

Derry City and Strabane District Council

Open Minutes of the Meeting of the Governance and Strategic Planning Committee held Remotely on Tuesday 6 October 2020 at 4.00 pm

Present:- Member of Committee Alderman Guy (in the Chair), Aldermen Bresland, McClintock and McCready, Councillors J Boyle, M Boyle, Fleming, Cooper, Donnelly, Duffy, Gallagher, McKeever, Mooney and Reilly.

Non-Members of Committee – Councillors Ferguson, Harkin and McCann.

In Attendance:- Chief Executive (Mr J Kelpie), Lead Finance Officer (Mr A Dallas), Lead Democratic Services and Improvement Officer (Ms E Cavanagh), Director of Health and Community (Mrs K McFarland), Lead Legal Services Officer (Mr P Kingston), Director of Legacy (Mrs O McGillion), Senior Economist (Mr MGallagher) and Committee Services Assistant (Ms N Meehan).

GSP134/20 Notice and Summons for Meeting

The Chief Executive read the Notice and Summons for the Meeting.

GSP135/20 Member Attendance and Apologies

The Chief Executive took the roll call and no apologies were recorded.

GSP136/20 Broadcasting Statement

The Chairperson read the Broadcasting Statement for the Meeting.

GSP137/20 Declarations of Members' Interests

The following Declarations of Interests were recorded:

Item 5 –To receive Mr P Brown Basic Income NI to make a Presentation on Introducing a Universal Basic Income – Councillor Ferguson.

Item 7 - Chairperson's Business - New Decade New Approach – Alderman McCready

Open for Decision

GSP138/20 To receive Mr P Brown, Basic Income NI – to make a Presentation on Introducing Universal Basic Income

Mr P Brown from Basic Income NI gave a power-point presentation on Introducing Universal Basic Income, a copy of which had previously been circulated.

Alderman McClintock thanked Mr Brown for his presentation. She referred to the fact that this was a new concept and whilst she was very keen that people should receive income to enable them to have an acceptable standard of living, this did present a number of questions. In regards to the suggestion that this be paid to people receiving income she noted that this was fundamentally different to the systems currently in operation. She queried how it was proposed to fund this. She also queried the correlation between this concept and the Peace Dividend.

In regards to the Peace Dividend, Mr Brown explained that the idea was to recognise that everyone in a post conflict society or who was a child of the "troubles", had lost out in some regard whether through lost opportunities or more directly. He stated that the Peace Dividend was regarded as a compensation for this loss. A Universal Basic Income (UBI), however, recognised some of the structural economic deprivation issues which may not have been addressed directly by the Peace Process. He referred to the considerable number of pensioners in Northern Ireland suffering from fuel poverty each year and the fact that currently one in five children were born into poverty each year and in areas of Derry two in three children were born into poverty each year.

In regards to funding the project, Mr Brown stated that as was evident from the Covid pandemic, there was always money available when needed and he argued that poverty presented a major crisis which had to be addressed. He stated that it would not be possible for the Northern Ireland Executive to fund this but there did need to be a level of fiscal responsibility. He referred to the low tax rate and the limited fiscal powers which existed in Northern Ireland and it was therefore necessary that the UBI would have to be a UK wide or national project. There were much more fiscal powers which the Westminster government could use in terms of varying tax rates and introducing new taxes e.g. sovereign wealth bonds, some form of quantitative easing and issues around corporation tax and wealth taxes. He stated that these were all options. He stated that initially a UBI could replace

existing costs, for example if it were paid above pension level it could replace the pension costs which were currently the largest welfare cost for the government. He said it would also probably replace the entire cost of Universal Credits, although it would be argued that disability benefits should remain. He acknowledged that this did appear to be an expensive idea, however, it would also be an investment in people and society. He referred to the monies currently lost through poverty in terms of increased hospitalisation rates, court costs and mental health which had a massive societal cost attached to it. Whilst it would not wipe out these costs it would help to reduce them significantly,

Councillor Cooper thanked Mr Brown for the presentation and acknowledged the significant cost of poverty on society and the welfare system in general through poor health, lack of educational attainment and unemployment. He said it was necessary to consider fundamentally the welfare system and how it was designed and implemented. He referred to the success of the UBI in other countries although this was by no means a one size fits all in terms of the models being applied. He stated that the principle of a UBI made sense by putting trust in people and providing them with an income trusting that they would use this to further progress their lives. He stated that whilst there was no issue with the principle in general, in practice, however, in terms of securing funding given the limited fiscal powers held by the Northern Ireland Executive provided in itself numerous difficulties. It would therefore be necessary to approach the British government in regards to a change in fiscal powers locally to provide the necessary leverage to fund this idea. This, however, would not be a quick or easy process. He said he would support the idea of a trial being rolled out, the findings of which could inform a possible introduction of a UBI in Northern Ireland.

Councillor Ferguson expressed an interest as a Member UBNI.

Councillor Ferguson referred to the obvious flaws in the current welfare system and stated that she was a strong advocate of a UBI. She stated that although this concept might not seem achievable there was sufficient research and evidence to support this becoming a reality. She stated that poverty transferred onto many issues referring to a quote by David Attenborough "that the only way to stop climate change was to give everyone a good standard of living, an education and health welfare". She felt that a UBI could be one of those elements necessary to make such a change. She stated that monies could be identified if necessary referring discussions regarding the possibility of

billions being invested to build a bridge between Northern Ireland and Scotland in order to improve the economic situation. Such monies could otherwise be spent on Northern Ireland itself to fund such a concept providing people with the security of having a secure income enabling them to explore new options. She suggested that Council consider introducing this concept which she considered would prove extremely beneficial particularly in areas of high deprivation within this Council district. She acknowledged that this presentation had been delivered to other Councils and enquired as to the levels of support received to date.

Councillor Reilly thanked Mr Brown for his presentation and for providing Members with an opportunity to view this prior to the Meeting. He pointed out that the SDLP had already expressed its support for this project when the presentation had been delivered to Newry, Mourne and Down and Belfast Councils. He said his Party Leader and Foyle MP Colm Eastwood had also raised this issue in Westminster and supported this together with his Party's MLAs. He referred to flaws within the current system whereby people were not receiving their entitlements whilst others were receiving payments to which they were not entitled. He said a universal system such as this would address some of these issues and would remove the stigma associated with applying for benefits. He said he believed that this was a concept worth exploring and expressed his support for a pilot project for this Council area which had high levels of poverty, deprivation and mental health issues.

