

North Belfast Area Working Group

Wednesday, 24th August, 2016

NORTH BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

Members present: Alderman McKee (Chairperson);
Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor Campbell;
Aldermen Convery, L. Patterson,
and Spence;
Councillors Corr-Johnston, Magee,
McCabe, and McCusker.

In attendance: Mr. N. Grimshaw, Director of City and
Neighbourhood Services;
Mr. G. Millar, Director of Property and Projects;
Ms. R. Crozier, Assistant Director of Park and Leisure;
Mr. D. Rogan, Head of Contracts;
Mr. G. Dickson, Policy Analyst; and
Miss E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillor Clarke.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 23rd June were agreed as an accurate record of proceedings.

Declaration of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Presentation – Department of Justice

The Working Group was reminded that, at its meeting on 23rd June, it had been agreed that representatives from the Department of Justice be invited to attend the Working Group.

The Chairperson welcomed to the meeting, Mr. S. McCourt, Head of Community Safety Unit, Ms. B. McAtamney and Ms. M. Wilson, Interface and PCSP Policy Leads, representing the Department of Justice.

Mr. McCourt presented information regarding the interface work that had been taking place in North Belfast. He informed the Group that the Government had four strategic commitments to removing interface barriers:

- Programme for Government 68 – to actively seek local agreement to reduce the number of peace walls;
- Community Safety Strategy 2012-2017 – to seek agreement with local communities to reduce the number of interface structures;
- TBUC – to create a 10-year Programme to reduce, and remove by 2023, all interface barriers and create a support package; and
- Fresh Start – to contribute to the conditions that will allow the removal of peace walls and the creation of a shared future through delivery of confidence and relationship building measures.

He explained the objectives and principles of their commitments and highlighted that cross-departmental and joint statutory body working would be necessary in order to address social and economic challenges required to facilitate creating the conditions to removing interfaces. He also advised that a cross Departmental Interface Programme Board had been established to deliver the Government's commitment to removing interfaces.

With the permission of the Chairperson, he tabled a list of North Belfast peace wall locations and explained that further research had been commissioned regarding the effects of peace walls on local residents, the result of which would be published later in the year.

During discussion, it was noted that the Duncairn Community Partnership membership was currently being renewed, and that Membership of the board would be provided to the Group by the Department of Justice, once confirmed.

After discussion, the Chairperson thanked the representative from the Department of Justice for attending and the Working Group noted the information provided.

Request for use of Alexandra Park - North Belfast Magical Festival

The Assistant Director advised the Group that a request had been received from the North Belfast Community Pride Steering Group to host the North Belfast Magical Festival and Lantern Parade in Alexandra Park instead of the Waterworks Park to broaden the reach of the event, and a full report would be submitted to the next People and Communities Committee for approval.

Noted.

Locality Planning Project – Geographical Options

(Ms. P. Flynn, Strategic Planning and Policy Officer, attended in connection with this item)

The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services reminded the Working Group that an area from the North of the city needed to be identified to participate in the locality planning initiative, and that the Working Group, at its last meeting, had agreed that further information and data be provided regarding potential areas, so that feedback for the final selection of the two areas required could be considered.

The Director outlined the contents of the report regarding the possible locations identified in North Belfast and explained that the rationale behind the five potential areas

outlined had been based on areas experiencing significant deprivation and social inequality and issues which had been identified by Members at the North Belfast Planning Workshop in January.

He advised that, once the geographical area had been agreed, the data analysis and community narrative for the area would help assist with which theme or action could be taken forward as part of this initiative using the outcomes based approach.

He reminded the Group that, although final selection of two areas was required, one of these areas would ultimately be taken forward first to participate in the locality planning initiative.

During discussion, the Working Group agreed that New Lodge and Duncairn would be the areas to be taken forward to participate in the Locality Planning Initiative, with New Lodge to be progressed in the first instance.

Local Investment Fund (Oral Update)

The Director of Property and Projects provided an update on the progress of those projects which had been approved by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee under the Local Investment Fund.

He explained that there had been difficulty in contacting some of the proposed project groups and advised that Members of the Working Group, who initially proposed the projects, would be contacted to assist if problems in this regard persisted.

