

South Belfast Area Working Group

Monday, 22nd August, 2022

MEETING OF SOUTH BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

HELD IN THE LAVERY ROOM AND REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillors Bunting, Gormley, Groogan,
T. Kelly, Lyons, McDonough-Brown, McKeown,
Murray and Spratt.

In attendance: Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes;
Mr. S. Leonard, Neighbourhood Services Manager
(South Belfast);
Mr. G. Bell, Project Officer - Off Street Parking/
Alleygating
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer

Election of Chairperson

The Working Group was reminded that, since this was its first meeting since the Annual Meeting of the Council in June, it was required to elect a Member to serve as Chairperson.

Accordingly, Councillor Bunting was proposed by Councillor T. Kelly and seconded by Councillor Murray, whilst Councillor McKeown was proposed by Councillor Groogan and seconded by Councillor Lyons.

Four Members then voted for Councillor Bunting and four for Councillor McKeown.

As there was an equality of votes, the Working Group agreed to defer the matter, in the event that those Members who were not present for the vote might attend before the formal part of the meeting had concluded.

(Councillor Groogan in the Chair.)

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 23rd May were approved by the Working Group.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Gormley declared an interest in relation to agenda item 3 - Update on Physical Programme, on the basis that he was a Board member of LORAG which owned

the Lockhouse referred to in project SLIF2-13. However, as the Working Group was not being asked to take a decision on that project, he was not required to leave the meeting whilst that item was being considered.

Councillor T. Kelly declared an interest in relation to agenda item 3 - Update on Physical Programme, in so far as it related to a request from Urban Villages for funding towards the Arts and Digital Hub project in Sandy Row. She confirmed that she had attended a meeting involving Mr. E. Poots MLA and Urban Villages to discuss plans for the Sandy Row area generally and did not participate whilst the report was being considered.

Update on Physical Programme

The Director of Physical Programmes submitted for the Working Group's consideration the following 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, the Belfast Investment Fund, Social Outcomes Fund and the new Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund. In addition, the programme covers projects which the Council is delivering in behalf of other agencies. This report outlines the status of projects under the Physical Programme.

2. Recommendations

The Working Group is asked to:

- note the physical programme update for South Belfast, and;**
- recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it approve a request from the Urban Villages Initiative for a specific and total allocation of £584,167 for the Arts and Digital Hub project, to enable a Letter of Offer to be released.**

3. Local Investment Fund (LIF)

Members are reminded LIF is a £9m fixed programme of capital investment in non-council neighbourhood assets, over two tranches: LIF 1 (2012-2015) - £5m total funding pot, allocated across each AWG areas; and LIF 2 (2015 -2019) - £4m allocation. Each LIF project proposal is taken through a Due Diligence process prior to any funding award. The table below outlines funding spend to date for each tranche, at key stages of the delivery process: 24 projects received 'In Principle' letters under LIF1 and LIF2, of which 21 have been completed; 1 project at delivery stage, 1 at pre-construction

stage and 1 project still at initial stage. Further details of these are outlined below.

| LIF breakdown – South | LIF 1 | | LIF 2 | |
|--|--------------|-------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Stage/ Description: | No. Projects | Amount (£) | No. Projects | Amount/ (£) |
| Number of Projects Completed | 12 (92%) | £1,053,600 | 9 (82%) | £676,000 |
| Number of Projects in Delivery | | | 1 (9%) | £80,000 |
| Number of Projects in Pre-construction | | | 1 (9%) | £40,000 |
| Number of Project in Initial Stage (Due Diligence) | 1 (8%) | £30,000 | | |
| Total Number of Approved Projects | 13 | £1,083,600 | 11 | £796,000 |

The table below provides an overview of progress and actions around the remaining live projects – Holylands Area Improvement Initiative (£80,000), Finaghy Bridge (£30,000) and The Lockhouse (£40,000). Members are asked to note the status of the live LIF projects and the ongoing actions.

