



Subject:	Physical Programme Update
Date:	23 May 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"/>
Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.	
Insert number <input type="checkbox"/>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Information relating to any individual2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime	
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input 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 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

	<p>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 requests for stage movement approvals under the Capital Programme and an update on Wilmont House.</p>
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is requested to –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Programme Movements - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Historic Tiled Street Signs - Agree that the project is moved to <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted</i> to allow the options to be fully worked up. ○ Historic Cemeteries Phase 1 - Agree that a first phase is moved to <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted</i> to allow the options to be fully worked up. ○ Bridges Improvement Programme Phase 1 - Agree that the first phase is moved to <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted</i> to allow the options to be fully worked up. ○ Beacon Programme - Agree that the project is moved to <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted</i> to allow the options to be fully worked up. ○ Communications Boards - Agree that the project is moved to <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted</i> to allow the options to be fully worked up. ○ Ulster Hall Lighting Scheme - Agree that the project is moved to <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted</i> to allow the options to be fully worked up. ○ Corporate Accommodation CWB and Duncrue Complex – Agree that the project is added to the Capital Programme at <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i> to allow a business case to be developed. • Note the update on Wilmont House and that funding has been secured by Golden Thread Gallery from National Lottery Heritage Fund for a feasibility study which will be carried out in partnership with the Council.
3.0	<p>Main report</p> <p><u>Key Issues</u></p>
3.1	<p>Physical Programme</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>
3.2	<p><u>Capital Programme - Proposed Movements</u></p> <p>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</p>

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
Historic Tiled Street Signs	Restoration of historic tiled street signs.	Move to Stage 2 – Uncommitted
Historic Cemeteries Phase 1	Conservation and restoration improvements at listed graveyards.	Move to Stage 2 – Uncommitted
Bridges Improvement Programme Phase 1	Programme of remedial works on bridges across the Council estate.	Move to Stage 2 – Uncommitted
Beacon Programme	Provision of beacons as an alternative to traditional bonfires.	Move to Stage 2 – Uncommitted
Communications Boards	Inclusive communications boards in playgrounds.	Move to Stage 2 – Uncommitted
Ulster Hall Lighting Scheme	Feature lighting to exterior of Ulster Hall.	Move to Stage 2 – Uncommitted
Corporate Accommodation - CWB and Duncrue	Enhancements to office accommodation at Cecil Ward Building and Duncrue Complex.	Add as Stage 1 – Emerging

3.3

Historic Tiled Street Signs

This project was added to the Capital Programme at *Stage 1 – Emerging* in November 2024. Belfast's iconic black and white tiled street signs have long been a unique and instantly recognisable feature of the city's architectural heritage, believed to date from c 1880 through to 1950's. The signs are either mounted on posts or are fixed to the gable walls of buildings. The survey of the first tranche of 32 signs by conservation architects, 24 of which are listed, showed that many are severely damaged, with fragments missing, and the lettering and blank field tiles also show significant damage. The initial research was carried out in conjunction with DfC's Historic Environment Division. An application for funding to the Pilgrim Trust for this first phase is being submitted this month. Officers are continuing to collate a database of other historic tiled street signs across the city, in order to prepare for further phases of survey work. **Members are asked to agree that 'Historic Tiled Street Signs' is moved to Stage 2 – Uncommitted to allow the options to be fully worked up.**

3.4

Historic Cemeteries

This project was added to the Capital Programme at *Stage 1 – Emerging* in November 2024. Members will be aware that the Council owns five historic graveyards, four of which are currently closed namely Balmoral, Clifton Street, Friar's Bush and Knock. Surveys have identified a programme conservation and health and safety works which are required to improve the condition of the graveyards. Conservation and restoration improvements will allow the graveyards to be more accessible to the public and contribute to neighbourhood tourism. Safety works to monuments are being brought forward within a first phase of works. **Members are asked to agree that 'Historic Cemeteries Phase 1' is moved to Stage 2 – Uncommitted to allow the options to be fully worked up.**

3.5

Bridges Improvement Programme

	<p>Development of a multiyear approach to bridge improvements is continuing for 50+ bridges across the Council estate, following on from the initial surveys that have already been carried out. A programme of remedial work is now being finalised for the first phase. Members are asked to agree that ‘Bridges Improvement Programme Phase 1’ is moved to Stage 2 – Uncommitted to allow the options to be fully worked up.</p>
3.6	<p>Beacon Programme</p> <p>Members will be aware that demand is increasing for beacons as a managed, environmentally more acceptable alternative to traditional bonfires. Members are asked to agree that ‘Beacon Programme’ is moved to Stage 2 – Uncommitted to allow the options to be fully worked up.</p>
3.7	<p>Communication Boards</p> <p>This project was added to the Capital Programme at <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i> in April. As agreed by Council, officers are exploring options in respect of funding the provision of communication boards for Council playgrounds in 2025/26, in addition to the recouped monies made available following the UKSPF funding last year. Members are asked to agree that ‘Communication Boards’ is moved to Stage 2 – Uncommitted to allow the options to be fully worked up.</p>
3.8	<p>Ulster Hall Lighting Scheme</p> <p>This project was added to the Capital Programme at <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i> in April. 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 and will be in keeping with the building’s listed status. An offer of funding to the Council is being finalised from Linen Quarter BID for the design phase. Members are asked to agree that ‘Ulster Hall Lighting Scheme’ is moved to Stage 2 – Uncommitted to allow the options to be fully worked up.</p>
3.9	<p>Corporate Accommodation - CWB and Duncrue</p> <p>This project will include upgrades to staff accommodation on the first floor CWB and in Duncrue to include office and staff welfare facilities such as canteens, kitchens, toilets and locker rooms. Members are asked to agree that ‘Corporate Accommodation – CWB and Duncrue’ is added to the Capital Programme as a Stage 1 – Emerging project to allow a business case to be developed.</p>
3.10	<p>Wilmont House – Update</p> <p>This project was added at <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i> on the Capital Programme in November 2024. Wilmont House is a Grade B+ Listed property in the grounds of Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park. The house has had various uses over the years and has now fallen into a serious state of disrepair. HED have assessed Wilmont House as “at risk” and officers have been in close liaison with HED officials on the condition of Wilmont House. In order to look at bringing forward a sustainable end use for the building and restoring it back to its original condition officers have been working with the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Golden Thread Gallery. Members are now advised that the Golden Thread Gallery has recently secured initial</p>

	<p>funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for a feasibility study on the restoration of the building. This study will explore the transformation of Wilmont House into a cultural venue to house the Golden Thread Gallery's Collection of Northern Irish Art. Members are asked to note the update on Wilmont House and that funding has been secured by Golden Thread Gallery from National Lottery Heritage Fund for a feasibility study which will be carried out in partnership with the Council.</p>
3.11	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p><i>Financial Implications</i> – None at this time.</p> <p><i>Resource Implications</i> – Officer time to deliver.</p>
3.12	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>All capital projects are screened as part of the stage approval process</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None