It was subsequently Proposed

That Council endorse this concept and this Council area be considered as an advocate for a pilot scheme given the levels of deprivation existing in this Council area.

Mr Brown welcomed the above proposal. He pointed out that the full support of Newry, Mourne and Down and Belfast City Councils had been received with the exception of the DUP who had abstained. They had not, however, opposed the concept.

Mr Brown acknowledged that the Chancellor had ruled out such a concept on a number of occasions and it was unlikely that he would reconsider it. He said it was therefore necessary to view this as a long-term strategy and begin to build on providing the data necessary to prove that a basic income could work and deliver on its outcomes. He

agreed that this would be a complete fundamental change in terms of the tax welfare and indeed in terms of how society worked and was no small undertaking. He said its proposers were under no illusion as to the fact that this could not be delivered overnight. However, the groundwork could begin in terms of gaining levels of support for the arguments being put forward. He said that if there was a change in government or indeed the current government were to change its policy, those Council's in support of the concept could have a document prepared and ready in respect of being included in any trials and related plans.

Councillor Harkin thanked Officers for taking forward the Motion approved by Council. He also thanked Mr Brown for his presentation. He referred to the evident inequality which existed in the North of Ireland and particularly in this Council area, which was obviously a feature of capitalism because of decisions made by Executive Parties to introduce welfare reform which resulted directly in absolute poverty. He said he was in agreement with much of the content of the presentation. He stated that the suggestion of inequality did not refer just to those who were being deprived but also to those with unjust wealth. He felt the proposal around a wealth tax or increasing the corporate tax rate could not be overlooked. He referred to the need for a redistribution of wealth as the way to fund this concept and the subsequent need for campaigning and lobbying of Westminster and Stormont to achieve this.

Councillor Harkin also referred to Mr Brown's statement that there were Libertarians who were also in support of a basic income. He stated that this was a major concern for him as some might see this as a way of reducing government spending, not just on benefits but on public services which would prove a disastrous outcome. He said this issue was also being considered by both the Trade Unions and Anti-Poverty Groups and he felt that a discussion within the District to consider this as a potential pilot was a good idea. He reminded Members that the Motion also proposed working collaboratively with Trades Unions and Anti-Poverty Groups and civil society to consider the best way of addressing poverty in the District. This could include the Universal Basic Income campaigning group. However, he felt that plans could not be made at this stage prior to discussion having taken place with all of the interested groups.

Councillor Donnelly referred to the shocking inequalities which existed within this Council area and to specific references to the Creggan area,

which he represented as a Councillor for The Moor Ward. He said he witnessed such inequality on a daily basis and he felt that any concept which would address this and create a fairer society could not be overlooked and must be further examined and investigated. He referred to the Peace Dividend which he considered to be exclusive and was not available to the vast majority of his constituents. He said the current system was seriously flawed and expressed concerns that there were no obvious attempts to address these flaws. He welcomed the proposal being put forward as it was universal, referring to the inherent inequalities and exclusions being faced by certain sectors of society. He referred to the culture which needed to be dismantled in order that everyone was treated equally and it was only when this was carried out, would the imbalances which currently exist in society be addressed. He referred to the fact that more and more people were becoming marginalised and alienated because of their lack of belief and trust in politicians. He said he would welcome further examination of this concept as a possible way to address all of the current inequalities and imbalances which existed.

Councillor Gallagher welcomed the presentation and stated that any system which could address the inequalities which existed in the North West could not be disregarded. He said that for the past 100 years Derry and Strabane had topped all economic and social deprivation indicators. He said such a concept would also help the local economy. He queried what rationale would be used to target participants for the pilot scheme throughout the Derry and Strabane area to ensure the desired outcome.

Mr Brown stated that there were a number of scenarios set out in terms of targeting, which he would make available for Members. He explained that a core criterion would be established which would include targeting a deprived area in order to get the greatest possible input in terms of poverty and deprivation. It was also felt that an urban area would provide better results as people would be closer together and making it easier to study changes as a result of UBI. He said Belfast was the area laid out in the trial, however, there was no reason why this could not be any other urban area. He said it was felt saturation sites would have greater social impact than a dispersed trial which was carried out in Finland and Canada. He said it was felt that 1,000 participants represented a good sample size, however, this could be reduced. Ideally it was proposed that a controlled site be used as well as an intervention site, so that the people receiving the income as well as those not in receipt of it could be included in the data collected in

order to compare the differences between the two areas. He fully supported the suggestion that a UBI would have a significant positive impact on the economy as those benefitting the most would be spending in the local economy. A steady income would also allow recipients to save and possibly borrow and potentially allow them to be granted a mortgage which they could not previously have done. They would also be protected from defaulting as they would have a secure and regular income to manage their debts.

Mr Brown acknowledged the problems with the Peace Dividend and UBI would give those most in need the income they required and the security and confidence to improve and flourish.

He acknowledged Councillor Harkin's comments in regards to Libertarian involvement and the worry that a UBI could be used to strip back public services. He said it would therefore be necessary to advocate for a UBI which would seek to enhance public services.

Mr Brown acknowledged that many Trades Unions were suspicious of a UBI and considered this as a subsidy to capital. He felt, however, that this would fundamentally change the relationship between labour and capital and give power to works as it would enable them to say no to exploitative or poorer working conditions. He said it was also necessary to be mindful of incoming automation which would reduce work. He considered the concept of a UBI to be an important part of any discussions with Trade Unions on the impact of this.

Members thanked Mr Brown for his presentation and he withdrew from the Meeting.

Subsequently the Committee

Recommended that Council endorse this concept and this Council area be considered as an advocate for a pilot scheme given the levels of deprivation existing in this Council area.

GSP139/20 To receive a Presentation from Janet Smyth and Peter Martin, Strategy Communications, Engagement and General Policy Department, Department for Communities on an Anti-Poverty Strategy.

The Chairperson welcomed Ms Janet Smyth and Mr Peter Martin. He pointed out that following a Motion passed by Council it was agreed that they be invited to address the Committee on an Anti-Poverty Strategy.

Ms Smyth thanked Council for granting the representatives from Department for Communities (DfC) the opportunity to address the Committee. She advised that she was the Head of the Poverty Policy Team within DfC and held responsibility for Poverty Policy and Child Poverty on behalf of the Executive. She stated that Mr Martin worked within the Professional Service Unit and they worked in collaboration in terms of the statistical information and research and were working together in terms of how it was proposed to develop an Anti-Poverty Strategy. She referred to the following questions previously presented to the Department to be addressed, which she undertook to cover within the context of the presentation.

