



Subject:	Physical Programme Update - includes Half Year Update
Date:	13 December 2024
Reporting Officer:	Sinead Grimes, Director of Property & Projects David Sales, Strategic Director of City & Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Shauna Murtagh, Portfolio Manager

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.	
Insert number <input type="checkbox"/>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Information relating to any individual2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime	
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	
Sometime in the future	
Never	

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues
1.1	<p>The Council's Physical Programme currently includes over 200 capital projects with investment of £150m+ via a range of internal and external funding streams, together with projects which the Council delivers on behalf of external agencies. The Council's Capital Programme forms part of the Physical Programme and is a rolling programme of investment which either improves existing Council facilities or provides new facilities. This report includes a review of recently completed and underway physical projects including Sporting Pitches Investment, along with requests for approvals relating to the Capital Programme and an update on external capital funding via the PeacePLUS Programme.</p>
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Programme Half Year Update - Note the overall update on projects that have been completed recently and projects currently under construction at 3.1 to 3.5 below and in Appendix 1; and that the Property & Projects Department is happy to arrange a site visit to any projects that have been completed or are underway. • Sporting Pitches Investment Update - Note the update on the Sporting Pitches Investment via City & Neighbourhoods Services Department including work to investigate securing community access to sporting facilities owned by other key partners; progress in anticipation of future potential funding opportunities; and progress on work to increase pitch provision across the city. • Capital Programme Stage Movements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ IT Programme – In-Cab Technology and Routing System – Note that a satisfactory tender return has been received and that the Director of Finance has confirmed that this project is within the affordability limits of the Council and agree that a maximum of £653,000 be allocated. ○ Innovation Factory Access Control System - Agree that 'Innovation Factory Access Control' is moved to <i>Stage 3 – Committed</i>; note that a satisfactory tender return has been received, that the Director of Finance has confirmed that this project is within the affordability limits of the Council and agree that a maximum of £100,000 be allocated. ○ Floral Hall Health & Safety Works - Agree that 'Floral Hall Health & Safety Works' is moved immediately to <i>Stage 3 – Committed</i> due to the condition of the building; note that a satisfactory tender return has been received, that the Director of Finance has confirmed that this phase of the project is within the affordability limits of the Council and agree that a maximum of £750,000 be allocated for the immediate works

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Belfast Zoo Health and Safety Works - Agree that 'Belfast Zoo Health & Safety Works' is added to the Capital Programme at <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i> as a programme of health and safety works and that any necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate 'framework' arrangements) be initiated with contract to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver; ○ 35-39 Royal Ave Health & Safety Works - Agree that '35-39 Royal Ave Health & Safety Works' is added to the Capital Programme at <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i> as a programme of health and safety works and that any necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate 'framework' arrangements) be initiated with contract to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver; ○ 35-39 Royal Avenue - Agree that '35-39 Royal Avenue' is added to the Capital Programme at <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i> to allow a business case to be developed on the long term model. ○ Fleet Programme – Small Vehicles - Agree that 'Fleet Programme – Small Vehicles' project is added to the Capital Programme at <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i> to allow a business case to be developed. ● External Capital Funding Update – PeacePLUS 1.4 – note the key conditions within the Letter of Offer from SEUPB for the Reconnected Belfast project under Theme 1.4 of the PeacePLUS Programme.
<p>3.0</p>	<p>Main report</p> <p><u>Key Issues</u></p>
<p>3.1</p>	<p><u>Physical Programme Half Year Update</u></p> <p>Members are aware of the scale of the Council's Physical Programme via a range of internal and external funding streams. Members are advised that the Property & Projects Department is happy to arrange a site visit to any projects that have been completed or are underway. Below is a brief summary of projects completed since June, as well as a sample of projects currently underway. Members are advised that from 2025 this half yearly reporting will be provided in line with the financial year to align with other reporting patterns, rather than by calendar year.</p>
<p>3.2</p>	<p><i>Awards and recognition</i></p> <p>Three of the Council's recently completed capital projects have been successful finalists for the prestigious National Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Awards held in October – St. Comgall's winning in the Refurbishment category and Templemore Baths – finalist for the Heritage category. In addition, Shankill Shared Women's Centre is also winner of the Construction Employers Federation (CEF) Awards 2024 for Social/Community Construction</p>

