

**Democratic Services Section
Legal and Civic Services Department
Belfast City Council
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS**



**Belfast
City Council**

**HYBRID MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
REPORTS TO FOLLOW**

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet both online and in-person, in the Lavery Room, City Hall on Friday, 20th June, 2025 at 9.30 am, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

John Walsh

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

2. **Restricted Items**

(l) Targeted Acquisition (Pages 1 - 6)

3. **Matters referred back from Council/Motions**

(a) Notice of Motions - Quarterly Update (Pages 7 - 16)

5. **Physical Programme and Asset Management**

(c) Update on Area Working Groups (Pages 17 - 62)

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6
of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Document is Restricted

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Subject:	Notices of Motion – Quarterly Update
Date:	20 th June 2025
Reporting Officer:	Nora Largey, City Solicitor & Director of Legal and Civic Services
Contact Officer:	Russell Connelly, Policy, Research and Compliance Officer Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer Clare Hutchinson, Strategic Planning and Policy Officer

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 style="width: 40px;" type="text"/>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information relating to any individual 2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual 3. 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 matter 5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained 6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction 7. 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 After Council Decision Sometime in the future Never	<input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> <input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> <input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> <input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/>

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	The purpose of this report is to update Committee on the progress of all Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance for which SP&R Committee is responsible for.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>It is recommended that SP&R Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the updates to all Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance that SP&R Committee is responsible for and • Agree to the closure of Notice of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance 49, 74, 167, 189, 197, 264, 341, 342, 351, 366 and 367 as referenced in Appendix 1 and paragraph 3.4 below.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>At SP&R Committee on 25th October 2019, the following Notice of Motion was agreed:</p> <p>“That this Council notes that other Councils produce a monthly status report in relation to Notices of Motion; and agrees Belfast City Council adopts a similar practice and produces a monthly Notice of Motion Update which will be brought to each full Council Meeting, detailing the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Date received 2. Notice of motion title 3. Submitted by which Councillor 4. Council meeting date 5. Committee motion is referred to 6. Outcome of committee where Notice of Motion will be debated 7. Month it will be reported back to committee 8. Other action to be taken.”
3.2	<p>Following a review exercise, a new database containing all Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance at Committee was created and quarterly reporting to Committee commenced in March 2021. Appendix 1 is the latest quarterly update showing all active Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance which SP&R Committee is responsible for.</p>
3.3	<p>Closure of Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance</p> <p>At SP&R Committee on 20th November 2020, it was agreed that Notices of Motion could be closed for one of two reasons:</p>

3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notices of Motion which contained an action(s) that has been completed; and • Notices of Motion have become Council policy. <p>SP&R Committee are asked to agree that the following Notice of Motions and Issues Raised in Advance are now closed:</p> <p>Category 1 Recommended Closure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childcare provision (341) – This Notice of Motion called on the Council to explore ways to support childcare provision, including considering whether council supported schemes during school holidays could be expanded. Whilst Council host a number of summer and play schemes, childcare is a specific function regulated by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust. As such Council does not provide registered childcare schemes. However £80,000 was committed to support the enhancement of the provision of summer schemes for children with additional needs during the summer of 2024. It is recommended that this Notice of Motion is now closed. • Mental health accessibility audit (342) – This Notice of Motion called on the Council to work with MindWise to conduct an online survey across the council district to gather information around accessibility to mental health support. Following exploratory work it is evident that there are other organisations who are fulfilling this obligation. It is recommended that this Notice of Motion is now closed. <p>Category 2 Recommended Closure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market gardens and urban farming (49) – This Notice of Motion called on the Council to establish an urban farm for community use and market garden development on an existing site within the Belfast City Council land bank. A draft Sustainable Food Strategy for the city has been developed through engagement with area working groups and includes the consideration of the potential for market gardens and urban farming in the city. The UPSURGE and UP2030 projects are also looking at the use of green space and nature based solutions and will include community and urban food growing opportunities. It is recommended that this Notice of Motion is now closed. • Disabled people and older people (74) – This Issue Raised in Advance called on the Council to commit to a number of actions around ensuring access and inclusion for disabled people, older people and carers. These actions are now being taken forward through the Disability Working Group and recommendations are being progressed in relation to delivering an accessible city for all by 2035. It is recommended that this Notice of Motion is now closed.
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- **Violence against women and girls (167)** – This Notice of Motion called on the Council to support the Executive’s Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls and commit to a number of actions to make Belfast more safe for all women and girls. At the December meeting of the People and Communities Committee, a series of actions were agreed to support the delivery of this strategy and the Strategic Director of Place and Economy was appointed as an internal champion. It is recommended that this Notice of Motion is now closed.
- **PEACE IV to PEACEPLUS Programme (189)** – This Notice of Motion called on the Council to write to the Executive Office and SEUPB to ensure the seamless transition of the current PEACE IV to PEACEPLUS programmes. As the PEACEPLUS programmes are well underway, it is recommended that this Notice of Motion is now closed.
- **The rights of nature (197)** – This Notice of Motion called on the Council to explore how the rights of nature could be expressed and embedded in community plans, corporate plans, improvement objectives and other strategic frameworks. This has been considered within the Council’s Climate Action Plan, which was brought for approval in May 2025. It is recommended that this Notice of Motion is now closed.
- **Electric vehicle charging points strategy (264)** – This Issue Raised in Advance called on the Council to examine the potential for increasing the number of electric vehicle charging points on council properties. Work is continuing on the implementation of Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Low Emission Vehicle Strategy. This includes a commercial assessment and market testing of council land assets to assess the feasibility of locations for low emissions infrastructure investment. It is recommended that this Issue Raised in Advance is now closed.
- **Right to grow on Council owned land (351)** – This Notice of Motion called on the Council to adopt a right to grow on council owned land identified as suitable for cultivation. Following a mapping exercise, this initiative is being considered as part of the development of a Sustainable Food Strategy. It is recommended that this Notice of Motion is now closed.
- **Gender pay gap recording and reporting (366)** – This Notice of Motion called on the Council to commence gender pay gap reporting, alongside a commitment to explore the further reporting of pay gap information in relation to disability and ethnicity. Gender pay gap reporting has been incorporated into the human resources programme of work and is due to be completed by December 2025. It is recommended that this Notice of Motion is now closed.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Crisis (367) – This Notice of Motion called on the Council to support co-housing schemes by identifying suitable sites within its own land that could be used for co-housing and include provision for co-housing within any development site it brings forward that is appropriate for housing. The housing led regeneration programme provides the basis to actively seek to identify suitable sites that could be used for co-housing. The strategic site assessments, supported by the Council's private sector partner for the delivery of housing led mixed use regeneration development, will look at sites through the lens of mixed tenure, which comprises all housing product types. It is recommended that this Notice of Motion is now closed.
3.5	<u>Financial & Resource Implications</u> There are no additional financial implications required to implement these recommendations.
3.6	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u> There are no equality, good relations or rural needs implications contained in this report.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1: Notices of Motion Live Database – SP&R Committee

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Belfast City Council Notice of Motion Database

Ref	Type	Meeting Date	Motion Title	Proposed by	Reporting Committee	Reporting Officer	Lead Department	Status	Status Update
7	Notice of Motion	09/04/2018	Childcare Strategy	Cllr Mal O'Hara	SP&R	John Tully	City & Organisational Strategy	Ongoing	UPDATE May 2025 = discussions with officials has indicated that Dept of Education is to bring forward an Early Learning and Childcare Strategy by Autumn 2025. The Council will review and input into this document which it becomes available for consultation. Members will note that the Dept of Education announced (on 16 May 2025) £55million investment in early learning and childcare in 2025-26. Minister also announced that the Northern Ireland Childcare Subsidy Scheme will now be extended to include school age children from 1 September 2025.
23	Notice of Motion	01/07/2019	Removal of Banners and Paramilitary Flags in Belfast	Cllr Ciaran Beattie	SP&R	Nora Largey	Legal & Civic Services	Ongoing	Since the decision by SP &R in 2019, the FICT report commissioned by the Executive was published which covers similar issues. Extensive consultation was undertaken between 2016 - 19 on this and the contents of this report have the agreement of the 5 main political parties represented on the CommissionReport to be brought to CMT and potentially Party Group Leaders for discussion on way forward.
25	Issue Raised in Advance	23/08/2019	Abortion Imagery	Cllr Aine Groogan	SP&R	Nora Largey	Legal & Civic Services	Ongoing	On 26 June 2023 the SP&R Committee agreed that the draft Bye Laws be issued for formal public consultation commencing in September 2023. At the Oct 23 Cttee it was agreed that this would remain open awaiting outcome of planned consultation. Consultation commenced on 27 November 2023 and concluded on 4 March 2024. There was an extremely high level of responses to this consultation and officers are currently working on analysing the responses in preparation for drafting a report on the consultation findings. Update - Further engagement was requested by Members and workshops took place in May 2025. A report on the byelaws will be brought back to Committee in the next few months.
35	Notice of Motion	02/12/2019	Pridestrian Animation	Cllr Matt Garrett	SP&R	Keith Forster	Place & Economy	Ongoing	Officers have engaged with external partners and developed a proposal for a piece of temporary public art. The cost has been prohibitive and discussions with the external partner are ongoing.
49	Notice of Motion	03/02/2020	Market Gardens and Urban Farming	Cllr Seamas de Faoite	SP&R	John Tully	City & Organisational Strategy	Recommend Close	The Climate Team have established a Belfast Sustainable Food Partnership, which is currently developing a sustainable food strategy for the city and will consider the potential for market gardens and urban farming in the city as part of this. Also links with Right to Grow motion. The UPSURGE and UP2030 projects are also looking at the use of green space and nature based solutions, and will include community and urban food growing opportunities. Engagement to develop Sustainable Food Strategy completed with Area Working Groups in February/March 2025 - draft strategy under review.
50	Notice of Motion	03/02/2020	Belfast Zoo	Cllr Conor Maskey	SP&R	Keith Forster	Place & Economy	Ongoing	This work is being progressed by the member led Castle, Cavehill, Zoo and North Foreshore Steering Group. There are Floral Hall works currently on site and Belfast Zoo H&S works (Stage 2) have been agreed as capital projects.
51	Notice of Motion	03/02/2020	Growth Deal	Cllr Ciaran Beattie	SP&R	Sharon McNicholl	Corporate Services	Ongoing	To be progressed as resources become available.
74	Issue Raised in Advance	19/06/2020	Disabled People and Older People	Cllr Ross McMullan	SP&R	Nora Largey	Legal & Civic Services	Recommend Close	10.01.23 Part one of this motion in relation to older people and inclusivity is now recommended for closure. 17.06.25. There were a number of further actions to be progressed in relation to accessibility and inclusivity with regards to disabled people and in a wider sense. These actions are now being taken forward through the Disability Working Group and recommendations are being progressed in relation to Accessible City 2035 and the Disability Action Plan. Recommend closure.
131	Notice of Motion	02/11/2020	Sealing of the Records of Mother and Baby Homes	Cllr Michael Collins	SP&R	Nora Largey	Legal & Civic Services	Ongoing	Response from Irish Gov still outstanding - 06/09/21
167	Notice of Motion	01/04/2021	Violence against Women and Girls	Cllr Sian Mulholland	SP&R	Nora Largey	Legal & Civic Services	Recommend Close	This motion is recommended for closure now that the the Executive have an EVAWG strategy and the Council have an internal champion - Damien Martin, Strategic Director of Place and Economy.
176	Notice of Motion	04/05/2021	Mater Hospital Services	Cllr Fiona Ferguson	SP&R	Nora Largey	Legal & Civic Services	Ongoing	This motion related to provision of services during the pandemic - this was resolved with services returning to normal from November 2022. 12.03.23 This motion recommendation for closure was rejected at Feb 2023 SP&R and therefore remains on-going
187	Notice of Motion	01/06/2021	Local Government Pension Scheme - Responsible Investment Strategy	Cllr Ryan Murphy	SP&R	Nora Largey	Legal & Civic Services	Ongoing	Letter sent 2/7/21. Meeting with NILGOSC requested by S P and R 20/8/21 - to be arranged
189	Notice of Motion	01/06/2021	PEACE IV to PEACE PLUS Programmes	Cllr John Kyle	SP&R	Nora Largey	Legal & Civic Services	Recommend Close	Letters sent 2/7/21. Response received from SEUPB 20/7/21 - TEO yet to respond. This motion was about the seamless transition between PEACE IV (ending in 2020) and PEACEPLUS (2021 - 2027). This motion should be closed as the PEACEPLUS is now well underway.
197	Notice of Motion	01/09/2021	The Rights of Nature	Cllr Brian Smyth	SP&R	John Tully	City & Organisational Strategy	Recommend Close	Research and engagement ongoing to understand related initiatives such as biodiversity net gain and nature positive as part of Council Climate Action Plan brought to Council for approval in May 2025.
199	Notice of Motion	01/09/2021	Four-Day Working Week	Cllr Matt Garrett	SP&R	Christine Sheridan	Human Resources	Ongoing	Discussions ongoing with Management Side & Trade Unions to consider an appropriate pilot
203	Notice of Motion	04/10/2021	Electric Charging Points	Ald George Dorrian	SP&R	Nora Largey	Legal & Civic Services	Ongoing	Responses from Ministers being considered by officers
209	Notice of Motion	04/10/2021	Environmentally Sustainable Event Spaces	Cllr Matt Garrett	SP&R	Grimes	Property & Projects	Ongoing	A report is required to SP&R Committee to outline the next steps. Progressing.
228	Notice of Motion	10/01/2022	Playing Pitches in Belfast	Cllr David Brooks	SP&R	David Sales	City & Neighbourhood Services	Ongoing	It is anticipated that a draft Pitches Strategy report will be presented to P&C Committee in Autumn 2025.
235	Notice of Motion	22/02/2022	Energy Price Crises	Cllr Brian Smyth	SP&R	John Tully	City & Organisational Strategy	Ongoing	The Belfast Local Area Energy Plan provides an evidence base which will help to inform investment in community energy schemes. The Plan specifically includes an action to support community energy organisations to develop rooftop solar PV installations and engage in area based retrofit projects. In parallel discussions are ongoing with projects such as Edenderry District Energy initiative, to explore opportunities to support community ambitions. A new temporary post has been created within the team specifically to support delivery of the LAEP effective Jan 2025 and a new Net Zero Officer is under recruitment. This will provide additional capacity to support energy projects. The development of a neighbourhood retrofit pilot is being progressed through the Retrofit Hub. Funding was secured to install solar PV on oneall Pass Community Centre and a solar PV web portal is being developed to provide information on the rooftop solar potential in the UP2030 project area.

