

North Belfast Area Working Group

Tuesday, 27th February, 2024

NORTH BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

Members present: Councillor Bradley (Chairperson);
Alderman McCullough; and
Councillors Anglin, Cobain, Doran,
Magee, Maskey, Nelson, Ó Néill
and Whyte.

In attendance: Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Property and Projects;
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies for inability to attend were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 21st November were approved by the Working Group.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Withdrawn Item

The item under the heading "Summer Programming Additional Needs" was withdrawn from the agenda.

Physical Programmes Update

The Director of Property and Projects provided the Working Group with an overview of the undernoted 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 (LIF), the Belfast Investment Fund (BIF), Social Outcomes Fund (SOF) and the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (NRF); in addition, the programme covers projects that the Council is delivering in behalf of other agencies. This report outlines the status of projects under the Physical Programme.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note the physical programme update for North Belfast, and;
- Consider the request from Belfast Orange Hall to use the NRF allocation to progress with a reduced scope of works.

3. Local Investment Fund

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 with the North being allocated £1.127m under LIF1 and £800,000 under LIF2.

Each LIF project proposal is taken through a Due Diligence process prior to any funding award. The table below outlines funding to date for each tranche, at key stages of the delivery process: 43 projects in total have received In Principle support under LIF1 and LIF2, of which 36 have been completed; 2 are at delivery stage; 1 is at pre-construction stage and 4 remain at due diligence/ initial stages.

LIF breakdown – North	LIF 1		LIF 2	
Stage/ Description	Projects	Value (£)	Projects	Value (£)
Number of Projects Completed	23 (92%)	£996,500	13 (72%)	£624,867
Number of Projects On-going Delivery			2 (11%)	£96,667
Number of Projects in Pre-construction			1 (6%)	£46,667
Number of Projects in Initial Stage (Due Diligence)	2(8%)	£131,000	2 (11%)	£30,000
Total Number of Approved Projects	25*	£1,127,500	18**	£798,201

**This includes additional funding for a LIF 2 project, Ballysillan Youth for Christ.*

*** This includes additional funding for two LIF 1 projects, Marrowbone Parochial Hall and Jennymount Church.*

The table below provide an overview of progress and actions around the remaining live projects. Members are asked to note the status of the current LIF projects and the ongoing actions.

LIF Ref	Project	LIF Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
NLIF2-14	Star Neighbourhood Centre	£58,467	Complete	Project completed.	Continue engagement with the group on post monitoring
NLIF2-21	Somme Group – cross	£21,667	Complete	Works complete.	Continue engagement with group.

	community memorial			Snagging underway.	
NLIF2-22	Sailortown, St. Joseph's Church Refurbishment	£75,000	On Ground	On ground. Works on gallery paused pending HED consent. Architectural option drawings for HED designed and submitted for HED approval. Awaiting decision.	Continue engagement with group and HED.
NLIF2-19	Women's Tec	£46,667	Pre-construction	Project approved by Due Diligence Group. Funding agreement has been signed and sealed. Contractor to commence works imminently.	Continue engagement with Group
NLIF014	Westland Community Centre - new building <i>(Link to UV Project)</i>	£65,000	Due Diligence stage	Partnership project with UV. Work is progressing on the land arrangements and the governance model. A Letter of Offer is awaited from the Executive Office.	Continue engagement with Group and The Executive Office
NLIF057	Ardoyne Holy Cross Boxing Club <i>(Link to UV project – ABC Trust H&L Hub)</i>	£66,000	Due Diligence stage	On ground. This project is part of the UV development of St Gemma's School - ABC Trust. Phase 1 works are complete. Boxing Club LIF project will be part of Phase 2 which has now commenced.	Continue engagement with Group and with UV
NLIF2-03	Holy Cross Trust/ Houben Centre <i>(The Parent Room)</i>	£15,000	Due Diligence stage	Agreed in June 2018. Project remains at Due Diligence	Continue engagement with Group to provide support with project.

				stage. Project plan is being updated by the group to reflect the current requirements however it is continuing to prove challenging to progress the project.	
NLIF2-05	Mercy Primary, Crumlin Road	£15,000	Due Diligence stage	Agreed in June 2016. Officers requested more information on the community use and benefit along with details on the logistics of opening the playground to the community within a school facility. Additional information requested is still outstanding.	Continue engagement with the school to obtain requested information for DD.

