

# People and Communities Committee

Thursday, 12th April, 2018

## MEETING OF PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Members present: Alderman Sandford (Chairperson);  
the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Copeland);  
Alderman Rodgers and McCoubrey; and  
Councillors Armitage, Baker, Carson, Corr, Corr Johnston,  
Heading, Lyons, Magennis, Murphy, McReynolds, Nic Biorna,  
Newton, Nicholl and Pankhurst.

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

### **Apologies**

An apology was reported on behalf on Councillor McCusker.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the special meeting of of 6th March were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 9th April.

### **Declarations of Interest**

The Chairperson (Alderman Sandford), the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Copeland), Alderman Rodgers, Councillors Newton and Pankhurst declared an interest in respect of agenda item 6 (g), Request for use of Barnett's Demesne, in that they were Members of the Orange Order.

Councillor Armitage declared an interest in respect of agenda item 5(e), Belfast Flare Pavilion Manderson Street, in that he was on the Board of the Eastside Partnership.

### **Items Withdrawn from Agenda**

#### **Motion - Childcare Strategy and Temporary Structure at Alderman Tommy Patton Memorial Park**

The Committee noted that the above items had been withdrawn from the agenda.

### **Matters referred back from Council/Motions**

#### **Motion – Development of a Greenway Strategy in Belfast**

It was agreed that the aforementioned report would be deferred until the May meeting to enable Councillor Dorrian, the proposer of the motion, to be in attendance.

### Restricted Items

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.

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the Press and public from the Committee meeting during discussion of this item as, due to the nature of the item, 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.

### Proposed Country Musical event in lower field, Botanic Gardens

The Committee considered a report, which had been prepared by the Assistant Director, from an events Company seeking permission to use the lower field in Botanic Gardens to hold a Country Musical Event.

The Committee granted permission for the use of the lower field in Botanic Gardens to hold a three-day Country Musical event in September 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022, subject to the organisers meeting all legal and statutory requirements and the production of an appropriate event plan and legal agreement.

### Committee/Strategic Issues

#### People and Communities Plan Committee Plan 2018/19

The Committee approved the draft People and Communities Committee 'Plan on a Page' for 2018-19 and noted that a detailed Committee Plan for 2018-19 would be submitted for consideration at the May meeting.

#### Housing Provision in Belfast

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 following Notice of Motion:**

*'This Council notes that, with the Belfast Agenda and the Local Development Plan coming into reality, there will be a need for 66,000 new housing units by 2035. This will need an imaginative response by all, including the Council.'*

*The Council calls upon all statutory bodies to review their land ownership and to determine if any such land is surplus and suitable for housing. Subject to legal requirements, the Council asks that consideration be given to making that land available to meet any identified housing needs and projected needs in terms of growth.*

*The Council is committed to a shared future and, therefore, is committed to shared housing. This shared housing should consist of community background, private and social housing.'*

1.2 Proposed by Councillor Armitage and seconded by Councillor Nicholl, at Council on 3rd January, and was referred to the People & Communities Committee for consideration.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to;

- Note the update provided.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Key Issues

Members are reminded that the Notice of Motion that was brought to the January Council meeting around housing provision was discussed by this Committee at its meeting on 6th January. It was agreed at that meeting that the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services would liaise with officers from other services within the Council to ensure that there is no duplication of work. A summary of the work ongoing is outlined below. Members should note that one of the ambitions in the Belfast Agenda is that our city is home to an additional 66,000 people by 2035, which will require approximately 32,860 housing units.

3.2 The Council is currently undertaking an Urban Capacity Study (UCS), which is an assessment of the potential for land across the city to accommodate housing and employment uses (or both in some cases). It will form a key part of the evidence base for the Local Development Plan and will be published as a technical supplement to the LDP when it goes out for consultation in the coming months. It is key to note that at this stage the UCS only considers land that is obviously surplus to requirements.

3.3 One of the key actions in the Department for Communities' (DfC) delivery plan for the draft Programme for Government is

the creation of a central register of surplus public sector land that may be suitable for housing. Officers have met with DfC and they have advised that this work is ongoing and that they are currently identifying surplus land within the estates of 4 departments. They did not provide the detail of which departments they are working with.

- 3.4 The Council's Planning Service also complete an annual monitoring report which is a high level report of the land zoned for housing and land that has planning approvals for housing. This report provides a monitor of how much land has housing built on it but it will not identify surplus land if it has not already been zoned for housing.
- 3.5 The City Centre Development team are currently undertaking a number of pieces of work that relate to housing provision in the city centre. 'City Centre Living' is a workstream that builds on a previous Council motion around housing, and an update was taken to City Growth and Regeneration Committee in January following a study visit and workshop in the autumn. The City Centre Living workstream is considering a number of issues, including how to promote residential development above commercial and retail premises. It is also specifically looking at how to make use of publicly owned land in the city centre, and the City Centre Development team are already working with DfC, NIHE and others on this. Alongside the use of land itself, City Centre Living is also about public and private sector partners promoting mixed use, mixed tenure housing schemes that incorporate tenure-blind design and other positive design features. In terms of the City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (CCRIS), the Belfast Agenda and the Local Development Plan. A report providing Members with an update on this work was brought to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee meeting in January 2018. This update provided information on the study visit and workshop which had taken place in October 2017.
- 3.6 Additionally, the City Centre Development Team is currently undertaking consultation on the draft Inner North West Masterplan. This document will help to guide and direct development in the area between Queen Street and Donegall Street in the city centre, informing types of uses and character of developments coming forward, whilst also establishing design principles such as how this area connects to surrounding neighbourhoods and other parts of the city. This consultation ends on 8th May.
- 3.7 Members are assured that Officers from the various services will continue to liaise around overlapping pieces of work in

relation to housing provision, and updates will be brought to the relevant Committee as required.

**3.8 Financial & Resource Implications**

There are no financial or resource implications associated with this report.

**3.9 Equality or Good Relations Implications**

There are no equality or good relations implications associated with this report.”

The Committee noted the update.

**GAA Strategy for Belfast City Council**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

**1.1 Ulster Branch Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) and County Antrim Board have developed a strategy for Belfast following extensive consultation across their members and other stakeholders. A five-year action plan for development of the sport in Belfast has been developed and costed at approximately £319,000 per annum, this model is based on funding from four key stakeholders and GAA have asked Belfast City Council to be a supporting partner in delivery of the action plan.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 That Committee is asked to give approval in principle to;**

- 1. permit officers to work with GAA to deliver and fund the Belfast Action Plan through the Belfast Community Benefits Initiative partnership agreement**
- 2. develop appropriate arrangements for management of GAA bookings to streamline processes and improve sporting outcomes**

**3.0 Main report**

**Key Issues**

**3.1 GAA has a good record of working in partnership with Council, having invested significantly in development of a range of sites**

with the installation of 3G pitches to improve accessibility to training and competition opportunities within the City.

- 3.2 County Antrim GAA worked with their governing body at Ulster Council and National level to develop a comprehensive action plan based on five hubs which will focus development in partnership with identified clubs, schools and community organisations. The hubs identified are at Beechmount, Cliftonville, Cherryvale, Woodlands and Sally Gardens.
- 3.3 Existing structures cannot support delivery of the strategy, accordingly revised structures will be put in place within GAA in Belfast and the action plan will see the employment of up to 12 additional staff at a range of designations including managerial, administrative, development and promotional levels. A pilot programme at Woodlands in summer 2017 engaged 169 coaches, 1,377 players and 20 new volunteers and was used to test the model in advance of governing body investment being confirmed.
- 3.4 To maximise the impact of the action plan in each area of the city will require careful manipulation of the programming mix across the wide range of target groups and users. Co. Antrim has proven its ability to do this successfully under the existing Partnership Agreement at Woodlands. Under this Agreement Co. Antrim is required to confirm six months' of bookings to Council's booking service in advance. This method also works well with Association Football leagues which are required to confirm their series of bookings in advance of the season to Council. The detail of the fixtures are not advised at that time, but developed by the booker according to their needs as the season progresses.
- 3.5 The Belfast Action Plan has been costed at £319,000 per annum to include £240,000 for staffing and £79,000 for facility hire, equipment and programme costs and will enhance the community and sporting benefit alongside the future development of Casement Park.
- 3.6 Council has an existing partnership arrangement with the Department of Communities and the Irish Football Association (IFA) titled Belfast Community Benefits Initiative for the delivery of sports programmes in the community. This partnership will maximise the impact of the redevelopment of the National Football Stadium at Windsor Park for the benefit of the wider community in Belfast. This agreement is currently funded jointly by Council and IFA and was drafted with GAA in anticipation of the redevelopment of Casement Park. The Belfast GAA strategy action plan will have elements

**amalgamated into the existing action plan and GAA will become a fourth partner in this agreement.**

**Financial Implications**

- 3.7 GAA has requested that Council provides £63,800 to support the action plan i.e. 20% of the overall annual cost. Within the Belfast Community Benefits Initiative Council has committed £100,000 per annum from 2016 to 2026, GAA will be able to access 50% of this funding for delivery of agreed programmes upon joining the partnership.**
- 3.8 There are no financial implications from agreeing new booking arrangements at the designated Council sites.**

**Equality or Good Relations Implications**

- 3.9 None.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Minutes of Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Development Working Group**

The Assistant Director advised that, at the meeting of the Strategic Cemetery and Crematorium Working Group held on 14th March, the following key items had been considered:

- update in respect of the provision of water bowsers at Roselawn Cemetery;
- snow clearance for funerals and cremations; and
- consideration of a request to film a mock-up cremation for a BBC documentary, which the Working Group had recommended be refused.

Following a query in respect of the request to film, the Assistant Director advised that a request had been received from a local production company, Doubleband Films, seeking permission to film in the non-public areas of the City of Belfast Crematorium for a BBC documentary. The officer reported that the Members of the Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Development Working Group had considered this request and had recommended that it be refused.