			Cost of Living						Continued implementation of the 2024-25 Hardship Programme continues until June 2025 deadline with the majority of supported allocated. A detailed impact study will be brought to Members Working Group and SP&R Committee in Autumn.
243	Notice of Motion	14/03/2022		Cllr Matt Garrett	SP&R	John Tully	City & Organisational Strategy	Ongoing	Inaugural gathering of the citywide 'Anti-Poverty Network' took place enabling partners who provide much needed support to those impacted by poverty within the city, to share information, discuss opportunities to collaborate and importantly help strengthen working relationships.
264	Issue Raised in Advance	19/08/2022	Electric Vehicle Charging Points Strategy	Cllr Michael Long	SP&R	John Tully	City & Organisational Strategy	Recommend Close	Physical Projects team continues to coordinate work on the implementation of phase 1 and phase 2 of the Low Emission Vehicle Strategy which will support a commercial assessment and market testing of Council land assets to understand potential scope to bring forward for possible locations for low emissions infrastructure investment.
284	Issue Raised in Advance	18/11/2022	Use of the Ceremony Room, City Hall	Cllr Michelle Kelly	SP&R	Sinead Grimes	Property & Projects	Ongoing	A report on the potential reinstatement of the Ceremony Room to be submitted to a future Committee meeting.
297	Notice of Motion	05/01/2023	Comber Greenway	Cllr Anthony Flynn	SP&R	Sinead Grimes	Property & Projects	Ongoing	Project has significant resource and financial implications. Officers are starting the process of reengaging with DfI on the Comber Greenway.
298	Notice of Motion	05/01/2023	School Street Schemes	Cllr Seamas de Faoite	SP&R	Nora Largey	Legal & Civic Services	Ongoing	Letters issued to DfI on 17 Apr 2023 in relation to Rosetta Way "quietway" and also to DAERA on 12 Feb 2024 re School Streets Air Quality but no letter specifically on School Streets Schemes appears to have been issued to DfI
305	Notice of Motion	24/01/2023	Support for striking Health Workers	Cllr Matt Collins	SP&R	Nora Largey	Legal & Civic Services	Ongoing	Adopted at Standards and Business Committee. Progress to be reported to SP&R
308	Notice of Motion	21/02/2023	Overdose Prevention Facility in Belfast	Cllr Mal O'Hara	SP&R	Nora Largey	Legal & Civic Services	Ongoing	At SP&R on 24th November 2023 the Committee agreed that, at the request of Councillor Smyth, that a report be submitted at its next monthly meeting with specific reference made to meetings held, legal advice sought and partners engaged with - see no. 346 for reference. A report was brought back to SP&R in January 2024. The Committee noted the contents of the report and that engagement would continue to take place with all the relevant agencies and stakeholders to advocate for such a
319	Notice of Motion	27/06/2023	CPR Training and Circuit	Cllr Christina Black	SP&R	Nora Largey	Legal & Civic Services	Ongoing	The Committee agreed to adopt the motion, with a report to be submitted to a future meeting outlining how it could be facilitated.
326	Issue Raised in Advance	18/08/2023	Data Protection	Cllr Ciaran Beattie	SP&R	Nora Largey	Legal & Civic Services	Ongoing	Agreed at SP&R that a report will be brought back to Committee
330	Notice of Motion	29/08/2023	Clean Indoor Air Motion	Cllr Jenna Maghie	SP&R	Nora Largey	Legal & Civic Services	Ongoing	The Committee agreed to adopt the motion, with a report to be submitted to a future meeting outlining how it could be managed, resourced, and facilitated.
331	Notice of Motion	29/08/2023	Save West Wellbeing Suicide Awareness	Cllr Michael Collins	SP&R	Trevor Wallace	Finance & Resources	Ongoing	Update August 24: At the request of Councillor Collins, the Council agreed that the Motion on Save West Wellbeing Suicide Awareness which had been recommended for closure, remained open and be brought back to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for further discussion."A paper was brought to SP&R on 19th April where committee further discussed and agreed that the request be dealt with via the discretionary payments process.The Discretionary payment processed opened at the end of June and closed on 2nd August. Again, West Wellbeing Suicide Awareness did not apply for funding. Update Jan 25 - at Dec Cttee meeting it was decided that this would remain open
337	Notice of Motion	26/09/2023	Right to Food Campaign	Cllr Paul Doherty	SP&R	Nora Largey	Legal & Civic Services	Ongoing	Response presented to S P and R 24/11/23 - Referred to Social Policy Working Group
341	Notice of Motion	24/10/2023	Childcare Provision	Cllr Jenna Maghie	SP&R	David Sales	City & Neighbourhood Services	Recommend Close	Whilst Council host a number of summer and play schemes, it must be noted that childcare is a very specific function with registration required with the Belfast Health & Social Care Trust and as such, BCC do not provide childcare schemes. However, our Employability and Skills team provide a range of Childcare, Playwork and Classroom Assistant Employment Academies, Upskilling Academies and will be delivering new Childminding and Homecare Academies – Classroom Assistant Academies in Irish Medium are also available. In addition, support of £80,000 was agreed by SP&R Committee in February 2024 to support the enhancement of provision of summer schemes for children with additional needs for delivery in summer 2024. In light of the above, it is recommended that this Motion is now closed.
342	Notice of Motion	24/10/2023	Mental Health Accessibility Audit	Cllr Matt Garrett	SP&R	David Sales	City & Neighbourhood Services	Recommend Close	Following exploratory work undertaken by officers in relation to how this Motion might be facilitated, it is evident that there are other organisations who are fulfilling this obligation. The proposer of the Motion has been updated. Given that this work is within the remit of other agencies as opposed to Council, it is proposed that this Motion is recommended for closure.
347	Notice of Motion	28/11/2023	Cost of School Uniforms and P.E. Kits	Cllr Sarah Bunting	SP&R	Nora Largey	Legal & Civic Services	Ongoing	
351	Notice of Motion	28/11/2023	Right to Grow on Council owned land	Cllr David Bell	SP&R	John Tully	City & Organisational Strategy	Recommend Close	Internal cross-departmental discussions are taking place to understand how this might be taken forward in Belfast. Mapping and survey of community growing space in the city completed. Information now needs groundtruthed and surveys carried out. Right to Grow being considered as part of engagement towards developing a Sustainable Food Strategy. Area Working Groups with members underway in February and March 2025.
356	Notice of Motion	04/01/2024	Memorial Wall - Covid-19	Cllr Emmett McDonough	SP&R	Sinead Grimes	Property & Projects	Ongoing	Progressing.
358	Notice of Motion	04/01/2024	Ulster Bank Closures	Cllr Geraldine McAteer	SP&R	Nora Largey	Legal & Civic Services	Ongoing	Required letters were sent on 19th January 2024
360	Notice of Motion	23/01/2024	Transparency by Default at Belfast City Council	Cllr Gary McKeown	SP&R	Nora Largey	Legal & Civic Services	Ongoing	Motion referred to SP&R
361	Notice of Motion	23/01/2024	Rights-based Ethical Procurement Policy	Cllr Bronach Anglin	SP&R	Nora Largey	Legal & Civic Services	Ongoing	Motion referred to SP&R. The draft Ethical Procurement Policy is currently under consideration by the Social Value Policy working group which is due to meet on 17th June 2025.
366	Notice of Motion	22/02/2024	Gender Pay Gap Recording and Reporting	Cllr Tara Brooks	SP&R	Christine Sheridan	Human Resources	Recommend Close	Gender Pay Gap reporting, incorporated into CHR programme of work, due to be completed December 2025
367	Notice of Motion	22/02/2024	Housing Crisis	Cllr Aine Groogan	SP&R	Cathy Reynolds	Place & Economy	Recommend Close	Recommended to Close (Category 2) The housing led regeneration programme provides the basis to actively seek to identify suitable sites that could be used for cohousing. The strategic site assessments city centre and city wide, supported by the Council's private sector partner for the delivery of housing led mixed use regeneration development will look at sites through the lens of mixed tenure, which comprises all housing product types.
385	Notice of Motion	30/04/2024	Plant Based Councils Initiative	Cllr Anthony Flynn	SP&R	John Tully	City & Organisational Strategy	Ongoing	Internal engagement with Procurement around how to take this forward ongoing. Report to SP&R in due course.
395	Issue Raised in Advance	24/05/2024	Transfer of Powers - Licensing of Bus Tour Operators in the City	Cllr Ciaran Beattie	SP&R	Nora Largey	Legal & Civic Services	Ongoing	Discussions ongoing with DFI in relation to bus tour operators generally.

396	Issue Raised in Advance	24/05/2024	Connection of Water Supply to Social Homes	Cllr Michael Donnelly	SP&R	Nora Largey	Legal & Civic Services	Ongoing	
402	Issue Raised in Advance	20/09/2024	Sunday Trading - Pilot Scheme	Cllr Sam Nelson	SP&R	Nora Largey	Legal & Civic Services	Ongoing	
406	Notice of Motion	24/10/2024	Epilepsy - Education and Training	Cllr Michael Long	SP&R	Christine Sheridan	Human Resources	Ongoing	Corporate HR will source appropriate education and training resources and deliver them via the Health and Wellbeing Action Plan and member development programme
407	Notice of Motion	24/10/2024	Blood and Bone Marrow Donations	Cllr Christine Bower	SP&R	Christine Sheridan	Human Resources	Ongoing	A blood donation session has been organised for employees in City Hall for 18 June. Corporate HR will also work with internal communications to raise awareness on bone marrow donation.
409	Notice of Motion	24/10/2024	NILGOSC - Disposal of Government Bonds	Cllr Carl Whyte	SP&R	Nora Largey	Legal & Civic Services	Ongoing	
411	Issue Raised in Advance	25/10/2024	Fundraising box at the City Hall Christmas Tree	Cllr Gary McKeown	SP&R	Nora Largey	Legal & Civic Services	Ongoing	
			Addressing Educational Inequalities in Belfast						Response received from Education Minister (dated 25 March 2025), stating that the intention is to establish Locality Reference Groups for each Raise locally, which will include representatives of all relevant stakeholders. Each Locality Reference Group will oversee the development of a Strategic Area Plan which will set out the priority needs and actions for tackling educational disadvantage.
417	Notice of Motion	21/11/2024		Cllr David Bell	SP&R	John Tully	City & Organisational Strategy	Ongoing	In response, Minister also states that the RAISE initiative and emerging Area Plans will support the delivery of the ambitions of the Belfast Agenda.
432	Notice of Motion	20/02/2025	Action to Address Empty Homes	Cllr Michael Collins	SP&R	Kate Bentley	Place & Economy	Ongoing	NEW: No update yet available
			Developing a Sponsorship and Philanthropy Network in Belfast						Being considered in context of work underway to explore the potential development of a Corporate Social Responsibility Framework. Engagement planned with Social Policy Working Group. Party Groups leaders and Members to help inform the emerging thinking.
433	Notice of Motion	20/02/2025		Cllr Michael Long	SP&R	John Tully	City & Organisational Strategy	Ongoing	Report to be brought to a future meeting of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.
439	Issue Raised in Advance	21/03/2025	LORAG - Youth Club Development - Council Land	Cllr Ciaran Beattie	SP&R	Sinead Grimes	Property & Projects	Ongoing	NEW: P&P Estates Mgt Unit is looking at this.
440	Issue Raised in Advance	21/03/2025	Bi-weekly meeting of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee: Efficiency/Consultancy Paper	Cllr Ciaran Beattie	SP&R	Nora Largey	Legal & Civic Services	Ongoing	Workshop taking place 13/06/25.
446	Notice of Motion	28/04/2025	Pathways to Work Green Paper	Cllr Paul Doherty	SP&R	Nora Largey	Legal & Civic Services	Ongoing	Democratic Services sent letter to OFMDFM & Minister for Communities on 15/05/25. Awaiting response.
447	Notice of Motion	28/04/2025	US War Planes out of Belfast	Cllr Michael Collins	SP&R	Nora Largey	Legal & Civic Services	Ongoing	Democratic Services sent letter to OFMDFM, Westminster Government and Aldergrove Airport re NOM - Awaiting response.
448	Notice of Motion	28/04/2025	National Famine Commemoration Day	Cllr Conor McKay	SP&R	Nora Largey	Legal & Civic Services	Ongoing	Democratic Services sent letter to Irish Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media on 15/05/25. Awaiting response.

