

People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 5th April, 2022

HYBRID MEETING OF THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Cobain (Chairperson);
Alderman Copeland;
Councillors Black, Bunting, Michael Collins,
Corr, Flynn, Garrett, Magee, Mulholland,
Newton and Verner.

In attendance: Mr. R. Crozier, Director of Neighbourhood Services;
Mrs. S. Toland, Director of City Services;
Mrs. C. Matthews, Director of Resources and Fleet;
Mrs. V. Smyth, Democratic Services Officer; and
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were recorded on behalf of Alderman McCoubrey and Councillors Baker, de Faoite, M. Kelly, McReynolds and Smyth.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 8th March were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that the minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 4th April.

Declarations of Interest

Councillors Black, Corr and Verner declared an interest in relation to item 2 (a) Community Provision Multi Annual Funding – 2023/2026, as they either worked for or were associated with an organisation in receipt of funding from the DfC. All those Members left the meeting whilst the matter was being discussed.

Restricted

The information contained in the reports associated with the following 2 items is restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the Members of the Press and public from the Committee meeting during discussion on the following 2 items as, due to their nature, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Section 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

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Community Provision Multi Annual Funding – 2023/2026

The Director of Neighbourhood Services reminded the Committee that each Council area had been allocated an award from the Department for Communities (DfC) to deliver a Community Support Programme (CSP), to support the aims of the DfC Building Inclusive Communities Strategy 2020 – 2025. She advised that Belfast City Council's CSP delivered a range of support to the community and voluntary sector through an open call for large grant programmes and direct funding for advice provision across the city. The two grant programmes being Community Capacity and Community Buildings Revenue Grants

The Director of Neighbourhood Services further reminded the Committee that, at the October 2021 meeting of Council, it had been agreed that the awards for the two grant programmes for 2021/22 would be rolled over to the 2022/23 financial year. The Members had been advised at this time that officers would proceed to develop a new multi annual bid that would open for applications during Summer 2022.

The Committee considered the contents of the report and recommendations contained therein in relation to the framework for the 2023/26 programme which sought approval of the outlined approach for implementing the large grant funding that was provided through Community Provision for activity from April 2023 – March 2026 and sought permission for a 3-year Letter of Offer to be issued to successful applicants, to extend until March 2026. The Committee noted that this approval recognised that the level of support required from the Council might increase if there was a reduction in the level of funding provided by the DfC.

The Committee noted that the Council had received an annual Letter of Offer from the DfC for the Community Support Plan, and that there was no indication that the level of funding from DfC would remain at the same level for the financial years 2023/24 – 2025/26. As noted in the March report to this Committee, the Council had not yet received the 2022/23 Letter of Offer.

The Director explained that the level of grant award from the DfC via the Community Support Programme (CSP) was traditionally £1,437,333.83. This consisted of two elements:

- Restricted Advice Grant of £607,928.42; and
- Community Support General £829,408.44.

The Council supplemented the £829,408 Community Support General DfC allocation to provide an overall budget of £1,929,829 which was broken down as follows:

- Capacity Building Grants - £835,824; and
- Revenue for Community Buildings - £1,056,296.

The Director drew the Members' attention to a number of key issues contained within the report and the following specific points were noted and agreed by the Committee:

- officers to submit an update report in the Autumn to advise of the outcome of the grant assessments, this would include an option for area-based allocations. The Committee noted that allocations were normally based on a citywide quality basis;

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- noted that the current upper limit for revenue awards was £20,000 per annum and agreed, given the current economic climate, to build in capacity for this to be increased;
- noted that the current upper limit for revenue awards was £50,000 and agreed, given the current economic climate, to build in capacity for this also to be increased;
- noted that if the upper limits did require to be uplifted that some groups might not receive funding as the overall budgets remained the same (as outlined above);
- agreed to include staffing costs associated with the running of the buildings, such as caretaking and cleaning, as eligible costs for the Community Buildings Revenue grant programme; and
- agreed to amend the aim of the Community Capacity Grant Aid to read as follows:

‘to support community development organisations that support, advocate and take action in relation to the interests of their members and communities, where communities will be defined as geographic communities and/or communities of interest’.

Following discussion, the Committee:

- agreed the approach outlined above for implementation of the large grant funding provided through Community Provision for activity from April 2023 – March 2026 and that an update report would be submitted in the Autumn which would provide detail in regard to the outcome of the awards;
- agreed the issue of the 3-year Letters of Offer to successful applicants to extend until March 2026; and
- noted that the level of support required from Council might increase if there was to be a reduction in the level of funding provided by the Department for Communities.

