st November, 2020 to 31st March, 2021 to those casual workers who would have been offered casual shifts which may now be reduced in number or cancelled due to Covid-19, with the payments to be calculated on the basis of their average earnings over the same period in the previous year.

The Director then highlighted the significant reduction in income which had been experienced by GLL as a result of Covid-19 and outlined the measures which it was putting in place to protect staff and maintain a sustainable business model. In terms of casual staff, GLL would apply its terms of engagement, which meant that there was no contractual obligation either on it to offer work or on a worker to accept work. It had, therefore, a contractual obligation to pay them only for the work which they undertook.

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Finally, he provided details of the financial impact of Covid-19 upon the Belfast Waterfront and the Ulster Halls, neither of which had operated during the current financial year. He pointed out that the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Board had also applied its terms of engagement to its casual staff, with there being no contractual obligation either on it to offer work or on the worker to accept work. It had a contractual obligation to pay its casual staff only for the work which they undertook.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to adopt Option 2, as set out above and agreed also that GLL be requested to provide for the meeting of the Active Belfast Limited Board on 9th November information on the cost and other implications of applying that option to its casual workers.

**Update on the Operational Recovery
of Council Services**

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided an updated position in relation to the recovery of services, together with the planned response and ongoing management of the second wave of Covid-19 and its potential impact upon the delivery of Council services this autumn.

The Committee agreed, in order to allow officers to work on maintaining recovery as a priority, that Working Groups would continue to be arranged only when there was an urgent matter to be considered and that Area Working Groups would meet on a quarterly basis, unless an urgent issue arose in relation to funding.

**Customer Focus Programme –
Update on Customer Hub Formation**

The Committee was reminded that a key element of the Customer Focus Programme involved the establishment of a Customer Hub which would, in time, deal with customer contact for all Departments and services across all communication/media channels.

The Director of Finance and Resources confirmed that that work was ongoing and reviewed the proposed structure for the Hub, the timeline for its implementation and the consultation process with the Trades Union and staff. Accordingly, he recommended that the Committee approve:

- i. the proposed staffing structure for the Customer Hub, together with the summary recommendations, as set out within the report; and
- ii. the implementation of the staffing structure, including the application of the relevant staff transfer processes and recruitment of required posts.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Update on Marketing and Communications Service

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided an update on the work of the Marketing and Communications Service, including the contribution made by the Service to the delivery of the Belfast Agenda through its work programme and its plans to focus on

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more Ward/DEA led campaigns in response to Covid-19 and inviting Members to support its social media channels to reinforce its messages around the pandemic.

**Decade of Centenaries Programme –
November 2020 to March 2022**

The Committee:

- i. approved the list of events accompanying the report, which had been added to the 1918 - 1922 Decade of Centenaries programme in response to the motion on the Centenary of the Foundation of Northern Ireland, as adopted by the Committee on 23rd August, 2019, and
- ii. approved the submission of an application to the Shared History Fund, for funding to deliver some elements of the programme.

Update on Appraisal of Inner City Kerbside Sort

The Committee noted that the report which was due to be submitted to this meeting on the outcome of the options appraisal on arrangements for future kerbside sort collections in inner City areas would now be presented in November.

Draft Strategic Drainage Infrastructure Plan for Belfast

The Chief Executive reminded the Committee that Belfast's draft Resilience Strategy had identified sustainable drainage and wastewater infrastructure as a critical priority for the City's long-term resilience.

She referred to the draft Strategic Drainage Infrastructure Plan for Belfast, which had been formulated by the multi-agency Living With Water Programme Board and approved by the Northern Ireland Executive, and pointed out that representatives of the Living With Water Programme were in attendance to review the Living With Water in Belfast consultation document which would inform the overall Plan.

Accordingly, Mr. S. Richardson and Mr. S. Wightman, the Director and Manager of the Living With Water Programme, respectively were welcomed to the meeting.

The representatives explained that the Strategic Drainage Infrastructure Plan for Belfast had been drafted in the context of protecting against flooding, enhancing the environment and growing the economy. They provided an overview of the existing infrastructure and current problems being faced across the City, outlined the various solutions which were being proposed and provided details of the main outputs which had been identified. They then reviewed the work programme, the timeline for its implementation and the overall funding requirements and concluded by pointing out that Members would receive further briefings as the Plan progressed.

Messrs. Richardson and Wightman were thanked by the Chairperson, following which the Committee noted the information which had been provided.

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Matters referred back from Council/Motions

Motion - Racism Free Zone

The Committee was reminded that, at the Council meeting on 1st October, the following motion on a Racism Free Zone had been proposed by Councillor Canavan and seconded by Councillor Garrett:

“This Council recognises that racism is a scourge across this society. The Council further recognises the positive contribution made to society by those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds; deplores the discrimination which Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities regularly face; condemns racism in all its forms; and calls on the Council to work together with the sector, local BAME representative groups, schools and colleges, private businesses and public enterprises to ensure that this Council area becomes a racism free zone.”

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

Councillor Canavan highlighted the need for Elected Members to work to eradicate racism across the City and, accordingly, urged the Committee to support her motion.

The Committee adopted the motion and agreed that a report on the issues raised therein be considered, in the first instance, by the Shared City Partnership.

**Installation of a Statue in Remembrance of Frederick Douglass –
Response from the Minister for Communities**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 31st July, it had agreed that a letter be forwarded to the Department for Communities requesting that it give consideration to erecting in Rosemary Street a statue in remembrance of Frederick Douglass, a slavery abolitionist.

The City Solicitor reported that the Minister for Communities had, within her response, indicated that she would be content for her Department to partner the Council in delivering the project. She had indicated also that, if the Council was willing to lead the project by establishing a working group, to include stakeholders such as the Arts Council for Northern Ireland, the Department for Communities and the Department for Infrastructure, her Department would be willing to provide part funding.

The Committee granted approval for the Council to establish and lead the working group tasked with delivering the project and agreed that it should also consider how the City's wider association with slavery during that period in history could be recognised.

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**Motion: Public Transport/Parking for Health Workers,
Patients and Visitors – Responses from the Ministers for
Health and Infrastructure**

The Committee was reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 1st September, had passed the following motion on Public Transport/Parking for Health Workers, Patients and Visitors, which had been proposed by Councillor Ferguson and seconded by Councillor Matt Collins:

"This Council greatly values and appreciates the role of health workers, especially given their efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic and believes that proper investment in our health service is necessary to facilitate the incredible effort of health workers.

As such, the Council supports all healthcare workers to be paid a fair and living wage that compensates them appropriately for the critical work they do for all of us in society.

The Council also recognises the negative health inequalities created by air pollution across Belfast, primarily caused by transport emissions, and is supportive of initiatives to ensure that all healthcare workers and patients can avail of active and sustainable travel alternatives.

This Council will write to the Minister for Infrastructure and the Minister for Health:

- to support the extension of the provision of free public transport for all healthcare workers beyond this crisis period due to Covid 19;
- to support the extension of free or reduced cost public transport for those in receipt of PIP and/or Universal Credit;
- to support extensions of the rail and bus networks and active travel infrastructure to improve access to hospitals; and
- to ask for a review of the categories of acute conditions that currently can avail of free car parking to ensure access to those patients most in need.

The Council, as part of its strategic review of the Belfast Bikes scheme, will also explore how it can provide concessionary access for healthcare workers."

The Committee was informed that the Minister for Infrastructure had, within her response, outlined the measures which had been implemented in relation to providing free travel for healthcare workers and had confirmed that those would remain in place until further notice. She had highlighted also the concessionary fares which were already available.

The Health Minister had referred to the policy which had been introduced in 2012 in the Health and Social Care sector, which had set out the direction for car park management, including charging. The policy had set out also the criteria for free and concessionary parking for patients. He had referred also to the Hospital Travel Costs Scheme, which helped those people on low incomes or income-based benefits who may be entitled to reclaim car parking

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charges or other travel expenses for hospital treatment. The Minister had concluded by pointing out that he had no plans to review his Department's policy on car parking provision at this time.

The Committee noted the responses.

**Motion: Review of Housing Fitness Standard –
Response from the Minister for Communities**

The Committee was reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 1st September, had passed the following motion on a Review of Housing Fitness Standard, which had been proposed by Councillor Canavan and seconded by Councillor Magee:

“This Council welcomes the Communities Minister Carál Ní Chuilín’s ambitious programme aimed at addressing housing stress, providing housing solutions and supporting those in greatest need. This council recognises that housing faces many challenges but agrees that it should be a primary focus of government as it is so vital to building and sustaining communities and improving the health and wellbeing of our citizens.