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Subject:	Update on Area Working Groups
Date:	20 June 2025
Reporting Officer:	Sinead Grimes, Director of Property & Projects
Contact Officer:	Shauna Murtagh, Portfolio Manager David Logan, Senior Programme Delivery Manager

Restricted Reports									
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
<p>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</p> <p>Insert number <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information relating to any individual 2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual 3. 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 matter 5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained 6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction 7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime 									
<p>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</p> <table style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;">After Committee Decision</td> <td style="width: 30%; text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>After Council Decision</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sometime in the future</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Never</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>		After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	Never	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To present to the Committee for approval the minutes of the most recent meetings of the Area Working Groups.

2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is asked to approve the minutes of the meeting of North AWG – 27 May, West AWG – 29 May, East AWG – 5 June 2025 as attached.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p><u>Area Working Group Minutes</u></p> <p>It was agreed in June 2016 that the minutes of the meetings of the Area Working Groups would be presented to the SP&R Committee for approval going forward, in line with the Council's commitment to openness and transparency and to ensure a consistent approach with other Member-led Working Groups. The Committee is asked to approve the minutes of the most recent meeting, as attached.</p>
3.2	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None</p>
3.3	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>None</p>
4.0	Appendices - Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1 - Minutes – Meeting – North Belfast Area Working Group 27 May 2025</p> <p>Appendix 2 - Minutes – Meeting – West Belfast Area Working Group 29 May 2025</p> <p>Appendix 3 - Minutes – Meeting – East Belfast Area Working Group 5 June 2025</p>

North Belfast Area Working Group

Tuesday, 27th May, 2025

NORTH BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

Members present: Councillor Doran (Chairperson);
Alderman McCullough; and
Councillors Anglin, Cobain, Magee,
Maskey and Nelson.

In attendance: Mr. D. Logan, Physical Programmes Senior Delivery
Manager;
Ms. M. McKay, Enterprise and Business Growth Manager
Ms. A. Diver, Climate Programme Manager;
Mr. R. Weir, Estates Surveyor;
Ms. M. Wilson, Neighbourhood Services Integration
Manager; and
Ms. C. Donnelly, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies for inability to attend were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 25th February were approved by the Working Group.

Declarations of Interest

The Chairperson (Councillor Doran) declared an interest in respect of the item under the heading of 'Physical Programmes Update' in that he was employed by Westland Community Group Ltd.

Councillor Maskey declared an interest in respect of the item under the heading 'Enterprise and Business Growth'.

Presentations

Community Navigators Programme – Ashton Community Trust Health and Wellbeing Team

The Chairperson welcomed Ms. I. Sherry and Mr. S. Barr to the meeting.

Ms. Sherry addressed the Working Group with a presentation on the Community Navigators Programme. She outlined the history of the programme, a multi-disciplinary service to provide support to those affected by the conflict and those experiencing poor physical and mental health, impacted by suicide, self-harm and those experiencing situational and emotional crisis.

She highlighted the following service impact indicators for 2024/25:

- 290 engagements to de-escalate violence/aggression within the Emergency Department;
- 327 engagements to de-escalate from suicide ideation;
- 89 engagements with 72 individuals impacted by domestic violence; and
- 2 assists with ligature removals.

She stated that there had been a growing demand for a place-based crisis de-escalation service within the city and explained that the service was comprised of a multi-disciplinary team that included community practitioners, mental health liaison teams, substance use practitioners and a health inclusion team.

She explained that any client over 18 years old who did not require immediate medical intervention could be referred to the service via a number of service providers, that included PSNI, GP out of hours service and political representatives.

She outlined the following service options:

- De-escalation and Risk management;
- Therapeutic support/psycho-social engagements;
- Mental Health Assessment pathway review;
- Onward Referral/s;
- Hardship Support (e.g. food and fuel poverty); and
- Transport/Taxi.

Ms. Sherry concluded by summarizing the next steps in the programme implementation, that included an independent analysis by Impact Research Centre, building upon evidence based need and defining the required resources and financial backing.

In response to a question from a Member with regard to a fixed location, Ms. Sherry stated that options were being considered for a location in north Belfast and explained that although the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust had offered support for resourcing the programme, financial capital would need to be sourced to provide a permanent locations for the service.

The Chairperson thanked Ms. Sherry and Mr. Barr for the presentation

Noted.

Enterprise and Business Growth

The Enterprise and Business Growth Manager outlined the following report to the Working Group:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

The purpose of this report is to update members on the business support available to constituents and businesses in their areas including Go Succeed – the regional initiative to support business start-up and growth that is being led by Belfast City Council on behalf of the 11 councils.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- Note and endorse the progress to date on the delivery of the Enterprise Support Service (Go Succeed) in North Belfast and beyond, with the objective of driving more and better businesses
- Promote opportunities for business support to constituents where relevant and appropriate
- Provide recommendations to Enterprise and Business Growth team on community and stakeholder engagement in the North Belfast area

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Go Succeed (Enterprise Support Service)

The Go Succeed service has now been operational for around eighteen months and has reached thousands of potential entrepreneurs and businesses across Northern Ireland.

By way of background, Belfast City Council led on a successful funding application to UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF). This provided £17 million of support for the period November 2023 to March 2025; £12 million programme delivery and £5 million for small grants. Following receipt of the funding agreement in September 2023, the service became operational in November 2023.

Belfast City Council, as lead for the service, has now secured additional funding via an application to UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) of £9.2 million for the 2025/2026 financial year, ensuring continuity of the service. The focus over the next year, alongside delivery of the service, will be working to secure a more permanent funding source.

The service aims to be the go-to source for expert business advice across the region. It represents the councils' collective response to our statutory responsibility and offers a set of connected enterprise support services where individuals, entrepreneurs or businesses can access a continuum of support to meet their needs, depending on their stage of development.

The key objectives of the model are to:

- Nurture a strong entrepreneurial culture, recognising enterprise as a viable career option and/or a route out of economic inactivity
- Enable a vibrant and productive business base across Northern Ireland
- Increase the proportion of 'innovation-active' businesses in NI and embed this more firmly with enterprise/ start-up agenda
- Diversify the representation amongst those supported by the enterprise and innovation ecosystem
- Delivery a service designed with the user in mind
- Focus on adding value to existing support available in the ecosystem

- Providing regional coverage while ensuring that delivery reflects local differences/nuances.

Go Succeed provides a continuum of support from early-stage enterprise awareness through to starting, growing, and scaling a business. The concept was that the service would help people get the right support at the right time – and would also help maximise other available funding streams by helping businesses to navigate the complex support ecosystem.

The service has been established to deliver across three core areas – **Start, Grow and Scale** – with tailored support for clients aligned with their growth ambitions.

- **Start**: this element of the service aims to identify individuals with entrepreneurial intentions as well as reaching those individuals who do not have an intention to start a business but could be encouraged to do so. There is specific, targeted support for a range of underrepresented groups. The menu of support available includes masterclasses, peer support networks and 1-1 mentoring
- **Grow**: this element of the service provides support for existing businesses. 1-1 mentoring is allocated based on the business' potential to grow and innovate. Masterclass and peer support network activity are also provided to support existing businesses to make key decisions on issues such as entering new markets or accessing finance for growth
- **Scale**: this part of the service is geared to supporting start-ups that have the potential to go on and generate at least £1m in revenue after 3 years. Support is delivered through 1-1 mentoring which aims to enable access to finance or further support through Invest NI, Catalyst or others.

In addition to the tiered menu of support, small grants of up to £3,000 (up to 50% of capital costs) are available to entrepreneurs or businesses accessing support through the service who demonstrate growth potential.

The delivery is underpinned by investments such as a wide-reaching marketing and communications campaign; a call handling service to deal with phone enquiries as well as an online portal to deal with online requests for support and a regional CRM system to enable tracking of client engagement across the service.

Belfast Performance Update

Since the service launched in November 2023, we have achieved the following by way of Belfast performance:

- 4,059 individuals 'reached' through a range of community outreach activities. This has included:
 - Sector specific events and self-employment academies for those in the hair and beauty industry including

delivery of aspirational workshops and hands-on mentoring support for over 80 newly qualified individuals.

- Delivery of a female-focused 'inspiring enterprise' event for a group of 100 female entrepreneurs providing practical support to starting or growing their enterprise.
 - Working with apprenticeship providers across Belfast to deliver aspirational workshops to 100s of 16–18-year-olds encouraging entrepreneurship as a very real and achievable pathway for consideration.
 - Facilitation of the '22 under 22' initiative, designed to unearth, recognise and fast track 22 exceptional potential entrepreneurs in the City.
 - Increasing awareness of enterprise among young people at the Young Enterprise Big Market event in St George's Market in December 2025.
- 1528 Belfast entrepreneurs supported through start up activity (1-1 mentoring, masterclasses, peer support networks) with 367 (24%) of these entrepreneurs being from the North Belfast area
 - 888 Belfast businesses supported through growth activity (1-1 mentoring, masterclasses, peer support networks) with 237 (27%) of these businesses being based in the North Belfast area.

315 Belfast businesses have accessed Go Succeed Grants since the launch in February 2024, drawing down over £1 million. These grants have enabled businesses to purchase capital and/or revenue items which will support their future growth plans.

The Enterprise and Business Growth team would welcome any guidance from working group members to increase engagement in the North Belfast area. Constituent referrals or enquiries can be sent to the Enterprise and Business Growth team via gosucceed@belfastcity.gov.uk

3.2 Go Social (Social Economy Support)

Developing the social economy sector has been a priority of the NI Executive for some time and Belfast City Council is aware of the important and unique contribution which the sector can, and does, make to the local economy. In the 2024/25 year the demand for Belfast City Council's 'Go Social' programme, aimed at encouraging more start-ups within the local Social Economy, has increased with over 60 individuals starting their social enterprise/cooperative.

Via our dedicated 'Go Social' service we offer enhanced support to those thinking of starting up a new business as a social enterprise or co-operative and we encourage existing SE businesses to join our social economy register to help us on our journey to grow the sector. Go Social support is open to individuals, groups and existing organisations seeking to set up, or transition to, a social enterprise or cooperative model.

We recognise setting up a social enterprise or cooperative can be difficult due to navigating complex legal structures and governance along with tackling a social cause or issue. Our Go Social support helps clients via specialist 1-1 mentoring support, access to networking opportunities and best practice visits as well as peer to peer support.

As part of our investment in the sector, Belfast City Council also deliver the Social Economy Incentive Fund which provides grants to new or developing social economy businesses in early growth stages. Each year we launch the fund in September with grants provided for up to £10,000, applications are assessed by a panel with shortlisted applicants invited to pitch. The fund is available to Belfast-based social enterprises and co-operatives, we would encourage anyone interested to sign up to our enterprise and business growth newsletter to be the first to hear about the fund launching again in September.

The Enterprise and Business Growth team would welcome any guidance from working group members to increase engagement in the North Belfast area. Constituent referrals or enquiries can be sent to the Enterprise and Business Growth team via gosucceed@belfastcity.gov.uk

3.3 Test trading

The Enterprise and Business growth team also offer fully funded opportunities for those receiving support through our services to test their products or services at St George's Market.

This opportunity gives businesses starting out, or those who have been in business for less than two years, the opportunity to test trade their products at our thriving, award winning St George's market.

Taking part is free of charge, and businesses have the opportunity to test trade up to six times – a fantastic opportunity to gain real customer feedback, insights from other traders and hone their sales pitch.

The Enterprise and Business Growth team would welcome any guidance from working group members to increase engagement in the North Belfast area. Constituent referrals or enquiries can be sent to the Enterprise and Business Growth team via gosucceed@belfastcity.gov.uk

4.0 Financial & Resource Implications

There are no financial or resource implications for members to consider.

5.0 Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment

Equality impact assessments for all of the above services have been completed."

The Working Group agreed to:

- Note and endorse the progress to date on the delivery of the Enterprise Support Service (Go Succeed) in North Belfast and beyond, with the objective of driving more and better businesses;
- Promote opportunities for business support to constituents where relevant and appropriate; and
- Provide recommendations to Enterprise and Business Growth team on community and stakeholder engagement in the North Belfast area.