	Project of the Year (above £2m). The awards recognise and celebrate the most inspirational initiatives and developments across the UK.
3.3	<p><u>Recently completed projects:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shankill Shared Women’s Centre (PEACE IV) – a £7.7m purpose-built shared space for women and their families. This significant new building is now complete and operational. • Black Mountain Shared Space Project (PEACE IV) – a £7m shared community space on the former Finlay’s factory site in west Belfast. The new building provides cross community facilities, joint programming and outreach. The building is complete and operational. Phase 2 works are ongoing. • Dual Language Street Signs – Gaeltacht Quarter - completion of the erection of dual language street signs en bloc within the Gaeltacht Quarter. • Belfast Bikes Expansion – new bike station is now installed at Yorkgate. • Playground Improvement Programme – improvements have been completed at New Lodge playground by CNS. • Other enhancements to Council assets include - Waterfront Hall/ICC Toilet Refurbishment, Brook Changing Pavilion, Henry Jones Playing Fields CCTV and lighting, Flora Street Play Park, Waste Transfer Station Floor Repairs, Water Refill Stations at City Hall and St George’s Market, The Mount MUGA (North Queen Street), Cherryvale Playing Fields Pitch 1, Pedestrian Access at Alexandra Park HWRC, Napier Park boundary works, fleet workshop replacement lifts and EV lifts for workshops at Duncrue. • Cavehill Tennis Club (BIF) - completion of the refurbishment of three tennis courts and replacement of perimeter fencing. • Berlin Swifts Football Club (LIF and SOF) – provision of 2-team changing facilities and improvements now completed. • Woodvale Park (SOF) - completion of Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) pitch upgrades. • Women’s TEC (LIF) - completion of upgrade to windows at education centre. • Shankill Road Environmental Improvement Project (SOF) - completion of environmental improvements and lighting for the Shankill Road. • The Entries Project – completion of Sugarhouse Entry part of the transformation of city centre entries into vibrant places that are safe, welcoming, playful and imaginative.
3.4	<p><i>Physical projects underway:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ballysillan Playing Fields (Urban Villages) - this is a £8.4m partnership project with DfI’s Living with Water Programme, DfC and Urban Villages. The contractor has recently been appointed with mobilisation this month and works to commence on site in the New Year. • Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (NRF) - a total of 20 significant scale projects have now progressed to <i>Stage 3 – Delivery</i> stage under the £10m+ NRF Programme. Design

Team procurements are underway for a number of schemes. The contractor is appointed for the first scheme at Act Initiative Community Hub & Visitor Centre with work due to start on site in January 2025.

