



Subject:	Physical Programme Update
Date:	19 December 2025
Reporting Officer:	Sinead Grimes, Director of Property & Projects
Contact Officer:	David Logan, Senior Programme Delivery Manager Shauna Murtagh, Portfolio Manager

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

☐

No

☒

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

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 type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
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Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

☒

No

☐

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues
1.1	<p>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 requests for stage movement approvals under the Capital Programme, approval for best practice site visits to inform the next phase of leisure and an approval to work with DFC to progress the mixed use development at Girdwood.</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"> ○ IT Programme—Website Content Management System (CMS) Upgrade and Website Replacement - Agree that the project is moved to <i>Stage 3 – Committed</i> and held at Tier 0 – Scheme at Risk pending further development of the project and a satisfactory tender return; and that necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate 'framework' arrangements) be initiated with a contract to be awarded on the basis of the most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver ○ City Hall External Christmas Tree provision – Note that a satisfactory tender return has been received and that the Director of Finance has confirmed that this project is within the affordability limits of the Council and agree that a maximum of £77,500 be allocated. ○ Sporting Pitches Investment 2025/26 - Agree that the project is moved to <i>Stage 3 – Committed</i> with a maximum allocation of up to £500,000. ○ Greening & Growing Project – Agree that the project is moved to <i>Stage 3 – Committed</i> with a maximum allocation of up to €30,000 funded through the Shared Island Unit. ○ Ulster Hall Lighting Scheme - Agree that the project is moved to <i>Stage 3 – Committed</i> with a maximum allocation of up to £165,000 funded by the Linen Quarter Bid ○ Depot Charging Scheme - Agree that the project is moved to <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted</i> to allow options to be fully worked up, with further detail to be brought back to Committee in due course. ○ IT Programme—HR/ Payroll Cloud Migration - Agree that the project is added to the Capital Programme at <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i> to allow a business case to be developed.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Assembly Rooms Cluster - Agree that the project is added to the Capital Programme at <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i> to allow a business case to be developed.○ Public AED Replacement - Agree that the project is added to the Capital Programme at <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i> to allow a business case to be developed.● Belfast Stories – note that the Contract for Funding (CFF) has now been received from Department for Economy (DfE) for £65m and is under review prior to acceptance.● Leisure Programme – agree that Member site visits are undertaken in early 2026, to view new products with unique selling points, to consider incorporating within the next phase of leisure.● Girdwood Masterplan – agree that officers work with DfC officials to progress the mixed-use development site at Girdwood with further information to be brought back to Members																								
3.0	Main report <u>Key Issues</u>																								
3.1	Physical Programme 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.																								
3.2	<u>Capital Programme - Proposed Movements</u> 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: <table><tr><th>Project</th><th>Overview</th><th>Stage movement</th></tr><tr><td>IT Programme—Website Content Management System (CMS) Upgrade and Website Replacement</td><td>Phased upgrades, enhancements and full replacements to Council websites</td><td>Move to <i>Stage 3 – Committed</i></td></tr><tr><td>City Hall External Christmas Tree Provision</td><td>Replacement of the current Christmas Tree provision in front of the City Hall with an alternative solution</td><td><i>Stage 3 – Committed with a maximum budget of £77,500</i></td></tr><tr><td>Sporting Pitches Investment 2025/26</td><td>Improvements to pitches</td><td><i>Stage 3 – Committed with a maximum budget of £500,000</i></td></tr><tr><td>Greening and Growing Project</td><td>Biodiversity improvement and sustainable food growing development project at the Waterworks, funded through Shared Island programme</td><td>Move to <i>Stage 3 – Committed with a maximum budget of €30,000</i></td></tr><tr><td>Ulster Hall Lighting Scheme</td><td>Feature lighting to exterior of Ulster Hall funded by the LQ Bid.</td><td>Move to <i>Stage 3 – Committed with a maximum budget of £165,000</i></td></tr><tr><td>Depot Charging Scheme</td><td>Improvements to electric vehicle (EV) charging provision on Council depots.</td><td>Move to <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted</i></td></tr><tr><td>IT Programme—HR/ Payroll Cloud Migration</td><td>HR/Payroll System migration to a new cloud-based platform</td><td>Add as <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i></td></tr></table>	Project	Overview	Stage movement	IT Programme—Website Content Management System (CMS) Upgrade and Website Replacement	Phased upgrades, enhancements and full replacements to Council websites	Move to <i>Stage 3 – Committed</i>	City Hall External Christmas Tree Provision	Replacement of the current Christmas Tree provision in front of the City Hall with an alternative solution	<i>Stage 3 – Committed with a maximum budget of £77,500</i>	Sporting Pitches Investment 2025/26	Improvements to pitches	<i>Stage 3 – Committed with a maximum budget of £500,000</i>	Greening and Growing Project	Biodiversity improvement and sustainable food growing development project at the Waterworks, funded through Shared Island programme	Move to <i>Stage 3 – Committed with a maximum budget of €30,000</i>	Ulster Hall Lighting Scheme	Feature lighting to exterior of Ulster Hall funded by the LQ Bid.	Move to <i>Stage 3 – Committed with a maximum budget of £165,000</i>	Depot Charging Scheme	Improvements to electric vehicle (EV) charging provision on Council depots.	Move to <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted</i>	IT Programme—HR/ Payroll Cloud Migration	HR/Payroll System migration to a new cloud-based platform	Add as <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i>
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Assembly Rooms Cluster	Redevelopment of Assembly Rooms Cluster	Add as <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i>
Public AED Replacement	To replace our current suite of public Automated External Defibrillator (AED) units	Add as <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i>