Physical Programmes Update

The Physical Programmes Senior Delivery Manager provided an overview of the undernoted report:

“1. Introduction

- The Council’s Physical Programme covers projects under a range of funding streams including the Capital Programme, the Leisure Transformation Programme, the Local Investment Fund (LIF), the Belfast Investment Fund (BIF), Social Outcomes Fund (SOF) and the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (NRF); in addition, the programme covers projects that the Council is delivering on behalf of other agencies. This report outlines the status of projects under the Physical Programme.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note the Physical Programme update for North Belfast including the recently completed project – Mercy Primary, Crumlin Road LIF project at Appendix 1; and
- Note the updated list of external capital funding opportunities.

3. Local Investment Fund

LIF is a £9m fixed programme of capital investment in non-council neighbourhood assets, over two tranches: LIF 1 (2012-2015) - £5m total funding pot, allocated across each AWG areas; and LIF 2 (2015 -2019) - £4m allocation with the North being allocated £1.127m under LIF1 and £800,000 under LIF2.

Each LIF project proposal is taken through a Due Diligence process prior to any funding award. The table below outlines funding to date for each tranche, at key stages of the delivery process: 43 projects in total have received In Principle support under LIF1 and LIF2, of which 38 have been completed; 2 are at delivery stage; 1 is at pre-construction stage, and 1 remains at due diligence/ initial stage.

LIF breakdown – North	LIF 1		LIF 2	
Stage/ Description	Projects	Value (£)	Projects	Value (£)
Number of Projects Completed	23 (92%)	£996,500	16 (89%)	£708,201

Number of Projects On-going Delivery	1 (4%)	£66,000	1 (6%)	£75,000
Number of Projects in Pre-construction				
Number of Projects in Initial Stage (Due Diligence)	1 (4%)	£65,000	1 (6%)	£15,000
Total Number of Approved Projects	25 *	£1,127,500	17 **	£798,201

****This includes additional funding for a LIF 2 project, Ballysillan Youth for Christ.***

***** This includes additional funding for two LIF 1 projects, Marrowbone Parochial Hall and Jennymount Church.***

The table below provides an overview of progress and actions around the remaining live projects. Members are asked to note the status of the current LIF projects and the ongoing actions.

LIF Ref	Project	LIF Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
NLIF2-05	Mercy Primary, Crumlin Road	£15,000	Complete	Project completed.	Continue engagement with school re post monitoring.
NLIF2-22	Sailortown, St. Joseph's Church Refurbishment	£75,000	On Ground	On ground. Construction works ongoing on the gallery.	Continue engagement with group and HED.
NLIF057	Ardoyne Holy Cross Boxing Club (UV – ABC Trust Hub)	£66,000	On Ground	On ground. The overall Urban Villages scheme will also incorporate this LIF scheme. Phase 2 of the project is underway and due to complete over the summer. The final phase, installation of sports hall is due to be completed by Autumn 2025.	Continue engagement with Group and with UV
NLIF014	Westland Community Centre - new building (Link to UV Project)	£65,000	Due Diligence stage	Due diligence ongoing including on part of site owned by NIFRS. Consultant team ready to be appointed once funding is confirmed.	Continue engagement with Group and TEO
NLIF2-23	Ardoyne Youth Club and Benview Community Centre	£15,000	Initial stage	Approved at SP&R Committee in December 2024. Officers have engaged with both Ardoyne Youth Club and Benview Community	Continue engagement with Groups.

				Centre to progress the proposal and agree scope of works.	
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4. Belfast Investment Fund

Members are reminded that BIF is a £28m investment fund for regeneration partnership projects, with a minimum £250k investment from Council BIF – North Belfast was allocated £5.5m. In North Belfast, 7 projects have received an In-Principle funding commitment under BIF, thereby fully allocating its £5.5m: and 2 projects are on the longer BIF list. Each of the ‘In Principle’ projects are taken through a 3-stage approval process, including a rigorous Due Diligence process before any Funding Agreement is approved and put in place.

Members are asked to note the status update of these projects provided below. The table provides a summary of BIF allocated projects i.e. project stage; project title; and funding allocated.

Summary of BIF allocated projects.

North	Stage 3 - Cavehill Tennis Club- £71k, Malgrove -£950k, Cultural Community Hub - £350k Stage 1 - Cliftonville Community Forum, Sunningdale Community Centre - no commitment
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BIF Ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
BIF15	Malgrove	£1,758,607	Stage 3 - Committed	Awaiting a Planning decision. Planning is awaiting statutory consultee responses.	Continue engagement with planners.
BIF43	Cultural Community Hub	£350,000	Stage 3 - Committed	Discussions with potential funder have progressed and should secure the additional budget required in order to begin works, subject to business case.	Continue engagement with the group and stakeholders.

5. Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund

The Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (NRF) is a capital fund with a current overall budget of £10,280,000 to help groups deliver capital projects that will make a real, long-term difference in their communities. The overall NRF allocation for North was £2,503,158. Five projects received an In Principle funding commitment and a contingency sum of £68,179 has also been retained. Each NRF project is taken through a 3-stage approval process, including a

rigorous Due Diligence process before any Funding Agreement is approved and put in place.

North Belfast – NRF overview

North	<p>Stage 3— Belfast Orange Hall, Ulster Supported Employment Ltd (USEL), Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum, Sailortown Regeneration Group, Ardoyne Youth Enterprises,</p> <p>Stage 1 (Reserve)— <i>Cumann Cultúrtha Mhic Reachtain, Indian Community Centre, North Belfast Working Men's Club, North City Business Centre, Quaker Service, Belfast Charitable Society, Sinclair Seamen's Presbyterian Church, Arts for All, Ligoniel Improvement Association</i></p>
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North Belfast – NRF projects at Stage 3- Delivery

Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
USEL - Green Growth & The Circular Economy	£518,191	Stage 3- Committed	Procurement stage. Procurement exercise carried out for contractor and tender returns being assessed. Discussed at Due Diligence on 15 May. Draft funding agreement is being prepared.	Continue engagement with the group.
Cliftonville Community Enterprise	£1,452,700	Stage 3- Committed	Development stage. Land boundary issue being addressed. DfC await an LPS valuation for both plots of land to enable them to proceed with a Business Case appraisal for the proposal.	Continue engagement with the group.
Ardoyne Youth Enterprises – Community Hub <i>(Link to UV Project)</i>	£154,696	Stage 3- Committed	Development stage. Updated business case approved by TEO and Letter of Offer to be updated. Outcomes from additional funding applications are expected in Summer. Outstanding legal issues are being progressed.	Continue engagement with the group.
Belfast Orange Hall Refurbishment	£154,696	Stage 3- Committed	Procurement stage. Tender significantly exceeds the budget. The procurement is being rerun with a	Continue engagement with the group.

			further reduction of the scope of works to include external improvements to the roof, walls and windows to optimise the NRF budget. The project remains subject to final due diligence.	
St Joseph's Restoration project	£154,696	Stage 3- Committed	Procurement stage. Design team preparing tender for contractor. Scope of works reduced to accommodate the current budget.	Continue engagement with the group.

6. Capital Programme

The Capital Programme is the rolling programme of enhancing existing Council assets or building / buying new ones. Members are reminded of the 3-stage approval process in place for every project on the council's Capital Programme, as agreed by SP&R Committee. The table below provides an update on current live projects in the North Belfast area.

Members are asked to note the updates on the Physical Programme.

North Belfast – Capital programme overview

Project	Status and update
Playground Improvement Programme 24/25	On ground. Stage 3 Committed. City-wide playground improvements. Works have been undertaken at three sites across the city including the Michelle Baird Memorial Playground. Works were delayed for a number of weeks due to issues around contractor resources. Handover is now expected by early June 2025.
Sporting Pitches Investment 24/25	On ground. Stage 3 Committed. Works being undertaken at various sites across the city including Mallusk Playing Fields. Final elements of work now being completed including installation of ballstop nets and GAA goal posts with handover expected by end May 2025. Shale pitch conversion to grass GAA is almost complete and turfing works will be completed when weather conditions are more favourable as a sustained period of rain is required. Two synthetic cricket wickets have been relocated to middle terrace and are now operational. Additional land drainage and hedge planting along site boundary with Park Mews is complete.
North Foreshore - Development Sites Infrastructure Works	On ground. Stage 3 Committed. Foul Pumping Station contractor appointed. NIE upgrade connections to fully service the site development have started (with completion anticipated at end of 2026).
Reservoir Safety Programme (links to PEACEPLUS)	Stage 3 Committed. Reservoir improvements at Waterworks and Alexandra Park. SEUPB PEACEPLUS funding of €13.5m to enhance shared space and connectivity. The technical design is currently in development.

Cathedral Gardens (including Belfast Blitz)	<i>Stage 3 Committed.</i> Procurement stage. Technical design stage work ongoing. Planning approval granted. Belfast Blitz memorial forms part of the overall scheme. First stage of contractor procurement is underway.
Alleygating Phase 5 – City wide	<i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> Works progressing. Progress made with the commencement of the installation for Phase 5a. Members agreed in February to proceed with the gating order for Phase 5b, with an estimated completion timeline following the enactment of four to six months.
LTP - Girdwood Indoor Sports Facility	<i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted.</i> Business case stage. DfC partnership project. Design team continues to develop designs to Planning Stage. Officers continue to respond to queries from DfC regarding the business case.
Relocation of Dunbar Link Cleansing Depot	<i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted.</i> Business case stage. RIBA Stage 2 Concept Design complete. The exterior layout and red line boundary is to be finalised ahead of a planning application being submitted.
Waste Plan – Waste Transfer Station Upgrade	<i>Stage 2- Uncommitted.</i> Business case stage. Link to Duncrue Masterplan and citywide kerbside scheme.
Electric Vehicle Charging Network	<i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted.</i> Business case stage. Land Asset Assessment underway to identify a long list of sites suitable in principle. Progressing.
Access to the Hills - Glencairn Park/ Ligoniel Park	<i>Stage 2- Uncommitted.</i> Business case stage. Part of the Belfast PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan to develop connections to the Hills at Ligoniel, Glencairn and Cavehill. The procurement for the design team is underway and anticipate that a design team will be appointed by early Summer 2025.
Access to the Hills – connections from Cavehill to Divis Mountain and Black Mtn	<i>Stage 2- Uncommitted.</i> Complementary scheme to developing further connections to the Hills at Ligoniel, Glencairn and Cavehill.
Historic Cemeteries	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Restoration programme for heritage cemeteries including Knock Cemetery, Clifton Street, Friar's Bush and Balmoral Cemetery. Scoping work underway. Strategic case prepared and request at May SPR to move to Stage 2.
Historic Tiled Street Signs	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Capital restoration programme for the historic Belfast tiled street signs across the city. Scoping of signs is continuing along with opportunities for external funding. Strategic case prepared and request at May SPR to move to Stage 2.
Loughside Playing Fields	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Creation of a modular changing and flexible space facility. Early stage design works underway.
Mobile Changing Places modular facility	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> This facility will be for use across the city. Specification developed.
Communications Boards in Playgrounds	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Inclusive communication boards in playgrounds. Initial capital funding secured via UKSPF recouped monies for first phase of installation at 29 playground sites. Strategic case prepared for overall rollout and request at May SPR to move to Stage 2.
Duncrue Masterplan	<i>Stage 1- Emerging.</i> Redevelopment of the whole Duncrue site which aims to improve the efficiency of the site.
Connectivity - Access to Hills Programme (city wide)	<i>Stage 1- Emerging.</i> Feasibility stage.
North Foreshore - Giant's Park	A complex development agreement is in place with Giant's Park Belfast Limited (GPBL). This agreement commits GPBL to deliver over 250 acres of phased development over a number of years in four distinct hubs: Adventure Hub,

	Welcome Hub, Pit Stop Hub, Distributions and Logistics Hub. The first planning application for the Adventure Hub was submitted in December 2024. Construction works are expected to commence on site in late 2025.
Belfast Bikes Expansion	A new provider/ operator has been appointed. Currently in transition phase. The new scheme will be launched in Autumn.

7. Externally funded programmes

The Council is the delivery partner for several government departments on key capital investment programmes, including Urban Villages (UV) from the Executive Office and PEACE under SEUPB. The following is an overview of projects within each programme relevant to North Belfast.

Urban Villages Initiative

The table below shows the status on UV projects in North Belfast – note the UV programme has a defined North Belfast geography (Ardoyne and Greater Ballysillan).

North Belfast – Urban Villages Initiative overview

Project	Status and update
ABC Trust Health & Leisure Hub (links to LIF programme)	On ground. Partnership project with DfC, DfI, Flax Trust, and UV. Phase 2 of the project is due to complete over the summer. The final phase, installation of sports hall is due to be completed by Autumn 2025.
Ballysillan Playing Fields	On ground. Partnership project with UV, DfC and DfI. Completion of tree clearance works. Awaiting review of construction environmental management plan by NIEA for discharge of planning conditions and commencement of works.
Ardoyne Youth Enterprises (AYE) Social Enterprise Project (links to NRF programme)	Business case stage. Updated business case approved by TEO and Letter of Offer to be updated. Additional funding applications have been submitted and outcomes are expected in Summer 2025. Outstanding legal issues are being progressed.
Sunningdale Community Centre (links to BIF programme)	Business case stage. Planning application withdrawn. UV remain committed to supporting the project. Currently working with the group and UV to identify an alternative site for development.
Westland Community Centre (links to LIF programme)	Business case stage. Due diligence ongoing including on part of site owned by NIFRS. Consultant team ready to be appointed upon receipt of Letter of Offer.