Waste Quarterly Update

The Director of Resources and Fleet provided the Committee with a comprehensive update on the following matters:

- The City’s current position, activities, and initiatives to address the challenges in relation to recycling of waste;
- The current activities of the Northern Ireland Resources Network;
- The latest position on the arc21 Residual Waste Treatment Plant Project and the interim arrangements around the disposal of residual waste;
- Activities concerning Household Waste Recycling Centres; and
- The draft response to the DEFRA consultation on the Introduction of Mandatory Digital Waste Tracking.

During discussion the Director addressed a number of queries in relation to Bryson House recycling figures and the possibility of tracking missed waste collections through the

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Customer Hub. The Director also undertook to brief the Members in the future regarding the current situation with the ARC21 contract, following which the Committee:

- granted approval for Mr. M. Campbell (Project Officer) to apply for membership of the Board of Northern Ireland Resource Network (NIRN);
- endorsed the Council's draft response to the DEFRA consultation on the Introduction of Mandatory Digital Waste Tracking; and
- agreed that the Customer Focus Task and Finish Group would investigate the potential of 'real time' local community issues being logged via the system and to provide an update at a future meeting.

Matters referred back from the Council/Motions

Notice of Motion - Graffiti Removal

The Director of City Services informed the Members that the Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 30th March, had referred the following motion, which had been proposed by Alderman Dorrian and seconded by Councillor Newton, to the People and Communities Committee for consideration:

“With the growth of graffiti vandalism across the city, this Council will consider investing in and expanding the in-house unit charged with tackling this problem.

At present there is a team which deals primarily with sectarian, racist and homophobic graffiti, however, there has been a noticeable growth in more general graffiti, which undermines efforts to keep our city clean.

This is not a problem unique to Belfast but is one for which we should consider innovative solutions alongside traditional cleaning methods.

Council will also work in an inter-agency capacity to address issues around unwanted graffiti across the city. In doing so, Council should consider how its team can be made available to other agencies on a commercial basis.”

The Committee adopted the motion and agreed that a report on how this would be facilitated, resourced and managed would be submitted to a future meeting.

Committee/Strategic Issues

Belfast Agenda Review (Action Planning Update)

(Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy, attended in connection with this item).

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 progress of the Belfast Agenda Review, including the action planning phase.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- i Note the following report which was submitted to the March SP&R Committee outlining progress of the development of the refreshed Belfast Agenda Strategy document and supporting four-year Delivery Action Plans.**
- ii Consider and provide comments on the emerging strategic intents and measures of success (stretch goals) as set out in slides 12-22 in Appendix 1.**
- iii Note the proposed next steps and timeline as set out in slide 33 in Appendix 1; and**
- iv Note the plans for continued elected member engagement, detailed in section 3.5.**

3.0 Main report

3.1 The following report was submitted to April's meeting of the Strategic Policy & Resources (SP&R) Committee and sets out the emerging strategic framework for the refreshed Belfast Agenda. Given the cross-cutting nature of the priorities, objectives and targets which will provide the focus for community planning over the period 2022-26, it was agreed to bring this to the attention of members of the People & Communities Committee.

The November 2021 SP&R Committee received an update on the emerging findings and recommendations following the initial phase of Belfast Agenda: Continuing the Conversation engagement to inform the refreshed Belfast Agenda (BA) for the period 2022-2026. As reported at the November meeting, there was broad agreement that the existing long-term vision and outcomes of the BA remain relevant, and the proposed priorities for focus were the things that stakeholders and communities believed community planning could help address over the next 4-year period. There had been feedback in relation to how some of the priorities had been framed and the need for them to be easily understood. As a result, some minor changes had been made to the framing of the priority areas such as, changing 'economic recovery' to 'Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Growth'. A summary of the current Belfast Agenda priority framework (which reflects many of the changes) is attached at Appendix 1.

3.2 Bringing focus and commitment to delivery

Building on the recommendations and consensus reached through Phase I, the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) and council has committed to co-design specific and measurable

actions plan(s) which would underpin the priority areas of focus. Subsequently, a small group of core partners (cross-sectoral) has been brought together to help further develop the approach to co-designing each of the priority areas and cross-cutting themes. Each task and finish group were responsible for analysing the range of outputs from phase 1 of the 'Belfast Agenda: Continuing the Conversation' engagement process; assessing relevant strategies, plans and local intelligence (including information received through the call for evidence); feedback from the community and Belfast Agenda Board engagement workshops; online and paper-based survey results; and the current delivery plans of existing Belfast Agenda Boards.

Based on this initial analysis, partners prepared a strategic framework to help bring focus and shape the co-designed action plans consisting of:

1. What we are trying to achieve over the next 4 years (strategic intent);
2. How will we measure success (stretch goals); and
3. How will we realise such success (SMART Action Plan(s)).