Whilst the Members accepted the Working Group's recommendation not to permit filming on this occasion, discussion ensued regarding the need to educate people on the use of cremation and also to highlight the huge expense of funeral costs on families and to investigate cost effective funeral options.

The Committee:

**People and Communities Committee,  
Thursday, 12th April, 2018**

- approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Working Group held on 14th March;
- ratified the Working Group's recommendation to refuse permission to film a mock cremation at the Crematorium; and
- agreed that a report would be brought back to a future meeting of the People and Communities Committee which would consider cost effective funeral options and educating the general public regarding the use of cremation.

**Physical Programme and Asset Management**

**Playground Improvement Programme 2018/19**

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 successful 2017/18 Playground Improvement Programme and outline plans for playground refurbishments in 2018/19. Members are asked to note that the refurbishments are funded under the Capital Programme and that an allocation of £580,000 has been agreed to for this work, in this financial year.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to;**

- **note the refurbishment of playground sites below under the Playground Improvement Programme which has an allocated budget of £580,000 under the Capital Programme for financial year 2018/19**

**Table 1**

<b>Fullerton Park</b>
<b>Duncairn</b>
<b>Barnett's Demesne</b>
<b>Glenbank</b>

**3.0 Main report**

**Playground Refurbishment Programme**

**3.1 Since its inception in 2012, the Playground Refurbishment Programme has made a significant impact on overall quality and play value to the city's playgrounds; this has greatly**

improved accessibility and play value, providing new inclusive equipment, safety surfacing, boundary fencing, site furniture and landscaping works.

- 3.2 With continued investment over the last six years, the Council has achieved desired improvements at each of the sites refurbished under the programme. Play facilities are now more inviting, inclusive and exciting places for children and parents to visit. The 2017/18 Improvement Programme, which consisted of three major refurbishments (Hanwood, Botanic Gardens and Blythefield) and six very minor/partial refurbishments are nearing completion, moving their quality scores to the desired higher standard.
- 3.3 Members should note that Play Services Ireland Ltd. has undertaken this year's cycle of independent inspections once again. The 'quality' score allocated for each playground is based on compliance with European safety standards BS EN 1176 & 1177.
- 3.4 The independent playground inspection reports also identify and prioritise much-needed repairs to existing playground equipment. Facilities Management and our own Playground Inspectors continue to undertake these repairs. A sample copy of the Independent Playground Inspection report 2018, which categorises playgrounds, giving each one a 'quality score' is available on mod.gov:
- |              |                |
|--------------|----------------|
| Score 9 – 10 | Excellent      |
| Score 8 – 9  | Very Good      |
| Score 7 – 8  | Good           |
| Score 6 – 7  | Fairly Good    |
| Score 5 – 6  | Sufficient     |
| Score 4 – 5  | Fair           |
| Score 3 – 4  | Insufficient   |
| Score 2 – 3  | Poor           |
| Score 1 – 2  | Very Poor      |
| Score 0 – 1  | Extremely Poor |
- 3.5 Following the independent inspection assessments of all 99 playgrounds across the city, it is proposed the sites listed in Table 1 above are refurbished under this year's Playground Improvement Programme, which has an allocated budget of £580,000 under the Capital Programme.
- 3.6 The playgrounds recommended for refurbishment are the ones with the lowest overall quality scores. Because of the proposed refurbishment works, these playgrounds will move from 'Fairly

good' to the higher classifications of 'Excellent' (quality score 9.0 – 10.0) when reinspected.

- 3.7 Members are asked to note that Twinbrook/Brook Activity playground will be rebuilt and moved to a new location close to the existing site as part of the Leisure Transformation programme. The old playground situated at Avoniel was removed/replaced by a new playground; close by within in the Flora Street Walk Way site as part of the Connswater Community Greenway project.
- 3.8 Members are asked to note that two other brand new playgrounds have recently been constructed at Blacks Road and in Poleglass (Colin Valley FC site)

#### Financial & Resource Implications

- 3.9 Refurbishment work at existing Belfast City Council sites will be funded through the Capital Programme and a budget of £580,000 has been allocated to this. Staff from the Landscape, Planning and Development Unit will continue to deliver the Playground Improvement Programme. As in previous years, Community Park Managers and Outreach officers will continue to assist with the distribution of information relating to playground improvements to Members of the local communities.

#### Equality or Good Relations Implications

- 3.9 The process proposed in this report will be subject to the Council's existing equality screening process."

Following a query, the Assistant Director undertook to update the Member directly regarding the number of swings that the Council had in its Parks that were suitable for use by children with a disability.

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations as set out under section 2.1.

#### Partner Agreements and Facilities Management Agreements Update and Review

The Assistant Director reminded the Committee that the Council had previously agreed to enter into Partner Agreements at seven sites and she then provided an update on the progress in relation to the Agreements for October – December 2017.

She explained that, in line with the Council's objectives, regular checks on the necessary Insurance, Health and Safety and Governance had been completed monthly at six of the seven sites.

**People and Communities Committee,  
Thursday, 12th April, 2018**

In addition, following the recent audit review, the reporting documents had been amended in accordance with the requirements and these had been sent to the Partners one month in advance of the reporting deadlines. She reported that, at the time of writing the report, only two of the seven Partners had been compliant with the Partner Agreement, however, in the last week all but Sirocco Works Football Club were now compliant.

Following a query, the Assistant Director confirmed that officers from the Council were scheduled to meet with representatives from Sirocco Works Football Club to ascertain why it was not compliant and she undertook to update the Committee at its next meeting.

The officer advised that, in addition to the Partner Agreements, the Council also operated Facility Management Agreements with a range of sporting and community organisations to undertake management task and delivery of programmes at other Council sites. A number of these Agreements were supported by a financial payment related to these tasks.

The Committee noted that, as part of the review process, officers had consulted with Agreement holders to identify ways to streamline payments and simplify administration. The officer explained that currently Facility Management Arrangements were paid monthly, subject to officer approval of documentation and Partner Agreements were paid quarterly with 80% in advance and 20% in arrears, subject to officer approval of documentation.

The Committee were asked to note that a full review of facility arrangements was currently being undertaken. However, it was suggested that, in the interim, payment arrangements should be standardised across all agreements, with payments to be made quarterly in advance, subject to the receipt of all required documentation and approval of satisfactory reports for the previous quarter.

The Committee noted the quarterly progress to date in relation to Partner Agreements and agreed to support a change in the payments process to facilitate efficiencies and enhance the partners' ability to deliver quality programming on designated sites.

**Alleygating - Notice of Traffic Regulation Order 2018**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

**1.1 Members will be aware that Council made £700,000 available from the Capital Programme to install alleygates across the city (Phase 4 Alleygates).**

**1.2 Phase 4 has been divided into 3 sub-phases to accommodate the different stages of Elected Member decision making across the city as well as a range of technical and legal issues, primarily associated with the replacement of community gates. Phase 4(a) was completed in March 2008 and the Road Traffic**

Order for Phase 4(b) is included in this report for Members consideration.

- 1.3 Members will be aware that the legislative authority for introducing gating Orders transferred to local Councils through the commencement of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 on 4th May 2011.
- 1.4 The 2011 Act inserts new Part 6A (Articles 69A to 69E) into the 1993 Order. These new provisions allow action to be taken quickly, easily and with a degree of flexibility not previously available. District councils are now able to make, vary or revoke gating orders in respect of relevant roads (as defined in Article 69A(5) of the 1993 Order) affected by crime or ASB within their area, permitting a gate to be installed at each end of the road.
- 1.5 The orders are an effective way of enabling councils to restrict public access to any relevant road by gating it (at certain times of the day if applicable), without removing its underlying road status.

Councils however still require the approval of the Transport NI ('DRD') to:

- a) make a gating order; or
- b) vary a gating order so as to further restrict any public right of way over the road to which the order relates.

- 1.6 The required statutory and community consultation has been undertaken and the purpose of this report is to seek formal approval from Committee to make the Traffic Regulation Orders enabling these gates to be installed.

## 2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to recommend to Council that a resolution is passed to make the Belfast City Council Traffic Regulation Orders 2018 for Phase 4(b) for the locations as set out in Schedule 1.

## 3.0 Main report

- 3.1 The pre-consultation exercise with affected residents and Statutory bodies / service suppliers has been completed and the Notice of Intention (formal consultation stage) was advertised on Friday 2nd March.
- 3.2 No formal objections to the Traffic Regulation Orders were received.

- 3.3 Legal Services have recommended that alleygating can proceed at all locations, as Council can be satisfied the requirements of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environments Act (2011) have been met in establishing that this area is affected by crime and anti-social behaviour.
- 3.4 Manufacture of the gates included in this Traffic Regulation Order will take place in May / June 2018 with installation commencing in summer 2018.
- 3.5 Ongoing work is taking place to commence the consultation for the remaining and final proposed gate locations approved by Council in 2018 as part of Phase 4 Alleygates.
- 3.6 A further Traffic Regulation Order is planned for autumn 2018 to include those final gates remaining to complete Phase 4.
- 3.7 Members should be aware that the level of response to the pre-consultation exercise was generally at a low level and also that the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (NI) 2011 requires that sufficient evidence of crime and anti-social behaviour should be established before alleygating can proceed.
- 3.8 Legal Services have therefore recommended further engagement (post Phase 4) with Members on the process by which areas/locations are selected for alleygating.
- 3.9 **Financial and Resource Implications**
- There are no specific financial implications associated with the enactment of this Traffic Regulation Order.
- 3.10 **Equality or Good Relations Implications**
- No Equality or Good Relations implications have been identified; however, this is being monitored on an ongoing basis.”