PEACEPLUS – Capital Projects

Members are asked to note updates on capital projects under the PEACEPLUS Programme.

North Belfast – Capital Projects overview

Project	Status and update
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Reconnected Belfast - Waterworks and Alexandra Park €13.5m SEUPB PEACEPLUS	Enhancements to shared space and connectivity within and between Waterworks and Alexandra Park. A total of 3 Design Information Sessions held with a further session to be arranged. Project Launch was held in April. Procurement of design team for next stage is underway.
Access to the Hills – Glencairn/ Ligoniel <i>Link to Capital Programme</i>	Part of the Belfast PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan. Plan to develop connections to the Hills at Ligoniel, Glencairn and Cavehill. The procurement for the design team is underway and anticipate that a design team will be appointed by early Summer 2025.

9. Capital funding opportunities

Members are asked to note the updated version of the list of external capital funding and finance opportunities attached at Appendix 2 which may be of assistance to groups and clubs.”

The Working Group agreed to:

- Note the Physical Programme update for North Belfast including the recently completed project – Mercy Primary, Crumlin Road LIF project; and
- Note the updated list of external capital funding opportunities.

At the request of Councillor Anglin, the Working Group agreed to undertake a site visit to the Floral Hall and extend an invitation to all Elected Members.

Update on EV Charging Point Network Project

The Climate Programme Manager outlined the following four steps of the Council’s draft Low Emission Vehicle Strategy:

- Step 1 – Land Assets Assessment (Council Sites);
- Step 2 – Commercial Agreements;
- Step 3 – Working with Staff and Partners; and
- Step 4 – Fleet Transition.

She explained that the Strategy aimed to assist the Council with procuring public charge points to enable residents, visitors and businesses to transition to electric vehicles in order to reduce emissions, she stated that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee had agreed at its meeting in August, 2024, that the first two steps of the strategy be progressed initially.

She outlined the transport hierarchy in reducing the carbon impact of transport and referred to the Belfast targets to achieve net zero emissions and to be climate resilient by 2050, that included the installation of at least 800 vehicle charging points for public use by 2027 in the Belfast Agenda and 4400 public electric vehicle charging points by 2050, in the Local Area Energy Plan.

She provided the Working Group with an update on the current numbers and types of public chargers in Belfast and on Council owned sites and outlined the actions required by the Council to increase public availability of Electric Vehicle Charging that included an understanding of the challenges and opportunities in operationalising the LEV Strategy, an assessment of the viability and interdependencies of Council sites for chargers, engagement

with key external stakeholders and to progress the actions required to implement step one and step two of the strategy.

The Climate Programme Manager explained that, 44 sites had been suggested as suitable in principle, as part of Phase 1 of the charging network roll out and that there was the potential for 132 to 170 connections across the 44 sites, five of the sites were located in north Belfast and most of the sites had the potential for at least six charge points with 12 spaces. Members were asked to note that sites, spaces, and overall progress on the EV network is dependent on further engagement with stakeholders including ChargePoint operators and NIE.

She stated that there were 30 potential sites to be reconsidered during Phase 2 which were currently not suitable and that 26 sites had been ruled out.

She concluded by providing the Working Group with an overview of the undernoted next steps:

- Exploration of operating models and recommendations;
- Engaging with NIE regarding wide ranging cost variables per site;
- Potential charge point operators;
- Preliminary market engagement exercise;
- Charge Point Operator engagement to assess site viability and revenue forecasts; and
- Equality and rural needs screening;

The Estates Surveyor displayed a site map for the Working Group and pointed out the locations of existing and proposed sites located on Council properties.

In response to a question from a Member with regard to the costs of the EV charge points, the Climate Programme Manager stated that if a charge point operator were to be appointed, depending on the operating model agreed by Council, it could absorb many of the upfront costs, and that following the marketing and engagement stage, a report would be brought to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee outlining the preferred operating model options.

Noted.

Chairperson

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West Belfast Area Working Group

Thursday, 29th May, 2025

HYBRID MEETING OF THE WEST BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

Members present: Councillor McCann (Chairperson),
Councillors Beattie, Black, Carson, Doherty,
M. Donnelly, R-M Donnelly, Duffy, Garrett,
McCoubrey, McCallin, McDowell, I. McLaughlin,
R. McLaughlin and Verner.

In attendance: Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Property and Projects;
Ms. M. McKay, Enterprise and Business Growth Manager;
Ms. A. Diver, Climate Programme Manager;
Mr. A. O' Neill, Assistant Estates Surveyor;
Ms. F. Dennison, Neighbourhood Services Integration
Manager; and
Mr. B. Flynn, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor Canavan.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 27th February were approved and adopted.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Presentations

It agreed that invitations be extended to representatives of Spórtlann na hÉireann and the Lenadoon Community Forum to present at a future meeting on projects which they are overseeing.

Physical Programme Update

The Working Group considered the following report:

"1. Introduction

The Council's Physical Programme covers projects under a range of funding streams including the Capital Programme, the Leisure Transformation Programme, the Local Investment Fund (LIF), the Belfast Investment Fund (BIF), Social Outcomes Fund (SOF) and the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (NRF); in addition, the programme covers projects that the Council is delivering on behalf

of other agencies. This report outlines the status of projects under the Physical Programme.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note the physical programme update for West Belfast including recently completed project – Sporting Pitches Improvements 24/25 - Falls Park GAA pitch at Appendix 1;
- Note the updated list of external capital funding opportunities attached at Appendix 2.

3. Belfast Investment Fund

Members are reminded that BIF is a £28m investment fund for regeneration partnership projects, with a minimum £250k investment. The West AWG had a total allocation of £9m comprising £5.5m from the original allocation, an additional £1.2m which was ring-fenced for projects in the Shankill area when this became part of the West AWG following the Council elections in 2015, and £2.5m which was ringfenced for projects in the Colin area following LGR. The table below provides a summary of BIF allocated projects.

Summary of BIF allocated projects

West	Stage 3—Davitt's GAC—£1m; Raidió Fáilte—£950k; St Comgall's- £3.5m; Colin Glen Forest Park—£2.5m; Greater Shankill Community Council - RBL project- £300k, Glencairn Community Project— £700k Stage 2— St Mary's CBS— no commitment Stage 1— An Sportslann; Suffolk Community Forum; Belfast Hills- Black Mountain Access—no commitment
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The table below shows an overview of the remaining BIF project –

BIF Ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
BIF09	Glencairn Community Project	£900,000 <i>BIF- £700,000; NRF- £200,000</i>	Committed; Due Diligence	The Design Team has been appointed. Revised concept design has been prepared and drawings will be updated for Planning application. Awaiting updated costs.	Continue engagement with the group.

4. Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund

The Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (NRF) is a capital fund with a current overall budget of £10,280,000 to help groups deliver capital projects that will make a real, long-term difference in their communities. The overall NRF allocation for West was £3,446,654

(West - £2,721,133 and Shankill - £725,521) and 6 projects received an In-Principle funding commitment. Each NRF project is taken through a 3-stage approval process, including a rigorous Due Diligence process before any Funding Agreement is approved and put in place.

West Belfast – NRF overview

West	<p>Stage 3— Michael Davitt's Community Heritage Centre- £684,058; Croí na Carraige - 'The Heart of the Rock' - Phase 1- £537,058; The Mountainview Hotel- £1,500,000; The ACT Initiative Community Hub & Visitors' Centre- £295,000; Glencairn Community Project (Hub)- £200,000, The Road- £210,759; <i>Shankill contingency- £19,762.</i></p> <p>Stage 1— <i>Improving the Environment at Patrick Sarsfield's GAC, Corrigan Park Redevelopment Project, WCC New Purpose-Built Childcare and Family Support Centre, Curam Leanaí na Fuisgeoige, Conway Mill - redeveloping for the future, Westcourt Uplift Project, Lamh Dhearg Renewable Energy & External Lighting Improvement scheme, St. Gall's Milltown Community Development, Colin Glen Eco Air-Cruizer, CNP Regeneration of Cloona House</i></p>
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West Belfast – NRF projects at Stage 3 - Delivery

Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
Michael Davitt's Community Heritage Centre	£1.1m NRF £684,058 Group - £463,490	Stage 3- Committed	On ground. Contractor appointed and works started onsite in April. Site progress meeting took place on Monday 19 May 2025.	Continue engagement with the group.
Croí na Carraige - 'The Heart of the Rock' - Phase 1	£787,058 NRF-£537,058 An Ciste- £250,000	Stage 3- Committed	Development stage. Design team is progressing work and cost estimates are now in place. Some match funding already in place. Fundraising activities are continuing along with engagement with other funders.	Continue engagement with the group.
The Mountainview Hotel	£1.5m	Stage 3- Committed	Development stage. Officer is in contact with the group to discuss next steps. Clarification on the site boundary is necessary to make any further progress with this project.	Continue engagement with the group.
The ACT Initiative Community Hub & Visitors' Centre	£295,000	Stage 3- Committed	On ground. Contractor appointed for heating element of contract and preparing to start on site. Exhibition works due to complete in early 2026.	Continue engagement with the group.
Glencairn Community Project	£900,000 NRF- £200,000; BIF- £700,000	Stage 3- Committed	Development stage. As above at BIF09. The Design Team has been appointed. Revised concept design has been prepared and drawings will be updated for Planning application. Awaiting updated costs.	Continue engagement with the group.

The Road	£210,759	Stage 3- Committed	Development stage. The group is continuing to work with a consultancy on funding opportunities. No further funding secured to date. Planning Permission has expired and group submitted a new application in March 2025.	Continue engagement with the group.
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5. Capital Programme

The Capital Programme is the rolling programme of enhancing existing Council assets or building/buying new ones. The table below provides an update on current live projects on the Council's Capital Programme in the West Belfast area. Members are asked to note status and update.

West Belfast – Capital programme overview

Project	Status and update
City Cemetery Visitor Centre – Heritage Fund/ DfC	Project complete. <i>Members will continue to receive reports on this project until the other external works are completed.</i> CNS is undertaking a re-procurement exercise for an operator for the Visitor Centre due to no replies to original advertisement. Victorian Fountain and landscaping works are progressing. Railings for central steps are due to be installed and completed by end of May which will enable security fencing to be removed.
Sporting Pitches Investment 24/25	<i>Stage 3 – Committed. Project completed.</i> Agreed at P&C Committee in June 2024. Works at four sites across the city including Falls Park. Spectator fencing and hard-standing installation is now complete.
Alleygating Phase 5 – City wide	<i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> Works progressing. Progress made with the commencement of the installation for Phase 5a. Members agreed in February to proceed with the gating order for Phase 5b, with an estimated completion timeline following the enactment of four to six months.
Electric Vehicle Charging Network	<i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted.</i> Land Asset Assessment underway to identify a long list of sites suitable in principle. Progressing.
Access to Hills - Black Mountain/ Upper Whiterock Pathway	<i>Stage 2- Uncommitted.</i> Design stage. Design team is continuing to develop the project. Ongoing engagement with DfI as key partner. Full Planning application has been lodged and is in process. Application to DAERA Challenge Fund has been unsuccessful. Project continues to be developed despite this outcome.
Colin Greenway	Meetings are continuing between the Council and key stakeholders DfI, DfC and NIHE on the Colin Active Travel Plan. Lagmore Avenue cycle scheme works has commenced and will be completed in late September 2025.
Access to the Hills - connections from Cavehill to Divis Mountain and Black Mountain	<i>Stage 2- Uncommitted.</i> This is being considered within the wider study as below.
Connectivity - Access to Hills Programme (city wide)	<i>Stage 1- Emerging.</i> Feasibility study presented to Members. Ongoing engagement with other stakeholders such as the National Trust and Belfast Hills Partnership.
Historic Cemeteries	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Restoration programme for heritage cemeteries including Knock Cemetery, Clifton Street, Friar's Bush, Balmoral

	Cemetery and Shankill Graveyard. Scoping work underway. Strategic case prepared and request at May SPR to move to Stage 2.
Historic Tiled Street Signs	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Capital restoration programme for the historic Belfast tiled street signs across the city. Scoping of signs is continuing along with opportunities for external funding. Strategic case prepared and request at May SPR to move to Stage 2.
Mobile Changing Places modular facility	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> This facility will be for use across the city. Specification developed.
Communications Boards in playgrounds	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Inclusive communication boards in playgrounds. Initial capital funding secured via UKSPF recouped monies for first phase of installation at 29 playground sites. Strategic case prepared for overall rollout and request at May SPR to move to Stage 2.
West Basketball courts	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> New facilities at Blacks Road and Páirc Nua Chollan – designs being prepared and engagement with key stakeholders.
Woodvale Park Sensory Garden	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> New sensory facility. Next step is to appoint the design team to take the scheme forward.
Belfast Bikes Expansion	A new provider/ operator has been appointed. Currently in transition phase. The new scheme will be launched in Autumn 25. DfI funding received on Belfast Bikes e-Bikes.
Lidl, Stewartstown Road Suffolk 3G Pitch and Lenadoon Park Pitch Improvements	This work is under S76 Developer Contributions for Open Space. <i>Suffolk pitch</i> - Planning application approved and awaiting decision notice. Will require additional funding. <i>Lenadoon Park</i> – Grass soccer pitch improvement works complete; includes spectator hard-standing, extension to height of boundary fence, including extended dugout areas; land drainage, new pedestrian access gate and path connections. MUGA improvements programmed for Summer 2025.