The Council notes that the current housing fitness standard that is applied to private rented housing in this district is the statutory minimum physical standard which focuses on the most basic structural standards for human habitation, and applies to all tenures. It was last updated in 1992. This Council calls on the Department for Communities to carry out a review of the fitness standard, to include a review of sanctions on private landlords for failing to maintain properties, with a view to introducing legislation which offers greater protection to tenants.

Further to the above, Council calls on the Department of Communities to review and strengthen their own rules and regulations regarding the housing fitness standards of existing properties managed by the Housing Executive and various Housing Associations. This Council notes the poor conditions that some social housing tenants are living in and calls on the Minister to urgently address these conditions as a matter of priority.”

The City Solicitor reported that a response had since been received on behalf of the Minister for Communities which had stated that the Department was carrying out a comprehensive review of the role and regulation of the private rented sector, with a view to ensuring that the regulatory framework and supporting policy improved standards for both tenants and landlords. The Minister was currently considering the most appropriate way of implementing the findings of that review.

It had stated also that, in terms of the conditions in the social housing sector, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive had advised that its capital and revenue programmes were designed in such a way as to maintain properties to a decent standard and that maintenance programmes were ongoing.

The Committee noted the response.

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**Motion: Climate Change Act – Response from the
Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs**

The Committee was reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 1st September, had passed the following motion on a Climate Change Act, which had been proposed by Councillor Flynn and seconded by Councillor Groogan:

“This Council welcomes the environmental commitments in the New Decade New Approach Deal. This council is deeply concerned that the Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs did not support an Assembly Motion to develop a Climate Change Act for Northern Ireland.

This Council notes that Northern Ireland has fallen behind other parts of the UK in progressing reduction of emissions. A Climate Change Act can help us realise the ambition of the Belfast Agenda to create an environmentally sustainable City. This Council calls on the Minister to immediately prioritise the development of a Climate Change Act with legally binding and ambitious sectoral emission-reduction targets and a just transition to protect jobs through upskilling in less carbon intensive sectors.”

The City Solicitor reported that the Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs had, within his response, stated that he had written to the independent expert UK Climate Change Committee seeking clarification on what Northern Ireland’s equitable contribution to the UK’s net zero emissions target would be, in order to ensure that its greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets were credible and evidence-based.

The Minister had stated further that, unfortunately, the Committee was not in a position to respond to his request until after it had provided advice on the UK’s sixth carbon budget, which would be published in December, 2020. In the interim, his officials had provided him with proposals for an options appraisal for a Climate Change Bill in Northern Ireland. The Minister would consider those options along with the advice provided by the Climate Change Committee and would present his findings to the Northern Ireland Executive to agree a way forward.

During discussion, a Member welcomed the progress being made towards the introduction of a Climate Change Act. However, she pointed out that the latest Carbon Intensity Indicator report had confirmed that Northern Ireland’s share of UK emissions had increased and she stressed the need for that to be addressed as a matter of urgency. She requested, therefore, that the Committee agree to write again to the Minister seeking an update on the work which was being undertaken by his Department to address increasing carbon emission levels, including the mechanisms for monitoring, reporting and enforcement, the role of the Chief Inspector of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency in this work, and any assessment of carbon emissions which had been undertaken at a local level.

The Committee noted the response from the Minister and acceded to the Member’s request.

Motion - Support for Mental Health

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on existing and future work plans to challenge the taboo around mental health and suicide, in support of the issues highlighted in the Motion proposed by Councillor M. Kelly and seconded by Councillor Long at the Council meeting on 1st July, 2020.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The committee is requested to note the content of the report.

3.0 Main Report

Council Motion

3.1 In recognition of the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic on the current mental health crisis, Councillor Kelly proposed a motion to ensure continuing Council support to challenge the taboos of mental health and suicide and ensure people are aware of the signs and understand the questions to ask someone we are worried about and what help they can get. At its meeting in August, the Committee agreed that a report be prepared detailing how a programme of suicide awareness training for staff and elected members would be facilitated, resourced and managed.

Staff Training and Mental Health Champions

3.2 The Council has had in place a positive health and wellbeing training programme (including suicide awareness) in place for staff since 2012. It was developed in response to an initiative launched by the then Lord Mayor, to raise awareness of suicide in the city. Two specific training programmes were rolled out; Positive Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing and Stress Awareness Training for Managers, a programme specifically aimed at managers on how to recognise and manage stress related issues. Since 2012, 645 staff have received training on positive mental health and emotional wellbeing and 434 managers have been trained on stress awareness. The current Covid restrictions have prevented delivery of this programme since March however, Corporate HR, as part of its recovery process, is currently assessing how to deliver both training programmes remotely.

3.3 In addition, in 2017, as part of the our employee Health and Wellbeing Strategy, we commissioned Action Mental Health to deliver Mental Health First Aid training for staff. The Mental Health First Aid training mirrors the aims and principles of the certified

SafeTALK training and has similar outcomes in that it equips individuals to recognise the early warning signs of mental health problems; provide initial help and advice and guide a person towards appropriate sources of professional help.

- 3.4 To date, a total of 30 staff have been trained and are recognised mental health first aiders and four additional programmes are planned to be delivered remotely between November and March 2021. Further classroom based programmes to facilitate those staff who do not have access to a PC will be organised as soon as current restrictions allow. It is proposed, with their permission, that the names of those staff who have attended the Mental Health First Aider training programme will be displayed on staff noticeboards and on Interlink for staff to contact, as required.
- 3.5 The opportunity to undertake the online training and become recognised Mental Health First Aiders will be offered to elected members.
- 3.6 The general health and wellbeing programme is further supported by a dedicated employee counselling service, accessible to all employees, through the council's current employee counselling contract with Apeido Associates. Line managers can make referrals to this service or employees can also self-refer on a confidential basis.

The Mersey Care Trust Foundation video.

- 3.7 This short, free online course in Suicide Awareness which is currently used widely by NI Health and Social Care Trusts, will be made available to staff and Elected Members and staff will be encouraged to take time to participate in the training. Managers will be asked to set aside time for staff to do so.

Additional Support

- 3.8 Additional support and guidance is available on the staff intranet site with a section on health and wellbeing which is updated on a continuing basis with helpful information and signposting to further mental health information and resources.
- 3.9 The Local Government Staff Commission's, Health and Wellbeing Group, has recently launched a Mental Health Strategy for local government to assist councils to plan to address the mental health crisis through the provision of support for their staff. It will be used in conjunction with our own staff Health and Wellbeing Strategy to influence future work planning in this area.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.10 The Mental Health First Aid training will be funded by the Local Government Training Group as part of its annual funding provision. Any other costs associated with delivery of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy activity will be covered by the existing corporate Organisational Development budget.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.11 The recommendations in the report will assist the council to deliver on its Section 75 duties and comply with the requirements set out in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. In addition, it will help further the aims and priorities of the Council's Disability Action Plan and Equality Scheme."

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues

Update on Smart Belfast and Belfast Digital Innovation Partnership

The Committee considered the following report:

"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 This paper presents a short impact report on the Smart Belfast work and the development of the Belfast Digital Innovation Partnership.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

1. note the attached Smart Belfast Outcomes and Impact report;
2. agree that the Council contribute £50,000 to the Belfast Digital Innovation Partnership's £300,000 co-investment budget;
3. agree a £20,000 contribution to the £650,000 EIT Digital project tracking the impact of public funding across the Belfast Fintech sector; and
4. note the development of the Digital Futures programme.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Smart Belfast Outcomes and Impact Report

An impact report, summarising the projects and initiatives supported by the Smart Belfast programme during its first three

years of operation, has been circulated to Members. Smart Belfast was set up by the Council in 2017 with the aim of harnessing digital innovation to solve major city challenges while also helping to grow a twenty-first century economy. Its challenge-led approach brings together businesses, our universities, government and citizens to co-create innovative solutions that improve city life.

3.2 Some of the key outputs from Smart Belfast include:

- Leveraged £10.2 million into the city
- Successfully delivered 47 digital projects
- Worked directly with over 200 SMEs and stakeholders
- Hosted over 30 events with 4,100 participants
- Built Northern Ireland's first free-to-use Internet of things network
- Successfully bid for two Horizon 2020 projects with a combined value of €1.2 million
- Won \$1 million to establish the Belfast Office for Resilience
- Led on the development of the £120 million digital bid to City Deal
- Supported four Collaborative Growth networks involving 16 Belfast SMEs
- Showcased the best of Belfast at international tech events in Barcelona, USA and China.

