

West Belfast Area Working Group

Thursday, 28th August, 2025

HYBRID MEETING OF THE WEST BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

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

In attendance: Mr. D. Logan, Senior Programme Delivery Manager;
Ms. S. O'Regan, Employability And Skills Manager;
Ms. S. Lewis, Regeneration Project Officer;
Ms. F. Dennison, Neighbourhood Services Integration
Manager; and
Mr. B. Flynn, Committee Services Officer.

Election of Chairperson

Moved by Councillor M Donnelly,
Seconded by Councillor McCallin and

Resolved – that Councillor McCann be elected to serve as Chairperson of
the West Belfast Area Working Group until the date of the 2026 Annual
Meeting.

(Councillor McCann in the Chair).

Apologies

There were no apologies received.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 29th May were approved and adopted.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Duffy declared an interest in the 'Physical Programmes Update' report in
that he was a Board Member of the Lagmore Youth Project. He left the meeting whilst the
matter was discussed later in the meeting.

Presentations

Lenadoon Greenway

In accordance with its decision of 29th May, the Working Group received a presentation
from Mr. M. Doherty, manager of the Lenadoon Community Forum. Mr. Doherty gave an
overview of the Forum and its aims and objectives. He referred to a report which had been

launched in May, entitled: 'Making Life Better in Lenadoon' and indicated that the report aimed to tackle the key issues that would impact on lives between 2025 and 2030.

He advised the Working Group that the Lenadoon Community Forum, in conjunction with 11 local experts, had undertaken a 15-month consultation exercise which had identified three priority areas, that being, health and wellbeing; education and employability; and housing and green spaces. In particular, the report had highlighted two areas for further consideration which included redeveloping the park in Lenadoon Avenue and the development of the Lenadoon Greenway initiative. He stated that the Lenadoon Greenway would, subject to funding and the undertaking of a feasibility study, link into plans for a broader West Belfast Greenway project, which sought to create a network of walking and cycling paths across the area.

The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Doherty) thanked Mr. Doherty for his presentation and proposed that the Working Group recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it consider providing funding towards the undertaking of a feasibility study as outlined.

During discussion, it was noted that the Working Group had identified previously a range of projects deemed worthy of support, but that Members were constrained by budgetary considerations. It was pointed out that it would be inadvisable, in principle, to support the undertaking of a feasibility study, particularly without indicative costs and in the absence of a business plan. In addition, any support or progression of the project would need to be considered within the context and several stages of the Council's Capital Programme and other funding streams.

After further discussion, the Working Group agreed to note the information which had been provided and to recommend that the project be added, subject to due diligence, as an emerging project on the Capital Programme. It was noted that a further report in the matter would be submitted to the Working Group for consideration at its next meeting.

An Spórtlann

Further to its decision of 29th May, the Working Group welcomed Mr. J. MacSiacais representing An Spórtlann, a sports and community-based organisation which had a specific focus on the development of the former Beechmount Leisure Centre site. He explained that An Spórtlann had worked in conjunction with the Council in the development of the site and indicated that the support of the Council had been vital in unlocking its potential. He outlined further site development plans and explained that the organisation was seeking to attract new partners in the next stage of the development. He suggested that a more formal arrangement with the Council on a longer-term basis would be welcomed in the further delivery of the project.

The Working Group noted that some of the plans outlined, particularly with regard to pitch development, were being progressed within the terms of the Council's several funding streams, including the Capital Programme, Pitches Strategy and Local Investment Fund. It was suggested that officers meet with representatives of An Spórtlann to discuss the next stages of the project and that a site visit to the Beechmount site would benefit the Working Group in considering the next steps of the project.

Noted.

Physical Programmes – Update

The Committee 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 West Belfast including recently completed project.

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	<p>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</p> <p>Stage 2— St Mary's CBS— no commitment</p> <p>Stage 1— An Sportslann; Suffolk Community Forum; Belfast Hills- Black Mountain Access—no commitment</p>
-------------	--

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 BIF- £700,000; NRF- £200,000	Committed; Due Diligence	Link to NRF project. Planning application has been submitted. The group is planning to purchase the	Continue engagement with the group and partners.

				land from NIHE, and the due diligence process is ongoing. DfC has agreed to provide funding - awaiting letter of offer.	
--	--	--	--	---	--

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><i>Stage 1— Improving the Environment at Patrick Sarsfield's GAC, Corrigan Park Redevelopment Project, WCC New Purpose-Built Childcare and Family Support Centre, Curam Leanaí na Faiseoige, 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>
-------------	---

West Belfast – NRF projects at Stage 3 - Delivery

Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
Michael Davitt's Community Heritage Centre	<i>£1.1m NRF £684,058 Group - £463,490</i>	Stage 3- Committed	On ground. Work on site progressing well.	Continue engagement with the group.
Croí na Carraige - 'The Heart of the Rock' - Phase 1	<i>£787,058 NRF-£537,058 An Ciste- £250,000</i>	Stage 3- Committed	Development stage. Design team is progressing work. 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. Project has stalled.	Continue engagement with the group.
The ACT Initiative Community Hub & Visitors' Centre	£295,000	Stage 3-Committed	On ground. Heating element of project to be re-procured as Contractor unable to deliver contract. Exhibition works due to complete in early 2026.	Continue engagement with the group.
Glencairn Community Project	£900,000 <i>NRF- £200,000; BIF- £700,000</i>	Stage 3-Committed	Development stage. <i>As above at BIF09.</i> Planning application has been submitted – awaiting validation. The group is planning to purchase the land from NIHE and the due diligence process is ongoing. DfC has agreed to provide funding – awaiting letter of offer.	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. Planning Decision awaiting.	Continue engagement with the group.