1. Outlines the strategic context of the current policy to tackle poverty in Northern Ireland (NI).
2. The proposed methodology and time line for the completion of the new proposed poverty strategy for NI.
3. The current programmes supported by the Department to tackle and or mitigate against poverty in NI.
4. The number of citizens within the Derry City and Strabane District Council (DCSDC) area who were beneficiaries of these anti-poverty programmes.
5. An overview of key statistics pertaining to poverty in NI with a sub-regional focus also on those statistics which relate to people living in the DCSDC area.
6. Any research and/or data available which forecasts the impact of Covid for those living in poverty and if this can be extrapolated for the DCSDC area.
7. Any research or data which forecasts changes in benefits which would indicate an increase in those living in poverty and if this could be extrapolated for the DCSDC area.

Ms Smyth and Mr Martin then jointly delivered a power-point presentation highlighting the following:

Programme for Government

1. We prosper through a strong competitive, regionally balanced economy.
2. We live and work sustainably – protecting the environment.
3. We have a more equal society.
4. We enjoy long, healthy, active lives.
5. We are an innovative, creative society where people can fulfil their potential.
6. We have more people working in better jobs.
7. We have a safe community where we respect the law and each other.
8. We care for others and we help those in need.
9. We are a shared, welcoming and confident society that respects diversity.
10. We have created a place where people want to live and work, to visit and invest.
11. We connect people and opportunities through our infrastructure.
12. We give our children and young people the best start in life.

New Decade New Approach

Co-Design and Co-Produce

Current Programmes to Tackle Poverty (DfC)

Neighbourhood Renewal Investment Fund

Poverty Statistics

- How Do We Measure Poverty?
- What Is It
- What Does It Tell Us?
- Relative Poverty
- Absolute Poverty
- Percentage of Individuals in Poverty
- Percentage of Individuals in Relative Poverty – 3 Year Averages – NI and DCSDC

- Percentage of Individuals in Absolute Poverty – 3 Year Averages – NI and DCSDC

Causes of Poverty – Worklessness and Low Pay

Worklessness

- Employment and Economic Inactivity 2019
- Barriers to Employment – Disability and Ill-Health
- % Population Claiming Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment – May 2020
- % of Working Age Population Claiming Employment and Support Allowance – May 2020

Low Pay

- Average (Median) Household Income
- In 2018/2019 Prices – NI
- Average (Median) Annual Pay – All Employee Jobs

Causes of Poverty/Barriers to Employment – Educational Attainment

- Level of qualifications (16-64 year olds) 2019
- School leavers achieving 5+ GCSEs A*-C including English and Maths – 2018/19
- Percentage of Working-Age Adults in Relative Poverty by educational attainment – 2018/2019
- Quintile Distribution of Income for Working-Age Adults by Educational Attainment – 2018/2019

Seven Domains of Deprivation

Income Deprivation

Employment Deprivation

Health Deprivation and Disability

Education, Skills and Training Deprivation

Access to Services

Living Environment

Crime and Disorder

Members thanked the representatives from DfC for their presentation.

Ms Smyth pointed out that the works carried out to date referred to the current Programme for Government. It was anticipated that a new Programme for Government would be published in April 2021.

Councillor Gallagher considered the presentation to be somewhat contrasting. He said few of the indicators set out in the Programme for Government were making any impact on the DCSDC area. This was evident from the research and data presented which showed this Council area to be above the NI average in all of the indicators in terms of unemployment, child poverty, health, deprivation and education albeit the language used and the indicators presented in The Programme for Government would suggest otherwise. He stated that this area had been failed continuously in regards to creating a regional balance and in terms of the under investment in this area. He referred to areas of Strabane which had the highest levels of child poverty. He acknowledged the good work carried out by DfC through the Neighbourhood Renewal Schemes but this did not make the required impact to address the major issues which existed. He reiterated that none of the indicators set out in The Programme for Government in terms of equality and balance impacted on this Council area which was affirmed by the data provided in regards to levels of deprivation and poverty. If government was serious in regards to producing an Anti-Poverty Strategy, it would be necessary to reverse these figures.

Councillor Harkin concurred with the comments made by the previous speaker. He said the statistics presented were astounding in terms of the levels of poverty existing in this Council area. He requested that all Council Members were furnished with a copy of the presentation as it was a visualisation of the scale of the problem. He agreed as alluded to by the previous speaker that this Council area was above the NI average on all of the indicator in regards to deprivation, health and poverty which confirmed the level and extent of the problem. This did not present a positive picture for young people facing the future in this Council area in terms of their future expectations and potential for fulfilment. However, this had been the legacy of living in this area for so long. He stated that the reason for presenting the original Motion was not because of a lack of discussion at Stormont regarding poverty and child poverty, it was because there was currently no Anti-Poverty Strategy. He said the figures presented showed an increase in Absolute Poverty and suggested that the Executive appeared to have a poverty producing strategy. He expressed concern that the Executive's policies had placed more children into Absolute Poverty. The evident increase in poverty should be regarded as most alarming and this could not all

be blamed on the Pandemic as the figures presented related to the period pre-Corona Virus.

Councillor Harkin referred to Mr Martin's research into the reasons for the change for some people between 2018 and 2019, and he suggested that those worst affected were people on low income. Councillor Harkin agreed that people on benefits and those on a low income and in receipt of some benefits were the members of society who had suffered most through the introduction and roll-out of Welfare Reforms. This had ultimately resulted in an increase in Absolute Poverty together with the devastating impact of the Pandemic in terms of the increase in the number of people accessing Universal Credit. This Motion was passed by Council as it appeared that Stormont was not capable of developing an Anti-Poverty Strategy and proposals to address child poverty. He said it was felt Council should not wait on the Department or the Executive to move forward on this but proceed to put forward proposals and campaign for these in the other Council areas in order to have some impact on the Executive's lack of action. He stated that irrespective of any proposals put forward by the Executive, there must be a specific plan to address the problem in the North West and questioned the political will to deliver on this.

Councillor Harkin referred to ongoing efforts by Council and other relevant bodies to develop through the Strategic Inclusive Growth Plan ways and means of decreasing deprivation, which included income and social wellbeing. However, there was a problem in that the Executive and the Department were undermining this with their policies, which he feared would lead to a political crisis whereby the policies from Stormont were undermining the goals set out by local government.