### **Schedule I**

#### **Affected Roads**

- To the rear of 2-48 Locan Street, 1-45 Amcomri Street and 36-46 Beechmount Avenue and to the side of 2 Locan Street and 1 Amcomri Street
- To the rear of 50-98 Locan Street and 47-97 Amcomri Street

**People and Communities Committee,  
Thursday, 12th April, 2018**

- To the rear of 2-46 Amcomri Street, 1-47 Clowney Street and 22-34 Beechmount Avenue and to the side of 2 Amcomri Street and 1 Clowney Street
- To the rear of 48-98 Amcomri Street and 49-93 Clowney Street
- To the rear of 2-50 Clowney Street, 1-49 Beechmount Parade and 10-20 Beechmount Avenue and to the side of 2 Clowney Street and 1 Beechmount Parade
- To the rear of 52-100 Clowney Street and 51-99 Beechmount Parade
- To the rear of 2A-58 Beechmount Parade and 1-53 Beechmount Drive
- To the rear of 60-108 Beechmount Parade
- To the rear of 1-5 Iveagh Crescent and 2-26 Iveagh Street
- To the rear of 7-39 Iveagh Crescent and 28-60 Iveagh Street
- To the rear of 41-67 Iveagh Crescent and 62-94 Iveagh Street
- To the rear of 2-40 Fallswater Drive, 1-37 Iveagh Drive and 240-250 Falls Road and to the side of 2 Fallswater Drive and 1 Iveagh Drive
- To the rear of 2-40 Iveagh Drive, 1-45 Iveagh Parade and 228-238 Falls Road and to the side of 2 Iveagh Drive and 1 Iveagh Parade
- To the rear of 218-226 Falls Road, 2-44 Iveagh Parade and 1-55 Fallswater Street and to the side of 2 Iveagh Parade and 2 Fallswater Street
- To the rear of 216 Falls Road, 2-42 Fallswater Street and 3-47 Nansen Street and to the side of 3 Nansen Street
- To the rear of 200-214 Falls Road, 2-60 Nansen Street and 5-63 Broadway and to the side of 2 Nansen Street and 3 and 5 Broadway
- To the rear of 4-22 Beechview Park, 447-465 Falls Road and 1-69 Rockdale Street and to the side of 4 Beechview Park and 1 Rockdale Street
- To the rear of 2A-54 Rockdale Street, 1-55 Rockville Street and 467-477 Falls Road and to the side of 2A Rockdale Street and 1, 35 and 37 Rockville Street
- To the rear of 2-64 Rockville Street, 1-67 Rockmore Road and 479-489 Falls Road and to the side of 2 Rockville Street and 1A, 1 and 67 Rockmore Road
- To the rear of 6-70 Rockmore Road, 3-57 Rockmount Street and 491-501 Falls Road and to the side of 3 and 57 Rockmount Street
- To the rear of 2-54 Rodney Parade and to the side of 2 and 54 Rodney Parade
- To the rear of 1-27 Rodney Parade, 1-59 Rodney Drive and 2-30 St James's Crescent and to the side of 1 Rodney Parade, 1 and 59 Rodney Drive
- To the rear of 11-79 St Katharine Road and to the side of 11, 39, 41 and 79 St Katharine Road
- To the rear of 1A-21 St James's Parade and 2-6 St James's Road and to the side of 1A, 1 and 21 St James's Parade
- To the rear of 1-23 Hugo Street and 438-442 Falls Road and to the side of 1 Hugo Street

**People and Communities Committee,  
Thursday, 12th April, 2018**

- To the rear of 2-24 Hugo Street, 1-29 Clondara Street and 426-436 Falls Road and to the side of 2 Hugo Street and 1 Clondara Street
- To the rear of 2-38 Clondara Street and 416-424 Falls Road and to the side of 2 Clondara Street
- To the rear of 1 - 11 Inver Avenue, 2 - 40 Victoria Gardens, 179 - 205 Cavehill Road, and 2a - 4 Charnwood Avenue, and to the side of 2 and 40 Victoria Gardens
- To the rear of 13 - 17 Inver Avenue, 1 - 39 Victoria Gardens, 6 - 8 Charnwood Avenue, and 50 - 70 Salisbury Avenue, and to the side of 8 Charnwood Avenue and 17 Inver Avenue
- To the rear of 3 - 5 Skegoneill Avenue, 24 - 52 Glantane Drive, 2 - 6 Glandore Gardens, 535 - 549 Antrim Road, and to the side of 2 Glandore Gardens, and 52 and 54 Glantane Drive
- To the rear of 1-17 Cliftonville Street and 119-123 Cliftonville Road and to the side of 1 Cliftonville Street
- To the rear of 278-294 Limestone Road and the side of 34 Oceanic Avenue
- To the side of 2, 18 and 19 Jamaica Road and the side of 25 Havana Gardens
- To the rear of 2-18 Jamaica Way and to the side of 2 Jamaica Way
- To the rear of 2-40 and to the side of 2 and 40 Clifton Crescent and to the rear of 1-45 and the side of 1 and 45 Manor Street and to the rear of 1-3 and to the side of 3 Harcourt Drive and to the rear of 66-76 Cliftonville Road.
- To the rear of 4-54 and side of 2 and 4 and Manor Street.
- To the rear of 2-16 Glasgow Street and 2-18 Ritchie Street and 6-10 and 5-9 Grove Court and to the side of 2, 12 and 14 Ritchie Street and 16 Glasgow Street.
- To the rear of 22 - 40 River Terrace and to the rear of 19 - 31 Cooke Court
- To the rear of 14 - 20 River Terrace and to the rear of 13 - 17 Cooke Court
- To the side of 9 Raby Street and 10 Jameson Street, and to the rear of 312 - 320 Ormeau Road, 9 - 71 Raby Street, and 10 - 74 Jameson Street, and to the side of 61 and 63 Raby Street
- To the rear of 9 - 15 Capstone Street, 1 - 67 Moonstone Street, 12 - 16 Mowhan Street, and to the side of 1, 45, 47, and 67 Moonstone Street
- To the rear of 1 - 19 Mowhan Street, 2a - 28 Charleville Avenue, and 597 - 605 Lisburn Road, and to the side of 1 and 19 Mowhan Street and 28 Charleville Avenue
- To the rear of 2A-58 Rosebank Street and 1A-55 Columbia Street
- To the rear of 2-36 and the side of 2 Carrington Street and to the rear of 1-31 Park Parade and 133-143 Ravenhill Road
- To the rear of 145-173 University Street, 1-47 Fitzroy Avenue and 137-147 Ormeau Road
- To the rear of 1-35 and to the side of 7 and 9 Harper Street and to the rear and side of 1 Edgar Street and to the rear of 92-120 Madrid Street

**People and Communities Committee,  
Thursday, 12th April, 2018**

- To the rear of 9-23 Lisbon Street and to the rear of 2 Madrid Street and to the side of 4 Madrid Street and to the rear of 1-13 Madrid Court and the side of 9 and 11 Madrid Court

The Committee recommended to Council that it pass a resolution to make the Belfast City Council Traffic Regulation Orders 2018 for Phase 4(b) for the locations as set out above.

**Proposed relocation of Moyard Playground**

The Committee agreed to defer the report to await an update from the Education Authority to establish its position in respect of the Moyard Playground being relocated to the Vere Foster Primary School site and also to enable the Council to undertake a scoping exercise in respect of land at the foot of the Belfast Hills to establish if it could be incorporated into the Upper Springfield Master Plan.

**Belfast Flare Pavilion Manderson Street**

(Councillor Armitage, who had declared an interest in this agenda item, withdrew from the table whilst it was under discussion and took no part in the debate or decision-making process.)

The Assistant Director advised that a request had been received from Landmark East seeking the Council to grant it a licence to construct a temporary pavilion at the Newtownards Road entrance to C. S. Lewis Square, East Belfast.

The Committee approved the granting of a licence for an 18 month period to Landmark East to permit the location of a temporary pavilion at the entrance to the C. S. Lewis Square, subject to the approval of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and to the appropriate terms being agreed by Estates and Legal Services.

(Councillor Armitage returned to the Committee table at this point.)

**Operational Issues**

**Waste Collection Update**

The Director provided the Committee with an update regarding the waste collection service which included a detailed update in respect of the following key areas:

- customer call handling and management interventions; and
- the waste collection improvement plan.

The Committee noted the Waste Collection update and that the next update would be submitted to the August meeting.

**Anti-social behaviour in Parks Update**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

**1.1 Further to discussion at People and Communities Committee on 9 January 2018, Members requested that quarterly updates on anti-social behaviour in parks and open spaces be provided. Members further agreed that the initial focus would be on Falls Park/City Cemetery and Orangefield Park/Avoniel Park.**

**1.2 The purpose of this report is therefore to update Members on the following:**

- **Current Context**
- **Animation/Programming**
- **Operational Co-ordination**
- **Awareness Raising**
- **Maximising Strategic Opportunities**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to;**

- **Note the progress against these actions and to receive a further progress report in June 2018.**

**Current Context**

**3.1 Reported Anti-Social Behaviour To Council**

**Ongoing analysis of reports from members of the public, along with anti-social behaviour witnessed by Council Officers has identified the following parks/open spaces as having issues with persistent anti-social behaviour.**

**3.2 Please note figures provided below are for the rolling year to date. Reports of anti-social behaviour in the last quarter have been minimal across the city, but Falls Park/City Cemetery continues to have consistently higher levels of reports during that period.**

**People and Communities Committee,  
Thursday, 12th April, 2018**

<b>Park/Open Space</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Reported Anti-Social Behaviour Incidents</b>
Falls Park/City Cemetery	West	59
Waterworks	North	40
Woodvale	North	38
Grove Playing Fields	North	27

**3.3 Please also note that the list below only represents the parks/open spaces with the highest numbers of reports of anti-social behaviour. Reports of anti-social behaviour are received for other parks/open spaces across the city but at a much lower level.**