3.3 Tracking the Impact of Public Support for the Fintech Sector

Belfast's fintech sector has been one of the major success stories over the past decade, and a major source of well-paid, high skilled jobs. It is also a sector that has proven surprisingly resilient during the current Covid crisis, with a number of companies expanding their work force. The Fintech sector is likely to be a focus of support as Belfast ramps up its Digital Innovation ambition.

3.4 To support this approach, Smart Belfast is seeking to partner in a £650,000 project funded by EIT Digital to track the impact of public funds in the sector. Local SME Xpand are working with local industry, Belgian SME accelerator 'Start-It' KBC¹ and the city of Antwerp to develop a set of software tools to help connect businesses to finance, to develop KPIs to measure how SMEs are impacted by funding, and to create more efficient, lightweight mechanisms for public officials to track grant spend. The project is also seeking to utilise open banking technologies to reduce the bureaucracy associated with many economic development funds.

3.5 If Belfast commits £20,000 to the project, the Council and its partners get access to the expert learning and software tools being

¹ <https://startit.be>

developed by the project. This would then be used to deliver a three-month project involving the local Fintech sector. It would also represent the first building block for wider engagement across other sectors of the city's digital economy.

- 3.6 Members are asked to approve a £20,000 contribution to the EIT Digital project in tracking the impact of public funds (and thus receiving the benefits of the larger £650,000 project).

3.7 **Belfast Digital Innovation Partnership**

Learning from the success of Smart Belfast, the Council and its city partners are now developing even more ambitious plans focused on the potential of digital innovation to build an economy capable of competing in the twenty-first century.

- 3.8 A new Belfast Digital Innovation Partnership (BDIP), which includes the Council, Queen's University, Ulster University, Belfast Harbour, Invest NI, and Catalyst Inc, has developed a shared ambition which aims to accelerate sustainable and inclusive growth through innovation.

- 3.9 Working with the leadership team from Eindhoven, one of Europe's most successful innovative cities, BDIP partners have drafted an initial project portfolio that aims to attract international investment, support local cluster growth, support a digital skills agenda; contribute to the sustainable development of our city, and work with communities to ensure economic inclusion.

- 3.10 The initial focus, in this post Covid period, will be to engage with innovation companies and policy-makers, on our plans for the coming ten years, ensuring Belfast is recognised globally as the place to invest in digital innovation during recovery. Promotional concepts for the Belfast Smart District were shared with Members at the June 2020 committee meeting.

- 3.11 Prior to a planned public launch in November 2020, the BDIP partners agreed to co-invest £50k to support an operational budget that will begin to deliver on its ambitious pipeline of projects which include:

Innovation District - which covers a 400 acre geographical area of the city from the city centre around the new Ulster University campus up to Catalyst in Queen's Island, will foster a place-based approach to cluster growth in fintech, healthtech and Greentech – while at the same time delivering an inclusive urban regeneration agenda.

Smart Healthy Neighbourhood - to develop an internationally significant digital health demonstrator in the heart of the city. Co-

designed and developed with housing providers, residents, and health stakeholders, and based in the Inner North West area of city centre, this neighbourhood will provide a supportive environment for technologists, researchers, and will seek to attract inward investment from the life and health sciences sector. Elements will include pervasive wireless connectivity (funded via the Belfast City Deal Infrastructure Enabling Fund) and a citizen-focused engagement programme.

Integrated Sustainable Mobility - this project will seek to address the inter-connected issues of connectivity to Queen's island (and the associated growth constraints), the connectivity challenges in a post-Covid city centre, the over-dependence on the private car across the smart district travel to work area, and the need to support active travel as part of the city's health agenda. Such a project will also provide opportunities to enhance research programmes across both universities (including CARL and GII) and support innovative business development opportunities.

Smart Port - Through significant investments in 5G connectivity and open architecture data, the Smart Port will deploy a number of IoT, mobility and Community Platform solutions to unlock new levels of safety, sustainability, and efficiency within Belfast Harbour and throughout Northern Ireland's sea freight logistics chain. Such digital solutions will assist Belfast Harbour to achieve its aims of becoming the world's smartest and greenest regional port and a key economic hub for growth.

- 3.12 The Committee is asked to agree that Belfast City Council, as a key partner, contribute £50,000 to drive forward this ambitious programme.

3.13 **Digital Futures Programme**

Digital Futures has been developed by Belfast Region City Deal partners, working closely with government and industry to deliver a rapid response to the economic impact of the pandemic. Funded by the Department for the Economy as part of the Skills Intervention Programme, and delivered by a number of FE Colleges across the region, Digital Futures will support 55 graduates over the next six months, giving them opportunities to explore career pathways in Cloud Computing, Data Analytics and Cyber Security.

There is a very tight timeframe for delivery of the programme as the funding has just been awarded this month and all delivery must be completed by the end of March 2021, due to DfE funding timescales. Due to the tight timeframe courses will commence late October/early November and training will be delivered online. Note that the closing date was Monday 19th October.

Each participant will get access to a training allowance of £150 per week throughout the entire duration of the programmes. The internship element of the programme will commence in the New Year and BRCD partners are actively recruiting employers to host internships.

Digital Futures Programmes

Cyber Security: <https://www.swc.ac.uk/digitalfutures>

Data Analytics:

<https://app.mindmill.co.uk/MyMindMill/landing/serc>

Cloud Computing: <https://www.belfastmet.ac.uk/support-for-business/digital-futures/>

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.14 All costs associated with this work and recommendations have been identified within existing budgets.

Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.15 None.”

After discussion, during which the Chief Executive confirmed that the promotion of inclusive growth had featured prominently in the Belfast Digital Innovation Partnership's discussions to date and would continue to do so, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

Physical Programme and Asset Management

Update on Physical Programme

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 The Council's Capital programme is a rolling programme of investment which either improves the existing Council facilities or provides new Council facilities. This report seeks approval to move LTP – Templemore to the next stage of the capital programme.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to –

- *Project Movement* - agree that LTP - Templemore is moved to a *Stage 3 – Committed* project, with a maximum £12m budget allocated.

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- *Service Yard, Falls Park/City Cemetery* – note that a satisfactory tender has been returned and the project remains within the maximum £420,000 budget.
- *Local Full Fibre Networks Programme* – agree to the procurement of additional fibre ducting assets/ infrastructure to enhance the existing ducting network as part of the Public Sector Asset Reuse (PSAR) project under the overall LFFN programme.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 LTP – Templemore

Members have previously agreed that all capital projects must go through a 3 Stage approval process where decisions on which projects progress are taken by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. This provides assurance as to the level of financial control and will allow Members to properly consider the opportunity costs of approving one capital project over another capital project.

Members are reminded that LTP – Templemore is an agreed Stage 2- Uncommitted project on the council's Leisure Transformation Programme. Members will note that a full update report on the Leisure Transformation Programme is also presented to the Committee. Members are asked to agree that LTP - Templemore moves to *Stage 3 - Committed* with a maximum budget of £12m under the £105m Leisure Transformation Programme. Members will be aware that this project has also received £5m in funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

3.2 Capital Programme - Service Yard, Falls Park/City Cemetery

Members will be aware that the Service Yard/City Cemetery project involves the relocation of the existing service at the City Cemetery site. Members agreed that the project moved to *Stage 3 - Committed* on the Capital Programme in February 2019. The project was held at Tier 0 – Schemes at Risk pending planning approval and the tender return price at which stage the final budget was to be brought back to Committee. A satisfactory tender has been received and the budget remains £420,000 which is within the affordability limits of the Council.

Members are asked to note that the project has since received planning approval and a satisfactory tender has been returned.

3.3 Local Full Fibre Networks Programme

Members will be recall that on 23rd March 2018, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee noted that Council was awarded £11.5m

from the Department of Culture Media and Sport's (DCMS) for the delivery of the Belfast Local Fibre Network Programme. The programme consists of two distinct projects: Public Sector Anchor Tenancy (PSAT) and Public Sector Asset Reuse (PSAR). The PSAR funding totals £206k and was approved to allow us to survey the condition of fibre ducts in the city centre, with a view to making them available to the telecoms market. This in turn will greatly benefit the businesses and residents of the city centre. Following the survey results, Digital Services engaged industry experts to conduct an analysis of the ducting network, and assess the viability of offering them out to the telecoms market. The output will enable a business case to be developed for DCMS. The results of the analysis suggest that demand will be high, but could be greatly enhanced by additional investment in the ducting network to make it more fit for purpose. This investment will cost no more than £190k, and will be funded from external sources. Members are asked to agree the procurement of additional ducting infrastructure to enhance the viability of the existing ducting network as part of the overall LFFN programme.

3.4 Financial and Resource Implications

LTP Templemore and Service Yard City Cemetery - The Director of Finance and Resources has confirmed that these projects are within the affordability limits of the Council.