- **Lagan Gateway Greenway Phase 2 (BIF)** – work continues on the next stages of this major investment of £5m in a new navigation lock, iconic foot and cycle bridge and new path connections. The procurement exercise is underway.
- **Strand Arts Centre (BIF)** – works to commence on the £6.4m major refurbishment of the NI last remaining art deco cinema building. The centre will provide a mix of educational and skills development workshops, arts, and heritage tours.
- **The Lockhouse (Urban Villages)** - this £2.7m partnership project will reimagine a historic and culturally important residential building along the Lagan towpath into a community focal point for good relations activity and cross-community partnership working, including minority ethnic communities. Remaining elements funded by DfC, DfI and Executive Office.
- **ABC Trust Health and Leisure Hub (Urban Villages)** – Phase 2 of the project is continuing on site comprising a community café, boxing club, minor halls, community gym and office space.
- **Sandy Row Arts & Digital Hub (BIF and Urban Villages)** – work is progressing on the new build development for creative and digital arts entrepreneurs.
- **Hosford Community Houses (Urban Villages)** – refurbishment of a building in ownership of East Belfast Mission at 240 Newtownards Road. Planned completion in early 2025.
- **Titanic People Exhibition (Urban Villages)** – redevelopment of the courtyard/frontage of the existing building at Westbourne Presbyterian Church. Planned completion anticipated in Spring 2025.
- **Corporate projects** – a range of capital IT projects via Digital Services to ensure business continuity including the completion of the Replacement Hardware for NIHE System, Server & Storage Technology Refresh, Grants Management System; Waste Plan – Expansion of Glass Collection Scheme, HWRC and CAS Containers, and ongoing delivery of Fleet Replacement Programme via City & Neighbourhoods Services.
- **Developers Contributions** – progressing a number of open space projects via CNS funded under S76 Developer Contributions.
- **Playground Improvement Programme** – Grampian Avenue, Michelle Baird and Balfour Avenue playgrounds are all on track to be completed by Spring 2025.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sporting Pitches Investment – improvements to pitches at Falls Park, Mallusk Playing Fields, Henry Jones Playing Fields, and Strangford Avenue Playing Fields (see detailed update at 3.6).
3.5	<p>Physical projects in development:</p> <p>The remainder of the Physical Programme covers projects at earlier stages i.e. tender preparation or before. This includes schemes at the start of procurement at <i>Stage 3 – Committed</i> as well as those at <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted</i> and <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i> or equivalent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Programme: Cathedral Gardens, New Crematorium, Belfast Stories, Reservoir Safety Programme, Alleygates Phase 5, LTP Girdwood Indoor Sports Facility, Waste Plan projects, Waterfront Hall – Chiller Units, Relocation of Dunbar Link Cleansing Depot, New Cemetery, Access to the Hills – connections from Cavehill to Black Mountain, Sydenham Greenway, Glencairn Park/Ligoniel Park Greenway, Black Mountain/Upper Whiterock Greenway, Colin Greenway, City Hall – Installation of 2 Stained Glass Windows, and recently added schemes including Floral Hall Health & Safety Works, Wilmont House, Fernhill House and Courtyard, Historic Cemeteries and Historic Tiled Street Signs. • A range of other schemes are also in development including the remaining LIF, BIF and SOF projects.
	<p><u>Sporting Pitches Investment</u></p>
3.6	<p>Members will recall that improvement works are underway to a number of pitches across the city. Work is also being progressed to investigate securing community access to sporting facilities owned by other key partners; to prepare for future potential funding opportunities; and on work to increase pitch provision across the city.</p> <p>Members were advised in June 2024 of work on an area-by-area basis to identify, agree and secure quick wins at the Council's pitch sites whilst the Pitches Strategy is still in development. Work is progressing on sites across the city as summarised below. Works may be subject to slight change due to weather dependency. Officers continue to identify pitch sites, city wide, for improvement as opportunities arise and will provide updates as work progresses.</p> <p>Sporting Pitches Investment 2024/25 update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mallusk Playing Fields - Conversion of the redundant shale soccer pitch to full size, grass Gaelic football is underway, drainage works are ongoing with turfing works programmed to be complete by early 2025. Fabrication is currently underway for four GAA ball-stop systems with installation also due in early 2025. Due to the requirement for four

full size, grass Gaelic football pitches at this location two existing, synthetic cricket wickets are programmed to be relocated within the site in February 2025.

- **Henry Jones Playing Fields** - Full planning approval for works at the Gaelic sports pitch was obtained in early November 2024. Fabrication of the GAA ball-stop systems and 1.2m high spectator railing is currently underway. Works will start this month with completion expected by the end of January 2025.
- **Falls Park** - Full planning approval for works at the Gaelic sports pitch was obtained in July 2024. Both GAA ball-stop systems have been installed. Fabrication of the 1.2m high spectator railing is currently underway; installation of the spectator fence and associated hard standing is programmed to be complete by the end of February 2025.
- **Strangford Avenue Playing Fields** - One of the soccer pitches was reconfigured for two small-sided pitches, including goals. The third pitch at the site, currently resting, will be set up in May for summer soccer for which there is demand at this site.
- **Loughside Playing Fields** – a new 9-a-side pitch has been created at this site adjacent to the new Crusaders FC 4G pitch.

In addition, improvement works have also been undertaken at the following sites:

- **Napier Park** - Installation of a new 4m high ball-stop fence to the boundary is complete.
- **Belvoir Activity Centre MUGA** - Improvement works are underway and include replacement of the existing MUGA carpet, drainage improvements and replacement existing basketball hoops and soccer netting. Works are expected to be complete within the coming weeks.
- **Lenadoon Park (Section 76 Developer Contribution)** - Improvement works at the soccer pitch are complete and included new spectator hard standings, an extension to the height of the existing pitch boundary fence and drainage improvements at dug out areas.
- **Suffolk Playing Fields** - The existing drainage system that served all three existing grass soccer pitches at Suffolk Playing Fields was improved in late November 2024, works included the construction of a new manhole and culverted outlet pipe.

Partnership opportunities for community access to facilities

In addition to these infrastructure improvements at council facilities, officers have been working to identify partnership opportunities to secure community access to facilities owned by the Education Authority or by other sporting clubs. Since the last committee update officers have secured access to a number of pitches located at the Montgomery Road Campus of the Belfast Met and negotiations regarding the terms of community usage for these are underway.