Councillor Reilly also requested that Members be furnished with a copy of the presentation in order that the figures contained therein could be interrogated in a more constructive way than the current format permitted. He acknowledged the time and effort involved in bringing the presentation together. He stated that the figures outlined were stark and demonstrated that this Council area was one of high deprivation and poverty but unfortunately was not one of sufficient importance to allow the changes necessary to be made. Members had been made aware through other Council Committees that requests had been made for the Economy Minister to have discussions with Council with a view to requesting Invest NI to put investment into the region, and all of the things which government should be doing in an effort to reduce the levels of deprivation and poverty were not being acted

upon. He said this lack of attention by the Executive to the figures produced was causing great anger and frustration. He said he felt it was necessary to use the presentation and the figures contained therein to campaign for a change in the levels of investment into this Council area. He said the presentation clearly showed that this area had incidents of low wages, high unemployment and huge numbers of food parcels being delivered across the Council area and all of this was the case prior to the Pandemic. He expressed concern that reaching the end of the Furlough Scheme that employers whose employees were currently benefiting from the Scheme would be made redundant, increasing unemployment figures and levels of poverty. He feared that the figures would continue to increase and said it was critical that these figures were taken into consideration by government in order that the poverty and deprivation existing in this area could be properly addressed. He felt that the way to achieve the desired outcome was for local government and central government to work together.

Councillor Ferguson acknowledged the huge regional inequalities highlighted in the presentation. She referred to the Department's efforts to address the problem with the Child Poverty Strategy and the Affordable Warmth Scheme, however, acknowledged that these were put in place basically because this unacceptable problem existed. She referred to the possibility of representatives from one of the advocacy groups for a Universal Basic Income being included in the Cross-Departmental Working Groups and Focus Groups involved in the delivery of an Anti-Poverty Strategy.

Councillor Duffy said that the figures presented were stark but unfortunately not surprising. She stated that the decades of underinvestment into the region together with ten years of Tory austerity had impacted greatly on society. She stated that the current Minister was from North Belfast, an area similar to the North West in terms of the figures of deprivation and lack of investment in the area. She said that she witnessed increasing poverty levels on a daily basis in her constituency work as well as through her work in the Homelessness Sector where she saw the pressures on young people and families. She agreed that to address this problem was not the responsibility on an individual Department but required an Executive approach involving the Department for Economy in terms of investment in jobs and skills, the Department for Infrastructure in regards to ensuring that the North West had the necessary infrastructure to support jobs and investment and a whole range of other issues which had to be addressed. She welcomed the announcement the previous week in regards to the suite

of strategies to be worked on in terms of bringing forward an Anti-Poverty Strategy. She also welcomed the Expert Panel which had been established and the fact that this included a representative from the North West. She felt that the voice of the North West had to be heard as this area had been overlooked for decades in terms of investment.

Councillor Duffy thanked the Minister and the Department for the work carried out throughout the Pandemic in terms of delivering food parcels and processing benefits and the invaluable support provided. She acknowledged the benefits of the Neighbourhood Renewal Scheme and the value of this to local communities. Whilst supporting the continuation of these existing initiatives, she stressed the need to address the inequalities which existed in the North West because for too long this area had been above the NI average in all of the poverty and deprivation indicators.

Councillor Farrell referred to a reference by Ms Smyth to a High Court Ruling in 2015 which stated that Stormont was in breach of its own rules by not having an Anti-Poverty Strategy. He expressed concern that now in 2020 this was only being discussed and if proposed timescales were adhered to would be delivered by December 2021. He acknowledged that there had been no devolved government but questioned why it had taken so long to actually reach agreement on this. He stated that it set out in the New Decade New Approach document that the Executive would have this prepared by March 2020 however, this had not been realised. He queried if indeed this was considered a priority.

Ms Smyth assured that the delivery of an Anti-Poverty Strategy was an absolute priority and was regarded as such by the Minister. She acknowledged the suggestion in the New Decade New Approach document that the strategy would be completed and signed off by March 2020, but pointed out that this was totally unrealistic as the work involved in the delivery of the strategy could not have been completed within such a short period of time. She acknowledged the court ruling in 2015 regarding the lack of an Anti-Poverty Strategy but pointed out that in reality there had not been an Executive in operation until January 2020. The legislation stated that it was for an Executive to adopt an Anti-Poverty Strategy and without an Executive in place it was not possible to process the strategy. She welcomed the New Decade New Approach document and the commitment behind producing an Anti-Poverty Strategy. She also welcomed the establishment of the Expert Panel, whose first meeting had taken place earlier that day.

There was also a Cross-Departmental Working Group and a Co-Design Group in terms of taking this forward. She stated that the role of the Expert Panel would be to ensure that recommendations and actions were evidence based and that this would be based on objective need. She stated that discussions would take place with Councils and partners in regard to the co-designing of the Strategy and Council would play a vital role in relation to being part of the contribution to the content of the Strategy.

Ms Smyth acknowledged the contrasts which existed in the presentation as one part dealt with the Strategic aspect whilst the other addressed the facts and the statistics behind the findings and the evidence in regards to Derry City and Strabane.

Mr Martin pointed out that all of the statistics provided were pre Covid 19 and if one considered the Universal Credit predictions and the unemployment figures this could have increased considerably and possibly doubled. The situation would not improve and there did appear to be an increase in poverty.

In regards to the inclusion of UBI in discussions Ms Smyth pointed out that they would not be a part of the Co-Design Group as this included people involved on the ground and those affected by poverty. However, in terms of the UBI's approach this may be something which the Group would wish to forward to the Expert Panel who would be forming their recommendations based on evidence in terms of identifying high level deprivation and high level actions. She said if it was agreed this could be forwarded onto the Expert Panel or if the representatives from UBI preferred to approach the Expert Panel to discuss their views, she did not image this would be an issue.

Councillor Donnelly said the statistics provided highlighted the failure of the State and the system. He stated that this Council area had historically topped all of the indicators in regards to deprivation and poverty and expressed concern that there was nothing to suggest that this would change regardless of who was in power. He stated that this was institutionalised discrimination and whilst the current system was in operation it would never address the critical issues. He referred to some of the aspects considered to be positive e.g. food parcels, however, there were a significant number of people who did not operate through the structures including those of Council and as a result of which many people did not receive food parcels on a continuous basis. He referred to an issue which had arisen in regards

to the Self Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) grant, in that recipients of this grant had received correspondence from NIHE advising that as they had failed to disclose to the Executive that they were in receipt of this payment and they were no longer entitled to receive Housing Benefit.