LFFN – works to be externally funded

3.5 Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment

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

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Leisure Transformation Programme - Assets Update

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

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

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report, including that:

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- the three new leisure facilities at Lisnasharragh, Brook and Andersonstown have now opened following lockdown and continue to see strong membership numbers, as outlined in paragraph 3.1;
- the demolition of Avoniel is now complete and works have commenced on the new facility and a contractor has now been appointed for the Templemore Baths redevelopment with works due to commence in October 2020, as outlined in paragraph 3.2;
- procurement of the ICT and Business Case consultant for the new leisure facility at Girdwood is underway and will be completed by December 2020, as outlined in paragraph 3.3; and
- the proposed approach to Leisure Phase 3 for those centres not currently included in the transformation programme, as outlined in paragraph 3.4.

3.0 Main Report

- 3.1** The Council is currently embarking on an ambitious 10 year plan to completely transform how it delivers leisure services across the city. The Leisure Transformation Programme (LTP), which includes a £105m capital investment, is designed to ensure everyone across the city has access to modern, fit for purpose, leisure facilities and programmes. The Programme's main objective is to enable active and healthy lifestyles for all citizens whilst also delivering on a number of the key priorities in the Belfast Agenda such as reducing life inequalities across the city, improving neighbourhoods and creating employment and opportunity. A further key objective is to ensure that each centre has its own Unique Selling Point (USP), to avoid duplication and encourage users to move across the city to access different services and programmes

3.2 Update on New Centres

Lisnasharragh and Brook have now re-opened and continue to enjoy strong membership numbers. Despite all leisure facilities experiencing a significant drop off in membership numbers over lockdown, the two centres have recovered strongly. Lisnasharragh currently has 2,950 live pre-paid members (86% of pre-lockdown figures) and Brook 1,613 (90% of pre-lockdown figures). These figures are well in excess of the UK average which shows gym memberships currently averaging around 60%-70% pre-lockdown figures.

Andersonstown- Members will recall that Andersonstown was completed in mid-March and was due to open in late March, just as

the full lockdown was introduced. Following lockdown, the gym and fitness studios were opened on 10th July, with the main pool following on 6th August. Members are asked to note that the plans for the opening of the slides have been placed on hold given the new restrictions announced by the NI Executive on 13th October. Due to social distancing requirements, the splash zone has not been opened and will remain closed until current restrictions are eased to allow safe usage.

3.2 Project Updates – Next Phase (Avoniel and Templemore)

Phase 2 of the Programme is proceeding as follows:

Avoniel – the demolition of the existing buildings is now complete and work is commencing on the site clearance. It is currently envisaged that the new facility will be completed by September 2021.

Templemore – as per the previous update, the Templemore Users' Trust formally vacated the building at the end of June. The contractor procurement process has now been completed and Heron Brothers have been awarded the contract. Responsibility for the site has now passed to the contractor and following a period of mobilisation, works are due to commence on site in late October. It is currently envisaged that the new facility will be completed by April 2022. TUT has now formally signed and returned the User Agreement, granting it priority usage of one of the pools in the new facility, and also have an agreement in place with GLL for access to Shankill Leisure Centre from this November, to continue their swimming programmes in the interim.

3.3 Girdwood Phase 2 – Following authorisation from DFC, procurement of the Integrated Consultancy Team is now underway and will be in place by the end of December. The procurement of a consultant to develop the business case in relation to the project is also underway with an appointment due by end October. Following appointment of the ICT and business case consultant, a period of consultation with key stakeholders will take place to revisit the current options for the new facility which were developed in 2016-18. Following agreement on a preferred option concept designs will be developed which will then be subject to further public consultation before final designs are produced. It is currently envisaged that work on the new facility will commence in early Spring 2022.

3.4 Phase 3 - Other leisure facilities - Ozone, Ballysillan, Whiterock, Shankill, Loughside and Belvoir

The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreed earlier this year that a feasibility study would be undertaken on the rest of the

leisure estate which have not been part of the Leisure Transformation Programme to date (Shankill, Whiterock, Ballysillan, Ozone, Loughside and Belvoir) given the age of these facilities. A draft terms of reference for this was agreed by Committee with the next step the appointment of consultants to undertake this work.

The Committee is asked to note that Space and Place Architects have now been appointed to carry out a review of the existing leisure estate and begin to develop options for the future of these six remaining facilities.

Proposed approach – Leisure Phase 3

It is proposed that this piece of the work is broken down into three phases and follows a similar approach to the methodology undertaken for the current phase of the Leisure Programme. Members are asked to note as highlighted in the Medium Term Financial Plan which was brought to Committee last month that no capital financing has been ring-fenced for Leisure Phase 3 which is different from the current phase where the budget envelope had been agreed at the start of the programme.

- **Phase A – Baseline Review** - This phase will consist of a detailed review of the current leisure estate and include a detailed performance analysis of all the current facilities. This will also include identification of gaps, areas of duplication and strategic advice on likely future requirements. This Phase will also look at innovation and key emerging trends in the leisure industry that could help achieve desired strategic outcomes beyond the existing/traditional sports offer;
- **Timescale** – This Phase of the review will be completed by end December and an update will be brought back to Committee early next year;
- **Phase B – Consultation** – Following completion of phase A, Phase B will be initiated which will involve large scale consultation with Members and a wide range of key stakeholders with a view to begin the process of developing options for the remaining six centres;
- **Phase C – Concept Designs** - Phase C would then involve the development of concept designs as required.

3.5 Financial and Resource Implications

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

Phase 3 – No capital financing in place.

Resource - Council to act as delivery partner for Girdwood Phase II ICT engagement. To be managed through current LTP governance arrangements.

3.6 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

There are no direct equality implication”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Assets Management

The Committee approved the following:

- i. Sewer relocation easement and licence for works – Knocknagoney Linear Park**
 - the grant of an easement for a proposed sewer relocation and subsequent licence for works at Knocknagoney Linear Park
- ii. New sewer installation easement and licence for works – Lagan Meadows**
 - the grant of an easement for a proposed new sewer and subsequent licence for works at Lagan Meadows
- iii. Licence Renewal – Ligoniel Community Centre**
 - a new licence agreement between the Council and the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust for their continued use of Ligoniel Community Centre
- iv. Sally Gardens – Lease Extension to Poleglass Community Association**
 - a lease extension to Poleglass Community Association for the community centre at Sally Gardens
- v. Springfield Dam – Acquisition of Land from Invest Northern Ireland**
 - the acquisition of c.0.400 acres of land from Invest Northern Ireland as part of the Springfield Dam project

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vi. Encroachment at 133 Mount Eagles Avenue

- the revised terms of an agreed disposal of a small plot of grassland to the owner of 133 Mount Eagles Avenue

vii. Musgrave Park – Northern Ireland Water Sewer Scheme

- the proposed works by Northern Ireland Water at Musgrave Park and the granting of a licence to Northern Ireland Water to carry out these works.

Update on Area Working

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 To seek the Committee’s approval of the minutes of the most recent round of AWGs and any additional recommendations to this Committee arising from the meetings.**

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- **AWG Minutes - approve the most recent round of AWG minutes (West – 24 September, South – 28 September, North – 30 September, East – 8 October); and**
- **Physical Programme - agree the recommendations on reallocations and residual monies from the AWGs under LIF, BIF and SOF Programmes as laid out below in 3.3-3.6.**

3.0 Main Report

3.1 KEY ISSUES

The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 20th September 2019, agreed revised Terms of Reference for the AWGs. These were presented to all AWGs at the last round of AWGs in January. It was agreed that they would be circulated to all Groups again. The Groups were reminded that under the Terms of Reference it had been agreed that AWGs would meet quarterly.

Area Working Group Minutes

- 3.2 Members agreed in June 2016 that the Area Working Group minutes would be taken to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for approval going forward in line with the Council’s**

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commitment to openness and transparency and to ensure a consistent approach with other Member-led Working Groups.

Members are asked to approve the most recent round of AWG minutes (*West – 24 September, South – 28 September, North – 30 September, East – 8 October*).