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 completed. All of the scheme's capital project undertakings are now fully complete. Works on the Victorian Fountain and Central Steps have been completed and the security fencing etc has all been removed and the monuments are now open for the public to view and enjoy since the 25th June. CNS are currently undertaking a revised procurement exercise to appoint an external operator to run the Visitor Centre.
Playground Improvement Programme 25/26	<i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> Agreed at P&C Committee in May 2025. Playgrounds selected for refurbishment are White Rise, Ohio Street, Roddens Crescent, and Finvoy Street playgrounds. Progressing.
Sporting Pitches Investment 25/26	<i>Stage 3 Committed.</i> Details being worked up with CNS.
Alleygating Phase 5 – City wide	<i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> Works progressing. Progress made with the commencement of the installation for Phase 5a. 115 gates remain to be installed and works to be completed by February 2026.
Access to Hills - Black Mountain/ Upper Whiterock Pathway	<i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> Tender preparation stage. Planning ongoing and contamination study requested by consultees due to be submitted in late August 2025. Tender documents preparation ongoing and will be issued once planning approval is secured. Match funding opportunities are being explored for this project.
Communications Boards in playgrounds	<i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted.</i> Inclusive communication boards in playgrounds. Outline business case prepared and request at August SP&R to move to Stage 3.
Historic Cemeteries	<i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted.</i> Restoration programme for heritage cemeteries in the city including Friars Bush, Knock Cemetery, Clifton Street Cemetery, Balmoral Cemetery and Shankill Graveyard. Scoping work underway for Phase 2 works, whilst the Phase 1 H&S works to Clifton Street are currently on site and due to complete October 2025.
Historic Tiled Street Signs	<i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted.</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.
Electric Vehicle Charging Network	<i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted.</i> Land Asset Assessment underway to identify a long list of sites suitable in principle. Outline business case being worked up. Progressing.
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> Complementary scheme to developing further connections to the Hills at Ligoniel, Glencairn and Cavehill.
Connectivity - Access to Hills Programme (city wide)	<i>Stage 1- Emerging.</i> Feasibility stage.
Mobile Changing Places modular facility	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> This facility will be for use across the city. Specification developed and project moving to procurement.
Basketball Courts	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> The work includes creation or upgrades of basketball courts at five BCC park sites including Victoria Park, Alderman Tommy Patton Memorial Park, Ormeau Park, Blacks Road Park and Páirc Nua Chollann. Strategic outline case prepared and request at August SP&R to move to Stage 2.
Woodvale Park Sensory Garden	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Upgrade to sensory garden. Strategic outline case prepared and request at August SP&R to move to Stage 2.
Belfast Bikes Expansion	The tender for a new provider/ operator has been completed. Project delivery progressing, with the new bikes due to come into operation in Autumn 2025.
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. Will require additional funding. <i>Lenadoon Park</i> – Grass soccer pitch improvement works completed. MUGA improvements programmed for Autumn 2025.
Christ the Redeemer, Lagmore Drive Lagmore Youth Project proposal	This work is under S76 Developer Contributions. Discussions have taken place regarding Lagmore Youth Project potential construction of a modular building to replace their existing marquee tent. AWG will appreciate that the proposal is at early stage.

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. Options for installation being explored.
Distillery Street Redevelopment Project	Part of the Belfast PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan. Moderation process now concluded, Intention to Award letter issued to appoint Design Team who will in place first week of September 2025. Steering Group meetings ongoing.

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</i> Project completed and fit out due to progress in the coming weeks.

During discussion, the Working Group noted that the Council's Planning Committee, at its meeting in June, had agreed to allocate a Section 76 developer contribution of £27,140 towards the funding of a permanent building for the Lagmore Youth Project, located within the grounds of Christ the Redeemer Church. It was requested that officers from the Property and Projects Unit would take forward the design process for the new building, utilising the agreed Section 76 developer contribution.

The Working Group endorsed the course of action outlined relating to the Lagmore Youth Project.

After further discussion, the Working Group approved the recommendations as set out in Section 2 of the report.

Employability and Skills - Oral Update

The Employability and Skills Manager provided an update on the forthcoming Council Roadshows for the Employment Academies. She explained that these were targeted to areas with low participation rates and, since West Belfast was currently underrepresented, there would be three roadshows within the upcoming cycle. The roadshows would offer information on 'Employment Academies' that 'The Gateway to Choice' service would also provide information, advice and guidance to anyone that lives in Belfast who is over the age of 18. The roadshows would help people find job opportunities, offer CV support, and search for suitable training, offer guidance on further education. The roadshows in West Belfast would take place at Forth Spring, 373-375 Springfield Road, on 11th September; Shankill Jobs and Benefits Office, 15-25 Snugville Street, on Wednesday 17th September; and Foodstock, 150F Andersonstown Road, on Tuesday 23 September. She encouraged Members to sign up to the Employability and Skills newsletter on the Council's website to help promote the initiative across the city.

Noted.

Request for Deputation - Glencairn Community Projects

At the request of Alderman McCoubrey, the Working Group agreed to receive a presentation from Glencairn Community Projects at a future meeting.

Chairperson