The Chairperson concurred with Councillor Donnelly's comments regarding people being denied benefits as they were had received an SEISS grant to assist them as they were unable to work.

Councillor McCann referred to the co-relations of poverty. He advised that these were related to ill-health thereby affecting the Health Service, it was associated with a lack of educational attainment and every other aspect of people's lives. He stated that at the heart of all the problems was the question of inequality in our society. He stated that the other problems associated with Northern Ireland were not unrelated because when people did not have money with which to exist, other factors could arise. This was not just a matter of statistics.

Councillor Gallagher referred to announcements mentioned within the Programme for Government in terms of investment and employment for Derry, Strabane and Belfast. However, what was not apparent was that the jobs allocated to Strabane and Derry were generally on a low or lower salary scale whilst those allocated to Belfast would be in the higher salary bracket. He said if this core principle of investment continued, all of the current indicators would remain unchanged. Until there was a regional balance the issue of poverty be not be addressed.

Ms Smyth welcomed the feedback provided and said further discussions with Council or the Community Planning Partnership Group on the matter would be welcomed, which would allow the Department to feed these views back into the wider Co-Design approach for the development of the Anti-Poverty Strategy. She said this Strategy would be evidenced based and based on objective need and the Department would appreciate further communication and would be in contact to have more focused discussion on this Council area.

She agreed with Councillor McCann's comments that poverty cut across all areas of ill-health and education and was not always just about providing additional monies but ensuring that those affected were ready for employment. There were wider issues than just income educational attainment, skills and ill-health. She stated that a considerable amount of work was required including consideration of

the wider issues and now was the time to put thoughts together and have the necessary discussions to ensure the development of a meaningful strategy in going forward and one which could be monitored and evaluated appropriately.

The DfC representatives then withdrew from the Meeting.

Chairperson's Business

GSP140/20 New Decades New Approach – Free Ports

With the permission of the Chairperson Alderman McCready referred to the New Decades New Approach document and the creation of Free Ports within the United Kingdom. He said he understood that this had not been presented to Council for consideration although consultation had been ongoing throughout the year with a number of stakeholder responses. He queried what work Council had carried out and the details of its written response to the consultation process and specifically what stakeholder working groups or work had been carried out in preparation for this response. He enquired about Members' input into the response through the Governance and Strategic Committee given that the impact, whether or not Members agreed on the concept of a Free Port or free trading zones would have to be discussed and a corporate decision made in going forward. He requested a brief summary on the current position and that a detailed report be presented to a future Meeting of the Governance and Strategic Planning Committee addressing the areas raised, in order that this could be discussed in greater detail.

The Lead Legal Services undertook to ensure that a report on this matter was presented to a future Meeting of the Committee for discussion.

In regards to a report being brought forward Councillor Duffy noted that Council had not agreed on a corporate position in regards to the issue of Free Ports.

GSP141/20 Confirmation of the Open Minutes of the Governance and Strategic Planning Committee held on Tuesday 1 September 2020

The Open Minutes of the Governance and Strategic Planning Committee held on 1 September 2020 (GSP108/20-GSP129/20) were agreed and signed by the Chairperson.

GSP142/20 Update of Poverty Motion

The Director of Legacy presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. She advised that the purpose of the report was to provide Members with an update on Council Motion (C195/20) – Deprivation/Emergency Poverty Working Group.

The Director of Legacy welcomed the invitation from the Department to submit information to their Expert Panel and suggested that in addition, Council meet with the Department through the Co-Design Group and also be granted an opportunity to meet with the Expert Panel. She suggested that if this were not possible Council put a written submission to the Expert Panel highlighting the initiatives already undertaken and in terms of the Strategic Inclusive Growth Plan. She stated that Council had identified a clear and strong ambition of where it wanted this Council area to be in regards to poverty and inequality, which required the intervention and support of central government in terms of moving forward.

In regards to the establishment of a Task and Finish Group, the Director of Legacy explained that this would allow for the wider representation as proposed in the Motion. She felt this would provide an opportunity to assess the statistics provided and set out some form of methodology in terms of how this Council would want to work alongside the methodology from the Department in regards to the new Strategy and also some of the initiatives in existence locally and others which it was hoped to promote. She referred to the work required around methodology in terms of the membership of the working group and how to achieve the best outcome in respect of the three Motions passed by Council in regards to the poverty, welfare reform and social values.

Councillor John Boyle welcomed the report and the proposals and recommendations contained therein.

Councillor Harkin welcomed the report and referred to the synergies between The Welfare Reform Working Group and the Social Value Motion and felt that these working groups could share and learn from their individual experiences. He felt that there could be a level of co-ordination. He enquired as to the purpose and role of the Task and Finish Group.

The Director of Legacy advised that the purpose of the Task and Finish Group would be to examine the methodology proposed by the Department and the establishment of the Expert Panel, the Co-Design Group and Focus Groups. The Task and Finish Group would examine where Council could influence at every stage of the process which would be the first part of the methodology. The second part would be to determine how this fitted within the context of what currently existed locally. She pointed out that inequalities and social inclusion had already been identified as cross cutting themes within the Strategic Inclusive Growth Plan and it would be necessary to determine how this Group would fit within that structure in order to achieve the best possible outcome. She stated that finally in terms of the other Motions it would be necessary to identify an opportunity to work together across the Motions to achieve the best outcome. She felt that this exercise would be completed within several meetings, following which a further report would be presented to the December Meeting of Committee with a recommendation in regards to membership of the full group and the timeline for the proposed activities to be carried out.

The Committee

- Recommended**
- (i) that Council establish a Task and Finish Group for a brief period and that a further more detailed report on the methodology proposed for the implementation of this Motion is presented to Members prior to December; and**
 - (ii) that Alderman Guy and Councillors Donnelly, Duffy, Farrell, Ferguson and Harkin be nominated to serve on the Task and Finish Group.**

GSP143/20 Capital Projects Approval

The Lead Finance Officer presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. He advised that the purpose of the report was to allocate funds towards progressing a number of capital projects within Council's Capital Plan, following consideration by the Capital Projects and Corporate Programme Planning Group held on 16 September 2020.

