



Subject:	Physical Programme Update
Date:	18 April 2025
Reporting Officer:	Sinead Grimes, Director of Property & Projects
Contact Officer:	Shauna Murtagh, Portfolio 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 type="checkbox"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Information relating to any individual2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime									
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	<table><tr><td>After Committee Decision</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td></tr><tr><td>After Council Decision</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td></tr><tr><td>Sometime in the future</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td></tr><tr><td>Never</td><td><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"/>
After Committee Decision	<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 or Summary of Main Issues
1.1	The Council's Physical Programme currently includes over 200 capital projects with investment of £150m+ via a range of internal and external funding streams, together with projects which

	the Council delivers on behalf of external agencies. The Council's Capital Programme forms part of the Physical Programme and is a rolling programme of investment which either improves existing Council facilities or provides new facilities. This report presents the Half Year Update, requests for stage movement approvals under the Capital Programme along with updates on capital letters of offer and contracts awarded.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is requested to –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Programme Half Year Update - Note the overall update on projects that have been completed recently and projects currently under construction at 3.1 to 3.4 below and in Appendix 1; and that the Property & Projects Department is happy to arrange a site visit to any projects that have been completed or are underway. • Capital Programme Movements - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fleet Programme – Small Vehicles Service – Note that the Director of Finance has confirmed that this project is within the affordability limits of the Council and agree that the project is moved to <i>Stage 3 – Committed</i> with a maximum budget of £470,000. ○ EV Charging Network - Agree that the project is moved to <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted</i> to allow the options to be fully worked up. ○ Belfast Zoo Health & Safety Works - Agree that the project is moved to <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted</i> to allow the options to be fully worked up. ○ 35-39 Royal Ave Health & Safety Works - Agree that the project is moved to <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted</i> to allow the options to be fully worked up. ○ Victoria Park Basketball upgrade; Ormeau Park Basketball upgrade; West Basketball courts; Loughside Changing Facility; Mobile Changing Places; Makaton Boards; Strangford PF Enabling Works; Musgrave Park Sensory Garden; Woodvale Park Sensory Garden - Agree that the projects are added to the Capital Programme at <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i> to allow business cases and designs to be developed. ○ Belfast Bikes eBikes – Agree that the project is added to the Capital Programme at <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i> to allow a business case to be developed. ○ Under the Bridges – Agree that the project is added to the Capital Programme at <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i> to allow a business case to be developed. ○ Ulster Hall Lighting Scheme – Agree that the project is added to the Capital Programme at <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i> to allow a business case to be developed. • Capital Letters of Offer – to note the update in relation to capital letters of offer. • Contracts awarded in Q4 2024/25 – to note the update in relation to contracts awarded.
3.0	Main report <u>Key Issues</u>

3.1	<p>Physical Programme Half Year Update</p> <p>Members will be aware that the Council runs a substantial Physical Programme. This includes the rolling Capital Programme – a multimillion regeneration programme of investment across the city which improves existing Council assets or provides new council facilities. The Property & Projects Department is happy to arrange a site visit to any projects that have been completed or are underway.</p> <p>The Half Year Update below at 3.2 to 3.4 is a brief summary of projects completed as well as a sample of projects currently underway. The reporting pattern is shifting to align with the financial year instead of the calendar year, so this update only covers three months namely January to March 2025 and will be on a six monthly basis again after that.</p>
3.2	<p><u>Recently completed projects:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fleet Replacement Programme 24/25 – prioritised purchase and replacement of older and/ or poor condition vehicles with Resources and Fleet such as forklifts, medium size panel vans, beavertails, mowers, compact sweepers, dropside trucks and others. • Sporting Pitches Investment 24/25 – completion of the improvements to pitches at Henry Jones Playing Fields - ball stops and spectator fencing at GAA pitch and Belvoir Activity Centre MUGA. • Playground Improvement Programme 24/25 – improvements have been completed at Grampian Avenue playground by CNS. • Covered Cycle Stands – completion of active travel projects bike stands at various locations across the city. • Other enhancements to Council assets include – Customer Focus Programme- Customer Hub at CWB, Duncrue Eurobin Workshop facility, HWRC Service Bay works at Ormeau (Park Road), pitch carpet replacement at LORAG/ Shaftesbury centre. • Rory Gallagher statue – commemorative statue of legendary composer and musician at the side of Ulster Hall. • Bredagh GAC container (LIF) – delivery and installation of container providing storage facilities for East Belfast clubs. • Hosford Community Homes Inclusive Hub (Urban Villages) – refurbishment of a building in ownership of East Belfast Mission at 240 Newtownards Road into a multi-purpose community and good relations space and accommodation units.
3.3	<p><i>Physical projects underway:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Hall Stained Glass Windows – the new LGBT stained glass window at City Hall is nearing completion and will be installed shortly, with an unveiling being planned for May. • Ballysillan Playing Fields (Urban Villages) - Works are underway on site at this £8.4m partnership project with DfL's Living with Water Programme, DfC and Urban Villages. Completion anticipated by Autumn 2026.

