

# People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 6th December, 2016

## MEETING OF PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Garrett (Chairperson);  
the High Sheriff (Alderman Rodgers);  
Aldermen McKee and Sandford; and  
Councillors Austin, Beattie, Copeland, Corr,  
Heading, Jones, Lyons, Magennis, McCabe, Milne,  
Newton and Nicholl.

Also attended: Councillors Attwood and Collins.

In attendance: Mr. N. Grimshaw, Director of City and  
Neighbourhood Services;  
Mrs. R. Crozier, Assistant Director;  
Mrs. S. Toland, Assistant Director;  
Mrs. C. Taggart, Community Development Manager; and  
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

Apologies were reported on behalf of Alderman McCoubrey and Councillors McCusker and O'Neill.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 8th November were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st December.

### **Declarations of Interest**

Councillors Austin, Beattie, Corr and Magennis declared an interest in respect of item 7 (b) Community Development Grant Programme 2017/18, in that they were associated with organisations that received grant funding from the Programme.

Councillor Magennis declared an interest in respect of item 5 (b) Review of Management Arrangements for the pitch at Sally Gardens, in that he was a member of the organisation's management committee.

### **New Member of the Council**

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Georgina Milne, who had replaced former Councillor Brown, to her first meeting.

**Items Withdrawn from Agenda**

**Request for Approval of World Celtic Spey  
Casting event at the Waterworks Park**

The Committee noted that the above item had been withdrawn from the agenda.

Noted.

**Presentation**

**Presentation – City Wide Tribunal Services**

The Chairperson welcomed to the meeting Mrs. Maria Morgan and Mrs Sinead McKinley who were representing the Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service (BCTS).

Mrs. Morgan thanked the Members for the opportunity to present. She reported that she wished to raise the awareness of the valuable work of the Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service and highlight the potential impact that the impending withdrawal of funding could have.

The representative reported that the citywide model had proven to be very successful over the past 3 years and highlighted that it had greatly enhanced all front line services and helped build capacity within the sector in Belfast.

Mrs. Morgan outlined that BCTS had two fundamental elements:

1. anti-poverty project – it helped Belfast citizens to claim back benefits and entitlements; and
2. enabled people to exercise their right to appeal – the right to a fair hearing and tribunal representation.

The representative concluded her presentation by advising that it was anticipated that there would be a dramatic rise in the number of appeals with the introduction of welfare reform. She reiterated the worthy work of the Service within the whole community and asked the Council to consider extending the funding to enable the Service to look for other avenues of funding.

With the permission of the Chairperson, Councillor Attwood addressed the Committee and asked the representative to provide some case examples to the Committee to help them better understand the work of the service.

The representatives proceeded to explain the appeals process in detail to the Members and then addressed a number of questions.

The Chairman thanked the representatives for their attendance at the meeting.

Noted.

**Update Report on Citywide Tribunal Service**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

**1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Members with an update on the findings of the evaluation of the Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service and to present options for consideration in relation to the future funding support of the programme.**

**1.2 Members will be aware that this report was deferred at the November committee pending party group briefings. Maria Morgan, Ligoniel Improvement Association, will present to the meeting of this committee.**

**1.3 By way of update the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services wrote to officials in DfC to seek any opportunity for sufficient funding to allow the Service to continue to the end of the financial year, which would allow a little more time to work with groups to secure sustainable external funding. They responded that there was no funding available and they had already provided additional funding for generalist advice in year.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- **Note that funding for the citywide Tribunal Service will cease in December 2016. Members are aware that it is unlikely council will be in a position to re-allocate any forecast in-year underspend for non-recurrent purposes in 2017/18. Officers are currently working with BAG in order to review their service delivery requirements, to identify alternative potential funding sources and to use the evaluation to support any subsequent funding bid**
- **Note the Deloitte MCS report which recognises the success to date of the Belfast Tribunal Service however recommends that, for the model to continue to be effective, it must adapt to the changes in the advice environment notably the next phase of welfare reform, the DfC investment in regional mitigation measures and the introduction of the Mandatory Reconsideration Step.**

**3.0 Belfast Tribunal Service Evaluation**

**Introduction**

**3.1** The Belfast Advice Group was established in 2012 to develop proposals for a citywide tribunal representation service. Ligoneil Improvement Association (LIA) was appointed as Lead Partner for the Belfast Advice Group (BAG) and entered into a Funding Agreement on behalf of the BAG to:

- Develop and deliver a citywide, free, independent, confidential and accessible tribunal service to all residents in Belfast and
- Develop other areas of partnership work pertaining to the advice sector in Belfast to establish common practices and processes across Belfast, subject to the terms and conditions contained in The Funding Agreement.