Councillor Fleming welcomed the extensive and positive report presented by the Lead Finance Officer, particularly given current circumstances. He commended Officers on the excellent work which had been carried out in regards to Capital Projects and in particular the Strathfoyle Greenway and in light of the statement by the DfI Minister the previous week anticipated that funding would be forthcoming to ensure the completion of this project. He also welcomed Eglinton Play Park and the smaller projects which had been undertaken. He looked forward to the submission of a report on Templemore Sports Complex referred to in this paper.

Alderman McCready commended the Members of the Capital Working Group on the work undertaken during the past year which was evident from the above report. He welcomed the shortfall which had been approved in respect of Eglinton Play Park which was long overdue. In regards to the Strathfoyle Greenway Project and the update provided by the DfI Minister, he said he understood that the Department had provided a caveat that Council's business case would have to go back through that Department in order to finalise the details. He enquired if this had as yet been progressed. He referred to the significant amount of work still outstanding in respect of this project and stated that the Minister had alluded to the possibility of additional funding being sought from DAERA and DfC of circa £500,000 and enquired if Council was in the process of making application to these Departments in respect of that funding.

In regards to the Maritime Museum – The Derry/Londonderry On The Atlantic Project – he thanked the Head of Business and Culture and the Museum Services Officer for their response to his previous request regarding stakeholder engagement with The Royal Naval Association. He said the Association were indebted to the Officers involved for the update which they had provided. He expressed concern, however, that the project was still underfunded with an approximate fifty per cent shortfall in money. He enquired how Council given its current financial position, would prioritise some of these projects which were linked in some way to the City Deal and where this funding would be identified. He also enquired if any of the projects were in serious jeopardy.

The Lead Finance Officer undertook to address some of the issues raised whilst others would be referred to project leads for further response. He said he understood that discussions were actively ongoing in regards to the DAERA/DfC bids and meetings had taken place and he undertook to provide an update on the current position at

a future Meeting. He said that from previous discussions with the project officer, he understood that work was ongoing in respect of the Business Case although he could not confirm if this had yet been submitted. However, if it not yet been submitted this would happen immediately. In regards to the Maritime Museum he explained that funding discussions were ongoing with a range of partners which he anticipated were nearing completion. He added that this had also been included as one of the projects in respect of any capital shortfall. He stated that in terms of the financial challenges, the major one in respect of this project was the ongoing revenue implications of the project and Officers were working to minimise these, ongoing revenue investment would be required from Council to sustain the facility. Discussions on this were ongoing and this would be considered as part of the wider strategic funding. He stated that this would form part of the wider strategic report which would be presented to Committee in respect of Templemore Sports Complex and funding for all of the other strategic projects.

Councillor Duffy welcomed the report and the progress which had been made on the numerous projects across the City and District. She referred particularly to the Harbour Square Redevelopment Project and the Factory Girls Sculpture. She said she was disappointed that Council had not yet delivered a fitting tribute to the Factory Girls. She acknowledged, however, the reasons why this had not yet happened and the difficulties faced by Council in not having been able to progress the previous sculpture. She again welcomed the fact that Council was progressing the Redevelopment of Harbour Square with the inclusion of the Factory Girls Sculpture. She also welcomed the proposed Skate Park, a project which had been put forward to Council by the youth of the City who were passionate about skating and this showed that the Council worked for and listened to the voices of people in the community.

Councillor Reilly welcomed the report and the tables forwarded to Members and commended Officers on the works carried out in respect of completed projects and planned projects. He referred to the fact that so many of the completed projects had been progressed during the Pandemic which was a testament to the work of Council Officers and those involved in the projects. He expressed his support for the recommendations contained in the report. He also welcomed the progress on the Redevelopment of the Harbour Square, which was a project which meant so much to so many across the City in terms of those working in the Shirt Factories. He referred to the fact that

Factory Girls were the backbone of the City's economy for so long and it would be great to have a befitting tribute to the Factory Girls. He welcomed the funding which had been forthcoming to ensure the progression and completion of this project. He also welcomed the proposed Skateboard Park and how this had come to fruition.

In regards to the impact of the Pandemic on the City and region he said it was encouraging to see that so many of the projects approved were already Covid-proofed in terms of encouraging people to use these public spaces, referring specifically to the Strathfoyle Greenway and the other Greenways across the District as well as the use of the former Ebrington Primary School to connect into the Greenway. He referred to the Lead Finance Officer's comments regarding works being carried out on a Motion in terms of reducing interest rates on existing loans. He acknowledged that this had not as yet been successful and undertook to have discussions with the Lead Finance Officer regarding how this could be achieved in order to realise more investment and savings for ratepayers.

Councillor Ferguson pointed out that DAERA and DfC had been heavily lobbied in terms of securing funding for the Strathfoyle Greenway and she thanked Council Officers for their efforts in this regard. She stated that the community had also lobbied hard for this over the previous nine years. She referred to a letter which had been received from the Department for Communities indicating that they would be eager to work with Council in respect of funding and were awaiting an application and Business Case being forwarded to them. She felt that DAERA would be in a similar position. She welcomed the many projects which had been completed and in particular the Play Parks. She said she understood that the Strathfoyle Play Park was one of the first fully inclusive play parks.

The Committee

Recommended **(i) that Members approve the £352,850 allocation of funds towards the projects and recommendations made in this report with £252,850 to be funded from in-year capital savings and £100k from previously allocated capital funding; and**

(ii) that Directors are provided with delegated authority to progress these

capital projects in line with the overall agreed budgets with all decisions to be recorded on the Register of Decisions.

GSP144/20 Establishment of a Rural Issues Group

The Director of Legacy presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. She advised that the purpose of the report was to outline a suggested approach to the development of a rural focused group and subject to Members' comments to provide a more detailed report prior to December on its proposed terms of reference, membership and programme of work.

Councillor M Boyle welcomed the report acknowledging that her Party colleague Councillor McGuire had been advocating for some time for the establishment of such a Group. She agreed that there were critical stakeholders particularly within the rural area who would welcome the opportunity in regards to the Rural Symposium. She considered this to be the best way forward. She felt it was important that the Group consisted of rural Councillors from across the political spectrum in order that a unified voice was presented to Council on the common issues which Members had been striving to have addressed in terms of the rural areas around rural proofing. She acknowledged that Council had a Rural Proofing Framework in place but pointed out that as most Councillors were elected from urban wards within the District, urban issues tended to dominate most meeting agenda. It was therefore necessary to have this geographical isolation addressed. She also looked forward to a report being presented to the December Meeting of Committee in regards to the composition, governance and resources of the Rural Issues Group and all of the issues which needed to be firmly embedded such as the inequalities surrounding rural issues. She referred specifically to transport, childcare, job creation and density of population. She agreed with the proposal to bring forward a more targeted approach to addressing the needs of those faced with the rural disadvantage in rural areas such as the Derg, Sperrin and Faughan electoral areas.