Figure 1 below illustrates this framework and how a structured and informed approach is being implemented with partners to ensure there is a strong thread between each of the priority areas, ambitions, measures of success and importantly the focus for collaborative action.

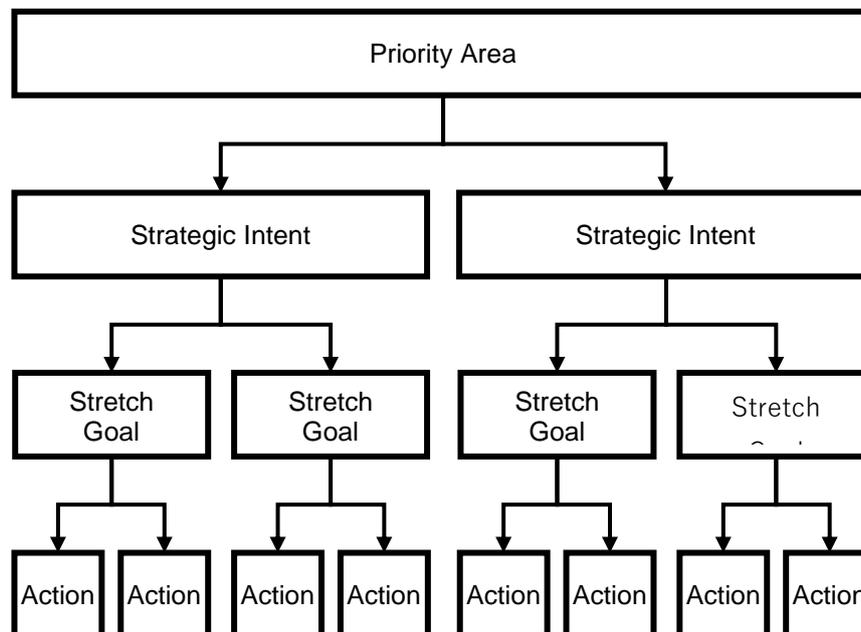


Figure 1: strategic framework adopted by partners to bring focus and shape co-designed action plans

- 3.3 Output from this initial exercise will inform the next phase of the Continuing the Conversation engagement programme, where we will continue to work with partners and communities to co-design delivery plans. This represents an ongoing and complex process, which requires participation and involvement across sectors and communities at multiple levels, which has resulted in some priorities being more developed than others. The emerging frameworks for each of the priorities are attached as part of the presentation attached at Appendix 1 (slides 12 to 22) which had been discussed with the All-Party Working group on Community Planning when it met on 23 February 2022. Please note that since the working group meeting of 23 February, the strategic intents and stretch goals have been further developed, particularly the City Development elements following the Board meeting on Friday 11 March. This reflects the dynamic nature of the co-design process which remains a work in progress. Members are asked to consider and provide feedback on the emerging frameworks outlined by 15 April 2022 to communityplanning@belfastcity.gov.uk. This feedback will then be reflected in future iterations and can be discussed further with members as the strategy is further refined.
- 3.4 As discussed with the All-Party Working Group, it is proposed that the timeline for developing the refreshed Belfast Agenda strategy document and underpinning delivery plans includes sufficient time for direct and genuine engagement with partners, communities/ communities of interest and specific sectors including the business and private sector over April and May 2022. In addition, more formal and intensive consultation activities are planned on the strategy document as well as further engagement to co-design the action plans during May and June 2022. Slide 33 in Appendix 1 outlines the proposed next steps and timeline for this process. It is felt that the timeline will allow for greater input and enable valuable buy-in to the emerging plans.
- 3.5 Political engagement with elected members

In addition to the All-Party Working Group on Community Planning on 23 February 2022, and subsequently the Strategic Policy, and Resources Committee, it is also intended to bring a similar paper, presentation, and discussions to the Social Policy Working Group in April 2022. The intention would be to bring a further iteration of the draft strategy and emerging action plans to Party Group Briefings and Committee in April 2022 for further consideration, input, and refinement. It is important to note that the feedback and recommendations from Members received following the All-Party Working Group on Community Planning meeting (23 Feb) will be factored into the continued refinement of the BA Refresh.

3.6 Financial and Resource Implications

Any financial implications arising from this report will be covered from existing budgets. The review process will continue to involve the participation of all community planning partners, who will need to commit their resources to the review process and the agreed action plans.

3.7 Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment

It is recommended that the consultation and engagement activities to review the Belfast Agenda will take account of the draft Audit of Inequalities and include specific sessions with targeted harder to reach groups to ensure that equality implications are considered as part of the review process.”

The Committee noted the update provided.