The pitches previously used for rugby have potential for conversion to a number of smaller soccer pitches. Designs options are underway. Officers are currently engaging with the IFA to identify potential sites for improvements to facilitate further development of grass roots soccer. This work is being carried out in anticipation of a possible further release of funding from DCMS. Members will be kept advised of any announcement in relation to this potential funding stream.

3.7

Capital Programme - Proposed Movements

Members have agreed that all capital projects must go through a three-stage process where decisions on which capital projects progress are taken by the Committee. This provides assurance as to the level of financial control and will allow Members to properly consider the opportunity costs of approving one capital project over another capital project. Members are asked to note the following activity on the Capital Programme:

Project	Overview	Stage movement
IT Programme – In-Cab Technology and Routing System	Replacement of two current systems: Masternaut fleet tracking and Webaspx route optimisation software with one integrated system.	Stage 3 – Committed: Proceed to contractor appointment with a maximum budget of £653,000
Innovation Factory Access Control System	Procurement of a replacement for the access control system at the Innovation Factory.	Move to Stage 3 – Committed: Proceed to contractor appointment with a maximum budget of £100,000
Floral Hall – Health and Safety Works	Works required to stabilise and secure the building	Move to Stage 3 – Committed: Proceed to contractor appointment for the immediate health & safety works with a maximum budget of £750,000
Belfast Zoo – Health and Safety Works	Health, safety and welfare works at the Zoo including improvements to animal enclosures and boundary fencing works.	Add at Stage 1 - Emerging and initiate procurement exercise
35-39 Royal Ave – Health & Safety Works	Urgent works to recently acquired Grade B2 listed building.	Add at Stage 1 – Emerging and initiate procurement exercise
35-39 Royal Avenue	Emerging proposal for recently acquired Grade B2 listed building.	Add at Stage 1 – Emerging
Fleet Programme - Small Vehicles	Procurement of two smaller collection vehicles to improve collection performance in narrow and restricted streets.	Add at Stage 1 - Emerging

3.8

IT Programme – In-Cab Technology and Routing System

Members will recall that in September 2023 this project was moved to *Stage 3 – Committed and held at Tier 0 – Scheme at Risk* pending further development of the project and a

	<p>satisfactory tender return. An update was to be brought back to Committee along with the final budget allocation and confirmation that this is within the affordability limits of the Council. This project involves the replacement of two current systems Masternaut fleet tracking and Webaspx route optimisation software with one integrated system - a digital system that integrates frontline operations, operational control and the customer hub. Members are asked to note that a satisfactory tender return has been received and that the Director of Finance has confirmed that this project is within the affordability limits of the Council and agree that a maximum of £653,000 be allocated.</p>
3.9	<p><u>Innovation Factory Access Control System</u></p> <p>Members will recall that last month this project was moved to <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted</i>. The project is for the replacement of the access control system at Innovation Factory. The current system is no longer fit for purpose. There is a requirement to upgrade the system which includes new door controllers, readers, and associated software. Members are asked to agree that ‘Innovation Factory Access Control’ is moved to Stage 3 – Committed; note that a satisfactory tender return has been received, that the Director of Finance has confirmed that this project is within the affordability limits of the Council and agree that a maximum of £100,000 be allocated.</p>
3.10	<p><u>Floral Hall Health & Safety Works</u></p> <p>Members will recall that last month this project was added to the Capital Programme at <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i>. A series of immediate health and safety works are required to the building. This will allow the building to be stabilised and steps to be undertaken to secure the most historically significant elements of the Hall including the domed roof. Members are asked to agree that ‘Floral Hall Health & Safety Works’ is moved <u>immediately</u> to Stage 3 – Committed due to the deteriorating condition of the building; note that a satisfactory tender return has been received, that the Director of Finance has confirmed that this phase of the project is within the affordability limits of the Council and agree that a maximum of £750,000 be allocated with a further tender figure to be brought back for any remaining works.</p>
3.11	<p><u>Belfast Zoo – Health and Safety Works</u></p> <p>A range of health, safety and welfare works are required at the Zoo including improvements to animal enclosures and boundary fencing works. Members are asked to agree that ‘Belfast Zoo – Health and Safety Works’ is added to the Capital Programme at Stage 1 - Emerging as a programme of health and safety works and that any necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate ‘framework’ arrangements) be initiated with contract to be awarded on the</p>

	basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.
3.12	<p><u>35-39 Royal Avenue</u></p> <p>The property recently acquired by the Council at 35-39 Royal Avenue is listed as Grade B2 and the building requires physical intervention, as well as further consideration on the future model. Health and safety works to the roof are required to be brought forward at pace to secure the building's integrity. It is proposed to bring this forward as two distinct pieces of work under the Capital Programme.</p> <p>Members are asked to agree that '35-39 Royal Avenue Health & Safety Works' is added to the Capital Programme at Stage 1 - Emerging as a programme of health and safety works and that any necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate 'framework' arrangements) be initiated with contract to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.</p> <p>Further, Members are asked to agree that '35-39 Royal Avenue' is also added to the Capital Programme as a Stage 1 – Emerging project to allow a business case and preferred model to be developed along with any associated improvement works.</p>
3.13	<p><u>Fleet Programme - Small Vehicles</u></p> <p>Procurement of two smaller collection vehicles to improve collection performance in narrow and restricted streets. Members are asked to agree that 'Fleet Programme – Small Vehicles' is added to the Capital Programme as a Stage 1 – Emerging project to allow a business case to be developed.</p>
	PeacePLUS Programme - Reconnected Belfast
3.14	<p>Members will be aware that the Council's Reconnected Belfast bid to the EU PeacePLUS Programme has been successful, securing an offer of €13.5m funding to enhance shared space and connectivity within and between Waterworks and Alexandra Park area of North Belfast as well as enhance linkages with other parts of the city and to the Belfast Hills. The Reconnect Belfast bid was submitted under Investment Area 1.4: Re-imaging Communities which seeks to 'create a more cohesive society through an increased provision of shared spaces and services, which will benefit and embed peace and reconciliation.' Members will also recall that the aligned Reservoir Safety Improvements project is currently at <i>Stage 3 – Committed</i> on the Capital Programme.</p> <p>The Reconnected Belfast project is a strategic connectivity project which aims to make Belfast a fully sustainably connected city via a series of greenways, urban greenways, and pocket</p>

parks. A key element of this transformational project will be to reduce long standing severance issues between communities, created by the physical environment including road infrastructure and interface barriers, by developing the surrounding and internal infrastructure.

The Letter of Offer has been received from SEUPB and is under review across a number of departments prior to acceptance. **Members are asked to note several key conditions within the Letter of Offer** including:

- The period of assistance started on **1 November 2024 and runs until 31 July 2029**. Any costs not processed by this end date will be ineligible for reimbursement.
- **The Council must bear any budget overruns as the Lead Partner.**
- The **funding can only be used for the approved purposes** to achieve the agreed outputs and indicators. Any changes must be agreed with SEUPB.
- The Council must enter into a **Data Sharing Agreement** – the content of which is under review with the Data Protection Team within Council.

Members are also asked to note that the Letter of Offer is in Euro. (€). Council officers have been liaising with SEUPB to ascertain if the offer can be in Pounds Sterling (£) but have been informed that this is not possible. This carries a risk of the Council being subject to currency fluctuations however the Council will continue to work with SEUPB in this regard and if any issues arise these will be reported back to Committee. Members are asked to note that this will also apply to the Letter of Offer for the Local Action Plan under Theme 1.1 and to agree that the Council accept the Letter of Offer subject to these going through the full Letter of Offer approval process.

During the development stage, significant community engagement was carried out on this scheme including an engagement and visioning exercise in 2023 as well as the pre-Planning community consultation in early 2024. Further Design Information Sessions on the project are due to take place in the coming months and officers will keep Members updated on next steps.

Financial & Resource Implications

3.15 *Financial Implications –*

IT Programme – In-Cab Technology and Routing System - a maximum of £653,000 is now allocated to this project. The Director of Finance has confirmed that this is within the affordability limits of the Council.

	<p>Innovation Factory Access Control System – a maximum of £100,000 is now allocated to this project. The Director of Finance has confirmed that this is within the affordability limits of the Council.</p> <p>Floral Hall Health & Safety Works – a maximum of £750,000 is now allocated to the first phase of this project. The Director of Finance has confirmed that this is within the affordability limits of the Council.</p> <p><i>Resource Implications</i> – Officer time to deliver.</p>
3.16	<p>Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment</p> <p>All capital projects are screened as part of the stage approval process</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 - Photos of completed projects (June – December 2024)