Alderman McClintock said she felt it was important that there was a Rural Group made up of rural Councillors who were familiar with the particular issues which were relevant for rural constituents. She put forward Alderman Kerrigan as the DUP representative on that group as he was aware of all of the issues affecting Castlederg and surrounding country areas.

Councillor McCann welcomed Councillor M Boyle's reference to transport and the lack of public transport in the rural area. He referred to an announcement by Translink that they would find it difficult to maintain their service to rural areas. He referred to the importance of this service to those passengers who used this. He said he understood that a number of rural routes were in jeopardy of being withdrawn. He referred to the unlikelihood of any private operators acquiring this service given that it would not be considered financially viable and because they would prefer to operate in areas with a reasonable population and traffic flow and the potential for a better income being guaranteed. He referred to the fact that rural transport would have to be subsidised and he felt that insofar as Council could have any influence on decisions being made regarding the deployment of public monies, it should be putting forward its views at all levels. He noted that as far as rail was concerned five new Park and Ride centres were announced by Translink two weeks previously, all of which were within a thirty-mile radius of Belfast. This was in effect the creation of a viable commuter network around Belfast which was a matter which Council should focus on in the longer term. He said Council should be preparing a stance against the threat to transport connections in rural areas.

Recommended (i) that a further more detailed report on the composition, governance and resources of the Rural Issues Group which would sit within the structure of the Strategic Inclusive Growth Plan is presented to Members prior to December; and

(ii) that Alderman Kerrigan and Councillors Edwards, Gallagher, McGuire and McKane be nominated to serve on the Issues Group.

GSP145/20 Consultation Response by DCSDC to Ulster University's Proposed Relocation of the School of Health Sciences

The Lead Finance Officer presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. He advised that the purpose of the report was to update Members on DCSDC's proposed response to the re-opened consultation on the future location of Ulster University's

School of Health Science. He pointed out that Members' support was also being sought for a co-ordinated cross sectoral response to endorsing Ulster University's preferred option to relocate undergraduate Allied Health Sciences to the Magee Campus.

The Chief Executive referred to the substantive submission which had been prepared in respect of the earlier consultation process which had been paused. He stated that as outlined in the report, a meeting had been arranged with key stakeholders and key organisations across the City and District for later that week and in particular with WHSCT who were also submitting a very substantial response. This would allow Council to share information with them and ensure that as many of Council's statutory civic partners were lined up to submit as comprehensive a response as possible. He continued that Council was also reaching out to other organisations in relation to health and was talking to the various professional bodies in an effort to influence them to submit a response. This included the British Medical Association which was chaired locally by Dr Tom Black. He stated that Council was also in contact with The Association of Radiologists, The Association of Physiotherapists and all of those professional organisations in an attempt to get them to align with Council's response. He said it was also very important that Political Parties, if possible, submitted a response to the document.

The Chief Executive pointed out that this was not the normal type of consultation response and said the Senior Economist would provide further detail on this. A draft response would also be presented to the December Meeting of Committee. He said the main purpose of the response was to set out why Derry was the right place for Ulster University to relocate those courses and not why the City needed them. He said it was vital that Council made a compelling case to Ulster University that this was the best place for the University to undertake those Allied Health courses particularly in light of The Medical School and the other City Deal developments and the regeneration plans and the other attributes which this City had. He said this was a slightly more inverted response compared to the normal type of response which Council would prepare in respect of such consultations. He referred to the substantial amount of work already carried out and invited the Senior Economist to comment on this.

Councillor Cooper enquired as to when the report had been prepared and referred to a Motion put forward by Councillor Farrell to the September Council Meeting regarding the response to the

consultation. He referred to an amendment which he had submitted regarding Council's preferred option that any relocation of The Allied Health Science Courses would involve post-graduate as well as under-graduate courses which was not one of the University's preferred options listed in the consultation. He said he had outlined at the Council Meeting the reasons why he felt this should be proposed based not just on the reduced cost involved but the fact that this City required post-graduate students to service the hospitals within this Council area and in Letterkenny as well. He stated that the Motion had been passed.

The Chief Executive confirmed that this would be included in the response as this was now the official position of Council.

Councillor Cooper said the report appeared to suggest that Council was interested in the under-graduate option only and he welcomed the clarity given in respect of this.

The Chief Executive pointed out that the report outlined Ulster University's preferred position and further to the adoption of the aforementioned Motion Council, would be reflecting the corporate views which was for both under-graduate and post-graduate courses at this stage.

The Senior Economist referred to the fact that the work had been halted in April when the consultation was stalled. He said further works were not carried out at that stage, as it was felt these would become redundant. Since then a number of things had happened such as approval being granted to the development of a Medical School at the Magee Campus, all of which had placed Council in a much stronger position than was previously the case. He also referred to the fact that the Paramedic Degree Course had located to the Magee Campus. He stated that the approach which had been adopted throughout in regards to the consultation with Ulster University was really what was best for Northern Ireland generally. He stated that in terms of what was known as 'The Eco System' of health which had been developed here right through the Competency Centre for Nursing together with THRIVE and CARL and DIAL which was available through the North West Regional College together with all of the other projects, put Council in a stronger position.

Mr Gallagher said he felt it was important that considerable time was spent on the EQIA given the size and importance of this document. He stated that the mitigations raised within the document included issues

such as the adverse impact on some Section 75 groups particularly women and women with dependants and those with disabilities. It was vital that the City was able to address these mitigations directly and support Ulster University in bringing forward a proposal which would hopefully completely mitigate those adverse impacts. He explained that this was how the document would be assessed.

He referred to the fact that this consultation response was unusual in regards to the fact that there were not specific questions but it related more to the objectives of Ulster University than any of the issues surrounding Allied Health. He referred to another core strength which Council had which was a move through the Bengoa Report for a Multi-Disciplinary activity among professionals so it did make more sense to have the various professions operating on the one site. He stated that enquiries into serious adverse incidents had found that there was insufficient co-working among those involved in Allied Health which again strengthened Council's case.