**3.4 Repairs at Parks/Open Spaces**

**As indicated above, anti-social behaviour is often under-reported. Officers therefore regularly review requisitions for repairs at parks/open spaces due to vandalism, criminal damage or arson. The list below provides details on those parks/open spaces with the most repairs needed (in descending order of cost of repairs for this financial year with highest costs at the top) along with an assessment of the frequency of issues (based on requisitions for repairs):**

**3.5**

<b>Park/Open Space</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Reason Repairs Needed</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Musgrave Park	South	Arson/Criminal Damage	Unpredictable
Falls Park/City Cemetery	West	Arson/Criminal Damage/Burglary	Persistent
Marrowbone	North	Criminal Damage	Persistent
White Rise	West	Criminal Damage	Persistent
Dunville	West	Arson	Unpredictable
Sally Gardens	West	Criminal Damage	Unpredictable
Ligoniel	North	Criminal Damage	Unpredictable
Lenadoon	West	Arson	Unpredictable
Whiterock	West	Criminal Damage	Unpredictable

**3.6 Member Feedback**

**Elected Members engage regularly with Officers articulating concerns about anti-social behaviour in parks/open spaces. Officers have reviewed their Elected Members contact on this**

**People and Communities Committee,  
Thursday, 12th April, 2018**

issue and the following parks/open spaces present most frequently as of concern:

<b>Park/Open Space</b>	<b>Area</b>
Falls Park/City Cemetery	West
Dunville Park	West
Marrowbone	North
Orangefield	East
Victoria Park	East

**3.7 Animation/Programming**

**Progress to Date**

- Community led Youth Outreach Teams have been proactive around a number of parks and open spaces, but in particular around Falls Park/City Cemetery, Dunville and Orangefield/Avoniel
- A range of community events took place in parks and open spaces across the city over the St. Patrick's Day weekend (Dunville, Bog Meadows, Colin Glenn, Whiterock Leisure Centre and CS Lewis Square). Unfortunately, a scheduled event had to be cancelled in Marrowbone due to the health and safety implications of the severe wind
- Historical and Educational Tours of the City Cemetery were scheduled throughout the day on St. Patrick's Day to use the space positively and avoid anti-social behaviour

**3.8 Next Steps**

- The Parks Outreach Schools Programme will be commencing as the weather improves to encourage ownership of the parks and open spaces
- The Spring/Summer 2018 programming and animation schedules to be finalised both internally and with statutory and community partners for priority parks and open spaces
- Specific discussion with senior Education Authority Officers scheduled for mid-April 2018 to identify how they can better support this work

**Operational Co-ordination**

**3.9 Progress to Date**

- A number of workshops have been completed with statutory, community and voluntary youth providers in West, North and East Belfast on how to more positively engage the large groups of young people moving across parks and open spaces in the city. The South Belfast workshop is scheduled for Quarter 1 18/19.
- A citywide framework is emerging from these workshops with common themes identified as Outreach, Communication, Programming and Environmental Improvements
- Effective youth provider co-ordination in East Belfast has resulted in a significant reduction in anti-social behaviour in parks and open spaces in recent months
- Council Officers continue to work jointly with PSNI and local youth workers around parks and open spaces every weekend in trying to address any negative issues and support any vulnerable young people
- A pilot citywide tasking approach is being developed using existing publicly available data
- Council Mobile CCTV has been proactive every weekend around priority Council owned parks and open spaces in deterring anti-social behaviour. All evidence has been passed to PSNI.

**3.10 Next Steps**

- The citywide framework for working in partnership to more positively engaging the large groups of young people moving across parks and open spaces in the city to be finalised
- Internal testing of citywide tasking approach to take place before testing with partners and securing commitment to develop further
- Further development to take place of the emerging Youth Providers Forum around Lenadoon to include the Falls Park and wider West Belfast area.
- Initiation of Youth Providers Forums in North Belfast and South Belfast

### **3.11 Awareness Raising**

#### **Progress to Date**

- Joint communication (PSNI, Council and HEI's) was issued to every post primary school in Belfast before the St. Patrick's Day period
- Joint (PSNI, Council and HEI's) media briefings were undertaken to highlight proactive work being undertaken across the city
- The scoping with partners for the Inter-Agency Community Safety Schools Programme has been completed and key community safety issues currently affecting young people have been developed

### **3.12 Next Steps**

- Ongoing development of partnerships with post primary schools across Belfast to take place, seeking co-operation around communication with parents and pupils regarding wider community impacts and risks of anti-social behaviour
- Inter-Agency correspondence on this issue to be continually issued through schools/youth groups to parents and pupils over the spring/summer period
- Engagement to take place with organisations who advocate and lobby for young people in the development of messaging to maximise impact e.g. Children's Commissioner
- Preparation of Inter-Agency Community Safety Schools Programme for implementation in the 18/19 academic year
- Detailed scoping of how to proactively encourage parental responsibility around this issue

### **3.13 Maximising Strategic Opportunities**

Officers continue to work to ensure alignment and connectivity between other strategic programmes of work to maximise benefit for people and communities in the city. For Members information, please see below some detail on other related programmes of work with the potential to positively impact on the ongoing challenges in parks and open spaces:

- PEACE IV Shared Spaces Project – This project provides capital and programming investment (£5.1 million) connecting a range of parks and open spaces in the wider Springfield area of West Belfast. The aim of this

work is to create a 'necklace' of shared civic space, thereby transforming land into a shared civic space, which will improve connectivity between the city centre and outlying communities and neighbourhoods.

- **Wider PEACE IV Programme – The wider PEACE IV Programme is providing investment in Children and Young People in the city (£1.66 million) and Building Positive Relations £2.30 million). Open tenders for delivery of these programmes of work will become available in the coming months.**
- **Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) – Council was recently successful in securing £40,000 of funding from the Department for the Economy to facilitate innovation around how to better encourage positive use and deter negative use of parks and open spaces. Officers are currently working with partners to refine the 'challenge' to be issued to SME's (including community and voluntary organisations Limited by Guarantee) for open call. There a high levels of interest in this 'challenge' because of its regional and national transferability, with the potential for a larger application to the 'GovTech' Fund whose purpose is to help the public sector modernise for the benefit of society**
- **Smart Belfast 'Things Connected' Project - Councils' Smart Cities Team is involved in a consortium project with Ulster University supported by Digital Catapult, to provide SME's with free access to a state-of-the-art wireless network linked to a range of low cost sensors. The sensors have the potential to assist in better understanding how our parks and open spaces are currently being used and to better anticipate future needs. All Data Protection and Privacy Impact requirements will be in place before any sensors are placed.**
- **Fresh Start – Tackling Paramilitarism Action Plan – Officers are currently working with Executive Office Officials and individual lead departments/organisations in maximising the benefit of the following work streams within the action plan for communities in Belfast.**
  - **B4 'Communities in Transition' – TEO/Co-operation Ireland**
  - **B12 'Young Men at Risk' – Probation Board**
  - **A4 'Youth Outreach for young people at risk' – Education Authority**

**3.14 Financial & Resource Implications**

**Staff Resources**

The above approach continues to support the values and principles of the City and Neighbourhood Services and wider Corporate Change Programme of customer focus, service integration and neighbourhood working. Learning from this work will continue to inform the ongoing transformation of the organisation.

**Financial Resources**

All of the above work continues to be accommodated from within existing Council and (D)PCSP revenue budgets. The work is intended to maximise existing resources, reduce duplication and facilitate joined up decision making and resource allocation in the identified parks/open spaces.

**3.15 Equality or Good Relations Implications**

There are no equality or Good Relations implication at present, however, this will be monitored on an ongoing basis.”

Several of the Members welcomed the joint initiatives that were being progressed and asked that their appreciation be recorded to the officers involved.

The Committee noted the progress against the actions and that a further progress report would be submitted at the June meeting of the People and Communities Committee.

**Memorial Bench in Woodvale Park**

The Assistant Director advised the Committee that the Council had been approached by representatives of Suicide Awareness and Mental Health Initiative (S.A.M.H.I.) seeking permission to install a memorial bench in Woodvale Park, adjacent to a memorial tree that had been planted a number of years ago.

The Committee approved the installation of a memorial bench in Woodvale Park to raise awareness of suicide.

**Dunmurry Community Association**

The Assistant Director advised that the Dunmurry Community Association (DCA) had a license agreement with the Council in respect of a portion of the changing pavilion located within Fullerton Park. She reminded the Members that Fullerton Park had transferred to the Council in April 2015, as a result of Local Government Reform.

**People and Communities Committee,  
Thursday, 12th April, 2018**

The officer outlined that Lisburn City Council had entered into a licence agreement with DCA with effect from April 2014. This agreement permitted the Association to use a section of the building for community purposes, with kitchen and toilet facilities being shared with other sporting users. The agreement was for an initial period of two years, with an extension of a further year having been granted which ended on 31st March.

The Committee was advised that the Association had requested that the Council enter a new licence agreement to enable it to continue to offer a programme of activities to the local community.

The officer detailed that the facility was maintained by Belfast City Council and, in addition, the Council through its Community Service budget provided a revenue budget to help with running costs. She advised that the group had initially sought a lease agreement, however, officers had met with the Association and following discussion it was proposed that:

1. the Council would agree to hold over on the existing licence agreement for a period of 6 months, up to 30 September 2018;
2. the Council would review and revise the existing agreement, with a view to providing a key holding agreement to the Association to deliver a pre-agreed programme of community development work;
3. the Council would retain maintenance responsibility for the building; and
4. the Council would work with the Association to establish financial needs to meet programme costs and identify how the costs might be met.

The officer advised that the Association had also highlighted the lack of office accommodation as an issue but officers felt that this should be deferred until a new agreement had been reached and the community development programme had been agreed.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed:

- to the extension of the existing licence agreement for a period of 6 months up to 30th September 2018;
- to a review of the existing agreement to be replaced with a key holding agreement which would be provided on the back of an agreed Community Development Programme and which would be developed in conjunction with Community Services and the Association; and
- that minor works be undertaken to facilitate the needs of the Association and the sporting users of the facility.