AWG Updates

- 3.3 West AWG - Members are asked to approve the following project movements, as recommended by the AWG at its meeting on 24th September:**

LIF Programme

The West AWG were updated that there was a residual allocation of £85,000 to be re-allocated from the decommitted monies of the Royal British Legion BIF project. In addition the AWG was updated that DFC monies had been secured in principle for two existing LIF projects (Berlin Swifts and St. James's Community Forum) and that there was therefore surplus LIF monies from these project that was available for reallocation (up to £65,000 and £17,000 respectively). The AWG considered the monies available for reallocation and agreed to recommend the following:

Ref No	Project	Proposed Recommendation
WLIF2-25	Woodvale Cricket Club – upgrades to enable the creation of a large upstairs hall	£33,000
WLIF2-26	St Matthew's Parish Hall – upgrades	£35,000
WLIF2-27	West Belfast Orange Hall – toilet upgrades	£17,000
WLIF2-28	Belfast Orange Hall Clifton Street – building upgrades	Up to £65,000 (reallocation from Berlin Swifts)
WLIF2-29 WLIF2-30	Davitts GAC St. John GAC	£17,000 (reallocation from St. James's Community Forum)

- 3.4 South AWG - Members are asked to approve the following project movement and updates, as recommended by the AWG at its meeting on 28th September.**

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Project	Current Stage	Proposed Recommendations
Knockbreda Parish Church Hall – BIF35	Stage 2- Uncommitted	Move to Stage 3 – Committed Works due to commence
Bredagh GAC – BIF19	Stage 3- Committed	Council to act as delivery agent
Sandy Row Community Forum – SOF04	Due Diligence stage	Change of project promoter from Sandy Row Community Forum to Belfast South City Resource Centre

The South AWG Group also agreed to hold a special meeting in October to look project proposals for the Sandy Row area and that both BSCR and Urban Villages be invited to this meeting in order to allow the AWG to fully consider emerging proposals.

- 3.5 **North AWG** - Members are asked to approve the following project movements and updates, as recommended by the AWG at its meeting on 30th September.

LIF Programme

The North AWG was updated that two LIF projects which had previously received in-principle allocations had confirmed that they no longer wished to remain part of the LIF programme (NLIF2-13 Intercomm £75,000 and NLIF2-18 Holy Family Parish Church £15,000). The AWG considered the £90,000 that was available for reallocation and agreed to recommend the following –

Ref No	Project	Proposed Recommendation
NLIF2-22	Sailortown/St Joseph's project – building upgrades	To be allocated £75,000
NLIF2-19	Women's Tec project	To be allocated an additional £15,000 Existing LIF project which had already been allocated £31,667

BIF Programme

The North AWG was updated that the Ulster Scots-Braeheid project (BIF31) which had previously received in-principle allocation of £500,000 had confirmed that they no longer wished to remain part of the BIF programme. The AWG considered this reallocation and

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agreed to recommend the following. It was noted that all proposals would be subject to the normal due-diligence processes, that a maximum budget was allocated and subject to the return of satisfactory tenders.

Project	Current Stage	Proposed Recommendations
Midland Boxing Club – BIF45	N/A	Add as a Stage 1 – Emerging project with a maximum allocation of £400,000
Cultural Community Club- BIF43	Stage 1 – Emerging	Additional £100,000 to the allocated in principle Project had an existing in-principle allocation of £250,000

The AWG further agreed that the Midland Boxing Club attend the next meeting to give a presentation on their proposal.

- 3.6 **East AWG** - Members are asked to approve the following project movement and updates, as recommended by the AWG at its meeting on 8th October.

LIF Programme

The East AWG was updated that one LIF project which had previously received in-principle allocation had confirmed that they no longer wished to remain part of the LIF programme (ELIF2-14 The Dock Café - £15,000). The AWG agreed to recommend the following –

Ref No	Project	Proposed Recommendation
ELIF2-17	Lagan Village Youth and Community Association	To be allocated £15,000

The East AWG also agreed that the Strand Arts Centre, Bloomfield Community Association, Castlereagh Presbyterian Church and the Education Authority re the Lisnasharragh Community Schools project be invited to their next meeting to present an update on the current status of their proposals.

- 3.7 **Financial and Resource Implications**

Financial – LIF/BIF – allocations as outlined above

Resources – Officer time in working with Groups

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3.8 Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment

No implications.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Finance, Procurement and Performance

Contracts Update

The Committee:

- approved the public advertisement of tenders, as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 - Table 1 of the report;
- approved the award of STAs in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions, as detailed in Appendix 1 – Table 2 of the report;
- noted the award of retrospective STAs in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions, as detailed in Appendix 1 – Table 3 of the report; and
- approved the modification to contracts in line with the Scheme of Delegation, as detailed in Appendix 1 – Table 4 of the report.

Table 1 – Competitive Tenders

Title of Tender	Proposed Contract Duration	Estimated Total Contract Value	Senior Responsible Officer	Short description of goods/ services
Tender for the supply of bottled and mains fed water with dispensers across BCC offices & sites (T2119)	Up to 3 years	£50,000	R. Cregan	Bottled water supply and dispenser maintenance across BCC offices and sites.
Provision of de-icing and snow-clearance services (T1986)	Up to 5 years	£600,000	S. Toland / R. Black	Service required to support in-house operations and minimise H&S slip and fall risk for the public and staff around various Council sites.

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Tender for the provision of security guarding services. (T1974)	Up to 4 years	£3.9m (5 Lots)	J. Walsh / S. Toland / R. Black / A. Reid	On site security guarding services to support in house security guarding operations.
Delivery of PCSP's Post Primary Cyber Safety Project in Belfast (fully funded) (T2130)	Up to 3 years	£75 ,000	S Toland / R Black	Project designed to help keep adults safe online
Tender for the delivery of PCSP's Adults at Risk of Harm Project (T2125)	Up to 3 years	£45,000	S Toland / R Black	Project designed to help keep adults at risk safe from harm
Tender for Educational Awareness Programme (Fully Funded) (T2129)	Up to 3 years	£90,000	S Toland / R Black	Commission services to address ongoing issues of sexual abuse through facilitated discussions on 'consent' particularly with vulnerable young people.
Tender for an external mail collection service of out-bound mail (T2123)	Up to 3 years	£600,000	R Cregan	External mail collection across various BCC offices/sites.
Framework for the delivery of Employment Academies (T1983)	Up to 4 years	Up to £6m	A Reid	Framework designed to deliver a more streamlined delivery of current range of employment academies.
Tender for the provision of West Belfast DPSPC's	Up to 3 years	£132,000	S Toland / R Black	West Belfast community safety initiative.

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Community Safety Initiative (T2124)				
Tender for the supply of a range of various vehicles (27 units) as part of fleet replacement programme (T2052)	One off purchase	£2.2m	S Toland / R Black	Replacement of 27 vehicles as part of fleet replacement programme.
Tender for research and guidance to advance IT Strategy Projects (T2128)	Up to 2 years	£45,000	R Cregan	Provides in-depth technical research and guidance to help Digital Services advance the initiatives/projects that support execution of the IT strategy.
Development of ducting infrastructure in Belfast City Centre (Capital Procurement) – Funded by Department of Digital, Culture, Media & Sport.	Up to 6 months	£190,000	R Cregan	Build a duct infrastructure in Belfast city centre that can be made available to the wider telecoms marketplace at a later date.
Peace IV St Comgall's Outreach Programme and Exhibition	Up to 25 months	£170,000	S Toland / R Black	Funded project to engage with local people around the St Comgall's on a cross-community basis
Consultancy to provide assurance in respect of real estate proposals inc progression of the Belfast Destination Hub	Up to 6 months	£50,000	A Reid	Undertake analysis evaluation and provide financial assurance to the councils in respect of real estate proposals

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Consultancy for City Centre Residential Development	Up to 6 months	£50,000	A Reid	Analysis of demand and identification of interventions to progress City Centre Residential
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Table 2- Direct Award Contracts (Single Tender Action)

Title of Tender	Supplier	Total Value
Provision of 'Shared History, Heritage and Identity Content / Narratives for Interpretative Panels on Shared Space Greenway' PEACE IV Programme Services (T2084b)	The Osborne Partnership	£80,000
Provision of Home Security/ Hazard Assessment and Repair Service for Elderly & Vulnerable (fully funded) – up to 12 month extension of contract whilst re-tender exercise is completed.	Bryson Energy	£120,000
Provision of a Case Management System for City and Neighbourhoods Department – up to 2 year extension of contract whilst replacement system is procured and implemented.	Civica UK Ltd	£113,878

Table 3 Retrospective Direct Award Contracts (Single Tender Actions)

Title of Tender	Supplier	Total Value
Provision of PEACE IV Youth Group Residential (T2032b)	Carlingford Adventure Centre	£16,000
Continued Hire of Temporary Accommodation, Toilets and Associated Electrical Generators and Cabling at Roselawn Cemetery	Nospace	£69,852 with potential up to £109,852 if further 6 month extension exercised.