**3.2** The Council agreed to fund the 2 year project to the total value of £426,209.60 to provide free effective representation for people appealing disallowed Social Security Agency decisions in regard to benefit entitlement. The service includes a senior tribunal representative, four tribunal representatives and two tribunal assistants. All staff are based in LIA and the project services the entire city: North, South, East, West and Central Belfast. Referrals to the service primarily come from all 21 Belfast City Council funded advice centres and external organisations including healthcare professionals, support organisations, MLAs and councillors.

**3.3** Council agreed to extend the programme to the value of £175,000 in March 2015 and further additional resources made available through the Community Support Programme secured the programme to 31st December 2016.

**3.4** In order to evaluate the impact of the work to date and to inform any request for sustained funding, the Council adopted Deloitte MCS to complete an independent review. The terms of reference for this work involved:

- Review the effectiveness of the Tribunal Service in meeting its objectives and targets and any additional benefits that the service has achieved.
- Consideration of the governance arrangements of the programme and in particular the Belfast Advice Group (BAG) and the future need for a strategic body in light of changes to the Advice sector and Welfare Reform.

- The examination of the impact of the Council's investment in the project and to determine the need for future funding in the context of the Council's Generalist Advice Programme, the New Advice Strategy for NI and Welfare Reform.
- The identification of options and make recommendations options for future funding needs and levels, future delivery methods in the context of the Generalist Advice Programme including Welfare Reform mitigation programmes.

### Key Findings

- 3.5 **Rationale:** In summary, Deloitte MCS report that the key rationale to establish the Citywide Tribunal Service was to increase support to those appealing benefit decisions in the wake of Welfare Reform. As Members are aware, the implementation of Welfare Reform was delayed in Northern Ireland. Welfare Reform has now been agreed as part of the Fresh Start agreement and Implementation Plan (November 2015) and substantive changes will be rolled out during the second half of 2016. The Deloitte review notes that the context in support of the original need to establish the CTS remains evident, however, if the programme is extended, the ongoing strategic need should be reviewed periodically as it may change, for example, depending on the success of the regional mitigation measures at delivering results for clients.
- 3.6 They further note the NI strategic focus is shifting from attaining the correct decision for benefit appellants at Tribunal, to reducing the number of appeals by making better decisions earlier in the process (e.g. via the use of the Mandatory Reconsideration Step). They summarise these key strategic, policy and sectoral issues impacting on the Citywide Tribunal Service and the Advice sector as a whole:
- 3.7 **The Fresh Start Agreement** means significant welfare reform, i.e. changes to people's welfare benefits, overcoming months and years (not least the move from DLA to PIP).
- 3.8 **The Mandatory Reconsideration Process** which is being introduced by the Social Security Agency is being put in place. In part this is seeking to reduce the number of cases going to appeal. The Mandatory Reconsideration Step means that someone wanting to review a decision must give the social security office the opportunity to formally review the decision and resolve welfare decision disputes quicker without the need to go to appeal. This process is due to commence in December 2016.

3.9 **The Belfast Agenda**: There is an alignment between the Citywide Tribunal Service and outcomes within the Belfast Agenda, most notably reducing poverty and reducing health inequalities.

3.10 **Mitigation Measures Welfare Reform**: there is an agreed regional approach to mitigating welfare reform under Strands one and two of the Evason Report. The detail of the strands are summarised as:

Strand 1 – The provision of a centralised telephone service. A joint bid to the value of £2.5 million has been submitted by the regional consortium (Citizens Advice Bureau as lead partner, Law Centre & Advice NI) to establish a helpline. Ten staff will be employed directly by Advice NI. The Department for Communities (DfC) are currently finalising the assessment of this proposal and hope to award a contract over the coming weeks.

Strand 2 – The provision of independent face to face services (additional advisors) This will result in 35 additional advisors regionally across the eleven council areas: 25 will be employed by CAB and 10 by Advice NI. This resource will be deployed across the city, however, the number of staff allocated to Belfast has not yet been finalised.

Strand 3 – Welfare Reform Support Programme (contract via local councils) There are two elements to the agreed DfC support programme:

3.11 **Welfare Reform Readiness Programme**: At its October meeting, Committee accepted additional funding of £203,677.26 to provide support to front line advice organisations currently funded through the council's Community Support Advice grant. The programme will ensure that advice organisations are prepared to assist customers through the implementation of Welfare Reform.

3.12 **Welfare Reform Training Programme**: A further additional £65,400.00 was agreed to support access to training support for all front line generalist advisers and volunteers. The programme will enable front line advice organisations to complete immediate training requirements related to Welfare Reform.