He advised that, through the Local Investment Fund (phase 2), the Area Working Group had committed £571,400 of its £800,000 allocation.

He also confirmed that, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 19th August, under the heading Peace IV – Capital Projects had agreed that the Cultural Corridor Project would be better suited to be supported under the Local Action Plan under the Shared Space Programme.

Noted.

Belfast Investment Fund

The Director of Property and Projects provided a brief overview in relation to the Belfast Investment Fund (BIF). With permission of the Chairperson, he tabled an updated map of the North Belfast Area which entailed the physical programme of the area and information on the Council projects in the Oldpark and Castle District Electoral Areas, which included the status of each one. He highlighted the BIF projects illustrated and informed the Group that the Grace Women's Centre and Cancer Lifeline had indicative costs of £2 million between them.

He advised the Working Group that workshops were being held during September for all of the Area Working Groups to engage the Members in the development of area plans and the change programme within the new City and Neighbourhood Services Department. He asked the Members to note that the North AWG workshop would take place on 6th September.

The Director advised that he would be seeking a decision from the Members in the autumn as to which of the proposals they wished to progress.

Noted.

Future Agenda Items

The Working Group noted the following outstanding deputation requests:-

- Belfast Hills;
- Women's Tec;
- Grow NI; and
- Urban Villages.

Chairperson

West Belfast Area Working Group

Thursday, 25th August, 2016

MEETING OF WEST BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

Members present: The Lord Mayor (Alderman Kingston);
Alderman McCoubrey;
Councillor Magennis (Chairperson); and
Councillors Austin, Beattie, Bell, Bunting,
Corr, Garrett, Groves, Heading, Hutchinson,
O'Hara and Walsh.

In attendance: Mr. D. Rogan, Head of Contracts;
Mr. G. Dickson, Policy and Performance Analyst; and
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillors Attwood and McVeigh.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 28th June were agreed as an accurate record of proceedings.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Groves declared an interest in respect of agenda item 2. viz., Presentation from the Roddy McCorley Society, in that she was an Associate Member.

Councillor Beattie declared an interest in a later discussion on the Blackie Community Centre, in that he was a Member.

Presentation from the Roddy McCorley Society

(Councillor Groves declared an interest in respect this Item, in that she was an Associate Member.)

The Chairperson welcomed Members of the Roddy McCorley Society to the meeting, Mr. D. McGivern (Chair), Mr. K. Crawford (Secretary) and Mr. H. Connolly, Executive Director of Fáilte Feirste Thiar.

The representatives advised the Members that the Roddy McCorley Society and Museum was a fully constituted, not-for-profit organization which was situated in Moyard Villa on the Glen Road. They provided the Members with background information on the society and outlined their proposal for the development of their museum and the surrounding grounds, which they hoped to transform into a must-see attraction on the local tourism trail. The representatives advised the Working Group that the finished project would include an interpretative museum, guest accommodation, a coffee dock, restaurant and further development of the extensive gardens.

Mr. Connolly outlined to the Working Group that they were asking for support to produce a feasibility study in an effort to advance the project.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for attending and they retired from the room.

A number of Members expressed support for the project given that it was commemorating a part of the history of Belfast. A number of other Members expressed concerns that public money should not be used to support the project as it celebrated violence.

During discussion, a Member stated that all attractions in the city should seek to direct tourists to other places of interest throughout Belfast, including attractions on the Falls Road encouraging tourists to visit venues in the Shankill Road, and vice versa. The Members suggested that a map of all areas of interest throughout the City, including smaller projects like the Roddy McCorley Museum, would be useful and should be encouraged.

The Head of Contracts advised the Working Group that, while the Council had a feasibility budget line, it was aimed at supporting BIF projects which had reached Stage 2 of the process.

After discussion, the Working Group agreed that the Director of Development would consider the tourism potential of the Roddy McCorley Society and investigate ways in which his Department could assist the Society with its project.

LIF – Reallocation and update

The Lord Mayor pointed out to the Working Group that, as the Highfield Soft Play Mothers and Toddlers Group project had not been viable, the £22,000 which had been allocated to that project would need to be redirected to other projects.