4. Belfast Investment Fund

Members are reminded BIF is a £28m investment fund for regeneration partnership projects, with a minimum £250k investment from Council BIF – North Belfast was allocated £5.5m. In North Belfast, 7 projects have received an In-Principle funding commitment under BIF, thereby fully allocating its £5.5m; and 2 projects are on the longer BIF list. Each of the ‘In Principle’ projects are taken through a 3-stage approval process, including a rigorous Due Diligence process before any Funding Agreement is approved and put in place.

Members are asked to note the status update of these projects provided below. The table provides a summary of BIF allocated projects i.e. project stage; project title; and funding allocated.

Summary of BIF allocated projects

North	<p>Stage 3 - Cancer Lifeline—£575k; Grace Family Centre —£1.3m; Midland Boxing Club £550k; Marrowbone Park £750k; Cavehill Tennis Club- £71k</p> <p>Stage 2- Malgrove- £950k, Cultural Community Hub - £350k</p> <p>Stage 1 - Cliftonville Community Forum, Sunningdale Community Centre - no commitment</p>
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BIF Ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
BIF41	Marrowbone Millennium Park	BIF- £750,000; DfC- £700,000; UV- £2,535,086	Completed	Project completed.	Continue engagement with stakeholders on post monitoring.
BIF49	Cavehill Tennis Club	£71,413	On Ground	All works complete bar resurfacing of one court due to adverse weather conditions. Resurfacing will complete in Spring 2024	Continue engagement with the group.
BIF15	Malgrove	£950,000; £808,607 – additional funding (£900k less expenditure on Basement)	Uncommitted - Design stage	Detailed design agreed for a 4-team changing pavilion. Planning submitted and verified	Continue engagement with the group.
BIF43	Cultural Community Hub	£350,000	Uncommitted – Due Diligence stage	Design team appointed to work up designs to planning stage. Design signed off by group and planning application has been lodged. Will go back into DD for full sign-off once planning has been obtained and tender returned.	Continue engagement with the group and stakeholders.

Malgrove reallocation – Members will recall that in September 2023, SP&R Committee agreed to the NBAWG recommendation that the funding allocated to Basement Youth Club/Elim Church be withdrawn and reallocated to the Malgrove project. Members are asked to note that the Basement YC incurred an eligible cost of £91,393 through project development so there is a remaining balance available for reallocation of £808,607. A total of £808,607 has been reallocated to the Malgrove project.

5. **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. NRF – North Belfast was allocated £2.4m and 5 projects received an In-Principle funding commitment. 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.

North Belfast – NRF overview

North	Stage 3— Belfast Orange Hall, Ulster Supported Employment Ltd (USEL), Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum, Sailortown Regeneration Group, Ardoyne Youth Enterprises,
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Stage 1 (Reserve)— Cumann Cultúrtha Mhic Reachtain, Indian Community Centre, North Belfast Working Men's Club, North City Business Centre, Quaker Service, Belfast Charitable Society, Sinclair Seamen's Presbyterian Church, Arts for All, Ligoniel Improvement Association