6. Externally funded programmes

The Council is the delivery partner for several government departments on key capital investment programmes, namely Urban Villages (UV) from the Executive Office, PEACEPLUS, DfI, DfC, DoJ as well as schemes with IFI. The following is an overview of projects within each programme relevant to West Belfast.

Urban Villages Initiative

The table below shows the status on UV projects in West Belfast – note the UV programme has a defined West Belfast geography (Colin area).

West Belfast – UV overview

Project	Status and update
Colin Community Health and Wellbeing Hub	Business case stage. TEO advise that the completion of the business case is scheduled for late 2025.

PEACEIV/ PEACEPLUS – Capital Projects

Members are asked to note updates on the capital projects that are related to the PEACE Programmes.

West Belfast – Capital Projects overview

Project	Status and update
Forth Meadow Community Greenway	Project completed. Signage being progressed.
Distillery Street Redevelopment Project	Part of the Belfast PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan. The project includes creation of a cross-community Peace and Reconciliation Park providing sustainable drainage and flood risk management as an integral part of urban renewal. The procurement for the design team is underway and a design team should be appointed by early Summer 2025. Project Steering Group established, first meeting held with regular programme of meetings going forward.

Other externally funded projects

Below is the status update on capital projects funded by other partners in West Belfast. *Other external funders – West Belfast projects overview*

Project	Status and update
Black Mountain Shared Space Project – Phase 2	<i>Via IFI, DoJ, DfC On Ground.</i> Contractor works progressing on site. Estimated completion in Summer 2025.

9. Capital funding opportunities

Members are asked to note the updated version of the list of external capital funding opportunities attached at Appendix 2 which may be of assistance to groups and clubs.”

In response to a Member’s question regarding the Glencairn Community Project, the Director reported that the design team had been appointed and that revised concept designs and drawings had been prepared in advance of the submission of a planning application. The Director added that engagement was ongoing with the group and that she would be willing to discuss the project further with the Member should he wish to do so.

After further discussion, the Working Group agreed to note the contents of the physical programme update for West Belfast, together with the associated appendices, and a list of external capital funding opportunities for information.

The Working Group agreed also to undertake a site visit to view a range a projects across West Belfast at a future date.

Electric Vehicle Charging Point Network Project - Update

(The Climate Programme Manager, along with the Assistant Estates Surveyor, attended in connection with this item.)

The Working Group was informed in the work undertaken to identify potential sites within the Council's estate where EV charging stations could potentially be installed. It was explained that 44 sites had been identified as suitable as part of Phase 1 of the charging network roll out and that there was the potential for 132 to 170 connections across the 44 sites. She stated that there were 30 potential sites to be reconsidered during Phase 2 which were currently not suitable and that 26 sites had been ruled out. She concluded by providing the Working Group with an overview of the next steps of the project, which are set out below:

- Exploration of operating models and recommendations;
- Engaging with NIE regarding wide ranging cost variables per site;
- Potential charge point operators;
- Preliminary market engagement exercise;
- Charge Point Operator engagement to assess site viability and revenue forecasts; and
- Equality and rural needs screening.

The Working Group thanked the officers for the update which had been provided.

Presentation from Enterprise and Business Growth

The Working Group considered the following report:

"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on the business support available to constituents and businesses in their areas including Go Succeed – the regional initiative to support business start-up and growth that is being led by Belfast City Council on behalf of the 11 councils.**

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- **Note and endorse the progress to date on the delivery of the Enterprise Support Service (Go Succeed) in West Belfast and beyond, with the objective of driving more and better businesses**
- **Promote opportunities for business support to constituents where relevant and appropriate**
- **Provide recommendations to Enterprise and Business Growth team on community and stakeholder engagement in the West Belfast area**

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Go Succeed (Enterprise Support Service)

The Go Succeed service has now been operational for around eighteen months and has reached thousands of potential entrepreneurs and businesses across Western Ireland.

By way of background, Belfast City Council led on a successful funding application to UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF). This provided £17 million of support for the period November 2023 to March 2025; £12 million programme delivery and £5 million for small grants. Following receipt of the funding agreement in September 2023, the service became operational in November 2023.

Belfast City Council, as lead for the service, has now secured additional funding via an application to UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) of £9.2 million for the 2025/2026 financial year, ensuring continuity of the service. The focus over the next year, alongside delivery of the service, will be working to secure a more permanent funding source.

The service aims to be the go-to source for expert business advice across the region. It represents the councils' collective response to our statutory responsibility and offers a set of connected enterprise support services where individuals, entrepreneurs or businesses can access a continuum of support to meet their needs, depending on their stage of development.

The key objectives of the model are to:

- Nurture a strong entrepreneurial culture, recognising enterprise as a viable career option and/or a route out of economic inactivity
- Enable a vibrant and productive business base across Western Ireland
- Increase the proportion of 'innovation-active' businesses in NI and embed this more firmly with enterprise/ start-up agenda
- Diversify the representation amongst those supported by the enterprise and innovation ecosystem
- Delivery a service designed with the user in mind
- Focus on adding value to existing support available in the ecosystem
- Providing regional coverage while ensuring that delivery reflects local differences/nuances.

Go Succeed provides a continuum of support from early-stage enterprise awareness through to starting, growing, and scaling a business. The concept was that the service would help people get the right support at the right time – and would also help maximise other available funding streams by helping businesses to navigate the complex support ecosystem.

The service has been established to deliver across three core areas – Start, Grow and Scale – with tailored support for clients aligned with their growth ambitions.

- Start: this element of the service aims to identify individuals with entrepreneurial intentions as well as reaching those

individuals who do not have an intention to start a business but could be encouraged to do so. There is specific, targeted support for a range of underrepresented groups. The menu of support available includes masterclasses, peer support networks and 1-1 mentoring

- **Grow**: this element of the service provides support for existing businesses. 1-1 mentoring is allocated based on the business' potential to grow and innovate. Masterclass and peer support network activity are also provided to support existing businesses to make key decisions on issues such as entering new markets or accessing finance for growth
- **Scale**: this part of the service is geared to supporting start-ups that have the potential to go on and generate at least £1m in revenue after 3 years. Support is delivered through 1-1 mentoring which aims to enable access to finance or further support through Invest NI, Catalyst or others.

In addition to the tiered menu of support, small grants of up to £3,000 (up to 50% of capital costs) are available to entrepreneurs or businesses accessing support through the service who demonstrate growth potential.

The delivery is underpinned by investments such as a wide-reaching marketing and communications campaign; a call handling service to deal with phone enquiries as well as an online portal to deal with online requests for support and a regional CRM system to enable tracking of client engagement across the service.

Belfast Performance Update

Since the service launched in November 2023, we have achieved the following by way of Belfast performance:

- 4,059 individuals 'reached' through a range of community outreach activities. This has included:
 - Sector specific events and self-employment academies for those in the hair and beauty industry including delivery of aspirational workshops and hands-on mentoring support for over 80 newly qualified individuals.
 - Delivery of a female-focused 'inspiring enterprise' event for a group of 100 female entrepreneurs providing practical support to starting or growing their enterprise.
 - Working with apprenticeship providers across Belfast to deliver aspirational workshops to 100s of 16–18-year-olds encouraging entrepreneurship as a very real and achievable pathway for consideration.
 - Facilitation of the '22 under 22' initiative, designed to unearth, recognise and fast track 22 exceptional potential entrepreneurs in the City.

- Increasing awareness of enterprise among young people at the Young Enterprise Big Market event in St George's Market in December 2025.
- 1528 Belfast entrepreneurs supported through start up activity (1-1 mentoring, masterclasses, peer support networks) with 383 (25%) of these entrepreneurs being from the West Belfast area
- 888 Belfast businesses supported through growth activity (1-1 mentoring, masterclasses, peer support networks) with 185 (21%) of these businesses being based in the West Belfast area.

315 Belfast businesses have accessed Go Succeed Grants since the launch in February 2024, drawing down over £1 million. These grants have enabled businesses to purchase capital and/or revenue items which will support their future growth plans.

The Enterprise and Business Growth team would welcome any guidance from working group members to increase engagement in the West Belfast area. Constituent referrals or enquiries can be sent to the Enterprise and Business Growth team via gosucceed@belfastcity.gov.uk

3.2 **Go Social (Social Economy Support)**

Developing the social economy sector has been a priority of the NI Executive for some time and Belfast City Council is aware of the important and unique contribution which the sector can, and does, make to the local economy. In the 2024/25 year the demand for Belfast City Council's 'Go Social' programme, aimed at encouraging more start-ups within the local Social Economy, has increased with over 60 individuals starting their social enterprise/cooperative.

Via our dedicated 'Go Social' service we offer enhanced support to those thinking of starting up a new business as a social enterprise or co-operative and we encourage existing SE businesses to join our social economy register to help us on our journey to grow the sector. Go Social support is open to individuals, groups and existing organisations seeking to set up, or transition to, a social enterprise or cooperative model.

We recognise setting up a social enterprise or cooperative can be difficult due to navigating complex legal structures and governance along with tackling a social cause or issue. Our Go Social support helps clients via specialist 1-1 mentoring support, access to networking opportunities and best practice visits as well as peer to peer support.

As part of our investment in the sector, Belfast City Council also deliver the Social Economy Incentive Fund which provides grants to new or developing social economy businesses in early growth

stages. Each year we launch the fund in September with grants provided for up to £10,000, applications are assessed by a panel with shortlisted applicants invited to pitch. The fund is available to Belfast-based social enterprises and co-operatives, we would encourage anyone interested to sign up to our enterprise and business growth newsletter to be the first to hear about the fund launching again in September.

The Enterprise and Business Growth team would welcome any guidance from working group members to increase engagement in the West Belfast area. Constituent referrals or enquiries can be sent to the Enterprise and Business Growth team via gosucceed@belfastcity.gov.uk

3.3 Test trading

The Enterprise and Business growth team also offer fully funded opportunities for those receiving support through our services to test their products or services at St George's Market.

This opportunity gives businesses starting out, or those who have been in business for less than two years, the opportunity to test trade their products at our thriving, award winning St George's market. Taking part is free of charge, and businesses have the opportunity to test trade up to six times – a fantastic opportunity to gain real customer feedback, insights from other traders and hone their sales pitch.

The Enterprise and Business Growth team would welcome any guidance from working group members to increase engagement in the West Belfast area. Constituent referrals or enquiries can be sent to the Enterprise and Business Growth team via gosucceed@belfastcity.gov.uk

4.0 Financial and Resource Implications

There are no financial or resource implications for members to consider.

5.0 Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment

Equality impact assessments for all of the above services have been completed."

After discussion, the Working Group adopted the recommendations within the report.

Chairperson

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East Belfast Area Working Group

Thursday, 5th June, 2025

MEETING OF THE EAST BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

**HELD IN THE CONOR ROOM AND
REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

Members present: Alderman Lawlor (Chairperson);
Aldermen Copeland and Rodgers;
The High Sheriff, Councillor McAteer;
Councillors Bower, R. Brooks, de Faoite,
P. Donnelly, Ferguson, Flynn, Hanvey,
Long, Maghie and McCormick.

In attendance: Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Property and Projects;
Ms. M. McKay, Enterprise and Business Growth Manager;
Ms. A. Diver, Climate Programme Manager;
Mr. A. O'Neill, Assistant Estates Surveyor;
Mr. S. McBride, City Protection Manager; and
Mr. C. Mealey, Committee Services Officer.

Election of Chairperson

The Area Working Group noted that it was required to elect a Chairperson for the coming year.

Moved by Councillor R. Brooks,
Seconded by Councillor Ferguson and

Resolved – that Alderman Lawlor be elected to serve as Chairperson of the East Belfast Area Working Group until the date of the Annual Meeting of the Council in 2026.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported on behalf of Councillors Abernethy, S. Douglas and Smyth.

Minutes

The Working Group agreed that the minutes of the meeting of 6th March were an accurate record of proceedings.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

East Belfast Area Working Group
Thursday, 5th June, 2025

Presentation

EastSide Early Learning Community

The Chairperson welcomed Ms. M. Vielman, Save the Children and Ms. G. Hamilton, EastSide Learning to the meeting.

