

**Democratic Services Section
Legal and Civic Services Department
Belfast City Council
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS**



**Belfast
City Council**

7th March, 2022

MEETING OF CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet in hybrid format, both in the Council Chamber and via Microsoft Teams, on Wednesday, 9th March, 2022 at 5.15 pm, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

RONAN CREGAN

Deputy Chief Executive

AGENDA:

- (b) Blue and Green Infrastructure Funding (Pages 1 - 10)

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Subject:	DfI Blue Green Infrastructure Fund – Active Travel Projects
Date:	9 th March 2022
Reporting Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Director, City Regeneration & Development
Contact Officer:	Sean Dolan, Senior Development Manager

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time 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	To update the Committee on DfI's Blue Green Infrastructure Funding relating to Active Travel Projects
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Members of the Committee are asked to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note the Letter of Offer from DfI for capital funding to deliver Active Travel Enabling projects and that officers are currently in ongoing discussions with the Department on funding draw down and around the conditions of the LoO in particular the tight

	<p>timeframes and risk in terms of delivery of the projects as outlined within this paper. A verbal update on the outcome of these discussions will be provided to Committee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dependant on the outcome of the ongoing discussions with DfI (with verbal update to be provided to Committee) to agree to recommend to the SP&R Committee advanced procurement of the covered cycle stands and cycle repair stands with further details on locations to be brought back to this Committee. Whilst the LoO is very welcome and is aligned to Council priorities officers would however highlight that any recommendation to accept this will need to consider any risk to delivery and potential financial implications in terms of clawback etc. • Dependant on the outcome of the ongoing discussions with DfI, to agree to the delivery of secured cycle units through an Expression of Interest approach to identify suitable delivery partners, with the outcome on the EoI including specification requirements to be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee; • Note the proposal to develop the designs for the Greater Clarendon North South Spine, and agree that Officers work with DfI and others to secure funding and to bring the designs through to RIBA Stage 3
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>The CG&R Committee received an update, and provided approvals, in September and October 2021 on the Active Travel Enabling projects under delivery through the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme, including a new temporary Active Travel Hub in Cathedral Gardens, expansion of the Belfast Bike scheme and replacement of the fleet, the establishment of an e-cargo bike pilot scheme and 10 new covered cycle parking locations located on Council assets across the city. The Committee were also informed that there was potential to seek additional funding through the DfI Blue Green Infrastructure Fund to deliver additional covered cycle stand locations as well secure cycle parking that could be delivered in partnership with, for example Translink or Multi-Story Car Park suppliers that can provide publicly accessible locations within a managed and serviced area.</p>
3.2	<p><u>Report</u></p> <p>As reported to the SP&R Committee in January 2022 Council submitted proposals to DfI for greenway and active travel projects that could potentially receive capital funding this financial year. These proposals were put forward based on receiving funding by October/November 2021 to facilitate completion by the end of the financial year. The submitted proposals had a focus on enhancements to live projects that have the best chance of delivery within the financial year. On this basis a business case was submitted to the Department seeking funding to deliver a further roll out of city-wide covered cycle stands, secure parking units to be delivered with partner organisations and the introduction and installation of bicycle repair</p>