North Belfast – NRF projects at Stage 3- Delivery

Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
USEL - Green Growth & The Circular Economy	£518,191	Stage 3- Committed	Business case complete. Meeting scheduled with group to discuss next steps.	Continue engagement with the group.
Cliftonville Community Enterprise	£1,452,700	Stage 3- Committed	Business case complete. Officers met with group and discussed next steps.	Continue engagement with the group.
Ardoyne Youth Enterprises – Community Hub	£154,696	Stage 3- Committed	Business case complete. Link to UV programme.	Continue engagement with the group.
Belfast Orange Hall Refurbishment	£154,696	Stage 3- Committed	Business case complete. Officers met with group and discussed next steps. A reduced scope of works has been proposed following the NRF allocation to include external improvements to roof, external walls and windows and internal improvements to multiple rooms on different floors but not the new heating system. The project remains subject to final Due Diligence. Members are asked to consider the group's request to use the NRF allocation to progress with a reduced scope of works.	Continue engagement with the group.
St Joseph's Restoration project	£154,696	Stage 3- Committed	Business case complete. Officers to meet with group and discuss next steps.	Continue engagement with the group.

6. Capital Programme

The Capital Programme is the rolling programme of enhancing existing Council assets or building / buying new ones. Members are reminded of the 3-stage approval process in place for every project on the council's Capital Programme, as agreed by SP&R Committee. The table below provides an update on current live projects in the North Belfast area.

Members are asked to note the updates on the Physical Programme.

North Belfast – Capital programme overview

Project	Status and update
Belfast Zoo – Programme of Works (Works to the Large Cats Enclosure, Sea Lion, etc)	Project completed.
North Foreshore - Development Sites Infrastructure Works	On ground. Storm Drainage Infrastructure Installation complete. The Landfill Gas Ring Main tender has been reviewed due to material price increases and will be re-issued with returns anticipated in Summer 2024. Foul Pumping Station to be tendered before Summer 2024. NIE connection required for future supply is being progressed.
Reservoir Safety Programme	<i>Stage 3- Committed.</i> Works to Alexandra Park, Waterworks Upper and Waterworks Lower. Consultants appointed and undertaking investigative work to assess the existing condition of the reservoirs and associated structures. Project has been integrated into Peace Plus application Reconnected Belfast under Theme 1.4. Reimagining Communities submitted in September 2023. Public consultation is well underway and open until 21 March 2024.
Cathedral Gardens (including Belfast Blitz)	<i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> Design team is continuing to develop the project to RIBA Stage 3 – Spatial Coordination. Stakeholder engagement ongoing, including discussion with NI War Memorial on Belfast Blitz element. Aim to submit planning application in April 2024.
Playground Improvement Programme	<i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> Works at Loughside Park playground are scheduled to be complete in March and New Lodge playground is scheduled to be complete in June 2024.
Alleygating Phase 5 – City wide	<i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> In January, SP&R Committee agreed terms of reference for a local inquiry in the event that an objection to a proposed Gating Order is received. Members granted approval for the publication of a Gating Order in November 2023 for certain streets and to proceed with a ten-week consultation for the remaining streets. Members are to be informed via CNS

	when that consultation process commences.
LTP - Girdwood Indoor Sports Facility	<i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted.</i> DfC partnership project. Proposal submitted to DfC for new leisure facility. Continued liaison with key stakeholders around options for new facility and overall development of the Girdwood site.
Relocation of Dunbar Link Cleansing Depot	<i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted.</i> OBC being worked up. Viable alternative site at Corporation Street Car Park being assessed by design team. Designs progressing to RIBA Stage 3-4 up to Planning application stage. Confirmation of design requirements is progressing.
Glencairn Park/ Ligoniel Park Greenway	<i>Stage 2- Uncommitted.</i> Project outline details submitted to DfI as part of the Greenway Development priority projects.
Access to the Hills – connections from Cavehill to Divis Mountain and Black Mountain	<i>Stage 2- Uncommitted.</i> Will also be considered within the wider study as below.
Waste Plan – Waste Transfer Station Upgrade	<i>Stage 2- Uncommitted.</i> OBC being worked up. Link to Duncrue Masterplan and city wide kerbside scheme.
Connectivity - Access to Hills Programme (city wide)	<i>Stage 1- Emerging.</i> Secured DAERA funding for the Access to the Belfast Hills Feasibility Study. Study and delivery plan has been completed in April 2023. Ongoing consultation with other stakeholders. Presented to Members in Autumn 2023. One of identified routes submitted in Peace Plus Local Action Plan application.
Belfast Bikes Expansion	Expansion in the North area for Phase 4: <i>Grove Leisure Centre</i> – installed and operational <i>Yorkgate</i> – the temporary solution on carpark didn't receive approval. The permanent location is outside the newly developed train station, agreed with Translink. Translink confirmed that the area for the Belfast Bikes docking station will be complete in early summer.