3.3	<p>IT Programme—Website Content Management System (CMS) Upgrade and Website Replacement</p> <p>This project aims to upgrade the Council’s CMS platform and to deliver a modern, secure, and accessible set of council websites that meet evolving legislative, user, and business requirements. The Content Management System (CMS) is software that lets the Council’s web editors create, edit, organise, and publish content on the council websites. It acts as the backbone for managing text, images, videos, and other digital assets. The provider of the current CMS has informed the Council that the platform we currently use will no longer be supported after December 2026. This means that there will be no support/ maintenance, patching or security updates from that date onwards. This would represent a significant security and reputational risk to the organisation. The project is now part of the overall IT Programme and a business case has been submitted. Members are asked to agree that the project is moved to <i>Stage 3 – Committed</i> and held at Tier 0 – Scheme at Risk, pending further development of the project and a satisfactory tender return; and that necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate ‘framework’ arrangements) be initiated. A contract will be awarded based on the most economically advantageous tender received and full commitment to deliver.</p>
3.4	<p>City Hall Christmas Tree Provision</p> <p>Members will recall that in August 2025 this project was moved to Stage 3 – Committed and held at Tier 0 – Scheme at Risk pending further development of the project and a satisfactory tender return. The project aims to replace the current Christmas Tree provision in front of the City Hall with an alternative solution. The City Hall Christmas tree is a major focal point within the City Centre and can set the tone for the city’s Christmas celebrations, both for visitors and the local economy. Given issues with the quality and supply of real trees it is proposed to purchase an artificial tree which will be installed from 2026 onwards. The Installation - City Hall/ City Hall Grounds Working Group at its meeting on 18th November was updated that the procurement process for the artificial Christmas Tree had been completed and a supplier had been appointed. Members are asked to note that a satisfactory tender return has been received and that the Director of Finance has confirmed that this project is within the affordability limits of the Council and agree that a maximum of £77,500 be allocated.</p>
3.5	<p>Sporting Pitches Investment 2025/26</p> <p>Members will be aware of the successful completion of pitch improvement works for the financial year 2024/25 as reported in April and October 2025. Officers have since been</p>

working to identify opportunities to use the recurring annual budget of £500,000 for the 2025/26 financial year and are proposing the following schemes:

Location/ project	Overview
Wedderburn Park*	Perimeter fencing to enclose 2 existing grass pitches.
Falls Park	Spectator fencing and hard standing to existing grass pitch
Marrowbone Millenium Park	Height increase of existing fencing from 5m to 8m
Clarendon	Height increase in fencing at goal ends to 6m
Cl Ladies Hockey Club	Funding Contribution towards Floodlighting
Belfast Met Montgomery Road	Provision of junior goal posts for use by SBYL
Westlands Pitch	Fencing and improved gates

**A concept design to further enhance Wedderburn Park for the benefit of local residents is being drafted from feedback gathered during preliminary engagement. Further engagement will be carried out and any works arising from this will form a second phase of parks improvements and be separately funded.*

Members are asked to agree that the ‘Sporting Pitches Investment 2025/26’ is moved to Stage 3 – Committed with a maximum allocation of up to £500,000. The Director of Finance has confirmed that this is within the affordability limits of the Council as a rolling programme of investment. Members are asked to note that should there be an underspend, this could be utilised for other projects from the existing shortlist subject to Member agreement.

3.6

Greening & Growing Project

This project was moved to the Capital Programme at Stage 2 – Uncommitted in September 2025. This project focuses on biodiversity improvement and sustainable food growing development funded through Shared Island Fund programme. It will be delivered at the GROW NI community garden at Waterworks, in partnership with Belfast City Council and Belfast Healthy Cities. As per the three-stage approval process, the outline business case has been completed and the project can now progress to delivery stage. **Members are asked to agree that the project is moved to Stage 3 – Committed with a maximum allocation of up to €30,000 from Shared Island funding.**

3.7

Ulster Hall Lighting Scheme

This project was moved to the Capital Programme at Stage 2 – Uncommitted in May 2025. 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. The letter of offer to the Council from Linen Quarter BID for the design phase has been secured. A subsequent letter of offer for the supply and installation is under review. The outline business case has been completed and the project can now progress to delivery stage. **Members are asked to agree that the project is moved to Stage 3 – Committed with a maximum allocation of up to £165,000 fully funded by the LQ Bid.**