**3.13 Operation & Governance**

Deloitte MCS summarise the operation of the Citywide Tribunal Service as follows:

- The need for representation at appeal was demonstrated through consultations with a wide range of stakeholders.
- According to statistics provided by the Lead Partner, the Service achieves a higher appeal success rates (65% to 54%) than a 2013 benchmark noted in a study by Citizens Advice report which highlighted the value of representation, making a significant difference to the likelihood of success at appeal.
- The monetary value added by the service has been calculated at £5.4 million (after the exclusion of the proportion of successful appeals which would have occurred anyway without Tribunal Service intervention). A significant Return on Investment of 12.79 shows that the Service is achieving high returns for its clients when set against the level of investment from the Council.
- The service has progressed well against the objectives set. Statistical targets have been exceeded in appeal representation and pre-appeal revised decisions. However, there is a need to revise these objectives in line with changes to the benefit system associated with Welfare Reform, including more of a focus on achieving better decisions before requiring a tribunal. This could mean increasing the target for pre-appeal revised benefit decisions.
- The service is currently wholly reliant on funding from Belfast City Council. Funding to support the service has come through various mechanisms – the investment programme and non recurring revenue estimates. The funding for this project is not mainstreamed into the annual revenue estimates programme. Given the time limited nature of BCC funding commitment, officers are supporting BAG to identify other funding sources when the BCC financial supports comes to an end in December.
- Over the summer period, steps have been taken by BAG, with Council officer support, to examine other potential avenues for funding. Council Officers and representatives from the Big Lottery People and Communities Programme have had an initial meeting to determine the potential for funding the Citywide Tribunal Service. BAG is to commence a pre-

application process with Big Lottery with the aim of securing funding from this programme.

3.14 **3. Deloitte MCS's Identification and Analysis of Options**

Deloitte presents four options based on their analysis, and has shortlisted two of those options for further consideration. These are summarised below:

(1) **Cease the Tribunal Service**

This option would see the Council end its support for the Tribunal Service. This would mean that the ability of Belfast citizens to receive representation in appealing a benefits decision would be reduced and would be largely limited to the tribunal support offered by generalist advice workers. (Deloitte have not shortlisted this option)

(2) **Continue, however, apply an alternative delivery model**

This option would see an alternative delivery model introduced. BAG would continue to support representation at Appeal, but delivery would be the responsibility of each Belfast Advice Consortium geographically. BAG would seek ongoing funding to resource a Tribunal Representative within each consortium who would represent citizens referred to it by its consortium members. (Deloitte have not shortlisted this option)

(3) **Continue under the current model**

This option would see the continuation of the Tribunal Service through the current delivery model. BAG would source ongoing funding and continue to provide the service through a Lead Partner. Under this option, it is recommended that proportionate change is made to some aspects of the Service, including governance and monitoring as outlined in the Deloitte report. The funder (yet to be secured) would consider a more committed funding period as was the case during Funding Stage One. (This has been shortlisted for further consideration)

(4) **Continuation of the model**

Continue the current model but responding effectively to the impact of regional changes and widening the funding mix. (This has been shortlisted for further consideration). This option sees the continuation of the service using the same delivery model (i.e. a dedicated team located together) and has two dimensions. Firstly, there are a series of regional changes that

should have an impact on the need for the tribunal service. These include the recent implementation of the Mandatory Reconsideration Step by the SSA, and the additional resources being invested in the advice sector through the mitigation measures (set out in Section 2.2.2). These should support clients and therefore reduce the need for tribunal representation. If the need for the service is demonstrably reduced through these (and evidence should be collated on what the impacts are), the funding support should be changed to reflect this. Secondly, a key theme within the evaluation has been a reliance on the single funder: BCC. They note the risk associated with any transition away from this single funder arrangement. They welcome the initial steps which BAG are taking with BCC officer support to address this.

**3.15 Financial & Resource Implications**

There are no resource implications attached to this report as the time-limited BCC funding expires on 31st December 2016.

**3.16 Equality or Good Relations Implications**

The programme is Citywide and open and accessible to all sections of the community.”

The Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed that, given the timescales, the Director of City and Neighbourhood Service would write immediately following the meeting seeking permission for an all-party deputation from the Council to meet with the Minister for Communities, and the Minister for Justice to discuss the funding shortfall.

**Community Development Grant Programme 2017/18**

The Committee considered a report which had been presented by the Community Development Manager in relation to the budget deficit in the Community Development Grant Programme 2017/18.

Several Members voiced their concern that there would be insufficient funds to support an extension of contracts across the grant categories.

The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services reiterated that there was no additional non-recurrent resource available from the Council to extend the existing grants programme and he drew the Members' attention to the details of the Council's deficit position in regards to the rates settlement with the Land and Property Services agency.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to refer the matter to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration within the context of the overall rate setting process.