### **Dealing with Banned Breeds**

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 further update the Committee on the motion that was brought to Council on 1st September**

2016 with regard to dangerous breeds of dogs and to provide a report on the work that has been undertaken to review how the Council handles any future cases involving dangerous breeds. The motion called for a review of breed specific legislation to avoid the removal from their owners of prohibited dogs that have not posed a danger to the public, as follows:

*'This Council calls upon the Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to conduct an urgent review of Breed Specific Legislation. Recent tragic events in England demonstrate the need for effective controls in respect of dangerous dogs. However, the removal from their owners of dogs that have not posed a danger to the public should be avoided. The Council supports and encourages responsible dog ownership and those who exercise appropriate care and control of their dogs.'*

- 1.2 The Council wrote to the Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Minister McIlveen MLA, regarding the motion on 5th October 2016. A reply from the Minister's office has been received. The Minister has stated in her response as follows;

*'The Department understands that the Council is currently reviewing its handling of a high profile case involving the seizure, assessment and return of a pit bull. We would be interested in learning of the findings of that review, and will then consider whether the existing legislative provisions could be reviewed to allow the impact of seizure on dogs and their owners, to be more effectively managed, while ensuring appropriate protection for the public.'*

## 2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee are asked to;

- Note the contents of the report and in particular the summary of current actions at paragraph 3.14.

## 3.0 Main Report

### 3.1 Key Issues

An internal officer group (comprising of officers from City and Neighbourhoods Department, Legal Services and Corporate Communications) has been reviewing the legal position and processes involved in dealing with cases of suspected banned breeds. The processes used by the Council's Dog Warden Service have been developed based on the legislative requirements of The Dangerous Dogs (Northern Ireland) Order

1991 (as amended) aimed at dealing with banned breeds of dogs, specifically those dogs from the pit bull terrier type breed which are the predominant banned breed found in this Council area.

- 3.2 Since the seizure of a pit bull terrier type dog known as 'Hank' in July 2016, the Council has seized a further three dogs which were subsequently found to be pit bull terrier type dogs but were assessed as suitable to be admitted to the exemption register. Those dogs were returned to their owners following court proceedings permitting the dog to be placed on an exemption register. In cases of this nature, a determination on whether a dog is of a breed banned under the legislation is made based on the animal's physical characteristics and temperament. This is a two stage process. The ultimate decision in terms of action is based on; the dog's physical characteristics which determine if it is a pit bull terrier type breed, an assessment as to the temperament of the dog and whether it poses a danger to the public. Sixteen dogs have been placed on the exemption register and returned to their owner by the Council since 2011, out of seventeen dogs assessed to be pit bull terrier types during this period, sixteen dogs have had conditions attached to their return, which are aimed at addressing issues of public safety.
- 3.3 The prohibition on possessing pit bull terrier type dogs was introduced with the intention of preventing serious injury to human life. The legislation classifies four breeds of dogs which are deemed to be dangerous dogs, namely;
- Pit Bull Terrier,
  - Dogo Argentino,
  - Fila Brasileiro,
  - Japanese Tosa
- 3.4 It is illegal to own or be in possession of one of these breeds or breed types unless a Court Order has been made exempting it from the prohibition on keeping such a dog. Once the Council is aware of the whereabouts of a dog that may fall within one of the prescribed breeds, officers will assess the situation to determine whether the owner is likely to agree to hand over their dog to be assessed. If not, or it is not possible to contact the owner, officers will seek a warrant from the court permitting the Council to seize and remove the dog from its home environment to allow an assessment to take place.
- 3.5 Whilst the removal of the dog from its home is understandably distressing for dog owners, the Council must balance that against its obligation under the legislation to protect the public

and ensure that there is a comprehensive, impartial assessment of the dog's physical and behavioural characteristics. That assessment cannot take place in the owner's home, as it is important to see how the dog will react in surroundings and circumstances which are not familiar to it.

- 3.6 The purpose of the assessment is to determine whether, in the Council's view, the dog is a pit bull terrier type dog and if so whether its behaviour is such that it could be admitted to an exemption register. In order to admit the dog to the exemption register and return it to its owner the Council must obtain a court order. That order will contain a number of conditions, not least of all that the dog must be kept on a lead, muzzled, neutered and insured as a pit bull terrier type dog. It is officers understanding that the relevant insurance can only be obtained when a court order is made making possession of the dog lawful.
- 3.7 The officer review considered the option of allowing a dog deemed to belong to a banned breed to 'stay at home' after its assessment and pending court proceedings for exemption. There is legislation in England and Wales which makes provision for the dog to remain at home following assessment, pending exemption. No such legislation exists in Northern Ireland. In order to explore the liabilities associated with a 'stay at home' option pending the outcome of court proceedings for exemption, on the advice of legal services, an opinion was commissioned from a leading expert on pit bull terrier type dogs and from a leading barrister.
- 3.8 Mr. Peter Tallack, a recognised expert in the field of identifying and dealing with banned breeds, advised as follows:
- He has investigated 14 fatalities caused by dogs on behalf of police forces in GB, ten of which involved pit bull terrier type dogs.
  - The biggest problem with this breed of dog is with people who own the dog but lack any appreciation of the enormous strength and tenacity of the dog.
  - That these breed/type of dogs are different to normal family domestic pets and sometimes do operate to different behaviour rules than ordinary domestic breeds.
  - That whilst all dogs can bite, the severity of the injuries that can arise from an attack by a pit bull type dog are at such a level that they would not generally be appreciated without supporting evidence.
  - It is standard procedure for the police service on the mainland to remove the dog from its home for assessment.

- Prior to the legislation permitting a 'stay at home' option in England, 'stay at home' policies were trialled but were discontinued, after the Independent Police Complaints Commission identified concern with this particular practice.

**3.9** Under the most recent legislation introduced in 2015 in England and Wales, which makes provision for a 'stay at home' scheme pending exemption, it is the Chief Police Officer who must make this decision and only where they are satisfied that the dog does not constitute a danger to public safety. In determining whether that is the case, they must consider the temperament of the dog, whether the person in charge of the dog is a fit and proper person to keep the dog and any other relevant circumstances. If the Chief Police Officer does decide to return the dog, the owner must comply with a number of strict conditions before the dog can be returned home.

**3.10** Mr Tallack has advised that very few authorities have applied this approach. The report stated that;

*'It is my opinion that one of the main considerations in regard to leaving a dog at home after being brought to the attention of an enforcement agency is liability. The legislation is most unusual by reversing liability, therefore as soon as the dog is brought to the attention of the enforcement agency, technically the suspect and the dog are guilty of the offence until the court makes a judgement or order. Therefore, if anything were to happen to any person as a result of the dog not being in custody, whether it is a member of the family or not, must raise huge concerns for the agency involved and therefore its chief officer could be made responsible'.*

**3.11** Mr. Tallack pointed out that there have been no fatal incidents involving a pit bull terrier type dog in Northern Ireland and he expresses the view that our dog licensing system and Dog Warden Services are better resourced and consistent across Northern Ireland which carries many advantages. Mr.Tallack recommends that the Council should protect its position by ensuring that there are robust procedures in place to deal with dogs suspected of belonging to a banned breed, which must be taken into the Council's care pending a determination on breed and court proceedings.

**3.12** The opinion of a leading barrister in NI was sought in relation to the Council's legal duties and administrative processes. The potential liability to the Council in allowing a dog from a banned breed to remain at home with its owner, pending legal proceedings for exemption, was considered as part of the

review into the Council's processes for dealing with dangerous dogs. The following comments form the basis of the legal opinion that has been provided to the Council in respect of its handling of dogs from banned breeds:

- The risks involved with the ownership of a 'dangerous dog' extends to fatalities of the most vulnerable, namely young children and elderly people.
- The objective of the legislation must always be the primary focus of those that operate under the processes of the legislation, namely to protect the public from serious injury and to prevent fear of an attack from such dogs.
- The current process of removing the dog from its home for assessment and fast tracking the court exemption process is the proper approach and works well in the vast majority of cases.
- The Council's approach to considering whether a dog is suitable for exemption is well measured and professional.
- The application of robust procedures, well recorded and documented as presently apply, appear likely to provide the best approach to the complexities that can arise.
- The experience of England and Wales of increasing attacks is a situation which does not apply to Northern Ireland and the comparison that can be made is strongly supportive that the processes adopted of handling dogs in Northern Ireland have produced a better outcome for all concerned.

- 3.13 The legal opinion concludes *'I am of the view that anyone fully informed of the risks and potential liabilities involved in the seizure and assessment of dogs under the legislation could but only form the reasonable view that what is being done, needs to be done and would and should be supportive of same'*

In light of the above, officers are concerned at the potential risk to the public generally, and indeed the Council, if it permitted dogs to remain at home to be assessed and/or pending a court hearing.

- 3.14 The following improvement actions have been implemented as part of this review;
- The Council does not adopt a 'stay at home' policy for dogs suspected of belonging to a banned breed who are eligible for exemption pending court proceedings.