He continued that the intention was to meet with the stakeholder group later that week to provide direction. However, this was a two-way process and it was therefore necessary for individual stakeholders to submit their own detailed responses. It would be hoped to avoid a submission of numerous duplicated responses and it was hoped to project the best possible case for the City. He reminded Members that the closing date was at the end of November for the EQIA, with a separate closing date for the consultation responses. He referred to an online consultee list and said it was hoped that as many organisations as possible be added to this to ensure that all those interested parties were included in the process. He advised that the decision would be taken in January 2021 and reiterated the fact that Council's position had been strengthened considerably by the Medical School in respect of which recruitment was taking place that day. He referred to the significant progress which had been made in regards to the Medical School with the competency entrance test having been carried out the previous weekend. He stated that the main question was could someone living outside this City be convinced that this was the best option for Ulster University and for Northern Ireland generally in terms of health care. He said Council was confident that it could and this was the approach adopted within the document concentrating on the strength of its position within Northern Ireland.

The Chief Executive pointed out that the WHSCT were the most important consultee and encouraged Political Parties and all other

interested parties to respond to the consultation. He said Council was satisfied that their response was shared with any other consultees hoping to submit a response. He pointed out that for obvious reasons it may be necessary to consider the report presented to the November Meeting of Committee in regards to the draft response.

Councillor McCloskey said she felt it was important that within the consultation response, Council made a strong representation regarding the historic under-representation of third level students in this City and the historic legacy of neglect by Ulster University in this area which in some ways this could help redress. She referred to the other arguments put forward which appeared to refer specifically to preferred options and she agreed it was very much tailored towards what staff and students might prefer. However, as elected representatives she felt Council must put forward a strong case that it was about more than that and that there was a legacy issue which needed redressing. She felt this was central to the future development of this City.

The Chief Executive assured that such issues would be raised within the consultation response and Council was on record with numerous Business Cases to government about why this was the right choice for this City and District. He referred, however, to the slight difference in this version of the consultation in that the questions were about why this was the best place for Ulster to allocate its Allied Health Science courses and therefore most of the response would be based on displaying that this was absolutely the best place for Ulster to relocate its Allied Health Science courses outlining the reasons why. He stated that clearly the under-investment into the City was a significant factor in the need for the expansion of third level education. He reiterated, however, that the consultation response was very specifically about why this was good for Ulster University and was therefore slightly different from the normal approach. He assured, however, that Council would make reference to that broadly and overall.

In response to a query from Councillor Boyle the Chief Executive explained that there were two response dates. The response date for the EQIA was 24 November 2020 whilst the consultation response date was 6 December 2020. The draft response would be presented to the November Meeting of Committee for comment and the final document would be presented to the November Council Meeting for ratification.

The Committee

Recommended that given the reopening of the consultation on 1 September, Members endorse the collaborative cross-sectoral approach highlighted in this report towards the completion of a comprehensive and substantive response from the City and District which will be tabled at the next Meeting of this Committee for approval.

GSP146/20 Wayleave Agreement with NIE

The Lead Legal Services Officer presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. He advised that the purpose of the report was to seek Members' approval to enter into a Wayleave Agreement with NIE at land adjacent to 38 Drumleck Drive, Shantallow (to facilitate the new power supply at the new Shantallow Community Centre) subject to the rental set out in the Wayleave Agreement being approved by Land and Property Services.

The Committee

Recommended that Council enter into a Wayleave Agreement with NIE to enable NIE to lay an electricity line along the Land subject to LPS confirming that the rental figure to be calculated in accordance with the terms of the Agreement is reasonable.

Open for Information

GSP147/20 Organisational Recovery Update

The Chief Executive presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. He advised that this report had been prepared following a request at the September Council Meeting on the Council facilities and services that are currently closed, plans in place for re-opening and details in relation to Council staff who may remain on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Members noted the content of the report and the significant progress made in the recovery of Council facilities and services.

GSP148/20 Partnership Panel

The Strategic Business Manager presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. She advised that the purpose of the report was to keep Members updated on the progress and discussions within the Partnership Panel for Northern Ireland.

Members noted the content of the report.

GSP149/20 North West Regional Development Group

The Strategic Business Manager presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. She advised that the purpose of the report was to provide Members with an update on the progress of the North West Regional Development Group.

Members noted the content of the report.

GSP150/20 Promoting Local Democracy Week 2020

The Lead Democratic Services and improvement Officer presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. She advised that the purpose of the report was to inform Members and seek their approval of the proposed programme of events to Promote Local Democracy 2020 and to encourage the participation of all Members.

Members noted the content of the report.

GSP151/20 Northern Ireland Housing Council Update

The Lead Democratic Services and Improvement Officer presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. She advised that the purpose of the report was to provide Members with the most recent Housing Bulletin.

Councillor Duffy referred to Item 4.2 of the Minutes of the Housing Council Meeting in regards to waste water capacity. She referred to problems which were being experienced locally in terms of the capacity of waste water systems within the City particularly impacting on developments such as the H2 site. She stated that meetings had taken place with NI Water and the developers who had stated that the waste water capacity on the H2 site was not fit for purpose and would therefore impact on planning decisions going forward. She requested

that Council's representative on the Housing Council, Alderman Bresland, address this through the Housing Council in order that the matter could be raised with NI Water when it presented to its next meeting.

Councillor Duffy also referred to Item 5.17 of the Minutes of the Housing Council Meeting in regards to homelessness. She stated that whilst there had been an increase in the number of people being placed in Bed and Breakfast accommodation during recent weeks and months and whilst it was welcoming to know that people were being adequately accommodated, it had been noted that some of these people had very complex needs and required support as well as accommodation. She referred to the Housing Executive's duty of care to these people to provide both. She said addressing homelessness was not simply a matter of providing accommodation. She stated that this increase in people with complex needs requiring increased support levels had to be addressed. She referred to meetings which had taken place with the District Manager regarding this issue. She requested that this also be addressed by Council's representative at a future Meeting of the Housing Council to include the reason for this increase and to ascertain if there was a need for further services to be commissioned to address this problem.

Councillor Duffy undertook to furnish Alderman Bresland with the details in respect of the issues raised.

Councillor McCann referred to the fact that there were insufficient houses being built to address the growing housing crisis. He referred to the fact that the Northern Ireland Housing Executive as the main provider of social housing, no longer had the power to build houses. He referred to the need for the Housing Executive to be given the authority to build houses whether through borrowing on existing stock and developing a programme to address the ongoing housing crisis.