**People and Communities Committee,  
Tuesday, 6th December, 2016**

**Matters Referred Back/Notice of Motion**

**Comber Greenway**

The Committee was advised that, at the Council meeting on 1st November, the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Newton and seconded by Councillor Kyle, had been referred to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee for consideration:

“This Council notes the benefits which the Comber Greenway facility has created in allowing Belfast’s citizens and visitors to the City the opportunity to become increasingly active and to promote increased health benefits.

The Council calls upon the Department for Infrastructure to develop, through a collective approach, a strategic, political and costed plan for the Comber Greenway, as part of the recently launched Strategic Plan for Greenways within Northern Ireland.”

At the Council meeting, the proposer, with the consent of the Council, had agreed to amend his motion to include provision for Council officers to submit to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee a report outlining the active role which the Council could take in progressing the issues raised within the motion. It had also been agreed at this meeting that the Department for Infrastructure would be requested to bring forward a strategy for delivering a cycle network in Belfast.

The Members were advised that officers felt that, given that the Comber Greenway had already been considered by the People and Communities Committee, that the Motion should be considered by that Committee instead of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee.

The Committee agreed that the notice of Motion regarding the Comber Greenway be considered by the People and Communities Committee instead of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee and that a report be submitted to a future meeting.

**Physical Programme and Asset Management**

**William McFadzean Memorial**

The Committee was reminded that a request had been received from the McFadzean VC Memorial Committee on behalf of Cregagh and Clonduff Community Associations: Museum of Orange Heritage and local ex-servicemen’s groups, for permission to place a Victoria Cross Commemorative Stone in the area of Cregagh Road/Cregagh Park, in memory of William McFadzean VC.

The officer reported that the request had been referred to the East Area Working Group for its consideration and a consultation exercise had been undertaken. She reported that in general the feedback received had provided a positive endorsement of the proposal, however, the family of the late Mr. W. McFadzean had stated clearly that they did not wish for the proposal to progress.

**People and Communities Committee,  
Tuesday, 6th December, 2016**

The Assistant Director reported that correspondence had since been received from a representative of the Memorial Committee accepting that the project would not progress but raising concerns about the level of support for the project, she detailed that a suggestion had been made regarding the installation of an alternative memorial on the site.

Following consideration the Committee approved:

- the recommendation of the East Area Working Group that the project would not be progressed in keeping with the views of the McFadzean family; and
- agreed that the matter would be referred back to the East Area Working Group for its consideration regarding an alternative memorial on the same site.

**Review of Management Arrangements  
for the pitch at Sally Gardens**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

**1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Committee on the management arrangements at Sally Gardens. The Committee is reminded that at its meeting in April 2016 it agreed to operate a 3 month pilot scheme with Poleglass Community Association (PCA). The 3 month pilot scheme has operated from 5th September 2016 and the association has been paid a monthly fee of £3666.67.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to;**

- **Agree to extend the pilot agreement on a month by month basis for a maximum of 3 months to potentially cover the period December 2016 – February 2017.**

**3.0 Main report**

**3.1 The Committee is reminded that, at its meeting in April 2016, it agreed to operate a 3 month pilot management arrangement at Sally Gardens. Essentially the Poleglass Community Association would carry out a range of duties.**

**3.2 The Association had indicated in discussions prior to the agreement that it had aspirations for a wide use of the facility beyond the normal bookings of training and matches. The Association had prepared a Sports Development Plan which identified a number of objectives. By meeting these**

**People and Communities Committee,  
Tuesday, 6th December, 2016**

objectives the Association would encourage greater use of the facility and generate increased income which would meet the fee cost of the management arrangement.

- 3.3 A brief summary of the figures from September and October are given below:**

	<b>August</b>	<b>September</b>	<b>October</b>
<b>Bookings</b>	77	72	91
<b>Full Pitch</b>	50	40	46
<b>Half Pitch</b>	22	32	45
<b>Adult</b>	28	22	29
<b>Concession</b>	41	50	62
<b>Income £</b>	<b>3,875</b>	<b>2,924</b>	<b>3,766</b>

Note: Matches and Match rates are not included

- 3.4 It is the view of officers that 2 months of information are insufficient to make a decision regarding whether the scheme should be continued or not. Officers will be meeting with the Association by the end of November to review the arrangements and to review the sports development plan and consider how the use of the facility can be increased.**
- 3.5 In relation to the upkeep of the facility, it is kept clean and tidy in accordance with the agreement.**
- 3.6 Members are asked to note that Council will meet the cost of the maintenance of the pitch and the utility costs associated with it. Within this context the facility is currently operating at a loss as a monthly payment of £3,666.67 is made to PCA. Previously it had been anticipated that the facility would generate sufficient income to meet the cost of the fee, while this was achieved in October it was not met in September and in aggregate over the 2 months the agreement has had a net cost of £642 which excludes utility and ongoing maintenance costs. However, if the ambitions in the Sports Development Plan can be realised not only will it result in improved levels of activity but it will result in increased income.**
- 3.7 Financial & Resource Implications**

The monthly cost of fees to manage the pitch facility will be £3,667 per month.