- When a dog which is suspected of belonging to a banned breed comes to the attention of the Council, the Council must respond and identify the breed as quickly and as professionally as possible. In advance of seizing the dog, the Dog Warden Service will endeavour to engage with the owner of the dog and encourage the owner to voluntarily hand the dog over for assessment. Each case must be assessed on its own merits and in some cases, it will be necessary to seize a dog without the owner's consent or presence.
  - It is recognised that the removal of a dog from its owners is a stressful situation. Dog Wardens will ensure that every effort is taken to settle the dog into its temporary surroundings and they will liaise regularly with the owner of the dog, while it remains in the Council's care to keep them fully informed of the welfare of the dog.
  - The dog will be assessed as soon as it is settled into kennels in order to determine if it is suitable for exemption.
  - Once a dog is deemed suitable to be placed on the exemption register, the Court proceedings for exemption will be fast tracked by the Councils' Legal Services so as to minimise the time spent in kennels. In recent cases, the dogs have been returned home within ten days from their removal.
- 3.15 In relation to visitation of dogs impounded in kennels by their owners, there is limited research to support or refute whether such visits are beneficial for the dog and its owner. For security and health and safety reasons, the location of the dog while in care will remain undisclosed. The dog will receive daily human contact and exercise from both kennel staff and the Dog Wardens. All aspects of its stay are documented to help allay the concerns of the owner. In most cases the duration of the stay will be relatively short. For dogs who may be required to stay for an extended period of time, the Council will explore how visitation can be facilitated taking into account our duty of care to the kennel provider, the welfare of the dog and the health and safety of the staff involved.
- 3.16 Financial & Resource Implications
- Costs associated with the expert advice will be met within existing budgets.
- 3.17 Asset & Other Implications

None

**3.18 Equality or Good Relations Implications**

**There are no relevant equality considerations associated with the review.”**

The Committee noted the contents of the report and in particular the summary of current actions at paragraph 3.14.

**Street Naming**

The Committee approved:

- the naming in respect of Donegal Park Gardens, off Antrim Road, BT15 and Rose Street, off Springfield Avenue; and
- the continuation of an existing street in the City namely Wandsworth Court, off Wandsworth Parade, BT4 and Lagmore Avenue, off Stewartstown Road, BT17

**Request for use of Barnett's Demesne**

(The Chairperson, Councillor Sandford, who had declared an interest in this agenda item, withdrew from the Chair whilst it was under discussion and took no part in the debate or decision-making process.)

(Councillor Carson, Deputy Chairperson, in the Chair.)

The Assistant Director reported that the County Grand Orange Lodge of Belfast had written to the Council regarding the use of the Barnett's Demesne for its Belfast demonstrations on 12th July.

The Committee agreed to the request from the County Grand Lodge for the use of Barnett Demesne on the 12th July 2018, subject to the organisers meeting all statutory requirements and an appropriate legal agreement being prepared by Legal Services.

(The Chairperson, Councillor Sandford, in the Chair.)

**Japanese Knotweed**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

- 1.1 The People and Communities Committee meeting of 6 February 2018 considered a motion by Councillor McReynolds. The motion called on the council to do more to assist individuals whose homes are negatively impacted upon by Japanese**

Knotweed and should therefore write to the Northern Ireland Environment Agency to see if they would be content to co-fund a Belfast City Council 'not for profit' service to treat properties across Belfast'.

1.2 An action arising from the Committee meeting was therefore for officers to consider the feasibility of this request. This paper serves to provide an update to Members regarding preliminary work that has been undertaken in the intervening period.

## 2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Committee is asked to;

- Note the content of this report.

## 3.0 Main report

3.1 Members will be aware that Japanese knotweed is one of thirty-five plant species that have been proscribed via Article 15 of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 for the purposes of preventing their planting or growth in the wild. The relevant authority is the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA).

3.2 Methods for the control of Japanese knotweed are typically grouped into physical controls, involving the mechanical removal or deep burial of the plant, together with the installation of growth barriers, or chemical controls involving the use of herbicides such as glyphosate, 2,4 D, Triclopyr or Picloram. Chemical treatments routinely have to be repeated until no regrowth is observed (usually for between 3 to 5 years), although it should be noted that glyphosate based herbicides are readily available from DIY stores.

3.3 In terms of treatment approach, it is considered that the council would have to determine, or seek professional advice regarding the most expedient method to control or eradicate a Japanese knotweed infestation; either excavation, burial or chemical treatment. Such advice may however have legal implications, particularly given the issues around the potential impact of Japanese knotweed on the sale of properties or the depreciation of assets. It is additionally considered that it would be difficult to forecast the likely demand for a knotweed treatment scheme as there is limited information available on the incidence of invasive species across Belfast.

3.4 In terms of offering a chemical treatment service, the council could opt to appoint a commercial contractor to deliver a '*not for profit*' type service or it might seek to deliver such a service

on an equivalent financial basis from within existing staff resources, although this capacity does not presently exist. Any option could have significant financial impact on revenue estimates for the Council. It is considered however, that mechanical removal or deep burial would have to be undertaken by a specialist contractor and that excavated materials would have to be disposed offsite to an appropriately licensed landfill site, with attendant haulage and disposal costs.

- 3.5 In order to determine the council's vires for establishing a Japanese knotweed treatment scheme for the city, officers have sought the views of the council's Legal Services regarding potential treatment approaches and on the likely risks associated with such a scheme.
- 3.6 In addition, in order to determine NIEA's views on the establishment of a Japanese knotweed treatment scheme, council officers have written to their counterparts in NIEA regarding the manner of the scheme delivery and regarding the potential for part-funding for such as scheme.
- 3.7 Finally, officers are presently undertaking a review of how GB councils manage Japanese knotweed, including whether any councils offer a treatment service for residents.
- 3.8 It is proposed that officers will complete the above-mentioned research and provide a further report to Committee containing recommendations or options for a Belfast treatment scheme.

3.9 **Financial & Resource Implications**

The provision of a 'not for profit' treatment service has not been included within existing revenue estimates for the 2018/2019 financial period. Any option could have significant financial impact on revenue estimates for the Council. It is anticipated that there may be significant administrative and financial resource implications should the council wish to establish a commercial contractor led 'not for profit' Japanese knotweed treatment scheme or if the council wished to provide an equivalent scheme from 'in house' resources.

3.10 **Equality & Good Relations Implications**

There are no equality or good relations issues associated with establishing a Japanese knotweed treatment scheme."

The Committee noted the update.

### Update on Houses in Multiple Occupation Regulation

The Committee considered the following report:

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

**1.1** The new legislative control, the Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Act NI 2016 completed Final Stage on the 15th March 2016 and received Royal Assent on the 12th May 2016. On commencement of this Act HMO regulation will transfer to local Councils. This paper provides an update to the Committee on the progress with the transfer of Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) function from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) to Councils.

#### **2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1** The Committee is asked to;

- Note the update information regarding the Houses of Multiple Occupation function and the current status of the programme of transfer.

#### **3.0 Key Issues**

**3.1** The programme for the transfer of the HMO function is being overseen by a Regional Board in NI consisting of officers from Department for Communities (DfC), NIHE and the three lead Councils (Belfast City Council, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, and Derry City and Strabane District Council).

**3.2** An economic appraisal commissioned by the Department for Communities considered a number of delivery options for the new service. The appraisal included financial and option modelling

**3.3** This appraisal recognised that whilst an 11 council model was the most desirable it would mean that full cost recovery for councils would prove difficult and would create a potential rate base burden on councils as the service would have to be provided within existing resources. It was considered that the only way to negate these risks and provide a cost neutral and fit for purpose service was to cluster councils and provide the new regime via a shared service.

**3.4** The proposed model for service delivery is to cluster councils on a geographical basis, the cluster leads being those areas with the largest number of HMOs, Belfast, Causeway Coast and

Glens, and Derry City and Strabane. It also reflects the location of existing staff.

3.5 Under the current proposed cluster arrangement in the economic appraisal, Belfast City Council is described as stand alone. It is accepted by the Regional Board that the Cluster leads will need to provide support to each other in order to ensure the effectiveness and provision of a fit-for-purpose service. This will require providing support across each other's respective cluster areas.

3.6 Members should be aware of the following emerging factors in the current programme.

3.7 Fee setting process

Members are reminded that the new regulatory regime comes with a number of additional powers and the financial modelling included in the economic appraisal forecast an uplift in fees will most likely be required to allow for full cost recovery. Derry City & Strabane District Council are in the process of appointing a consultant to undertake the next step in the fee setting process. The cost of the consultant will be funded by the DfC as a transition cost.

3.8 Date of transfer

The date for transfer of functions will be 31 March 2019. This date was considered appropriate given the amount of work that was required, especially regarding the fee setting process and the procurement processes, prior to the transfer.

3.9 Transferring staff

Whilst it is not a strict transfer of the existing registration scheme or function to councils by way of a Transfer of Functions Order, advice obtained from the Department for Communities Personnel Department confirms that TUPE transfer arrangements remain as there is a change in control of the regulatory HMO function that was provided by the Housing Executive and is now being taken over by councils.

3.10 The Committee should also be aware that the NIHE currently employ 14 staff to manage the current HMO function. It is suggested that Belfast City Council could become the employing authority for all the currently employed NIHE staff, including those currently based in Coleraine. Arrangements for office accommodation and staffing will be brought to a future meeting.

- 3.11 The specific details of the responsibilities of the councils across the region will be outlined and covered by an agreed SLA. The costs for staffing will be covered from fee income.

ICT

- 3.12 It is envisaged that a new ICT system will be required to support the transferring HMO function. The current system does not provide a public interface, provides limited ability to make online payments and applications, and does not provide for mobile working for technical officers undertaking site visits and inspections.

- 3.13 BCC's Digital Services will shortly undertake to procure new ICT systems required for the new scheme. To underpin this work, a collaboration agreement between Belfast City Council and the 10 other councils will be required. This will provide detail on how BCC will carry out this process on behalf of the other councils.

- 3.14 The purchase of new ICT systems will be funded by the DfC. A letter of assurance regarding the estimated costs has been received from DfC.

3.15 Financial & Resource Implications

It is anticipated that procurement costs for the consultant and for the new ICT System will be paid for as transition costs by the DfC. It is essential that the scheme will be cost neutral to the councils and that all costs will be covered by fee income.