3.8	<p>Depot Charging Scheme</p> <p>This project was added to the Capital Programme at Stage 1 – Emerging in October 2025, when the SP&R Committee approved the submission of an application for funding under the Government’s Depot Charging System. The Depot Charging Scheme supports the uptake of zero emission HGVs, vans, and coaches by part-funding the installation of charging infrastructure at fleet depots. The scheme covers 75% of eligible costs incurred and 25% will be the Council’s counterpart. The project which aims to improve the EV charging on Council sites will support the fleet transition and overall decarbonisation of Council fleet. The application for funding has been submitted and a decision is awaited. Members are asked to agree that ‘Depot Charging Scheme’ is moved to Stage 2 – Uncommitted to allow the options to be fully worked up, with further detail to be brought back to Committee in due course, and update regarding the funding position referred above.</p>
3.9	<p>IT Programme—HR/ Payroll Cloud Migration</p> <p>The Council’s current HR/ Payroll System provider has informed the Council that the platform that it currently uses needs to be migrated to a new cloud-based platform. This includes the ResourceLink system and the Optimum (Time & Attendance) system. Members are asked to agree that the ‘HR/ Payroll Cloud Migration’ project is added to the Capital Programme at Stage 1 – Emerging to allow a business case to be developed.</p>
3.10	<p>Assembly Rooms Cluster</p> <p>At the July 2025 special SP&R Committee meeting, Members agreed that a without prejudice/ conditional offer was made to acquire the Assembly Rooms and adjoining properties – the sale completed on 24 October 2025. The Assembly Rooms Cluster consists of approximately 0.5 acres within the former Tribeca Belfast site located in Belfast city centre. The Cluster is comprised of the following buildings: Assembly Rooms (Grade B1 Listed Building) and including rear extension; part of the Donegall Street carpark site; 5 – 9 North Street (former Laffin Travel building); and the Braddell’s Building, 11 North Street (Grade B1 Listed Building). Members are asked to agree that the project is added to the Capital Programme at Stage 1 – Emerging to allow the business case to be developed with further information to be brought back to Committee.</p>
3.11	<p>Public AED Replacement</p> <p>The project aims to replace the Council’s current suite of public Automated External Defibrillator (AED) units to ensure continuity of service provision. Members are asked to agree that the project is added to Stage 1 – Emerging to allow the business case to be developed.</p>
3.12	<p>Belfast Stories</p> <p>Members will recall that Belfast Stories Outline Business Case (OBC) update was considered by the SP&R Committee in April 2025. Belfast Stories is the Council’s flagship project under</p>

	<p>the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) and is due to open in 2030. Positioned as a tourism anchor, Belfast Stories is set to deliver significant economic and social impact for Belfast and beyond, helping to regenerate the city centre and connect the tourism offer to the neighbourhoods. The Committee also noted the detailed overview of the OBC following the 5-case model, with the total estimated capital cost of the preferred option at approximately £100m with £35m funded by BCC and £65m by BRCD. Furthermore, it was agreed to submit the Business Case to the Department for Economy (DfE) for £65m funding as part of the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) and a Contract for Funding (CFF) has now been received. Members will also recall that the project is now at Stage 3 – Committed and held at Tier 0 – Scheme at Risk pending further development of the project and update regarding the funding position referred above. Members are asked to note that the Contract for Funding (CFF) has now been received from Department for Economy (DfE) for £65m and is under review prior to acceptance.</p>
	Leisure Programme – Site Visits
3.13	<p>Members will be aware that work is underway on the development of the next phase of the Leisure Programme with Party Group briefings held in late Autumn. At these the need to look at USPs for the other sites was discussed and the need to look at where there are gaps in provision across the city. To inform this it is proposed that a two-day site visit is undertaken in late January/early February to leisure sites in and around London focusing on sites which provide facilities not currently within the Belfast leisure model. Details of the final itinerary are currently being finalised. It is proposed that this will be for Party Group Leaders or their nominees. Members are asked to agree that site visits are undertaken in early 2026 to London to inform the next phase of leisure.</p>
	Girdwood Masterplan
3.14	<p>Members will be aware that the Girdwood Masterplan includes several agreed elements, some of which have not yet been delivered. These include the leisure facility, which forms part of the Council's Leisure Transformation Programme; housing at the Oldpark end of the site, which the Department for Communities (DfC) is progressing with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive; and the mixed-use development. DfC is leading on the mixed-use site, and officers have been engaging with DfC officials to explore options for progressing its development, including the potential for the Council to act as a development or delivery partner. Members are asked to note these ongoing discussions and to agree that officers continue to work with DfC to identify an appropriate mechanism to deliver the mixed-use site.</p>
3.15	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p><i>Financial Implications –</i></p> <p>City Hall External Christmas Tree Provision – capital budget allocation of up to £77,500.</p>

	<p>Sporting Pitches Investment 2025/26 – recurring capital budget allocation of £500,000. The Director of Finance has confirmed that these are within the affordability limits of the Council.</p> <p>Greening and Growing Project – capital allocation of up to €30,000 externally funded via Shared Island Fund. Letter of Offer is in Euro (€).</p> <p>Ulster Hall Lighting Scheme – capital allocation of up to £165,000, externally funded via Linen Quarter BID.</p> <p><i>Resource Implications</i> – Officer time to deliver.</p>
3.16	<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.