| LIF Ref | PROJECT | FUNDING | STAGE | STATUS | ACTION/RECOMMENDATION |
|----------|---|---------|--------------|---|---|
| SLIF2-07 | Holylands Area Improvement Initiative | £80,000 | Awarded | A contractor has been appointed to undertake these works – challenges remain in terms of supply. There is regular contact with the contractor and community group (QUBA) on the project status. | Continue engagement with the contractor, group and partners |
| SLIF2-13 | The Lockhouse— Gateway to the River / Walkway | £40,000 | Design stage | Partnership project with UV. Business Case is now approved – awaiting Letter of Offer. Further | Continued engagement with the group. |

| | | | | | |
|---------|----------------|---------|---------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| | | | | potential funding from DfI and DfC. At design stage and planning application has been submitted. | |
| SLIF017 | Finaghy Bridge | £30,000 | Initial stage | DfI Roads are now taking the lead on design and the Council will contribute the LIF funding to DfI. | Continue engagement with DfI Roads. |

4. Belfast Investment Fund (BIF)

Members are reminded BIF is a £28m investment fund for regeneration partnership projects, with a minimum £250k investment from Council BIF – South Belfast was allocated £5.5m; with additional £500k ringfenced for new areas (outer South) that had joined the District area under Local Government Reform. In South Belfast, 6 projects received an In-Principle funding commitment, thereby fully allocating its £5.5m, and £500k pot of funding. Each 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.

Summary of BIF Allocated Projects

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| South | Stage 3—Lagan Gateway—£2.1m; Lanyon Tunnels—£1.3m; Bredagh GAC- £700k Stage 1— Coffee Culture, Sandy Row Open Space project and BSCR IT Exam Centre project (Sandy Row Arts & Digital Hub) [Sandy Row area projects, formerly Gilpins]— £1.35m <i>Stage 1—Belfast Islamic Centre—no commitment</i> |
| Balmoral DEA | Stage 3 - Knockbreda Parish Church Hall—£250k Stage 2— Linfield FC/ Boys Brigade and Belvoir FC—£250k |

| Ref | Project | BIF funding | Stage | Status | Action/ recommendation |
|-------|--|-------------|--------------------|---|---|
| BIF04 | Lagan Gateway | £2.1m | On ground | Phase 1 of the project complete and bridge is open. Handover and operation discussions are underway within Council regarding the lock. Design of Phase 2 of the project has started. Nature murals on the piers are already complete and remainder are underway. Potential match funding from Dfl for Phase 2. | Continue engagement with the group and key stakeholders. |
| BIF19 | Bredagh GAC | £700,000 | Tender stage | Tender issued. Proposal involves refurbishment of existing building to provide a club house and community facility. Construction due to commence in Autumn 2022. | Continue engagement with the group. |
| BIF07 | Lanyon Tunnels | £1.3m | Stage 3- Committed | Project has been impacted by the JR decision on the adjacent site to the tunnels – the adjacent site is a critical access point for the project, enabling range of connectivity outcomes and benefits. A new planning application was submitted in October 2021. The SIF programme has expired, and Urban Villages have been approached as potential funder in place of SIF. Ongoing discussions with group, DfC and TEO. | Officer engagement with Executive Office as key funder, and key stakeholders. |
| BIF33 | Linfield FC/ Boys Brigade and Belvoir FC | £250,000 | Stage 3- Committed | Proposal for Phase 1A of larger sports hub project – replacement of Belvoir FC's grass football pitch, road access works and resurfacing carpark. Planning consent for wider development in place. NIHE agreed in principle the land disposal and have | Continue engagement with the group. |

| | | | | | |
|--------------|--|--|-------------------|--|---|
| | | | | instructed their solicitor accordingly. The Boys Brigade and Project Promoter are working with officers Belfast City Council to fulfil the Due Diligence requirements. | |
| BIF46 | Coffee Culture | £1.35m – total allocation for the Sandy Area projects (formerly Gilpins) | Stage 1- Emerging | Partnership project with UV. Letter of Offer approved. Property Purchase completed. Also includes SOF and DfC funding. BIF funding commitment agreed as the shortfall amount at SAWG March 2021. At design stage and planning application is being prepared. <i>Part of Sandy Row Area projects.</i> | Continue engagement with the group. |
| BIF47 | Sandy Row Open Space project | | Stage 1- Emerging | Work is progressing, location being confirmed with an exploration of potential opportunities in terms of final project, urban farm to allotments or a mixed development based on community needs. <i>Part of Sandy Row Area projects.</i> | Continue engagement with the group. |
| BIF48 | Sandy Row Arts and Digital Hub <i>(formerly BSCR IT Exam Centre project)</i> | | Stage 1- Emerging | Partnership project with UV. Property purchase progressing. At design stage and planning application is required. The business case process by UV has shown that there is a funding deficit of £121,152. UV have requested that the Council consider meeting this funding shortfall, amounting to a total BIF contribution of £584,187 so that the Letter of Offer can be released. <i>Part of Sandy Row Area projects.</i> | Agree in principle the allocation of BIF funding to address the funding deficit |