### **3.8 Equality or Good Relations Implications**

**There are no equality or good relation implications at this time.”**

Following a query regarding difficulties with the booking system at the facility, the Assistant Director advised that she was aware of some issues and she assured the Committee that matters would be resolved.

The Committee adopted the recommendations as set out within the report.

#### **Connswater Community Greenway - naming of bridge structures at Dixon Playing Fields, The Hollow and Flora Street Walkway**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 13th September, it had agreed to proceed with the second phase of the consultative naming process to name a further four new bridges structures which were being constructed as part of the Connswater Community Greenway.

She advised that the naming process had involved a three week consultation period in October, during which the public had the opportunity to submit ideas for the names for each bridge in line with the Council’s naming policy. Following that, a panel of judges had met at the end of the month and considered the submissions and shortlisted two or three for each structure. The public then had the opportunity to vote for its favourite between 1st and 16th November, during this process a total of 1801 votes were cast.

The Members noted that the final bridge name proposals had been determined by the majority votes for each and within the context of the Belfast City Council Naming Policy.

The Committee approved the following bridge name preferences that had emerged from this consultative naming process:

1. **‘Grace Bannister Bridge** - connecting Dixon Playing Fields to Grand Parade;
2. **‘Shannon Bridge’** - connecting Dixon Playing Fields to Dunraven Gardens;
3. **‘Hutchinson Bridge’** connecting Linen Gardens to Abetta Parade (The Hollow);  
and
4. **‘Mill Bridge’** connecting Flora Street Walkway to Bloomfield Parade.

#### **Environment**

##### **Leading the way - Active Workplace Travel Programme**

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 the progress made to date in engaging and supporting staff to change their travel behaviours, including reported barriers to adopting more sustainable travel behaviours and proposed recommendations to increasing the number of staff currently using sustainable travel options.

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1** The Committee is asked to;

- Note the progress made to date in supporting staff to choose more sustainable travel options.

**3.0 Main report**

**Key Issues**

**3.1** Following the launch of the Belfast Active Travel Action Plan in 2015, which Council supported through the Belfast Strategic Partnership (BSP), the Public Health Agency (PHA) commissioned Sustrans to deliver a three year active travel workplace programme called ‘Leading the Way’, in which Council were invited to participate.

**3.2** ‘Leading the Way’ has been integrated into and forms a key part of Council’s staff Health and Wellbeing Strategy and complements a range of other initiatives being taken forward under the theme of ‘Better Mind and Body’. The programme also demonstrates Council’s role as an exemplar to the city, in changing the culture of how people travel to work.

**3.3** The primary focus for this programme is to improve staff health and wellbeing, by engaging and supporting staff working within city centre locations to choose more sustainable travel options, with emphasis placed on promoting active travel options (walking and cycling).

**3.4** Sustrans are providing direct support to Council, through Claire McLernon, Active Travel Workplace Officer. Claire has recently taken up a one day per week placement within the City and Neighbourhood Services Department, to provide additional support to staff including the delivery of lunch time walks and cycles, promotion of sustainable travel options and general staff engagement around barriers to active travel.

**3.5 'Leading the Way' is approaching the end of its second year of delivery and, as part of the programme, considerable staff engagement has taken place through online surveys, focus groups and individual conversations. Comparable data is now available across years 1 and 2 of the programme, on the positive changes to staff travel behaviours and reported barriers to adopting more sustainable travel options.**

**3.6 Changes to staff travel behaviours during the time of 'Leading the Way'**

- **Car usage:** There has been a reported reduction in staff car usage for journeys to and from work of 6%, taking the percentage of staff travelling to work by car from 42% to 36%.
- **Cycling to work:** The percentage of staff working in city centre locations and cycling to work has increased by 1% from 12% to 13%. This is significantly higher than the Belfast average for cycle to work journeys (4%).
- **Walking to work:** The percentage of staff working in city centre locations and walking to work has increased by 3% from 6% to 9%.
- **Active Belfast Challenge:** The percentage of staff participating in the Active Belfast Challenge (sustainable journey challenge delivered throughout May) increased from 1% in 2015 to 6% in 2016. This increase led to Council winning the Challenge award for best large organisation.