	<p>stations along the active travel network. This application was submitted in recognition that Active Travel and connectivity are strategic priorities for Belfast, identified within the PfG, Belfast Agenda and underpinned within A Bolder Vision for Belfast. Through the Community Planning Partnership – City Development Board it was also agreed across the Partners that connectivity and sustainable and active travel should be a priority for the city, both in terms of meeting our sustainable objectives but also in terms of making the city a more accessible, attractive and liveable city. While the CG&R Committee received a report from DfI in December 2021 on the Belfast Cycle Network outlining the timeframe for developing up and delivering the much-needed expansion of the capital infrastructure it is recognised that an opportunity exists now to deliver Active Travel enabling projects in advance of these capital works, and to further compliment the schemes and projects delivered through the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme.</p>
3.3	<p>The SP&R Committee were informed in January 2022 that although funding had not been confirmed, DfI had publicly announced their intended support for four capital proposals – enhancements to the Forth Meadow Greenway Project at Sections 1 & 3, enhanced Connectivity between City Quays, Greater Clarendon and City Centre, and Active Travel Enablers such as cycle parking and bike repair stands. The SP&R Committee were informed that no formal offer of funding had been made, and that further work was required to establish the timeframes constraints given global supply chain issues and the need to mitigate against these issues, as well as constraints put forward in relation to match-funding requirements, and the Committee noted these risks to delivery.</p>
3.4	<p>On the 2nd February 2022 Council received a Letter of Offer from DfI to provide capital funding to support Active Travel Enabling Projects in line with the Business Case submitted to the Department. The Letter of Offer for £207,500 of capital funding includes cycle parking, secure cycle parking and cycle repair stands. It should be noted that the LoO commits Council to in year spend but given that we are now in March, this is the focus of ongoing discussions between officers and DfI, and a verbal update will be provided to Committee on the outcome of these. Officers are working to ensure that funding could be drawn down in a manner which would ensure deliverability and protects the interests of the Council and provide a level of comfort to Council in terms of advance procuring where possible, as well as allowing adequate planning, further procurement and installation of the capital schemes. The approval of the procurement and delivery of these schemes will also be subject to approval at the SP&R Committee. Whilst the LoO is very welcome and is aligned to Council priorities officers would highlight that a recommendation to accept this cannot be made if there is a risk to delivery and any potential financial implications in terms of clawback etc.</p>

3.5	<p>Under the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme Officers had engaged Sustrans to identify a list of locations for covered cycle stands that can be further developed to bring forward the additional units under this funding stream. Officers from CRD, PP and CNS are currently working through this list and identifying potential for use of Council lands and 3rd Party landowners and any required permissions prior to bringing a final list of locations to Committee. Given the timing of the Letter of Offer, and pending Committee approval it is proposed to advance procure the covered cycle units with a list of locations to brought back to this Committee for agreement prior to installation. This is subject to the outcome to ongoing discussions with the Department in relation to the draw down of funding and conditions within the LoO.</p>
3.6	<p>With regard to the secure cycle units these are more complex in in terms of the need for physical assets /infrastructure, different operational models, staff resourcing, revenue tails etc. Officers have held a number of discussions with potential delivery partners including, Translink and Multi-Story Car Park Operators, that can utilise existing physical assets and provide strategically located, publicly accessible, and maintained and operated locations that could deliver out additional secure cycle parking as pilot projects for this type of provision. Subject to the outcome of discussions with the Department in relation to the Loo and pending Committee approval, it is proposed to engage the wider market through an Expression of Interest, with a potential to provide capital grant funding to delivery partners to install and operate secure parking infrastructure within their existing assets and to provide regular monitoring and reporting on the usage and uptake of the scheme to further inform potential future projects. It is proposed to run the EoI from the end of March of a period of 3 weeks followed by application and capital grant award process. Delivery partners will be assessed on their location in relation to key trip attractors and the Belfast Cycle Network, as well as their operating model and ability to adequately deliver a publicly accessible model. It is proposed that the results of this EOI is brought back to Committee at the earliest opportunity, and prior to awarding funding to deliver the secure cycle units. This is subject to the outcome to ongoing discussions with the Department in relation to the draw down of funding and conditions within the LoO.</p>
3.7	<p>Officers are also working on a list of locations for the cycle repair stations, aligned to the existing cycle network and Council assets. Subject also to the outcome of discussions with the Department it is proposed to advance procure these units to meet the funding timeframes with further detail on locations to be brought back to this Committee at a future date.</p>
3.8	<p><u>Enhanced Connectivity between Greater Clarendon, City Quays and the City Centre.</u></p>