- **Lagan Gateway Greenway (BIF)** – major investment of £5m in a new navigation lock, iconic foot and cycle bridge and new path connections. Phase 2 procurement exercise is nearing completion for works on the Belvoir side. Completion anticipated by Summer 2026.
- **North Foreshore Development Sites Infrastructure Works** – the landfill gas infrastructure contractor has been appointed. Procurement on the foul pumping station is almost complete. NIE works to upgrade the connections to begin this month.
- **Floral Hall Health & Safety Works** – Contractor appointed, and initial investigations complete on a series of immediate health and safety works to stabilise the building. Completion anticipated by Summer 2025.
- **Strand Arts Centre (BIF)** – works are underway on the £6.4m major refurbishment of the art deco cinema building. The centre will provide educational and skills development workshops, arts, and heritage tours. Completion anticipated by Summer 2026.
- **Michael Davitt's Community Heritage Centre (NRF)** - contractor has been appointed and works are due to begin in May for the new build community and heritage centre at Davitt's GAC.
- **ABC Trust Health and Leisure Hub (Urban Villages)** – Phase 2 of the project is on site comprising a community café, boxing club, minor halls, community gym and office space. Phase 2 to be completed in Summer 2025.
- **Sandy Row Arts & Digital Hub (BIF and Urban Villages)** – work is progressing on the new build development for creative and digital arts entrepreneurs.
- **Titanic People Exhibition (Urban Villages)** – redevelopment of the courtyard/frontage of the existing building at Westbourne Presbyterian Church. Planned completion anticipated in Summer 2025, and launch expected in September 2025.
- **Corporate projects** – a range of capital IT projects via Digital Services to ensure business continuity; Waste Plan – Expansion of Glass Collection Scheme, HWRC and Civic Amenity Sites Containers, and ongoing delivery of Fleet Replacement Programme 25/26 via City & Neighbourhoods Services.
- **Developer Contributions** – progressing open space projects via CNS.
- **Playground Improvement Programme** – Michelle Baird and Balfour Avenue playgrounds are due to be completed by May 2025.
- **Alleygating Phase 5** – Progress made with the commencement of the installation of 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.
- **Sporting Pitches Investment** – final works at Falls Park, Mallusk Playing Fields and Strangford Avenue Playing Fields are nearing completion.

3.4

Physical projects in development:

The remainder of the Physical Programme covers projects where activity is at earlier stages i.e. tender preparation or before. This includes schemes at the start of procurement at *Stage 3 – Committed* as well as those at *Stage 2 – Uncommitted* and *Stage 1 – Emerging* or equivalent:

Capital Programme: Cathedral Gardens, New Crematorium, Belfast Stories, Reservoir Safety Programme, LTP Girdwood Indoor Sports Facility, Waste Plan projects, St George’s Market – New Stalls, Waterfront Hall – Chiller Units, Relocation of Dunbar Link Cleansing Depot, New Cemetery, Access to the Hills – Black Mountain/Upper Whiterock Pathway, Glencairn Park/Ligoniel Park Greenway, City Hall – External Christmas Tree, Wilmont House, Historic Cemeteries and Historic Tiled Street Signs, and recently added schemes including City Hall Preservation, Bridges Improvement Programme, Beacon Programme and a range of health and safety projects.

A range of other schemes are also in development including the remaining LIF, BIF and SOF projects.

3.5

Capital Programme - Proposed Movements

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

Project	Overview	Stage movement
Fleet Programme – Small Vehicles Service	Smaller collection vehicles to improve collection performance in narrow and restricted streets	Move to <i>Stage 3 – Committed</i> with a maximum budget of £470,000
EV Charging Network	A publicly accessible electric vehicle charging point network on Council owned assets	Move to <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted</i>
Belfast Zoo H&S Safety Works	Improvements to animal enclosures and boundary fencing	Move to <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted</i>
35-39 Royal Ave H&S Works	Urgent works to listed building.	Move to <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted</i>
Victoria Park Basketball upgrade	Upgrade to existing court	Add as <i>Stage 1 - Emerging</i>
Ormeau Park Basketball upgrade	Upgrade to existing court	Add as <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i>
West Basketball courts	New facilities at Blacks Road and Páirc Nua Chollan	Add as <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i>
Loughside PF Changing Facility	Modular changing and flexible space facility	Add as <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i>
Mobile Changing Places	Modular facility for citywide use	Add as <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i>
Makaton Boards	Inclusive communications boards in playgrounds	Add as <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i>
Strangford PF Enabling Works	Enabling works for active travel container and gate improvements	Add as <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i>
Musgrave Park Sensory Garden	Upgrade to sensory garden	Add as <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i>
Woodvale Park Sensory Garden	New sensory facility	Add as <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i>