**3.7 Reported barriers to adopting more sustainable travel options**

- **Knowledge barriers:** The highest reported barriers to travelling to work by bicycle continues to be safety and confidence, with 57% of those who do not cycle to work stating safety as the primary reason and 41% reporting that they do not feel confident enough to cycle to work.
- **Practical barriers:** Bicycle ownership levels for council staff (37%) are below the average level of ownership reported across Belfast (45%). The lack of facilities including showering, changing and storage (31%) is also reported as a significant barrier to walking or cycling to work.
- **Socio-cultural barriers:** Culturally, there is a reliance on travelling by car due to it taking too long to travel actively to work (42%), having to travel elsewhere after work (39%) or having to leave / collect children from school (36%).

**3.8** A programme of work to support more staff to adopt sustainable travel options has been developed in partnership with Sustrans and linked to the work of the Council's staff Health & Wellbeing Strategy. The programme of work follows the 3 core pillars set out within the Bicycle Strategy for Northern Ireland. These include:

- **Build:** The inclusion of 40 new bicycle parking spaces within 9 Adelaide demonstrates Council's commitment to supporting staff to travel more sustainably. Currently 161 city centre based staff report that they cycle to work. As this number increases so too will the demand for bicycle parking spaces. Information relating to the trends around the number of staff cycling to work will be shared across Council and relevant external partners, to ensure adequate and appropriate bicycle parking spaces are available within the city centre.
- **Support:** Increasing the skills and confidence of staff to cycle to work and addressing the issues of safety and confidence is fundamental in encouraging more staff to cycle to work. In Spring 2017, supported by Sustrans, a programme of staff activities will commence, including teaching basic bicycle handling and maintenance skills, a series of lunch time walks and cycles and advice on journey planning using quieter travel routes.
- **Promote:** Travelling actively will not be for all staff. The promotion of more sustainable travel options is required for those staff who live too far away to walk or cycle or who require their car for a part of their journey. Work has already commenced on increasing awareness and uptake of sustainable travel options, such as the TaxSmart scheme, through Council's internal communication channels.

**3.9** Financial & Resource Implications

There are no Financial or Resource Implications at this stage.

**3.10** Equality or Good Relations Implications

There are no known equality and good relation implications."

The Committee noted the update report.

**Finance, Procurement and Performance**

**Financial Reporting - Quarter 2, 2016 – 2017**

The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services summarised the contents of the report which presented a Quarter 2 financial position for the People and Communities Committee, including a forecast of the year end outturn. He advised that the detail included the Quarter 2 position for the Committee which showed an under-spend of £819k or (2.2%) of the budget, with the forecast year end position being an under-spend of £601k (0.8%) which was well within the acceptable variance limit of 3%.

The Director reported that, as referred to earlier in the meeting, the Land and Property Services agency was forecasting a district rate claw back position of £2,154k, resulting in the Council having to find an additional £658k above the forecast departmental positive balance to fully finance the rate claw back.

The Committee noted the contents of the Quarter 2 financial update and that the Strategic Policy and Resources had agreed, that in order to limit the impact on the Council's reserves position, departmental cash limits would be capped at their forecast position and that officers would review the planned capital programme and non-recurrent work programmes to secure the £658k balance of the rates claw back from the capital financing budget.

**Analysis of Cost of Pitch Hire**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

**1.1 At the People and Communities Committee meeting in November 2016 it was agreed that a report be brought back to Committee to assess the charges applied to grass and 3G pitches and to clarify the engagement and support provided to clubs.**

**1.2 The report was available which sets out pitch hire rates and provides benchmark information for hire rates in the region.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked;**

**(a) To note that the current charges do not cover all of the costs of maintenance nor provide funding for capital replacement but are in line with other benchmarks within the Greater Belfast Area.**

**(b) To note the engagement and support provided to clubs.**

**People and Communities Committee,  
Tuesday, 6th December, 2016**

**3.0 Main report**

**Grass Pitches**

**3.1** Currently there are 112 grass pitches available for booking across the City. On average each pitch should be played no more than 80 times in a season to ensure the pitch continues to be usable. Taking the highest charge of £25.75 per hour (x2 hours for an average booking) and the maximum usage capacity this would generate a maximum income of £4,120 per annum.

**3.2** In terms of the costs of each grass pitch the following maintenance is required:

<b>Maintenance requirement</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Verti-draining	2 times per season
Aeration of pitch through September - April	17 occasions
Over seed of pitch at end of season	Once a year
Cut playing surface	40 occasions
Supply and apply 50 tons of top dressing	Once a year
Fertilize with controlled release	4 occasions
Marking of pitch	40 occasions
Supply and apply 1 ton of top dressing sand	30 tonnes per year
Treatment of selective weed killer	Once a year

**3.3** On average the cost of staff, supplies and services to maintain each pitch is £8k per annum. These costs are for direct maintenance only and do not include other running costs to support match play such as:

- Staffing and maintenance of pavilions
- Booking administration
- Fuel costs and vehicle capital costs or any vehicle replacement costs
- Sports Development Costs.