After discussion, the Working Group agreed that, of that £22,000 which had originally been allocated towards the Highfield project, £4,000 be directed towards listed building works at the North Belfast Working Men's Club, in addition to the £20,000 which it had already been allocated, and that the remaining £18,000 would be directed towards Farset International.

The Head of Contracts advised the Working Group that Gort na Mona GAC had requested that the Council act as delivery agent for the project. He also advised the Members that, in relation to the Woodvale Cricket Club project, the scope of the work had changed to include the construction of an equipment shed, but that there had been no monetary change.

Noted.

Blackie Community Centre

(Councillor Beattie declared an interest in this Item, in that he was a Member of the Blackie Centre)

The Chairperson advised the Working Group that correspondence had been received from the Blackie Community Centre to request that they be considered for any leftover LIF funding, if any project was to be unsuccessful in passing the due diligence process.

Noted.

Notification of Future Agenda Items

The Working Group noted that the Glencairn Group would present at the next meeting.

The Chairperson also advised the Working Group that requests had also been received for presentations on the Western Quarter, Urban Villages and the West Belfast Partnership Board.

The Working Group also noted that updates on BIF, the Innovation Factory and feedback from the West Belfast AWG Workshop would be submitted to a future meeting.

Date of Next Meeting

The Working Group agreed to hold its next meeting at 4.30 p.m. on Thursday, 29th September.

Chairperson

East Belfast Area Working Group

Thursday, 15th September, 2016

MEETING OF EAST BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

Members present: Alderman Haire (Chairperson);
The High Sheriff of Belfast, Alderman Rodgers,
Aldermen McGimpsey and Sandford; and
Councillors Brown, Copeland,
Hussey, Johnston, Long, Mullan,
Newton, O'Donnell and O'Neill.

In attendance: Mr. N. Grimshaw, Director of City and
Neighbourhood Services;
Mr. G. Millar, Director of Property and
Projects;
Mr. D. Rogan, Head of Contracts; and
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology was reported from Councillor Graham.

Minutes

The Working Group agreed that the minutes of the meeting of 4th August, 2016, were an accurate record of proceedings.

Declarations of Interest

Alderman Rodgers declared an interest in the Belmont Bowling Club and in the Lagan Valley Youth and Community Group, in that he was a board member.

Councillor Copeland declared an interest in the Lagan Valley Youth and Community Group in that she was a board member.

Councillor Newton declared an interest in the Lagan Valley Youth and Community Group in that he was a board member.

Election of Chairperson

The Panel was reminded that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 24th June, had agreed that a policy should be introduced whereby each Council Working Group would be required to consider the appointment of a Chairperson on an annual basis. That item of business would be placed on the agenda for the first meeting of each Working Group following the Annual meeting of the Council each year.

Accordingly, nominations were sought for the position of Chairperson of the East Area Working Group.

The Panel agreed that Alderman Haire be re-elected to serve as Chairperson for the period to end on the date of the Annual meeting of the Council in 2017.

Belfast Investment Fund

The Director of Property and Projects reminded the Area Working Group that £22million had been put into a Belfast Investment Fund (BIF), with £5.5million to be allocated to projects in the east of the city. The projects which would receive BIF had to be over £250,000 and the Area Working Groups were to make recommendations for their area to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

He provided the Area Working Group with an update on the four projects which it had previously agreed to progress to Stage 2, namely:

1. Willowfield Parish Church
2. Bloomfield Community Association
3. Strand Cinema Community Arts Project
4. Harland and Wolff Welders Football Club at Blanchflower Playing Fields

The Director advised the Working Group that the Willowfield Church project, which had an estimated cost of £560,000, had now progressed to Stage 3 (Committed) and that work had commenced on site.

In relation to the Bloomfield Community Association, the Working Group was advised that it had requested £440,000 of funding through the BIF and that it had not secured any other source of funding. The Director advised the Members that the economic appraisal was ongoing for the project and that due diligence could not be carried out until that had been completed.

He advised the Members that the Strand Cinema proposal had increased its funding request from an initial estimate of £1million to £4.2million. He confirmed that the economic appraisal and due diligence had been carried out and, as a result of the project costs having escalated and that no other source of funding had been secured, that the affordability was in red. During discussion, the Working Group noted that the Strand Cinema was privately owned and that the proposer of works for the project was the tenant. A number of Members expressed concern at the huge increase in costs from the initial proposal.