7. Externally funded programmes

The Council is the delivery partner for several government departments on key capital investment programmes, including Urban Villages (UV) from the Executive Office and Peace IV under SEUPB. The following is an overview of projects within each programme relevant to North Belfast.

Urban Villages Initiative

The table below shows the status on UV projects in North Belfast – note the UV programme has a defined North Belfast geography (Ardoyne and Greater Ballysillan).

North Belfast – Urban Villages Initiative overview

Project	Status and update
Marrowbone Millennium Park <i>(links to BIF programme)</i>	Project completed.
ABC Trust Health and Leisure Hub <i>(links to LIF programme)</i>	On ground. Partnership project with UV DfC, DfI and Flax Trust. Phase 1 of the project completed which provided a modern, purpose-built sports hall, support space and accommodation for BCT NI. Phase 2 works are progressing with completion anticipated middle 2025.
Ballysillan Playing Fields	Partnership project with UV, DfC and DfI Living With Water Programme. Planning approval secured. Due to inflationary pressures project costs have escalated from projections. Awaiting confirmation of business case addendum from TEO. Detailed design stage ongoing in consultation with NI Water and DfI LWWP to consider options. It is anticipated that a main contractor will be appointed and onsite Spring 2024.
Ardoyne Youth Enterprises (AYE) Social Enterprise Project <i>(links to NRF programme)</i>	Partnership project with Urban Villages. The project team is managing issues with rising costs and delays related to site clearance. Planning approval secured. Demolition have completed and site investigation reports are progressing. Outstanding legal issues are being progressed and the project remains subject to Due Diligence.
Sunningdale Community Centre	Council is acting as delivery agent, proposed on Council land. Lease being finalised. The Design Team has been appointed and planning application has been submitted. Continue to gather reports and surveys to support the planning application. Scheduled to begin on site in early Summer subject to planning.
Westland Community Centre <i>(links to LIF programme)</i>	As above under LIF. Partnership project with UV. Work is progressing on the land arrangements and the governance model. A Letter of Offer is awaited from the Executive Office.

Peace IV/ Peace Plus

Members are asked to note the update on Peace IV - Forth Meadow Community Greenway and the proposed Reconnected Belfast project under Peace Plus.

Project	Status and update
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Forth Meadow Community Greenway project	Project completed. Signage package to be installed subject to agreement via Committee and Council.
Reconnected Belfast - Waterworks and Alexandra Park	<p>The Reconnected Belfast proposal focuses on the redevelopment of the Waterworks and Alexandra Park. The proposal will enhance and improve connectivity within and between the two parks as well as enhance linkages with other parts of the city and to the Belfast Hills.</p> <p>The application has been submitted under PeacePLUS Theme 1.4 – Reimagining Communities and feedback is expected by Spring 2024.</p>

UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Project	Status and update
Enhancement Loughside Park Trim Trail	Project completed.

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Following a suggestion from the Director of Property and Projects, the Working Group agreed to undertake site visits to the project sites and to look at holding some future meetings at external venues related to the projects mentioned within the report.

The Working Group agreed to write to Holy Cross Trust and Mercy Primary School to request a definitive, time bound response as to whether they wish to remain within the Local Investment Fund (LIF) process.

The Working Group noted the report and acceded to the request from Belfast Orange Hall to use the NRF allocation to progress with a reduced scope of works.

Chairperson