3.4 The above analysis shows that the income generated from the use of our pitches covers on average 50% of the direct costs of maintenance.

3.5 **3G Pitches**

Currently there are 11 3G pitches available for booking across the City within the Parks Estate. Six of these are managed as part of the partnership with GLL with income going to GLL. Assets are all Council assets and all maintained by Council staff. Income for Council 3G pitches in 15/16 is in the region of £70k.

3.6 3G pitches are designed to intensify use and our 3g pitches are used at peak times in the following percentage capacity:

	Woodlands	Sally Gardens	Marrowbone	Dunville	Cliftonville
% Bookings at Peak Times	99%	88%	99%	85%	98%

*\*Peak times are Monday – Friday 12-2pm, after 5pm and all day Saturday and Sunday*

3.7 Assets are all Council assets and all maintained by Council staff. Our 3G pitch carpets are not all the same and are maintained as specified by the manufacturer’s recommendations at installation. The average life of an artificial pitch is 10 years with costs of replacing the surface estimated at £150k depending on size. However in general in terms of the costs of routine maintenance for each pitch the requirements are:

Maintenance requirement	Frequency
Litter removal	Daily
Brushing	Once a week

**People and Communities Committee,  
Tuesday, 6th December, 2016**

Inspection	Once a week
Cleaning of rubber crumb surface	Twice a year
Topping up of aggregate	As required

**3.8 On average the cost of staff, supplies and services to maintain each pitch is £5k per annum, with costs for all 3G pitches being in the region of £55K per annum. These costs are for direct maintenance only and do not include other running costs as follows:**

**3.9**

- **Staffing and maintenance of pavilions**
- **Booking administration**
- **Fuel costs and vehicle capital costs or any vehicle replacement costs**
- **Sports Development Costs.**
- **The income generated does not provide a contribution to the capital replacement costs of the carpet as set out above.**

**3.10 Sports Development**

**The Leisure Development Unit engages with clubs of all sporting codes across the city to provide financial support to clubs through a number of avenues. Support for Sport Funding supports costs of; setting up new clubs and new sections within clubs; taster and try it programmes; local low level competitions for groups aspiring to league play; coach and volunteer development activities. Partner agreements are in place in 7 sites with financial support for delivering comprehensive sports development plans on each site. Each of the partners are maximising the capacity of the grass pitches through delivery of their development plans. Advice and support from Sports Development Officers is also improving the quality of delivery through increasing the number of successful funding applications, number of groups achieving club quality awards and the number of participants in under-represented groups such as females and homeless.**

**3.11 Financial & Resource Implications**

**The above analysis shows that the income generated from the use of pitches and does not cover the total cost of provision with the remainder funded through the rates contribution. Any reduction in prices will increase the burden on the**

**ratepayer and therefore will need to be considered as part of  
the revenue estimates and rate setting process for 2017/18**

**3.12 Equality or Good Relations Implications**

**There are no equality or Good relations implications.”**

With the permission of the Chairperson, Councillor Collins addressed the Committee and once again outlined his concerns surrounding the increase in the hire cost of the Council’s pitches.

The Assistant Director addressed a number of queries regarding the current pricing policy and how the current fees had been set. She reiterated that the income generated was for the management and maintenance of the existing facilities and advised that the prices had not been reviewed since 2012.

It was:

Moved by Councillor Beattie,  
Seconded by Councillor Magennis,

That this Council proposes a 25% reduction to the pricing of the 3G pitches.

On a vote by a show of hands, 8 Members voted for the proposal and 6 against and it was declared carried.

Following further discussion, it was also agreed that a report be submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, given that this decision might have an impact on the overall rate setting process.

**Operational Issues**

**Training Support to the Community and Voluntary Sector**

The Community Development Manager provided an update on the training support which was currently being delivered by Community Services as part of the Autumn/Winter Programme for community and voluntary groups across the city which included details of the various courses available as follows: Outcomes Based Accountability; Governance and Charities; Making Grant Applications, Committee Skills Training; Basic Introduction to Good Governance; Social Innovation and Basic Health and Safety. The Committee was also informed on the future training initiatives that were being developed for delivery in 2017 - 2018, many of which would be accredited.

It also noted the development of further training initiatives that would be provided by the service in order to extend support to the community and voluntary sector.

**Allotment Strategy Review**

The Committee was reminded that new rules and procedures had been introduced in October 2014 regarding the Council’s allotments.