3.16 Equality or Good Relations Implications

**There are no relevant equality considerations associated with the delivery of the new function."**

Following a query, the Assistant Director confirmed that the proposed date of transfer and the commencement of the new functions was 31st March 2019. She provided an overview in respect of some of the work that was currently ongoing with the other 11 Councils to try and ensure that this deadline was achieved. The Assistant Director undertook to keep the Members informed with regular update reports.

The Committee noted the update in respect of the transfer of the Houses of Multiple Occupation function to Councils and agreed that officers would submit a further update report in due course.

## **Home Safety Update**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

- 1.1 **Members will recall that the April 2017 meeting of People and Communities Committee approved that, from April 2018, the Council would procure and manage the Home Safety Check and Repair Service on behalf of partners.**
- 1.2 **This report provides an update to Members on the progress of the Belfast Handy Person Home Safety Check and Repair Scheme to date and the plans going forward.**
- 1.3 **The Council’s Home Safety team sits within the Environmental Health Section. The team receives funding from the Public Health Agency (PHA) to deliver the Under 5 Home Safety Check scheme and numerous safety projects with older and vulnerable adults, parents and young children.**
- 1.4 **This report also provides an update to Members on the work of the home safety team.**

### **2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 **The Committee is asked to note:**
  - **That from 1st April 2018 the Council will manage the contract for the Home Safety Check and Repair Service on behalf of partners;**
  - **Changes to the equipment criteria for the Family Home Safety Check Scheme;**
  - **The ongoing home safety project work.**

### **3.0 Main report**

#### **Belfast Home Safety Check and Repair Service**

- 3.1 **This scheme has operated for the last three years and, following an evaluation, it was agreed that the Council would procure and manage the scheme for the next three years.**
- 3.2 **Following a public procurement process, the contract for this service was awarded to Bryson Energy and the Council will commence management of the contract from 1st April.**

- 3.3** This scheme offers residents aged 65 and over (or vulnerable adults) a free home safety visit during which they will be provided with advice, information and home safety equipment (e.g. helping hand grips, magnifier reader, long length shoe horn, jar opener and sock aids) which will be fitted free of charge. Residents can also avail of a reduced rate repair service (£5 per hour for people in receipt of benefits and £15 per hour for people who are not in receipt of benefits). These rates were previously agreed at the August 2015 meeting of the People and Communities Committee.
- 3.4** Following agreement with the District Police and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) the new contract extends into the area of Home Security/Crime Prevention. Residents aged 60 and over who have been a victim of burglary in their home will be visited by the Crime Prevention Officer and referred in to the scheme, where they will be able to avail of free security equipment (e.g. door chains, window/door alarms, bin locks, key safes, door braces, call blocking devices, property marking kits and electricity timers) which will also be fitted free of charge.
- 3.5** The objectives of this project are as follows:
- identify vulnerable households using relevant stakeholders/referral partners;
  - reduce the risk of accidents in the home by making it a safer environment;
  - empower people to change their behaviours;
  - develop understanding about risk of accidents in the home by raising awareness and providing educational resources;
  - promote effective training, skills and knowledge in home accident prevention across all relevant stakeholders and groups;
  - improve the evidence base regarding home accidents by collecting relevant data.
  - reduce the risk of crime and the fear of crime perpetrated against vulnerable members of our community; and
  - help minimise the likelihood of repeat victims.
- 3.6** The objectives of this service link directly to the ‘Living Here’ priority of the Belfast Agenda and Corporate Plan by supporting older people. The older population of Belfast is rapidly growing: it is estimated that 22% of people aged 60+ are affected by income deprivation which has a significant impact on the health and wellbeing for the residents.

- 3.7 Furthermore, these objectives reflect the objectives listed in the Northern Ireland Home Accident Prevention Strategy 2015-2025 and the provision of a Handy Person service has been made a priority under the Age Friendly Belfast Action Plan, under the Belfast Strategic Partnership supported by the Belfast Health Development Unit.
- 3.8 A Home Hazard Steering group has been established including staff from the Council, Public Health Agency (PHA), Bryson Energy and Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, to oversee and monitor the effectiveness of the scheme.
- 3.9 All occupants that received repair work under the scheme to date were left a Customer Quality of Service (CQS) form to complete and return via free-post. A remarkable 70% return has been observed, with 100% satisfied to very satisfied responses on the handyperson's performance and standard of workmanship and overall experience of the Scheme. Evaluation of the project to date has reported that the scheme has had a positive impact on those who have received it.
- 3.10 This project is funded by the PHA, PCSP and BCC.

**Belfast Family Home Safety Check Scheme**

- 3.11 Council staff deliver the Belfast Family Home Safety Check scheme. This scheme offers families with children (under the age of five) a home visit to provide advice and information on how to prevent an accident. Occupants may also receive a range of home safety equipment (e.g. stair gates, fireguards, cupboard locks, anti-tipping furniture and TV straps, blind cord safety devices, carbon monoxide alarms and safety packs).
- 3.12 In 2016/17, 1,321 checks were carried out across the City. The majority of referrals are received from Health Visitors, Social Workers and Sure Start staff.
- 3.13 In January 2018, new eligibility criteria was introduced by the Public Health Agency to ensure that families living in the most deprived areas and who are affected by income deprivation are receiving the safety equipment they require. Families who do not meet this criteria can still receive a home safety visit for advice and information.
- 3.14 This service links directly to the 'Living Here' priority of the Belfast Agenda and Corporate Plan by being committed to ensuring children and young people are safe. Five out of the ten most deprived wards in NI are in Belfast and it is estimated that 39% of children in Belfast live in income deprivation.

This scheme aims to alleviate some of the risks to these children.

- 3.15 Customer surveys are completed on a quarterly basis with a 10% random sample population.

Home Safety Project Work

- 3.16 The Public Health Agency (PHA) provides annual funding for a range of home safety projects across the City.

- 3.17 The Council organises an annual falls prevention project targeting older people across the City. This year the project theme was 'Foot Care for Falls Prevention' and we worked with a BHSCT podiatrist to deliver the workshops to 533 individuals from 28 community groups across the City. Evaluations were completed with a sample population to assess knowledge increase and behaviour change.

- 3.18 The Council's Home Safety Officer also delivers an annual Community Family Safety Project in conjunction with the City's Sure Starts. In 2017/2018, we delivered 32 workshops to 253 parents on the topic of burns and scalds and blind cord safety. At these events we also provided heat proof pouches and blind cord safety devices free of charge.

- 3.19 We organise annual visits for primary 7 pupils from schools across the City to visit the Risk Avoidance Danger Awareness Resource centre (RADAR) where they learn about: home safety; fire safety; road safety; anti-social behaviour; e-safety and bus safety. In addition to the funding received from the PHA we also received funding from PCSP which allowed us to pay for the centre admission fees for 2,186 pupils from 46 schools across the City in January-March 2018.

- 3.20 The projects delivered by the home safety team aid toward delivering outcomes from the Belfast Agenda including ensuring 'Belfast is a safe City for all' and 'Everyone in Belfast experiences good health and wellbeing'.

3.21 Financial & Resource Implications

The City Council contribution is included within existing budget estimates.

3.22 Equality or Good Relations Implications

There are no relevant equality considerations associated with the proposed scheme."

The Committee noted the update.

**People and Communities Committee,  
Thursday, 12th April, 2018**

**Connswater Community Greenway  
Animation Programme 2018/19**

The Assistant Director drew the Members' attention to the proposed Connswater Community Greenway (CCG) Animation Plan for 2018/19.

The officer advised that the programme had important regeneration outcomes in relation to health, volunteering and reducing anti-social behaviour. The Committee noted that the plan had been developed to support the strategic direction of the EastSide Partnership, the Belfast Agenda and the Programme for Government.

The Assistant Director requested that the Committee, in anticipation of increased requests from external event and activity providers, grant authority to the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services, under the scheme of the delegation, to approve such requests.

The Committee:

- granted authority for the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services, under the scheme of delegation, to approve event and activity requests for the use of the parks and open spaces along the Connswater Community Greenway in 2018/19, delivered by the Connswater Community Trust in partnership with Belfast City Council;
- granted authority for the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services, under the scheme of delegation, to approve event and activity requests which might include licensing arrangements such as trading or the selling of alcohol at the main event spaces along the Connswater Community Greenway, including the C.S. Lewis Square, Orangefield Park and Victoria Park; and
- noted that an entertainment license was already in place for the CCG.

**Tropical Ravine, Botanic Gardens**

The Assistant Director reminded the Committee that the Tropical Ravine was due to be re-opened to the public in mid-April and she proceeded to provide the Members with an update in respect of issues relating to the operation of the newly refurbished facility.

The Committee noted that, as part of the Business Plan for the facility, it was anticipated that an income could be generated by using the building for conferences and events. Fees for commercial use of the Tropical Ravine would be charged in line with the current fee structures within the corporate policy.

Following consideration of the report, the Committee:

- granted permission for the location of a donation box in the Tropical Ravine, Botanic Gardens, with the funds to be used for the purpose of enhancing services for visitors to the Tropical Ravine;

**People and Communities Committee,  
Thursday, 12th April, 2018**

- agreed to open the Tropical Ravine from Tuesday to Sunday, with Monday reserved for Corporate events, staff training and routine maintenance; and
- agreed to run a series of promotions to market the Tropical Ravine and to generate income where appropriate.

**GLL Service Level Agreement and  
Swimming Pool Testing**

The Assistant Manager reminded the Committee that, as the Council's Strategic Operating Partner, Active Belfast Board Ltd (ABL) was responsible for overseeing the direct delivery and development of the service in compliance with the terms and conditions of the contract which included performance monitoring and reporting.

As the appointed Strategic Service Provider, Greenwich Leisure (GLL) was contracted by ABL to manage the Council's leisure centres and to deliver the service as set out in the partnership documentation.