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Table 4 Contract Modification under Delegated Authority

Title of Tender		Senior Responsible Officer
Delivery of a New Enterprise Pathway (T1980a); Increase in contract value from £200,000 to £300,000	North City Business Centre	A Reid
Delivery of Construction Employment Academy (T1912) Increase in contract value from £200,000 to £237,500	Workforce Training Services	A Reid

Commercial and Procurement Service - Pricing Policy

The Committee agreed to defer this report to allow it to be considered alongside the Commercial Plan for commercialisation and income generation, which was due to be presented at the meeting in November.

Equality and Good Relations

Minutes of the Meeting of the Shared City Partnership

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Shared City Partnership held on 5th October, including the recommendations to:

- i. note the endorsement of the Partnership to the Council's approach to Community Provision Recovery and agree the recommendation that the budgets for Tranche 2 Good Relations Small Grants Scheme and St Patrick's Day be allocated to the ongoing community provision recovery funding programme;
- ii. agree that an amount of up to £1k be allocated to assist with a workshop for the East Belfast Tension Monitoring Group to refocus its priorities and communication; and
- iii. agree the Revised Action Plan Summary 21/22 as requested by TEO, as set out in Appendix 2 of the report.

Peace IV

- i. delegate authority to the PEACE IV Programme Manager and the relevant Thematic Project Manager to sign off participant's achievement based on the 80% of contracted contact hours with no financial impact to the delivery partner;

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- ii. delegate authority to the Chair of the relevant Theme, in conjunction with the PEACE IV Programme Manager and the relevant Thematic Project Manager to consider requests, on an exceptional circumstances only, achievement of 80% of 26 hrs taking into account any financial and contractual impact, subject to SEUPB approval; and
- iii. note the contents of all PEACE IV update reports and appendices and the agreed changes to projects.

Motion on Hate Crime and Intolerance

- i. write to the NI Executive to ask what plans are in place to support those groups which fall outside of the current good relations duty and if consideration is being given to extension of the categories in line with the Hate Crime legislation; and
- ii. agree that officers look at the Hate Crime Steering Group convened by Safer Cities and other different strands of funding across Council which could assist in funding more proactive work relating to Hate Crime and bring a report back to Committee in due course.

**Signage Scheme Proposal for the
Gaeltacht Quarter Area**

The City Solicitor informed the Committee that the Council had been invited by Forbairt Feirste to participate in a working group which it was proposing to establish to develop a comprehensive signage scheme for the Gaeltacht Quarter.

He explained that the working group, which would include Forbairt Feirste, the Department for Infrastructure and Tourism NI, would examine, for example, welcome signage on the main thoroughfares into the Quarter, directional signage covering the main buildings, places of interest and linear walkways and signage integration with other Quarters and the City centre. It was envisaged that officers from the Council's Building Control Service, Culture and Tourism Unit and Equality and Diversity Unit would participate in the working group initially, however, others might need to become involved to ensure that proposals were aligned with existing Council policies and planned capital and programme investment.

The Committee approved the Council's participation in the Working Group.

Bilingual Street Signage

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 To consider options for the consultation of occupiers for the erection of a second nameplate in a language other than English. Having regard to discussions on the issues the options presented are as follows:**

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1. retain the current policy requiring one third of residents petitioning in favour of the erection of a second name plate and two thirds responding positively to the formal consultation with non-respondents treated as, in effect, against.
2. retain the one third requirement through petition trigger but adopt a 50+1 rule with non-respondents, in effect, not taken into account. This would be subject to a minimum response threshold of one third;
3. adopt an entirely new policy position, the trigger for a consultation being an expression of interest by a resident or residents or Councillor with a percentage of residents (suggested at 20% but to be agreed) responding positively being sufficient to erect a second nameplate subject to residual discretion and protections/mitigations as appropriate;
4. the Conradh Na Gaeilge option in which the process is triggered by a request from an occupier with a 10% response threshold and a 50+1 rule;
5. adopt some other position which would be subject to further legal advice.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 The Committee is requested to adopt a position in respect of the options presented or consensus on some other position to enable a policy to be finalised and presented for approval.

3.0 Main Report

Key Issues

- 3.1 Article 11 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (NI) Order 1995 requires the Council, in deciding whether to exercise its discretion in relation to the erection of a second nameplate, to have regard to the views of occupiers in a street. Thus any policy position adopted requires a process to enable occupiers to be consulted and given the opportunity to respond. This is important because it is a statutory requirement and something which is required to be taken into account in making decisions.
- 3.2 The current policy is that one third of residents, by way of petition, may trigger a formal consultation in relation to the erection of a second nameplate in a language other than English. If two thirds respond positively the threshold is deemed to be met. The policy treats those who do not respond as essentially not in favour.

The policy was subject to a judicial review in 2014 which was successfully defended.

- 3.3 By way of notice of motion on 3 February 2020 it was proposed that the council change its current policy position regarding the consultation requirements on erecting a second name plate in that whilst the one third trigger through petition would be retained, a 50+1 rule in respect of the consultation would be adopted with non-respondents not counted. Concerns were articulated regarding this position in the context of the proposed policy position not being legally robust which led me to propose that a minimum response threshold mirroring the initial trigger should be adopted. Under this a majority in favour would represent circa 17% of residents with a one third response rate required overall. There has been some legal contention in respect of the advice given. That advice was subsequently supported by counsel's opinion that was previously circulated.
- 3.4 Discussions have ensued and progressed toward an option which does not enjoy universal support in terms of where the threshold should land. There is however a level of agreement in relation to the principles that should underpin the policy. In terms of those who are supportive of changing the existing policy all favour an approach embracing international law and standards.
- 3.5 The position promoted by Conradh Na Gaeilge refers to a simple trigger of a request by a Councillor or resident and a 50+1 rule with non-respondents not counted and a minimum response threshold of 10%. In support the organisation refers to the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the UN Special Rapporteur's guide to the implementation of language rights of linguistic minorities. The relevant paragraph of the guidance is as follows:

Street and locality names and topographical indicators intended for the public are important as markers of social identity, culture and history. A good, practical approach adopted in most countries is for the authorities to provide transparent legislation or procedures to allow bilingual or even trilingual signs, usually following the proportionality principle where there is a sufficient concentration or demand for such signs in minority languages. While national legislation varies, the low threshold where it is considered practicable and reasonable to provide such signs tends to vary between 5 per cent and 20 per cent of the local population, with the lowest threshold usually associated with the use of a minority language that also has some kind of official status or for traditional, historical reasons. The criteria for the display of signs in minority languages must be given a clear and unambiguous legislative basis for it to be effectively implemented. Bilingual or multilingual signs used by public authorities

demonstrate inclusiveness, and that various population groups share a locality in harmony and mutual respect.

- 3.6 In the first instance, it is important to remember that how the process is triggered is less important than the consultation itself as it is this that informs decision-making and is formally required by domestic law. A previous proposal by Conradh Na Gaeilge retaining the trigger of a one third petition but with a 50+1 rule in respect of responses has been withdrawn and replaced with the current proposal which contains a minimum response threshold in respect of the consultation.
- 3.7 The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, to which the UK is a signatory, establishes an obligation on state signatories not to create barriers in respect of the use of a minority language. The UN Special Rapporteur guidance may also be taken into account in formulating a policy position and as an aide to understand where treaty obligations land in practical terms. The state obligation arising in respect of the Charter has been taken into account in the preparation of this report and in respect of all of the options that would change the current policy. It is also my opinion that all meet the international legal standard and guidance referred to.
- 3.8 The guidance suggests that a threshold in the range of 5%-20% is acceptable. Thus the threshold suggested in any of the proposals that would change the current policy would appear to meet international standards (Members will recall that it was asserted that the minimum response threshold advocated in option 2 was criticised for not complying with international obligations). The reference to thresholds refers to the 'local population'. Thus any adoption of policy that has its roots in this guidance should refer to the percentage of occupiers in the street responding positively to the formal consultation required for the second nameplate to be erected. Essentially what consultation would seek to establish is if there is a sufficient community of interest to warrant the erection of a second nameplate. In that sense the consultation is not a referendum.
- 3.9 Any policy needs to reflect on the prevailing circumstances in which its adoption is being considered and the legal parameters established by the domestic legislation in which it is rooted. The Special Rapporteur guidance on the use of bilingual signage is caveated by reference to when it is reasonable and practicable to do so. Even the guidance in reflecting a range of acceptable thresholds, which it describes as 'low', implicitly suggests that there may be local or domestic circumstances that need to be taken into account in the formulation of any relevant policy.