Ms. Vielman and Ms. Hamilton presented the Working Group with an overview of the work and activity of the EastSide Early Learning Community (ELC) including:

- **EastSide ELC** – a collaboration of partners working in a systems change approach to improve early learning outcomes for children in East Belfast;
- **Partners** – Government departments, schools and nurseries, statutory services, community organisations, and children and families;
- **ELC toolkit** - created by the Dartington Service Design Lab and associates, Save the Children and its partners to enable ELC partnerships to improve early learning outcomes for children growing up in poverty across their area, and to support partnerships to develop and implement a strategy. The toolkit is underpinned by evidence and provides guidance and resources to inform an effective approach to improving children's early learning outcomes;
- **EastSide ELC Framework** – two high-level outcomes identified by partners based on the evidence, improved speech language and communication and improved social and emotional development; and
- **ELC Project Planning Group** – focused on local partners working directly with children and their families in East Belfast, promoting opportunities for relationship building and collaboration, test-and-learn initiatives and sharing with wider system, development of tools to support cohesive approach, securing funding to develop work, evaluation and strengthening the maturity of Early Years system in East Belfast.

The representatives concluded the presentation by providing the Working Group with an overview of the EastSide ELC's activities over recent years and its alignment with the Belfast Agenda.

During discussion, the representatives answered a range of questions from the Members in relation to referral pathways for children experiencing poverty, engagement with educational bodies, funding, summer activities and support for parents.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their presentation, and they retired from the meeting.

East Belfast Area Working Group
Thursday, 5th June, 2025

After discussion, the Working Group noted the information which had been provided.

Physical Programme Update

The Working Group considered the undernoted report:

“1. Introduction

The Council’s Physical Programme covers projects under a range of funding streams including the Capital Programme, the Leisure Transformation Programme, the Local Investment Fund (LIF), the Belfast Investment Fund (BIF), Social Outcomes Fund (SOF) and the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (NRF); in addition, the programme covers projects that the Council is delivering on behalf of other agencies. This report outlines the status of projects under the Physical Programme.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- **Note the physical programme update for East Belfast including recently completed project at Appendix 1 - Sporting Pitches Investment 24/25- Henry Jones Playing Fields GAA Pitch and Playground Improvement Programme 24/25 - Grampian Avenue playground and Hosford Community Homes Inclusion Hub (UV);**
- **Consider request for site visit on the Strand Arts Centre project and to agree to invite the DfC Minister to visit; and**
- **Note the updated list of external capital funding opportunities attached at Appendix 2.**

3. Local Investment Fund

LIF is a £9m fixed programme of capital investment in non-council neighbourhood assets, over two tranches: LIF 1 (2012-2015) - £5m total funding pot, allocated across each AWG areas; and LIF 2 (2015 -2019) - £4m allocation with the East being allocated £1.127m under LIF1 and £1.2m under LIF2.

Each LIF project proposal is taken through a Due Diligence process prior to any funding award. The table below outlines funding spend to date for each tranche, at key stages of the delivery process: 22 projects received In Principle support under LIF1 and LIF2, of which 19 have been completed and 1

East Belfast Area Working Group
Thursday, 5th June, 2025

project is at delivery stage and 1 project is at due diligence stage.

LIF breakdown – East	LIF 1		LIF 2	
Stage/ Description	Projects	Amount/ Value (£)	Projects	Amount/ Value (£)
Number of Projects Completed	8 (80%)	£931,902	12 (100%)	£1,161,589
Number of Projects in Delivery	1(10%)	£30,000		
Number of Projects in Pre-construction				
Number of Projects at Initial Stage (Due Diligence)	1 (10%)	£70,000		
Total Number of Approved Projects	10	£1,031,902	12	£1,161,589

The table below provides an overview of progress and actions around the remaining live projects.

Ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action / Recommendation
ELIF31	Bloomfield FC, Clonduff FC, East Belfast FC and Dundela FC, Tullycarnet, Cregagh Wanderers, Nettlefield Multi-Sports and Bredagh GAC – storage facilities	£65,000 (£30k plus £35k reallocation)	On Ground <i>Phase 1- complete</i> <i>Phase 2- ongoing</i>	Phase 1 – Complete - Bloomfield FC, East Belfast FC, Tullycarnet FC and Cregagh Wanderers projects completed. Phase 2 - Bredagh GAC - completed. Clonduff FC – awaiting to sign the funding agreement to enable delivery of the container. Nettlefield Multi-Sports – awaiting information, to be discuss/ sign-off at DD on 26 June. Dundela FC –funding agreement to be finalised. Club preferred that container will be delivered after the NRF pitch work is complete.	Continue engagement with the groups.
ELIF29	Cycling Ireland	£70,000	Due Diligence	Due Diligence stage ongoing. Proposed licence arrangements have been discussed (subject to group confirming proposed usage requirements). Group is currently reviewing the suitability of the site and Council awaits an update from the group on this matter.	Continue engagement with the group and key stakeholders.

4. Belfast Investment Fund

Members are reminded BIF is a £28m investment fund for regeneration partnership projects, with a minimum £250,000 investment from Council. In East Belfast, 9 projects have

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received an In-Principle funding commitment under BIF. There are 5 projects on the longer BIF list. Each of the In-Principle projects are taken through a 3-stage approval process, including a rigorous Due Diligence process before any Funding Agreement is approved and put in place. The table below provides a summary of BIF allocated projects i.e. project stage; project title; and the funding allocated.

Summary of BIF allocated projects:

East	Stage 3—Willowfield—£560k; H&W Welders—£2.37m; Strand—£1.5m; Bloomfield—£655k Stage 2—Lagan Village Youth & Community—no commitment Stage 1—East Belfast Mission; Belmont Bowling Club; Bloomfield Presbyterian Church; St. John's Orangefield, Church of Ireland, Tullycarnet Community Support Services—no commitment / on long list
Outer East	Stage 3 —TAGIT- £434k; Hanwood—£396k; Lisnasharragh Community Schools—£398k; Braniel—£390k; Castlereagh Presbyterian Church—£382k

The table below provides an overview of the remaining projects. Members are asked to note the actions and recommendations.

Ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
BIF12	Strand Arts Centre	£6,782,069 LUF- £4,094,000 BIF- £1,550,000 HF- £255,000 (Development Grant), £768,069 (Delivery Grant) Several Trusts- £115,000	On Ground	On Ground. Works began on site in early January 2025 and are progressing well, with completion due 2nd quarter 2026. Discussion ongoing with DfC regarding potential additional funding. Group requested/ offered on possible site visit to the Strand Arts Centre.	Continue engagement with the group and funders. AWG is asked to consider request for site visit on the project and to agree to invite the DfC Minister to the project.
BIF13	Bloomfield Community Association	£715,009 BIF - £655,000 LIF - £60,009	Stage 3 - Committed – In Principle	The group is continuing to explore additional funding opportunities to meet the shortfall. An updated application to DfC has been prepared on the basis of updated costs. DfC Minister has visited the site on 15 May 2025. DfC funding commitment announced on 2 June 2025.	Continue engagement with the group.

Outer East BIF Projects

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Ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action/Recommendation
BIF38	Castlereagh Presbyterian Church	£382,000	Stage 3 - Committed – In Principle	On Ground. Works on site and progressing well, with completion due end July 2025.	Continued engagement with the group.

5. Social Outcomes Fund

SOF is £4m ringfenced capital investment programme with a focus on local community tourism projects. There is one project under SOF for East Belfast - Eastside Visitor Centre – with an In-Principle funding commitment. Similar to BIF, all projects are subject to Due Diligence process prior to any funding award.

Project	SOF Award	Status	Action/Recommendation
EastSide Hotel & Visitor Centre <i>(links to NRF project)</i>	£2,050,000 <i>Comprising:</i> SOF- £700,000 NRF- £950,000 Group- £400k	An agreed combined project for the construction of a new hotel and extension of the current Eastside Visitors Centre. Design Team appointed and pre start meeting held on 15th May. Progressing with detailed design.	Continued engagement with the group.

6. Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund

The Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (NRF) is a capital fund with a current overall budget of £10,280,000 to help groups deliver capital projects that will make a real, long-term difference in their communities. The overall NRF allocation for East was £2,351,551 and 4 projects received an In-Principle funding commitment. Each NRF project is taken through a 3-stage approval process, including a rigorous Due Diligence process before any Funding Agreement is approved and put in place. Projects remaining at Stage 2 continue to have the support of a Client Manager for their proposals.

East Belfast – NRF overview

East	Stage 3 - Eastside Container Hotel, Portview Exchange, Development of sporting hub at Wilgar Park, Hosford Community Homes: 335 Newtownards Road Stage 2 - Impact Belfast, Nevin Spence Centre Visitor Experience
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East Belfast – NRF projects at Stage 3 - Delivery

Project name	Funding	Stage	Status	Action/Recommendation
EastSide Hotel & Visitor Centre	£2,050,000 <i>Comprising:</i> SOF- £700k	Stage 3- Committed	An agreed combined project for the construction of a new hotel and extension of the current	Continued engagement with the group.

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(links to SOF project)	NRF- £950k Group- £400k		Eastside Visitors Centre. Design Team appointed and pre start meeting held on 15th May. Progressing with detailed design.	
Portview Exchange	£600,000	Stage 3- Committed	Link to UV project. Awaiting decision on the business case from The Executive Office.	Continue engagement with the group.
Development of sporting hub at Wilgar Park	£500,000	Stage 3- Committed	New planning application in process. The group submitted a funding application in March to secure the remaining budget required. Awaiting response until mid-summer.	Continue engagement with the group and integrated design team.
Hosford Community Homes: 335 Newtownards Road	£300,000	Stage 3- Committed	Design team procurement planned for September 2025.	Continue engagement with the group.

7. Capital Programme

The Capital Programme is the rolling programme of enhancing existing Council assets or building / buying new assets. Members are reminded of the 3-stage approval process in place for every project on council's Capital Programme, as agreed by SP&R Committee. The table below provides an update on current live projects in East Belfast. Members are asked to note the status and update.

East Belfast – Capital programme overview

Project	Status and update
New Crematorium	<i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> Technical Design is complete. Procurement exercise for the main contractor has been completed. A review of the business case is being undertaken. A paper will be brought SP&R Committee outlining the current status and with key issues for Members consideration.
Sporting Pitches Investment 24/25	<i>Stage 3 Committed. Project completed.</i> Agreed at P&C Committee in June 2024. Works at various sites across the city including Henry Jones Playing Fields GAA Pitch.
Playground Improvement Programme 2024/25	<i>Stage 3 - Committed. Project completed.</i> The Programme for 2024/25 included improvement works at Grampian Avenue playground. The refurbished playground was opened on 3rd April 2025.
Alleygating Phase 5 – City wide	<i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> Works progressing. Progress made with the commencement of the installation for Phase 5a. Members agreed in February to proceed with the gating order for Phase 5b, with an estimated completion timeline following the enactment of four to six months.
Cremated Remains Burial Plots	<i>Stage 2- Uncommitted.</i> Feasibility study has been completed. An Outline Business Case is being prepared.

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Sydenham Greenway	<i>Stage 2- Uncommitted.</i> Business case to be worked up with DfI who are at design development stage for the greenway. Ongoing discussion with DfI regarding a partnership approach. DfI plan to deliver Phase 1A (Victoria Park to Inverary Community Centre) in current financial year. DfI are developing design options for the entrance to Victoria Park and asking to present these options to the next AWG. Suggestion for Council to deliver the 'feeder path' through Tommy Patton Millenium Park with DfI funding.
Electric Vehicle Charging Network	<i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted.</i> Land Asset Assessment underway to identify a long list of sites suitable in principle. Progressing. Presentation at AWG.
Historic Cemeteries	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Restoration programme for heritage cemeteries including Knock Cemetery, Clifton Street, Friar's Bush, Balmoral Cemetery and Shankill Graveyard. Scoping work underway. Strategic case prepared and request at May SPR to move to Stage 2.
Historic Tiled Street Signs	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Capital restoration programme for the historic Belfast tiled street signs across the city. Scoping of signs is continuing along with opportunities for external funding. Strategic case prepared and request at May SPR to move to Stage 2.
Mobile Changing Places modular facility	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> This facility will be for use across the city. Specification developed and project now moving to procurement.
Communications Boards	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Inclusive communication boards in playgrounds. Initial capital funding secured via UKSPF recouped monies for first phase of installation at 29 playground sites. Strategic case prepared for overall rollout and request at May SPR to move to Stage 2.
Victoria Park – Basketball court upgrade	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Upgrade to existing court. Meetings held with stakeholders and Elected Representatives to feed into design. Design work ongoing.
Shared Youth and Community Facility Inner East	<i>Stage 1- Emerging.</i> Link to Ballymacarrett Area Masterplan. Education Authority (EA) is continuing to develop a business case for capital funding for youth provision at the council owned Ballymacarrett site. Officers are continuing to liaise with EA on the way forward.
Ballymacarrett Area Masterplan	<i>Stage 1- Emerging.</i> Link to the Shared Youth and Community Facility Inner East project.
Belfast Bikes Expansion	A new provider/ operator has been appointed. Currently in transition phase. The new scheme will be launched in Autumn.
Parklands, Knocknagoney Dale - Knocknagoney Park Improvements	This work is under S76 Developer Contributions for Open Space. Tree planting and installation of additional park seating is programmed for summer 2025.
Lands at Castlehill Manor - Belmont Park Improvements	This work is under S76 Developer Contributions for Open Space. Additional sensory play equipment to be installed at Belmont Park playground in Autumn 2025.