The officer reported that the Environmental Health Service had traditionally sampled Belfast City Council pools for bacteriological analysis on an informal basis for many years to help provide advice and reassurance regarding pool hygiene for users. This process, whilst not guaranteed on a monthly basis, was of benefit to all and it was felt that this arrangement should be formalised.

The Committee endorsed the draft Service Level Agreement between Greenwich Leisure Ltd and Belfast City Council with regard to swimming pool testing and authorised the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services to sign the agreement on the Council's behalf.

**Use of Lower Crescent - Belfast Book Festival 2018**

The Assistant Director advised that a request had been received from the organisers of the Belfast Book Festival seeking permission to hold a Fun Day and Belfast Book Festival 'Lit Crawl', on Saturday, 16th June in the Lower Crescent Green Space.

The Committee noted that this event had been held annually for the past six years and had proven to be a successful outreach programme for the festival. The officer detailed that the ethos of the fun day was to bring the world of books to those in the community who would not normally access the arts and to introduce children to the fabulous world of books. The fun day would be free for all to attend with arts and craft, author readings and entertainment.

The officer advised that, as a new addition to the 2018 Programme, the organisers had decided to organise a 'Lit Crawl'. This would take place for three hours around the Queen's Quarter, which would come alive with free events in various locations in and around Botanic Avenue and Stranmillis.

The officer reported that, usually once the fun day ended, the marquee would be taken down. However, this year the organisers were seeking permission to use the

**People and Communities Committee,  
Thursday, 12th April, 2018**

marquee and park as a 'Lit Crawl' venue. She detailed that from 7.00 p.m. there would be a number of events in the marquee, which would conclude with a festival finale at 11.00 p.m.

The Committee was asked to note that the event would be ticketed, with the number of tickets limited to 200. In addition, bar and food vendors would also be in attendance.

The Committee granted permission for the use of Lower Crescent green space for a Belfast Book Festival Fun Day, subject to satisfactory terms in line with the above being agreed with the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services and on condition that:

1. the event organiser resolves all operational issues to the Council's satisfaction;
2. an appropriate legal agreement is completed; and
3. the event organiser meets all statutory requirements of the Building Control Service, including the terms and conditions of the Parks Entertainments Licence.

**Update on the Reference Group on Older People**

The Assistant Director advised that, at the meeting of the Older Peoples Reference Group held on 20th March, the following key items had been considered:

- update in respect of Older Volunteer of the Year Awards;
- update in respect of Age-Friendly Belfast;
- update on Age-Friendly Belfast Events;
- review of Positive Ageing Month;
- update in respect of the Age-Friendly Network for Northern Ireland; and
- update on the Age Sector Platform.

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Reference Group on Older People held on 20th March.

**Chartered Institute of Waste Management (CIWM) - National Conference, London**

The Committee authorised the attendance of the Chairperson and the Deputy Chairperson (or their nominees) and the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services (or his nominee), to attend the Chartered Institute of Waste Management (CIWM) National Conference, in London from 13th – 14th June.

**Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland, Walk NI**

The Assistant Director advised that a request had been received from Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland (ORNI) seeking the Council to part fund, as part of its partnership arrangement with ORNI, the ongoing marketing and promotion of walks within Belfast Parks through the WalkNI website, available [here](#)

She reminded the Members that ORNI provided a number of services to the Council, as follows:

**People and Communities Committee,  
Thursday, 12th April, 2018**

- it audited a number of the Council's Parks' walks;
- promoted the Council's 24 short and medium walks;
- promoted the Ulster Way throughout the Council's Parks; and
- listed detailed information on its website on behalf of Belfast Parks.

The officer advised that the Council wished to promote its 23 short quality walks (totalling 73 kilometres), 1 medium walk (totalling 17 kilometres) and 8 kilometres of Ulster Way through the WalkNI website. She asked the Committee to note that there was a section of the website which was designated specifically to Belfast, available [here](#)

The Committee agreed to continue to provide financial support to ORNI with funding of £3,445 for 2018/19, to enable ORNI to market support for walking routes within Belfast Parks.

**Appointment of Elected Members to  
Community Centre Committees**

The Committee considered a report in relation to the revised appointment of the Elected Members to Community Centre Committees and noted that Political Parties had recently submitted new appointees to replace those Members who were no longer Members of the Council.

Following a query from a Member regarding functioning centre committees, the Assistant Director confirmed that not all centres had functioning centre committees, for example, both the Ardoyne and Whiterock Community Centres did not currently have a functioning committee. She advised that officers were currently conducting a community centre scoping exercise as part of area working and it was anticipated that this would provide specific details in respect of the current position across all centres.

A further Member suggested that he had never been invited to attend a committee meeting for the community centre to which he was appointed, however, he believed that there was still a functioning committee.

Discussion ensued, during which it was agreed that an updated list be circulated of the Elected Members appointed to each Community Centre to both the Elected Members and also to the secretary of the relevant Community Centre.

The Committee further agreed to authorise the following changes in Community Centre Committee membership:

- the replacement of the former Councillor McCabe with Councillor Murphy on the Ardoyne and Ligoniel Community Centre Committees;
- the replacement of the former Councillor McKee with Councillor Pankhurst on the Concorde Community Centre Committee; and
- the replacement of the former Councillor Austin with Councillor Nic Biorna on the Whiterock Community Centre.

**Community Services: Proposed Services Closures**

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 present information regarding Council’s ongoing commitment to the professional development of frontline staff to deliver high quality services to children and young people and to identify the impact of planned training on service delivery.
- 1.2 In order to enable identified staff to access training, we are seeking permission to close limited services as required against a schedule for Director approval.
- 1.3 As part of the continuous improvement plan for customer delivery, it is proposed that registration to our Summer Scheme programme should take place on one day across the city, potentially on Wednesday 16th May 2018. In order to support this amended approach to registration, there will be a need for limited service closures on this date.

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:
- i. Note plans for the delivery of Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) training to all Play Development and Assistant Community Development Officers and to agree to the limited closure of some services noting that any closures will be kept to a minimum.
  - ii. Agree limited access to some services to support city wide registration to Council Community Summer Scheme programmes on Wednesday 16th May (TBC).

**3.0 Main report**

**Key Issues**

- 3.1 Belfast City Council employs 20 professionally qualified Play workers who deliver a range of play initiatives across a number of settings including After-schools services and outreach play programmes for Parent and Toddler groups across the city. We also deliver a range of after-school programmes for children aged 5 to 11 at our BCC Community Centres.

**People and Communities Committee,  
Thursday, 12th April, 2018**

- 3.2** These are delivered by the Assistant Community Development Officer team supported by volunteers and include homework clubs, sports programmes and arts and craft activities.
- 3.3** Council adopts an open access policy for children attending these services, however, analysis of registrations over recent years points to an increasing number of children who are presenting with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism and other challenging behaviours.
- 3.4** Working with challenging behaviour can be difficult for both staff and children and a high level of self awareness is required so that staff move from reacting to situations to responding to situations. It requires a level of emotional intelligence so that staff can manage their emotions and understand their responses.
- 3.5** Working with young children aged 5-11 years means staff are often dealing with children who are only now developing their emotional capacity and who may have an outburst when they cannot understand, manage or control their emotions. Knowing the child, understanding the triggers for that child and having strategies that work to de-escalate any situation, will enable the child to remain in the session and help staff to apply the appropriate strategy to ensure their effective participation.
- 3.6** It is also important that a child learns from their experience and that staff have the skills to help children reflect on what has happened and problem-solve a different solution which they feel will work for them.
- 3.7** The planned training in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention will further develop the capacity of the Playworker and Assistant Community Development officer teams by equipping them with the skills to manage challenging situations with children, promote positive behaviours, and support the child in their learning. This training is considered as being essential for these frontline staff and is designed to be delivered over three
- 3.8** The TCI training is designed to be delivered to groups of no more than 10 participants and three training programmes have been scheduled for delivery before the end of May 2018. Where possible efforts are being made to accommodate staff attendance at this training within their current working pattern.
- 3.9** Having Council staff trained in TCI is regarded as essential to the safe delivery of services for children and the HR forum approved the request to procure this training. The proposed dates for delivery are as follows:

**People and Communities Committee,  
Thursday, 12th April, 2018**

- 9th, 10th and 11th April 2018
- 16th, 17th and 18th May 2018
- 5th March (already completed), 21st and 22nd May 2018

**3.10** In order to support access to the training, committee is asked to support limited closure of some services. Every effort will be made to keep any disruption to a minimum including access to additional agency resources to cover gaps. Where the closure of services may be required, Director approval will be sought. A communications plan will be put in place for service users to inform them of any planned closures. A maximum of three play services across the city will be closed during each training day and efforts will be made to rotate the closure of services across the city to limit the impact on children and parents.

**3.11** **Summer Scheme Registration:** As part of its direct service provision Community Services manage, programme and staff 32 summer schemes across the city through its network of community and play centres. The Service delivers a comprehensive curriculum of educational, recreational, health, cultural and social activities for children and young people (5-14) in deprived and more isolated areas of Belfast.

**3.12** As part of our normal business, we are reviewing our approach to summer scheme delivery to support continuous improvements in areas such as programming, evaluating access and impact, staff and volunteer support and resourcing. One of the review recommendations is to move to a single day for participant registration. This will streamline and simplify the process for our customers while also supporting better communication to parents and guardians.

**3.13** This approach will necessitate the cancellation of some activity programmes however this will be managed to limit impact and will be supported by timely communication to service users.

**3.14** **Financial & Resource Implications**

The cost of the TCI training has been met within the current 2017/18 Play Service budget.

**3.15** **Equality or Good Relations Implications**

None.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**People and Communities Committee,  
Thursday, 12th April, 2018**

**Ribbon of Poppies Campaign 2018**

The Committee agreed to defer the report to enable officers to obtain more information in respect of the Campaign and to submit a further report to a future meeting.

Chairperson