- 3.10 The political landscape and maturity of post conflict states are likely to be factors that should be considered in fixing the point at which any such threshold might be set. The guidance also establishes that the status of the language and the extent of any community of users are important factors. Both Irish and Ulster Scots are registered under the Charter. Whilst the policy may relate to any language it is an inescapable fact that the predominant outworking will be for street signage in Irish.
- 3.11 OFMDFM policy, whilst dating back to 2005, emphasised the need for authorities to take positive action to ensure that shared and neutral spaces remain shared and used by all sections of the community. These and the other matters referred to in the preceding paragraph are real world considerations that cannot be swept away by portraying them as obstacles to the implementation of, in this case, a bilingual signage strategy. The guidance clearly allows for consideration of local context. Ultimately these are matters for the parties to take a position on. The domestic obligations in respect of equality and the need to promote good relations also need to be considered in terms of any potential wider impact.
- 3.12 Taking a look at the outworking of the policies is important. As an example a street of 100 occupiers applying the thresholds would have the following results;
- 3.13 Under option 1, the current policy position would require 67 occupiers to respond positively (with non-respondents treated as against).
- 3.14 Under option 2, with a minimum response threshold of one third, the number of positive responses required would be 17 (with 33 responses required).
- 3.15 Under option 3, with a fixed percentage at the upper end of the low threshold (20%) in the UN guidance the number of positive responses required would be 20 (representing a sufficient community of interest).
- 3.16 Under the Conradh Na Gaeilge proposal of a minimum response threshold of 10%, the number of positive responses required would be 6 (with 10 responses required).

Taking account of the legal requirement to have regard to the views of residents I remain of the view that the Conradh Na Gaeilge proposal is not sufficient in terms of discharging that obligation and is likely to be legally susceptible to challenge. There is a balance to be struck in terms of the requirement to take account of views as required by the legislation even if the 'regard' duty falls

at a lower level than some others. There must be some concept of proportionality in arriving at the outcome.

- 3.17 It is important to remember that residual discretion exists and that any policy should not be viewed as a straitjacket. There may be circumstances when notwithstanding the consultation response it may be appropriate to depart from the policy when there are clear reasons for doing so. That may work both ways in terms of outcome.

Principles/Mitigations

- 3.18 In the event that the agreement is reached to change the policy in line with either options 2 or 3 or 4 (the latter contrary to advice) it is suggested that the following principles could be considered in the context of a protocol that the parties may wish to sign up to.

1. That the policy will be used for the promotion of language rights and for the benefit of linguistic communities.
2. That the principles of equality, promoting good relations and respect will underpin the application of the policy in addition to the rights promoted by the policy itself.
3. That, as with any statutory consultation which the council is required to undertake, the City Solicitor may intervene if any complaint is made and a basis for that complaint established.
4. That any decision relating to the erection of a second nameplate in the city centre (business core) will, in addition to the current policy considerations, be subject to a wider public consultation to reflect the community of users.
5. That the policy will cover the corporately designated Gaelteacht Quarter until such time as a policy which may contain specific proposals in respect of a bilingual strategy have been adopted.

- 3.19 **Administrative Considerations – Finance and Resource Implications**

1. Whilst I have indicated that I am less concerned with how the formal consultation is triggered, it is important to remember that any change in policy in terms of the options presented will be likely to increase the number of applications received. For that reason members may wish to fix some petition threshold. This may also help filter those applications that are speculative.

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2. **Given the potential for increased numbers of applications the council will deal with no more than 5 in any given month. If numbers are excessive they will be held in a queue and dealt with in the order in which they have been received. This will also be managed in the context of the existing staffing resource and the established annual budget for street signage.**

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.20 Any proposed change to the policy will be subject to consultation and equality screening.”**

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Beattie,
Seconded by Councillor Lyons,

That the Committee agrees:

- i. to adopt Option 3 within the report, that is, to adopt an entirely new policy position, with the trigger for a consultation being an expression of interest by a resident/residents/Elected Member but with the percentage of residents responding positively being sufficient to erect a second nameplate being set at 15%, rather than the 20% which had been suggested within the report;
- ii. that the City core be included within the revised policy until such time as a policy similar to that in place for the Gaeltacht Quarter was formulated; and
- iii. that a report be submitted to a future meeting outlining the potential for increasing the number of applications which could be processed on a monthly basis.

On a recorded vote fourteen Members voted for the proposal and six against and it was declared carried.

<u>For 14</u>	<u>Against 6</u>
Councillors Beattie, Black, Carson, Garrett, Groogan, Heading, Long, Lyons, McAllister, McDonough-Brown, McLaughlin, McReynolds, Murphy and Walsh.	Aldermen Dorrian, Haire, Kingston and Sandford and Councillors Bunting and Pankhurst.

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Operational Issues

Minutes of the Meeting of the Party Group Leaders' Consultative Forum

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Party Group Leaders' Consultative Forum of 15th October.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Customer Focus Working Group

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Customer Focus Working Group of 30th September.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Climate Crisis Working Group

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Working Group on the Climate Crisis of 19th October.

Requests for Use of the City Hall and the Provision of Hospitality

The Committee approved the recommendations made in respect of applications received up to 9th October, 2020 as set out below:

NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED	CIVIC HQ RECOMMEND
2021 EVENTS						
Moloney and Kelly on behalf of Transformational Leadership Council	28 July 2022	<p>Celebratory Gala Dinner– welcome dinner event to open a 4 day conference for authors, trainers and business leaders taking place at Culloden Estate.</p> <p>Numbers attending – 100</p> <p><i>* Numbers and room layout will be reviewed and revised in line with COVID19</i></p>	A & B	£825 (Commercial organisers)	No Hospitality	Approve Charge No hospitality

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		<i>social distancing guidelines at the time of this event.</i>				
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**Request for use of the Cenotaph for
City of Belfast Grand Black Chapter Service**

The City Solicitor informed the Committee that a request had been received from the City of Belfast Grand Black Chapter for the use of the Cenotaph on 28th August, 2021 for a service and wreath laying ceremony. The event, which would run from 10.00 a.m. till 11.00 a.m., was being held to mark the Centenary of the formation of Northern Ireland and would involve approximately 1,000 participants, including band members. The People and Communities Committee had previously granted approval for the City of Belfast Grand Black Chapter to use the Lower Botanic Gardens later that day for a family fun event.

He pointed out that the organisers of the Cenotaph event would liaise closely with Council officers, adhere to the social distancing measures in place at that time and meet all associated costs.

The Committee approved the use of the Cenotaph for the event.

**Arrangements for Annual Remembrance
Sunday Ceremony and Armistice Day 2020**

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

1.1 To advise Members of proposals to mark this year’s Remembrance Sunday observance and Armistice Day at Belfast City Hall, in light of public health considerations.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is requested to:

- a) agree to the revised arrangements for Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day taking into account the need to comply with public health and social distancing guidelines and;**
- b) grant authority to inform the VIPs and Associations of the Committee’s decision with immediate effect bearing in mind the timescale required to make the necessary arrangements.**

3.0 Main Report

Remembrance Sunday

- 3.1** Members will be aware that the annual Remembrance Sunday ceremony is a significant event in the civic calendar affording an opportunity for Members, VIPs, Associations and members of the public to commemorate the fallen of two world wars in the Garden of Remembrance.
- 3.2** Members will also be aware that, in association with the Royal British Legion, the ceremony normally invites over 20 VIPs and over 40 Associations to participate in the service as well as drawing a large public audience in Donegall Square West and City Hall Grounds.
- 3.3** Following consultation with the Royal British Legion and other key stakeholders, it is recognised that the observance should be carried out in a dignified and appropriate manner in keeping with the solemnity of the occasion and in accordance with the prevailing public health regulations. This is consistent with guidance the Legion has communicated to its members with a strong message that Remembrance Sunday should be conducted in such a manner as to 'remember our fallen while protecting our communities'.
- 3.4** **As such, the following proposals are suggested for the conduct of Remembrance Sunday on the 8 November, 2020.**
- 1.** Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant for the County Borough of Belfast, Fionnuala J O'Boyle CBE, will enter the Garden of Remembrance to lay a wreath.
 - 2.** Following her departure, the Lord Mayor will lay a wreath on behalf of the city with a chaplain and bugler participating in a short ceremony. At no stage will there be more than 15 people in the Garden of Remembrance at any one time, in line with current public health restrictions. Attendance by Members of Council wishing to be present, will be configured on a proportionality basis, so that the total number of people at the ceremony does not exceed the permitted number.
 - 3.** VIP attendees will be offered the opportunity to attend, and lay wreaths on an individual basis, following the initial ceremony, between 11.45 am and 12.45 pm.
 - 4.** Associations will also be afforded the opportunity to attend and lay individual wreaths in four separate time slots

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between 1.15 pm and 3.30 pm. Participation will be limited to 1 individual per association to take account of the higher number of wreath-layers participating in Remembrance Sunday.