8. Externally Funded Programmes

The Council is the delivery partner for a number of government departments on significant capital investment

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programmes, namely the Urban Villages Initiative (UV) funded by the Executive Office, and number of schemes with DfC. The following is an overview of projects within each programme relevant to East Belfast.

Urban Villages Initiative

Project	Status and update
Hosford Community Homes Inclusion Hub	Project completed. Official launch completed 14 May 2025.
Titanic People Exhibition	<i>Project underway.</i> The project is expected to complete in late Summer 2025 (September), launch expected in Autumn 2025.
Portview Exchange <i>Link to NRF 'Portview Exchange'</i>	<i>Business case stage.</i> Awaiting decision on the business case from The Executive Office.

PEACEPLUS – Capital Project

Members are asked to note updates on the capital project under the PEACEPLUS Programme.

East Belfast – PEACEPLUS LAP Capital Project overview

Project	Status and update
Sanctuary Theatre	Part of the Belfast PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan. Refurbishment of the Sanctuary Theatre at Castlereagh Street. The procurement for the design team is underway and anticipate that a design team will be appointed by early Summer 2025.

9. Capital Funding Opportunities

Members are asked to note the updated version of the list of external capital funding opportunities attached at Appendix 2 which may be of assistance to groups and clubs.”

The Director of Property and Projects highlighted the following recently completed projects:

- Henry Jones Playing Fields GAA Pitch (Sporting Pitches Investment 2024/25);
- Grampian Avenue Playground (Playground Improvement Programme 2024/25); and
- Hosford Community Homes and Inclusion Hub.

She provided the Working Group with further detail in relation to the remaining live projects under the Local Investment Fund and the Belfast Investment Fund and highlighted a recent announcement by the Minister for Communities that the Department

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for Communities had committed to provide funding in relation to the Bloomfield Community Association redevelopment project.

In relation to the Strand Arts Centre, the Director advised that officers continue to engage with the Department for Communities in respect of potential funding towards the project and suggested that the Working Group undertake a site visit to the Strand Arts Centre, and to extend an invitation to the Minister for Communities.

The Director of Property and Projects further suggested that it would be beneficial to Members for the Working Group to undertake site visits to some of the other completed and ongoing projects and to consider the potential to hold a future meeting at an appropriate site within East Belfast.

She drew Members attention to the External Funding and Social Investment Opportunities for Capital Projects as outlined in Appendix 2 of the report and encouraged Members to share the information provided with relevant groups.

In response to a Member's question on the Bloomfield Community Association project, the Director advised that the funding recently announced by the Department for Communities would be additional funding.

The Working Group:

- i. noted the Physical Programme update for East Belfast;
- ii. noted the updated list of external capital funding opportunities, as outlined in Appendix 2 of the report;
- iii. agreed to undertake a site visit to the Strand Arts Centre and to extend an invitation to the Minister for Communities; and
- iv. agreed that officers would explore the potential to hold a future meeting of the Working Group at an appropriate site within East Belfast.

Enterprise and Business Growth Support Update

The Working Group considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

The purpose of this report is to update members on the business support available to constituents and businesses in their areas including Go Succeed – the regional initiative to support business start-up and growth that is being led by Belfast City Council on behalf of the 11 councils.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- **Note and endorse the progress to date on the delivery of the Enterprise Support Service (Go Succeed) in East Belfast and beyond, with the objective of driving more and better businesses**
- **Promote opportunities for business support to constituents where relevant and appropriate**
- **Provide recommendations to Enterprise and Business Growth team on community and stakeholder engagement in the East Belfast area**

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Go Succeed (Enterprise Support Service)

The Go Succeed service has now been operational for around eighteen months and has reached thousands of potential entrepreneurs and businesses across Eastern Ireland.

By way of background, Belfast City Council led on a successful funding application to UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF). This provided £17 million of support for the period November 2023 to March 2025; £12 million programme delivery and £5 million for small grants. Following receipt of the funding agreement in September 2023, the service became operational in November 2023.

Belfast City Council, as lead for the service, has now secured additional funding via an application to UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) of £9.2 million for the 2025/2026 financial year, ensuring continuity of the service. The focus over the next year, alongside delivery of the service, will be working to secure a more permanent funding source.

The service aims to be the go-to source for expert business advice across the region. It represents the councils' collective response to our statutory responsibility and offers a set of connected enterprise support services where individuals, entrepreneurs or businesses can access a continuum of support to meet their needs, depending on their stage of development.

The key objectives of the model are to:

- **Nurture a strong entrepreneurial culture, recognising enterprise as a viable career option and/or a route out of economic inactivity**
- **Enable a vibrant and productive business base across Eastern Ireland**

- Increase the proportion of ‘innovation-active’ businesses in NI and embed this more firmly with enterprise/ start-up agenda
- Diversify the representation amongst those supported by the enterprise and innovation ecosystem
- Delivery a service designed with the user in mind
- Focus on adding value to existing support available in the ecosystem
- Providing regional coverage while ensuring that delivery reflects local differences/nuances.

Go Succeed provides a continuum of support from early-stage enterprise awareness through to starting, growing, and scaling a business. The concept was that the service would help people get the right support at the right time – and would also help maximise other available funding streams by helping businesses to navigate the complex support ecosystem.

The service has been established to deliver across three core areas – Start, Grow and Scale – with tailored support for clients aligned with their growth ambitions.

- **Start:** this element of the service aims to identify individuals with entrepreneurial intentions as well as reaching those individuals who do not have an intention to start a business but could be encouraged to do so. There is specific, targeted support for a range of underrepresented groups. The menu of support available includes masterclasses, peer support networks and 1-1 mentoring
- **Grow:** this element of the service provides support for existing businesses. 1-1 mentoring is allocated based on the business’ potential to grow and innovate. Masterclass and peer support network activity are also provided to support existing businesses to make key decisions on issues such as entering new markets or accessing finance for growth
- **Scale:** this part of the service is geared to supporting start-ups that have the potential to go on and generate at least £1m in revenue after 3 years. Support is delivered through 1-1 mentoring which aims to enable access to finance or further support through Invest NI, Catalyst or others.

In addition to the tiered menu of support, small grants of up to £3,000 (up to 50% of capital costs) are available to entrepreneurs or businesses accessing support through the service who demonstrate growth potential.

The delivery is underpinned by investments such as a wide-reaching marketing and communications campaign; a call handling service to deal with phone enquiries as well as an online portal to deal with online requests for support and a regional CRM system to enable tracking of client engagement across the service.

Belfast Performance Update

Since the service launched in November 2023, we have achieved the following by way of Belfast performance:

- **4,059 individuals 'reached' through a range of community outreach activities. This has included:**
 - **Sector specific events and self-employment academies for those in the hair and beauty industry including delivery of aspirational workshops and hands-on mentoring support for over 80 newly qualified individuals.**
 - **Delivery of a female-focused 'inspiring enterprise' event for a group of 100 female entrepreneurs providing practical support to starting or growing their enterprise.**
 - **Working with apprenticeship providers across Belfast to deliver aspirational workshops to 100s of 16–18-year-olds encouraging entrepreneurship as a very real and achievable pathway for consideration.**
 - **Facilitation of the '22 under 22' initiative, designed to unearth, recognise and fast track 22 exceptional potential entrepreneurs in the City.**
 - **Increasing awareness of enterprise among young people at the Young Enterprise Big Market event in St George's Market in December 2025.**
- **1528 Belfast entrepreneurs supported through start up activity (1-1 mentoring, masterclasses, peer support networks) with 419 (27%) of these entrepreneurs being from the East Belfast area**
- **888 Belfast businesses supported through growth activity (1-1 mentoring, masterclasses, peer support networks) with 306 (34%) of these businesses being based in the East Belfast area.**

315 Belfast businesses have accessed Go Succeed Grants since the launch in February 2024, drawing down over £1 million. These grants have enabled businesses to purchase capital and/or revenue items which will support their future growth plans.

The Enterprise and Business Growth team would welcome any guidance from working group members to increase engagement in the East Belfast area. Constituent referrals or enquiries can be sent to the Enterprise and Business Growth team via gosucceed@belfastcity.gov.uk

3.2 Go Social (Social Economy Support)

Developing the social economy sector has been a priority of the NI Executive for some time and Belfast City Council is aware of the important and unique contribution which the sector can, and does, make to the local economy. In the 2024/25 year the demand for Belfast City Council's 'Go Social' programme, aimed at encouraging more start-ups within the local Social Economy, has increased with over 60 individuals starting their social enterprise/cooperative.

Via our dedicated 'Go Social' service we offer enhanced support to those thinking of starting up a new business as a social enterprise or co-operative and we encourage existing SE businesses to join our social economy register to help us on our journey to grow the sector. Go Social support is open to individuals, groups and existing organisations seeking to set up, or transition to, a social enterprise or cooperative model.

We recognise setting up a social enterprise or cooperative can be difficult due to navigating complex legal structures and governance along with tackling a social cause or issue. Our Go Social support helps clients via specialist 1-1 mentoring support, access to networking opportunities and best practice visits as well as peer to peer support.

As part of our investment in the sector, Belfast City Council also deliver the Social Economy Incentive Fund which provides grants to new or developing social economy businesses in early growth stages. Each year we launch the fund in September with grants provided for up to £10,000, applications are assessed by a panel with shortlisted applicants invited to pitch. The fund is available to Belfast-based social enterprises and co-operatives, we would encourage anyone interested to sign up to our enterprise and business growth newsletter to be the first to hear about the fund launching again in September.

The Enterprise and Business Growth team would welcome any guidance from working group members to increase engagement in the East Belfast area. Constituent referrals or

enquiries can be sent to the Enterprise and Business Growth team via gosucceed@belfastcity.gov.uk

3.3 Test trading

The Enterprise and Business growth team also offer fully funded opportunities for those receiving support through our services to test their products or services at St George's Market.

This opportunity gives businesses starting out, or those who have been in business for less than two years, the opportunity to test trade their products at our thriving, award winning St George's market.

Taking part is free of charge, and businesses have the opportunity to test trade up to six times – a fantastic opportunity to gain real customer feedback, insights from other traders and hone their sales pitch.

The Enterprise and Business Growth team would welcome any guidance from working group members to increase engagement in the East Belfast area. Constituent referrals or enquiries can be sent to the Enterprise and Business Growth team via gosucceed@belfastcity.gov.uk

4.0 Financial and Resource Implications

There are no financial or resource implications for members to consider.

5.0 Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment

Equality impact assessments for all of the above services have been completed."

The Working Group:

- i. noted and endorsed the progress to date on the delivery of the Enterprise Support Service (Go Succeed) in East Belfast and beyond with the objective of driving more and better businesses;
- ii. agreed that Members would promote opportunities for business support to constituents where relevant and appropriate; and
- iii. agreed that Members would engage further with the Enterprise and Business Growth team in relation to increasing community and stakeholder engagement in East Belfast.

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EV Charging Point Network Project Update

The Climate Programme Manager, along with the Assistant Estates Surveyor, presented the Working Group with an overview of the work which had been undertaken to date in relation to potential sites within the Council's estate where Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations could be installed.

The Climate Programme Manager reminded the Working Group that, at its meeting in August, 2024, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreed that officers progress with phase 1 (Land Assets Assessment) and phase 2 (Commercial Agreements) of the draft Low Emission Vehicle (LEV) Strategy, with the aim of assisting the Council in procuring public charge points to enable residents, visitors, and businesses to transition to electric vehicles.

She provided the Working Group with an update in relation to existing EV charging points currently in operation on Council sites and the work that had been undertaken to assess Council sites in order identify suitable locations for further charging points. She reported that 44 sites had been identified overall in phase 1 as suitable in principle, however, those identified sites and the progress in respect of the EV network would be dependent on further engagement with stakeholders.

She outlined the next steps for the EV Charging Point Network Project which included exploring operating models, financial modelling, market testing for potential charge point operators, and equality and rural needs screening.

The Assistant Estates Surveyor concluded the presentation by outlining the 20 sites that had been identified as suitable in principle within East Belfast.

The Working Group thanked the officers for the presentation and noted the update which had been provided.

Ballyhackamore Parklet Update

The City Protection Manager provided the Working Group with an update on the work that had been undertaken to date in respect of the proposal by Councillor Flynn for the installation of a parklet on vacant Council land in the Ballyhackamore area.

He advised the Working Group that the project was currently at a concept stage and presented, for the Members information, two concept designs for a potential parklet.

It was reported that the proposal would be considered by officers at a Council Assets Board meeting in June, 2025 to identify potential costings and feasibility, and that any project relating to capital would be subject to the Council's capital processes including Strategic Policy and Resources Committee approval.

The Working Group welcomed the update which had been provided and agreed to endorse the proposal for a parklet in line with the draft layout 1 design.

Chairperson