Arts and Digital Hub – Request for Increased Allocation

In March 2022, SP&R Committee agreed to the recommendation of SAWG that the Arts and Digital Hub project be allocated £463,015 of the £1.35m which had been ringfenced for Sandy Row area projects (formerly Gilpin's). Following completion of the Business Case process, a shortfall is identified of £121,152. Members are asked to consider a request from the Urban Villages Initiative for a specific and total allocation of £584,167 for the Arts & Digital Hub project so that a Letter of Offer can be released. Members are asked to note that an allocation for this project would form part of the £1.35m ringfenced for Sandy Row Area projects.

5. Social Outcomes Fund

SOF is £4m ringfenced capital investment programme with a focus on local community tourism projects. 3 projects in South Belfast received an In-Principle funding commitment. Similar to LIF and BIF, all projects are subject to Due Diligence process prior to any funding award. Members are asked to note the progress update of each project in the table below.

SOF – South Belfast projects overview

| Project | SOF Award | Status and update | Recommendation/ Proposed Action |
|--|-----------|--|--|
| SOF02 Coffee Culture <i>UV partnership</i> | £100,000 | As above at BIF46. Partnership project with UV. Letter of Offer approved. Property Purchase completed. Also includes SOF and DfC funding. BIF funding commitment agreed as the shortfall amount at SAWG March 2021. At design stage and planning application is being prepared. | Continue engagement with the group and key stakeholders. |
| SOF04 Sandy Row Community Forum | £80,000 | Development of a Tourism Trail to complement the Transport Hub. Due Diligence complete. The project concept has been developed and costed. Belfast South Community Resources have signed off the project concept. Council will act as delivery agent for the project and will assist in the maintenance of signage as part of the council-wide upkeep of tourism signage. The project is ready to start on site subject to DfI clearance which is expected imminently. | Continue engagement with the group |

6. Capital Programme

The Capital Programme is a rolling programme to either enhance existing Council assets or build / buy new assets or facilities. Table below provides an update on current live projects South Belfast area. Members are asked to note status and update.

South Belfast – Capital Programme Overview

| Project | Status and update |
|--|---|
| Playground Improvement Programme 2021/2022 (City wide) | Stage 3 – <i>Committed</i> . Ormeau (Park Road) playground. Project completed. |
| Alleygating Phase 5 – City wide | Stage 1 – <i>Emerging</i> . Request to August SP&R to move to Stage 2 – <i>Uncommitted</i> . Engagement underway with Members to confirm locations. |
| Palm House, Botanic Gardens | Stage 1 – <i>Emerging</i> . Link to Tropical Ravine |

7. Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund

The Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund is a £10m capital fund to help groups deliver capital projects that will make a real, long term difference in their communities. Members will recall that the fund was originally £8m and has been bolstered by an additional £2m via the reallocation of year end surpluses. The fund has attracted significant interest and an exceptionally high volume of applications was received. The Fund encompasses a three-stage process as approved by Council. Stage 1 is the application phase; Stage 2 is the development phase and Stage 3 is the delivery phase. The fund closed to applicants in May 2022. Members were advised that they would be updated on the outcome of the Stage 1 – Application stage once all the applications were collated and reviewed by an assessment panel against the agreed project assessment matrix. An intensive period of eligibility review, validation, panel assessment and moderation has now been completed with final checks now underway. Reports will be brought to Members shortly via the AWGs as per the agreed process. Activity remains in line with the timeframe previously presented to Members.

8. Externally Funded Programmes

The Council is the delivery partner for several government department on key capital investment programmes, namely Social Investment Fund (SIF) and Urban Villages (UV) from the Executive Office as well as a number of schemes with DfC and DfI. The following is an overview of projects within each programme relevant to South Belfast.

Social Investment Fund

The table below provides a status update on the remaining SIF project in South Belfast. Officers continue to liaise with TEO officials in relations to this project.