	<p>There have been ongoing discussions between DfI and Council in relation to the enhancement to the connecting routes to and from the city centre and the greater Clarendon area. This will better link communities from the Greater Clarendon / Sailortown area to and from the city centre. Given issues of severance with the city centre this was identified as a priority connectivity project in the Greater Clarendon and Sailortown Masterplan / Accessibility Guide progressed by DfI in conjunction with BCC, DfI and other partners including local communities. Building on these discussions and the proposal within the Masterplan /Accessibility Guide an application was submitted to DfI to develop up the designs for the Greater Clarendon North South Spine to RIBA Stage 3, under a project entitled 'Enhanced Connectivity between Greater Clarendon, City Quays and the City Centre'.</p>
3.9	<p>This project relates to the development of design proposals to enhance the urban environment and connectivity between the city centre and the Greater Clarendon area through the design of public realm/open space and active travel infrastructure improvements within the project area, known as the 'North-South Spine'.</p>
3.10	<p>As above the 'North-South Spine' concept was developed as part of the Greater Clarendon & Sailortown Masterplan and subsequent Public Realm & Accessibility Design Guide, which noted the importance of improved north-south pedestrian and cycle links (and east-west links) in terms of integrating Greater Clarendon and Sailortown into the city centre, enhancing local links to the Cathedral Quarter and City Quays, and linking the two new proposed city parks at Cathedral Gardens and City Quays.</p>
3.11	<p>Alongside the emerging plans for 'City Quays Gardens', it is proposed to develop similarly ambitious streetscape and open space design proposals for adjacent connecting streets. The proposed area takes in Tomb St, Corporation St and Little Patrick St/Great Patrick St, and design development would focus on enhancing local public realm and ease of movement, while contributing to wider city connectivity, including pedestrian and cycle links between City Quays and Custom House Square, the Cathedral Quarter and UU campus and accommodation. It is proposed that the appointed team would develop design information to RIBA Stage 3 for environmental and connectivity improvements for streets and spaces within the project area. Proposed interventions may include, but would not be limited to, enhanced pedestrian crossings, dedicated cycle lanes, soft landscaping, lighting, resurfacing, open space, street furniture. This is subject to the outcome of ongoing discussions with the Department in relation to the draw down of funding and any conditions which may be contained within a future LoO.</p>

3.12	<p>In line with the RIBA Plan of Work, preparation of design information to Stage 3 would include site appraisal, concept development, options appraisal, business case development, feasibility studies, development of project brief / budget / programme and stakeholder engagement. Specific outputs from the currently proposed design development work would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RIBA Stage 3 Report • Outline Specification • Cost Plan • Planning application submitted
3.13	<p>On completion of RIBA Stage 3, funding options to support capital delivery would be further explored with delivery partners, including Dfl, as a 'shovel-ready project', in order to progress to delivery/construction. It should also be noted that a number of developer contributions have been agreed in principle for public realm provision, but not yet secured within this area,</p>
3.14	<p>A business case has been submitted to Dfl and the indication from Dfl is that an offer of circa 50% funding may be made by the Department. Officers are currently exploring opportunities for match-funding to meet the remaining funding requirements. Further updates will be brought to this Committee at a future date.</p>
3.15	<p>Finance & Resource Implications</p>
	<p>The capital costs associated with the Active Travel Enabler projects referenced in this report are to be covered from the Dfl Blue & Green Infrastructure Fund (subject to the verbal update at Committee in relation to conditions of funding). In relation to the 'Enhanced Connectivity between Greater Clarendon, City Quays and the City Centre' design work, a LoO has not yet been received although Dfl has indicated it may be forthcoming based on circa 50% of the cost. There are ongoing discussions in relation to further third-party funding for the remaining cost and an update will be brought back to Committee.</p> <p>All proposals will be subject to the Council's Capital Governance Process. A verbal update will be provided to Committee on the outcome of ongoing discussions with Dfl in relation to the drawdown of funding.</p>
3.16	<p>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</p>
	<p>Equality of opportunity and good relations, and disability duties screening will be carried out on the schemes prior to implementation.</p>
4.0	<p>Appendices – Documents attached</p>

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SAILORTOWN

UNIVERSITY
AREA

CITY QUAYS

CATHEDRAL QUARTER

NORTH-SOUTH SPINE

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