



Subject:	Physical Programme Update
Date:	22 May 2026
Reporting Officer:	Sinead Grimes, Director of Property & Projects
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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	
Sometime in the future	
Never	

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 a request for an approval under the Capital Programme.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is requested to –</p> <p>Capital Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waterfront Hall - Chiller Units – Note that a satisfactory tender return has been received; that the Director of Finance has confirmed that this project is within the affordability limits of the Council; and agree that a maximum of £545,000 be allocated. • Waterfront Hall - Smoke Curtains – Note that this project is being removed from the Capital Programme • Drumglass Park SuDS Project – Note that this project with DfI is added to the Capital Programme at <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i> to allow the project to be developed. <p>Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the update regarding NRF projects as outlined at 3.6 below <p>Local Community Ownership Fund</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note that the £1.5m Local Community Ownership Fund was launched on 20th May and that the Expressions of Interest process is currently open
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 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:</p>

Project	Overview	Stage movement
Waterfront Hall – Chiller Units	Replacement of the chiller units at the Waterfront Hall to ensure adequate cooling for events and operational requirements.	Maximum of up to £545,000 to be allocated
Waterfront Hall – Smoke Curtains	Redesign and replacement of the smoke curtain system at Waterfront Hall due to operational requirements	Removed from Programme
Drumglass Park SuDS Project	Nature based drainage solution at Drumglass Park.	Added at Stage 1 - Emerging

3.3	<p>Waterfront Hall – Chiller Units</p> <p>Members will recall that in February 2026 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. An update was to be brought back to Committee along with the final budget allocation and confirmation that this is within the affordability limits of the Council. 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 £545,000 be allocated.</p>
3.4	<p>Waterfront Hall Smoke Curtains</p> <p>Members are asked to note that following modelling of the auditorium, and with agreement from Building Control and the Fire Service, no major remedial works are required to the Waterfront smoke curtains. Members are asked to note that this project has been removed from the Capital Programme.</p>
3.5	<p>Drumglass Park SuDS Project</p> <p>The DfI Transformation Programme is part of a 4 year pilot programme under the NI Executive’s Public Sector Transformation Fund. It aims to demonstrate how nature-based solutions can help address drainage and wastewater issues, adapt to climate change by managing the flow of rainwater through urban areas, and pave the way for future projects which create a shared vision of ‘Sustainable Drainage Systems’ (SuDS). The Drumglass Park project aligns with these aims, along with the Council’s Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan and DfI’s Living With Water in Belfast. The project aims to reduce the risk of flooding and pollution, promote biodiversity, create a space for education, support economic growth by freeing up capacity for new sewer connections and provide a positive example for future opportunities. A detailed project programme is under development, subject to agreement with key stakeholders, community engagement and securing necessary statutory approvals. Members are asked to note that this project with DfI is added to the Capital Programme at Stage 1 – Emerging to allow the project to be developed. Members are asked to note that this project is due to be 100% funded and delivered by DfI.</p>

	Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund projects
3.6	<p>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. 20 projects across the city have received in-principle funding commitment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 projects have been completed to date – Markets Heritage Hub (acquisition of the building) and Belfast Orange Hall - 3 projects are currently on the ground and/or nearing completion – Solas, Michael Davitts GAC, the ACT Initiative and Ardoyne Youth Entreprises <p>Work is continuing with the other projects. Members will be aware that projects were agreed in 2024 and costs were based on business cases developed in 2024 and that there was recognition that construction costs had risen in the intervening period and that they continue to be impacted by global events. Members had therefore previously requested that an update on NRF projects as brought back to Committee and it is proposed that this will be brought back in June along with the year-end financial paper to be brought by the Director of Finance.</p>
3.7	<p>Members will note that the SP&R Committee last month agreed an additional £200k from the discretionary fund for the 'Croí na Carraige - 'The Heart of the Rock' project by Glor Na Mona. Members are also asked to note that the contractor who has been appointed for the USEL – Circular economy project has advised the Council that they are exercising the X1 clause within their contract. X1 clauses are now built into all construction contracts and allow for price adjustment to contracts reflecting Inflation indices. They are designed to provide protection for parties in volatile markets. Members are asked to note this is being applied by the contractor for the USEL project given recent market volatility.</p>
	Local Community Ownership Fund
3.8	<p>The Local Community Ownership Fund (LCOF) is a £1.5m initiative investing in the transformation of local places, supporting community wealth building and capacity development. The LCOF will support capital related projects that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support the acquisition of community assets or existing derelict sites for viable and sustainable community use. • prevent the risk of loss of such assets in local community areas and ensure that they are used for maximum community benefit. • enable existing community groups to move to new, larger and/or more appropriate locations within the same area. • strengthen local community ownership of assets.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> strengthen social & community infrastructure that needs to be in place to allow local areas to thrive. <p>Members have previously agreed that LCOF will involve an open call for applications, with three stages to the application and approval process. The fund will remain open to applications until respective area allocations are exhausted.</p>
3.9	<p>Members are asked to note that the LCOF was launched on Wednesday 20th May. The Expression of Interest Stage is now open and will close on Wednesday 16 June. The Stage 2 Application process will open on Friday 19 June and will close on Friday 28 August. Updates on all applications and the assessment results will be brought to the Council’s Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for decisions on next steps. Groups will be able to find information on the Council’s website and Council officers will respond to queries throughout the application process. Members are asked to cascade information about the opening of the LCOF through their social media etc.</p>
3.10	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p><i>Financial Implications –</i></p> <p>Waterfront Hall – Chiller Units - capital allocation of up to £545,000. The Director of Finance has confirmed that this is within the affordability limits of the Council.</p> <p>Drumglass Park SuDS Project – this project is due to be fully externally funded and delivered.</p> <p><i>Resource Implications –</i> Officer time to deliver.</p>
3.11	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>The legislation requirements have been met including screening.</p> <p>All physical projects are designed for people and are inherently inclusive and accessible.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None.