	Belfast Bikes eBikes	Introduction of Belfast Bikes eBikes	Add as Stage 1 – Emerging
	Under the Bridges	Connectivity, active travel and public realm enhancements under M3 bridges	Add as Stage 1 – Emerging
	Ulster Hall Lighting Scheme	Feature lighting to exterior of Ulster Hall	Add as Stage 1 – Emerging
3.6	<p><i>Fleet Programme – Small Vehicles Service</i></p> <p>This project was moved to <i>Stage 2 - Uncommitted</i> in March 2025. It forms part of the Council's Waste Collection service and seeks to address issues around difficult to access streets via the introduction of smaller refuse collection vehicles. Following a successful trial utilising lease vehicles it is proposed to procure the small vehicles. The business case has now been completed. Members are asked to agree to move the project to Stage 3 – Committed with a maximum budget of £470,000.</p>		
3.7	<p><i>EV Charging Network</i></p> <p>This project was added to the Capital Programme in January 2025 in line with the LEV Strategy. It will deliver a publicly accessible electric vehicle charging point network on Council owned assets, working with a commercial partner. The Climate and City Resilience Committee noted in March that a cross departmental working group is progressing Step 1 of the LEV Strategy which involves assessing the suitability of land assets for this purpose. Options around the operating model, delivery timelines and cost estimates are being developed, with the timeline being heavily dependent on NIE processes. Members are asked to agree that 'EV Charging Network' is moved to Stage 2 – Uncommitted to allow the options to be fully worked up.</p>		
3.8	<p><i>Belfast Zoo Health & Safety Works</i></p> <p>A range of health, safety and welfare works are required at the Zoo including improvements to animal enclosures and boundary fencing works. Members are asked to agree that 'Belfast Zoo – Health and Safety Works' is moved to Stage 2 – Uncommitted to allow the options to be fully worked up.</p>		
3.9	<p><i>35-39 Royal Avenue Health & Safety Works</i></p> <p>The property at 35-39 Royal Avenue is listed as Grade B2 and the building requires physical intervention, as well as further consideration on the future model. Health and safety works to the roof are required to be brought forward at pace to secure the building's integrity. Members are asked to agree that '35-39 Royal Avenue Health & Safety Works' is moved to Stage 2 – Uncommitted to allow the options to be fully worked up.</p>		
3.10	<p><i>Victoria Park Basketball upgrade; Ormeau Park Basketball upgrade; West Basketball courts; Loughside Changing Facility; Mobile Changing Places; Makaton Boards; Strangford PF Enabling Works; Musgrave Park Sensory Garden; Woodvale Park Sensory Garden</i></p>		

	<p>Members will recall that capital monies were received from UKSPF for existing schemes last financial year, which freed up resources for additional schemes. These schemes, as listed above, have been considered via the AWGs and will target a range of small scale capital schemes focusing on sporting provision and access and inclusion. A further project, 'Historic Cemeteries', is already on the programme and so the scope of that existing scheme will be widened accordingly. Members are asked to agree that these projects are added to the Capital Programme at Stage 1 – Emerging to allow the business cases to be developed.</p>
3.11	<p><i>Belfast Bikes eBikes</i></p> <p>Members will recall that in January 2025 it was reported that a satisfactory tender return has been received for a new Belfast Bikes operator and that capital costs can be met via an existing reserve along with either external funding or a growth proposal. Members will now note at Appendix 2 that the funding has been successfully secured from DfI. Members are asked to agree that the 'Belfast Bikes eBikes' project is added to the Capital Programme at Stage 1 – Emerging to allow the business case to be developed.</p>
3.12	<p><i>Under the Bridges</i></p> <p>This project was noted by Members of the City Growth & Regeneration Committee in January 2025 and seeks to improve connectivity through high quality active and sustainable travel corridors, enhanced public realm and amenity space under the M3 bridges. Members are asked to agree that the 'Under the Bridges' project is added to the Capital Programme at Stage 1 – Emerging to allow the business case to be developed.</p>
3.13	<p><i>Ulster Hall Lighting Scheme</i></p> <p>Design and delivery will be fully funded by DfC and Linen Quarter BID. The project involves the installation of an LED lighting display on the façade of Ulster Hall capable of changing colour similar to City Hall's Illuminate scheme. Members are asked to agree that the 'Ulster Hall Lighting Scheme' is added to the Capital Programme at Stage 1 – Emerging to allow the business case to be developed.</p>
3.14	<p><i>Capital Letters of Offer</i></p> <p>Members are asked to note the update in relation to capital letters of offer in Q4 2024/25 at Appendix 2.</p>
3.15	<p><i>Contracts Awarded</i></p> <p>Members are asked to note the award of tenders for capital works including services related to works in Q4 2024/25 at Appendix 3.</p>
3.16	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p><i>Financial Implications – Fleet Programme – Small Vehicles Service</i> - a maximum of £470,000 is now allocated to this project. The Director of Finance has confirmed that this is within the affordability limits of the Council.</p> <p><i>Resource Implications – Officer time to deliver.</i></p>

	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment</u>
3.17	All capital projects are screened as part of the stage approval process
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 – Photos of completed projects Appendix 2 - Capital Letters of Offer in Q4 2024/25 - January to March 2025 Appendix 3 – Contracts Awarded in Q4 2024/25 - January to March 2025