SIF – South Belfast Projects Overview

| Project | Status and update |
|--|--|
| Lanyon Tunnels (<i>no Letter of Offer in place</i>) | Project has been impacted by the JR decision on the adjacent site to the tunnels – the adjacent site is a critical access point for the project, enabling range of connectivity outcomes and benefits (SIF business case dependent on connectivity). Members are asked to note that discussions remain ongoing with Executive Office under Urban Villages and DfC. |

Urban Villages Initiative

Table below is the status update on UV projects in South Belfast – note the UV programme has a defined South Belfast geography (Sandy Row; Donegall Pass and Markets).

UV – South Belfast Projects Overview

| Project | Status and update |
|---|--|
| Coffee Culture <i>SOF and BIF</i> | As above at BIF46. Partnership project with UV. Letter of Offer approved. Property Purchase completed. Also includes SOF and DfC funding. BIF funding commitment agreed as the shortfall amount at SAWG March 2021. At design stage and planning application is being prepared. |
| The Lockhouse— Gateway to the River / Walkway | As above at SLIF2-13. Partnership project with UV. Business Case is now approved – awaiting Letter of Offer. Further potential funding from DfI and DfC. At design stage and planning application has been submitted. |
| Sandy Row Arts and Digital Hub <i>BIF (formerly IT Exam Centre)</i> | As above at BIF48. Partnership project with UV. Property purchase progressing. At design stage and planning application is required. The business case process by UV has shown that there is a funding deficit of £121,152. UV have requested that the Council consider meeting this funding shortfall, amounting to a total BIF contribution of £584,187 so that the Letter of Offer can be released. |
| Accidental Theatre (Shaftesbury Square) | Business Case at preliminary stage and progressing. |
| School of Music Redevelopment | Urban Villages has confirmed that this project has been removed from the Programme. |

DfC Funded Projects

Listed below is the status update on project funded by Department for Communities in South Belfast.

DfC – South Belfast Projects Overview

| Project | Status and update |
|--|--|
| Belfast Islamic Centre – Renovations of Aldersgate House, University Rd | The Council is the delivery agent for this project. Working in conjunction with BIC and DfC the project has progressed to tender. After a period of delay to rectify some issues the project has now commenced on site as of the 15 August. A delivery agreement between DfC, BIC and BCC is in development. Further progress updates will be brought back in due course to the AWG. |
| Holylands Alleygating and Cleansing Project | DfC funding in the sum of £120,000 has been confirmed and project progressing. |
| Strangford Playing Fields | Feasibility study completed. Potential funding sources are being explored with discussions ongoing with DfC. |

DfI Funded Projects

Listed below is the status update on project funded by Department for Infrastructure in South Belfast.

DfI – South Belfast Projects Overview

| Project | Status and update |
|---|--|
| Finaghy Bridge | As above at SLIF017. Design stage. |
| Lagan Gateway | As above as BIF04. Underway. |
| Covered cycle stands Phase 1 | <i>Via Revitalisation Programme (DfC, DfI)</i> Belvoir Activity Centre – due to be installed in late August Mary Peters Track – due to be installed in September |
| Covered cycle stands Phase 2 | <i>Via DfI Active Travel Enablers Blue and Green Infrastructure Fund</i> Botanic Gardens, Ormeau Park - Currently in production and due for installation by May 2023. Potential additional locations: Cherryvale Park, Shaftesbury Centre, Musgrave Park. |
| Expansion of Belfast Bikes Network | <i>Via Revitalisation Programme (DfC, DfI)</i> The new station at Olympia in South is due to be installed in Autumn. Further stations are also under development via the Council funded scheme. |

The Committee adopted the recommendations and noted that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 19th August, had agreed to name the Lagan Gateway Bridge in memory of Noah Donohoe.

Election of Chairperson

At this point, Councillor Spratt joined the meeting and voted in favour of Councillor Bunting acting as Chairperson of the Working Group.

As the formal part of the proceedings had now ended, Councillor Bunting was, accordingly, elected to serve as Chairperson for the period to end on the date of the Local Government Elections in May, 2023.

(Councillor Bunting in the Chair.)

Workshop - Alleygating Phase 5

The Working Group then proceeded to hold a workshop, with the aim of identifying locations in South Belfast which would benefit from the erection of alleygates, under Phase 5 of the Council's Alleygating Scheme.

Chairperson