Physical Programme and Asset Management

Temporary facility support to the Midland Boxing Club

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 Committee is asked to note that Midland Boxing Club premises will be closed for re-development from June 2022 until March 2023. This project is being funded by the Belfast Investment fund and will be delivered by the council’s Physical Programme department. Council officers are currently working with the club to identify suitable alternative premises for interim use to enable them to continue to deliver their boxing programme to their 60+ members.
- 1.2 Outside of boxing, they also support the delivery of youth outreach programmes in North Belfast and their premises are normally used for hosting interface diversification activities in summer months. This has helped to strengthen good relations with other clubs from across the interface and tackle anti-social behaviour in periods of peak tension.
- 1.3 The club currently train 5 nights a week Monday to Friday, 5pm – 9pm and some Saturday mornings. While their premises are closed during the redevelopment, they require a suitable building with toilet and changing facilities that can be used for boxing activities and the delivery of other youth activities.

- 1.4 The club is also used by Midland Social & Recreational club who deliver a day-time programme Monday to Friday for older people in the local community. Ideally the club would like to find a suitable temporary premise to cater for the social and recreational club as well.
- 1.5 Woodvale bowling pavilion, which is situated in Woodvale Park, has been identified as a possible temporary home for both clubs. The bowling green and pavilion has not had a resident bowling club or interest from casual bowlers for over 5 years. This would offer an opportunity for community usage of the facility and could be the catalyst for local interest when the boxing club return to their own premises.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to

- Grant authority for officers to repurpose Woodvale bowling pavilion as a temporary home for Midland Boxing Club and Midland Social and Recreation Club whilst their premises are being redeveloped.
- Officers have met with the club on site and the facilities are considered to be suitable. Committee is further asked to grant authority for a key handling arrangement to be drafted between Council and Midland Boxing Club to enable the clubs to access the facility without the need for Council staff.

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

- 3.1 Officers have explored the option with representatives from Midland Boxing Club and confirmed that Woodvale bowling pavilion is a suitable venue to house their range of activities. A meeting took place with the club on site on Thursday 31 March 2022. The building is sizeable with a main hall, a side room, large kitchen facilities, toilets and changing rooms. The interior ceiling is pitched, so the height is suitable for the boxing ring to be erected on one side of hall.
- 3.2 There are adequate parking facilities within the park so it is not envisaged that increased usage and traffic at the site will cause any disruption to local residents or existing park users.
- 3.3 Following due diligence, it is likely that a level of training will need to be carried out with representatives from the clubs who have responsibility for facility management. Midland Boxing Club successfully manage their own premises and therefore with

adequate training around health and safety, security and fire evacuation procedures, officers are confident that the club should be able to manage the building via temporary facility management and key handling arrangement.

3.4 Midland Social and Recreation Club are in receipt of a Council revenue grant. It is envisaged this grant will be transferable to cover some running costs of the temporary venue.

3.5 Financial and Human Resource Implications

Midland & Social Recreation are currently in receipt of a £4500 revenue grant which could be transferred over to cover eligible costs at the interim facilities.

BIF capital budget also included scope to cover storage of boxing equipment during the period of redevelopment.

3.6 Asset and Other Implications

Council officers will carry out adequate training with representatives from Midland who have responsibility for facility management. A temporary facility management and key handling agreement will be drafted by legal services.

3.7 Equality or Good Relations Implications/
Rural Needs Assessment

There are no known implications.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Operational Issues

Installation of Sandbag Containers

The Members considered a report seeking consideration of a proposal to locate three new sandbag containers on Council land, as part of a Multi-Agency partnership approach to help mitigate and support communities across Belfast that had previously been impacted by flooding incidents.

The Director of City Services advised that it was anticipated that the proposal would enhance community resilience within flooding ‘hot spot’ areas and help to support residents, Elected Members and Community Groups to be more resilient in times of potential flooding.

She explained that Emergency Planning, in conjunction with other partner agencies, had identified the following three locations that had previously suffered with incidents of flash flooding:

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- Site 1. - Stockman's Lane (Musgrave Park);
- Site 2. - Shore Road, Shore Road Playing Fields (green space beside existing container); and
- Site 3. - Ardoyne Community Centre.

The Director advised that, once the containers had been located, the Regional Community Resilience Group members could commence engagement with residents to establish Community Resilience groups in these areas. They could also potentially link in with the existing community groups to enhance this community resilience work.

The Committee noted that the proposed works would be funded from the 2022-2023 Emergency Planning budget expenditure.

In response to a suggestion from a Member that sandbag provision in the Ardmore areas be considered, the Director of City Services undertook to liaise further with Councillor McAteer regarding the request.

The Committee agreed to locate three new sandbag containers at Stockmans Lane, Shore Road and Ardoyne Community Centre.

Chairperson