Members will recall that a similar system was introduced to mark the Somme Anniversary on 1 July which was well received by all those who took part.

- 3.5 In agreeing to participate, all attendees will observe guidelines set out by Council. Each act of remembrance will be carried out within social distancing guidelines, individuals will remain 2m apart at all times and Lord Mayor's Office and City Hall security will be on hand to greet attendees, oversee participation and ensure compliance with the council plan.
- 3.6 In light of the circumstances prevailing at this time, it will not be possible for the general public to attend to observe either of these ceremonies. It is important that Council is seen to take the lead and demonstrate civic leadership in observing an appropriate act of remembrance while endeavouring to dissuade a public gathering and Council will liaise closely with the Royal British Legion in communicating this shared message in engagement with local associations and the general public.

In addition, the Lord Mayor will record a video message prior to Remembrance Sunday to be utilized across a variety of platforms.

Armistice Day

- 3.7 It is proposed that arrangements for Armistice Day, which will be observed on Wednesday, 11th November at 11 am, should be broadly similar to those outlined above to mark Remembrance Sunday, in terms of attendance by Members of Council.
- 3.8 The proposals as outlined for Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day will be revised in line with any further public health restrictions should they be introduced prior to these dates.

3.9 **Financial and Resource Implications**

None

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

None"

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Governance

Standards Committee – Draft Terms of Reference

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the development of draft Terms of Reference for a new Standards Committee

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is recommended to:

- (i) note the attached report; and
- (ii) approve, in principle, the attached draft terms of reference for the Standards Committee

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Background

At its meeting on 18th September, the Committee agreed to introduce additional arrangements to ensure that the Council, its officers and Elected Members maintain the highest standards of conduct in all that they do. Such arrangements included the establishment of a new Standards Committee, the designation of a ‘Monitoring Officer’ responsible for all issues in relation to standards, and the introduction of a number of new governance arrangements aimed at promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Councillors and officers.

3.2 Standards Committee Terms of Reference

It is proposed that the Council establish a Standards Committee whose main functions would be to promote, sustain and safeguard the conduct of Councillors within the Council and the probity of all the Council’s proceedings.

The Terms of Reference for the Committee could include the promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct by Members and officers, a commitment to joint working across political groups and between officer and Members, oversight of any training required on all matters relating to standards and conduct, advising the Council on the Code of Conduct for Councillors and oversight of the Members’ Register and Declaration of Interests and associated procedures. The committee will have a role in managing and maintaining the

officer/member interface and relations. It will promote a shared understanding of roles and look at how we work collectively in a political environment.

A copy of the draft terms of reference is attached. These are draft Terms of Reference which will be updated based on the detail of the processes to be developed. Any updates will be brought back to Members for approval.

3.3 Complaints raised by an Officer about a Member

Complaints raised by an officer about a Member are already dealt with under the existing Local Government Employee and Councillor Working Relationship Protocol (issued by the Local Government Staff Commission).

Paragraph 5.9 of that Protocol provides that if an issue cannot be resolved informally and is sufficiently serious, that a formal meeting between the dispute parties, the relevant party group leader and a senior HR representative should take place. The Protocol advises that the minutes of any such meeting be presented to the relevant governance committee in the Council which in this case will be the Standards Committee.

Low level disputes between Members

It is proposed that the Standards Committee will be notified of the outcome of any 'low level disputes' between Members which have been dealt with under a voluntary proposed Local Resolution Protocol which will facilitate mediation of such disputes. Low level disputes are defined as those relating to alleged breaches in respect of the following paragraphs of the Code of Conduct:

- Code para 4.7 - You must not make vexatious, malicious or frivolous complaints against other councillors or anyone who works for, or on behalf of, your council.
- Code para 4.13(a) - You must show respect and consideration for others.

In such cases, the Committee will be advised as to the outcome of the mediation process – for example if no action was taken or if the issue was resolved successfully. The Committee will note that participation in the Local Resolution Protocol is entirely voluntary and any individual councillor is free to make a complaint to the Commissioner for Standards at any time.

Members will note that the introduction of a Local Resolution Protocol to deal with 'low level disputes' will be subject to discussions with both the Department for Communities and the

Office of the Northern Ireland Local Government Commissioner for Standards.

Serious Potential Breaches of the Code of Conduct

It is proposed that, on occasion, it will be possible for the Standards Committee itself to refer a Member to the Local Government Commissioner for Standards if the Committee feels that the Member might have breached the Code of Conduct for Councillors. This may be particularly relevant with regards to issues which are not categorised as low level disputes between Members but which are serious enough to damage the reputation of the Council.

In such a scenario the Monitoring Officer may identify or be notified of a potential breach of the Code of Conduct. After carrying out any necessary initial inquiries the Monitoring Officer will bring a report to the Standards Committee with a recommendation that either no further action is taken or that the Member be referred to the Commissioner for Standards.

There would however be some element of flexibility in matters of urgency or potential criminal matters where a referral may need to be made directly by the Chief Executive or the Monitoring Officer. The Chief Executive and the Monitoring Officer will therefore retain a residual right to refer any Member to the Local Government Commissioner for Standards regardless of whether the Committee has endorsed a recommendation to do so.

3.4 Corporate Ethics / Procurement

It is also suggested that the Standards Committee has an oversight role on consideration of issues in relation to corporate ethics including ethical standards, procurement, trading and investment in line with the developing corporate procurement strategy which is being brought to Members in the coming months.

3.5 Financial and Resource Implications

There will be minor financial implications associated with introducing a new Standing Committee. If the Standards Committee is to meet quarterly then it will require an associated Special Responsibility Allowance be allocated to the Chair and Deputy Chair positions of responsibility and funded from the reallocation of the existing Special Responsibility Allowance fund.

The committee will be serviced by existing resources within Governance and Compliance; and Democratic Services. A budget will be required to cover any associated training and external mediation services.

3.6 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

Any equality, good relations and rural needs assessments implications will be subject to the usual screening processes.

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

These are draft Terms of Reference which will be updated based on the detail of the processes to be developed. Any updates will be brought back to Members for approval.

The draft Terms of Reference for the Standards Committee may include some or all of the following functions:

- promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Elected Members and officers
- a commitment to encourage positive joint working across political groups and between officers and Members and to uphold the high standards of values and behaviours in a relationship of mutual trust
- advising the Council on the Code of Conduct for Councillors including any revisions to the Code
- oversight of any training required to train Members and relevant officers on all matters relating to standards and the promotion of the 12 Principles of Conduct in public life, including the Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors and any associated training identified by the Committee
- oversight of the Members' Register and Declaration of Interests
- to develop, monitor and review any local protocols required to support the standards regime within the Council
- to keep under review the Local Government Employee and Councillor Working Relationship Protocol
- to consider any minutes of a formal meeting held under Section 5.9 of the Local Government Employee and Councillor Working Relationship Protocol
- oversight of the Local Resolution Protocol which will deal with "low level disputes" alleging breaches of the Code of Conduct for

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Councillors and is designed to restore positive working relationships through mediation²

- consideration of any recommendation by the Monitoring Officer to refer any Councillor to the Local Government Commissioner for Standards in respect of any potential breach of the Code of Conduct for Councillors, particularly where the alleged breach relates to a matter which would potentially have a reputational consequence for the Council**
- the Monitoring Officer will retain a residual right to refer any matter to the Commissioner for Standards regardless of whether the Standards Committee has endorsed a recommendation from the Monitoring Officer to do so**
- oversight of any mediation process required to restore internal relationships between political parties, Members and/or officers**
- consideration of update reports into investigations carried out by the Public Services Ombudsman / Commissioner for Standards**
- oversight of the implementation of recommendations made by the Public Services Ombudsman / Commissioner for Standards**
- providing recommendations to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in respect of any amendments which need to be made to the Council Constitution in relation to the standards regime within the Council**
- consideration of issues in relation to corporate ethics including ethical standards, procurement, trading and investment.**

The Committee approved the draft Terms of Reference for the new Standards Committee.

² The Local Resolution Protocol will only deal with minor complaints about councillors made by other councillors. The Protocol will not consider complaints made by officers, members of the public or other third parties. The Protocol will not consider complaints made about officers.

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Issues Raised in Advance by Members

Unit Fees for St. George's Market

The Committee agreed, at the request of Councillor Gormley, that a report be submitted to its meeting in November on the potential for waiving, for a three-month period, rental fees for those businesses operating from the units in St. George's Market, in light of the trading difficulties which they were experiencing as a result of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

Chairperson