With regards to the Harland and Wolff Welders project, he advised the Working Group that their estimated costs were £2.37million. He confirmed that the project was seeking £500,000 funding from the Department for Communities which, if that funding was to be confirmed, that would reduce the amount required from the Council to £1.87million. The Working Group were also advised that planning permission was in place for the project and that the Council had been asked to carry out the work.

Proposal

Moved by the High Sheriff of Belfast, Alderman Rodgers,
Seconded by Alderman McGimpsey,

That officers should engage with the Strand Cinema project to ascertain why the project costs had increased from an initial quote of £1million to over £4.2million and also to clarify the issues raised in relation to the ownership and tenancy of the building with regards to the proposals; and

That the Area Working Group recommends to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that the Bloomfield Community Association and the Harland and Wolf Welders projects should proceed to Stage 3.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Brown,
Seconded by Councillor Long,

That the Area Working Group should defer consideration of projects for the Belfast Investment Fund to next month.

On a vote by show of hands four Members voted for the amendment and eight against and it was declared lost.

The original proposal standing in the name of the High Sheriff of Belfast, Alderman Rodgers, and seconded by Alderman McGimpsey was thereupon put to the meeting when eight Members voted for and none against and it was accordingly declared carried.

The Working Group then considered correspondence from five further projects which were seeking funding through the Belfast Investment Fund, namely:

1. TAGIT Boxing Club
2. Braniel Church
3. Hanwood Project
4. Lagan Village Youth and Community Group
5. Belmont Bowling Club

The Working Group agreed that officers should engage with all five projects to determine the feasibility of the proposals and noted that updates would be brought to a future meeting.

A Member made reference to a project in the Tullycarnet Primary School which had previously been discussed by the Working Group, and the group agreed that an update should be brought to a future meeting on discussions which had taken place with the Education and Library Board with regards to the possibility of the school closing and what repercussions, if any, that would have on such a project.

It was reiterated that a meeting would be organised for the Members representing Ormiston and Lisnasharragh to discuss the additional £2million of BIF which had been ring-fenced for projects in the newly transferred areas of outer east.

Alleygating Scheme – Councillor O’Donnell to raise

The Working Group was reminded that the Council had allocated an additional £700,000 from its Capital Programme towards Phase IV of the Alleygating Scheme, £210,000 of which had been made available for East Belfast and which would allow up to 89 alleygates to be installed. The Working Group was reminded that, at its meeting on 2nd June, 2016, it had recommended to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, locations for 43 gates within the east of the city, that the remaining 46 gates should be installed in the streets identified as ‘high need’ by the PSNI, and that a reserve list would also be created from this list.

The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee had subsequently agreed to the Working Group’s recommendation.

Councillor O'Donnell requested that the Working Group considered adding four gates within the Short Strand to the reserve list of alleygates, as she felt it would help to reduce anti-social behaviour at an interface.

The Director of City and Neighbourhoods advised the group that, as a number of the 89 gates which had been agreed would likely not progress for a variety of reasons, such as a lack of support from the local residents, he would be content to add four gates in the Short Strand to the reserve list for East Belfast.

The Working Group agreed that four gates in the Short Strand be added to the reserve list.

Urban Villages

The Working Group noted that Urban Villages would make a presentation at the next meeting.

Clonduff Community Association

(Mr. J. Nelson, Community Services, attended in connection with this item)

The Director of Property and Projects advised the Working Group that Mr. J. Nelson, Community Services, was in attendance to provide the Members with an update on the ongoing discussions between the Council and the Clonduff Community Association.

Mr. Nelson provided the Area Working Group with an update on the ongoing discussions between the Council and the Clonduff Community Association. He advised the Members that an expectation had been raised within the Association that it would be getting its own building as part of the redevelopment of the Robinson Centre site, but he clarified that this was not the case and that it would be incorporated within the new Leisure Centre.

He advised the Working Group, however, that the Association would have its own access arrangements to their premises, which meant that members did not have to go through the leisure centre and that it would also agree its own management arrangements. The Members were also advised that the Council would continue to act as a bridge between GLL and the Community association if any issues were to arise.

Noted.

Chairperson