**People and Communities Committee,  
Tuesday, 6th December, 2016**

The Assistant Director advised that a number of requests had been received from allotment holders seeking a review of the policy, she added that it was also considered good practice to review the rules and procedures and as a result a consultation exercise would be undertaken with the relevant stakeholders.

The Committee noted that a review of the Council's allotment rules and procedures would be undertaken between January and March 2017 and that any changes/amendments be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

**Street Naming**

The Committee approved the naming of the following streets:

<b>Proposed Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Applicant</b>
Gullivers Avenue	Off Dargan Road, BT3	Belfast City Council
Gullivers Drive	Off Dargan Road, BT3	Belfast City Council
Gullivers Link	Off Dargan Road, BT3	Belfast City Council
Gullivers Road	Off Dargan Road, BT3	Belfast City Council

**Street Naming - Dual language application**

The Committee considered the undernoted applications to erect additional street nameplates in a language other than English:

<b>English Name</b>	<b>Non- English Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Persons surveyed</b>
North Howard Street	Sráid Howard Thuaidh	Off Falls Road, BT13	Clonard Neighbourhood Development Partnership	25

It was reported that, in accordance with Council policy, a survey of residents had been conducted for the application which had determined that at least two-thirds of the total numbers of residents surveyed had been in favour of the proposal.

Accordingly, the Committee approved the erection of the additional street nameplates.

**Donation towards Candle Sculpture - Boston**

The Committee was advised that, in June 2016, Belfast Botanic Gardens had unveiled a commemorative candle sculpture, which had been gifted to the people of Belfast from the Galway Civic Trust to symbolise the hope and healing of organ donation.

The Assistant Director advised that, in order to reciprocate the gesture and help to promote organ donation, Strangeboat Donor Foundation was proposing to stage a global organ donor commemorative event in late 2017. This event would centre on the choreographed unveiling of candle sculpture in a representative city in each continent.

**People and Communities Committee,  
Tuesday, 6th December, 2016**

She outlined that the cities that had been chosen were Cape Town, Melbourne, New Delhi, Boston, Barcelona, Dublin and Newcastle, as each of those cities were associated with a world class centre of transplant excellence.

The Director reported that the sculpted candles would be prepared in Galway and dispatched to their final destinations at a ceremony in the Irish National Commemorative Garden during May 2017. Due to the fact that Belfast was a sister city of Boston she stated that it was proposed that Belfast would pair with Boston.

The Committee was advised that the total cost of the project would be €30,000, to date, €23,000 had been secured and match funding of €1000 was being sought from Irish Cities which included Belfast.

The Officer confirmed that the donation could be accommodated within existing budgets.

The Committee approved a donation of €1000 to the Strangeboat Donor Foundation, Galway towards the creation of a candle sculpture which would be gifted to Boston City as part of a global initiative to stage an international organ donor commemorative event in late 2017.

#### **Britain in Bloom Finals Awards Ceremony**

The Assistant Director advised that Belfast City Council had been invited, along with other councils in the region, to potentially host the Britain in Bloom Finals Award Ceremony.

The Committee granted permission for officers to begin negotiations with other councils and statutory organisations with a view to hosting this prestigious event in the region in October 2018 and agreed that an update report would be submitted to a future meeting.

#### **Restricted Item**

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

#### **Request for the Use of Ormeau Park - Belsonic**

The Assistant Director reminded the Committee that Belsonic had been a regular fixed feature on the events calendar since 2008. Custom House Square had been the venue for the event from 2008 until 2015 with it having been held at the Titanic Slipways last year, hosting a total of 14 concerts over the months of June and August.

The Committee was advised that for a number of different reasons, the promoter wished to use the Ormeau Park for the 2017 event. It was felt that this venue was still close enough to the city centre to enable other local businesses and the night time economy in general to benefit.

**People and Communities Committee,  
Tuesday, 6th December, 2016**

Following a query, the Assistant Director answered a number of questions in relation to the reinstatement of the pitches and potential noise disturbance. She confirmed that the event would affect the pitch maintenance reinstatement programme over the summer months but advised that the Council would work with the leagues and teams to try and ensure that they were accommodated at other Council facilities. In respect of the noise, the Assistant Director advised that given the scale and nature of the events proposed it would not be possible to guarantee that noise disturbance would be completely eliminated but all concerts would finish by 11.00 p.m.

The Committee:

- granted authority for Belsonic to hold up to 10 concerts at the Ormeau Park from the period from 1st June to 1st July 2017, subject to satisfactory terms being agreed with the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services and on the condition that:
  1. the promoter resolves all operational issues to the Council's satisfaction;
  2. an appropriate legal agreement is completed, to be prepared by the City Solicitor; and
  3. the promoter meets all statutory requirements of the Environmental Protection and Building Control Service, including the terms and conditions of the Parks Entertainments Licence.

Chairperson