

North Belfast Area Working Group

Tuesday, 27th August, 2024

NORTH BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

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

In attendance: Ms. N. Lane, Neighbourhood Services Manager;
Mr. G. McCartney, Good Relations Manager;
Ms. M. Wilson, Neighbourhood Services
Integration Manager;
Mr. D. Logan, Senior Programme
Delivery Manager; and
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

Election of Chairperson

The Area Working Group noted that it was required to elect a Chairperson for the coming year.

Moved by Alderman McCullough,
Seconded by Councillor Cobain and

Resolved – that Councillor Doran be elected to serve as Chairperson to the North Belfast Area Working Group until the date of the Annual Meeting.

Apologies

An apology was reported from Councillor Ó Néill.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 28th May were approved by the Working Group.

Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were reported.

Presentations

North Belfast Community Partnership

The Members were reminded that the Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships (NRPs) had facilitated several sessions for key stakeholders over the last number of months to explore the potential of developing a new North Belfast Community Partnership, in the absence of the North Belfast Partnership Board, and accordingly Ms. Joanne Kinnear and Mr. Manus Maguire

were welcomed to the meeting to present on the consultation and engagement process to date, along with its vision for the future.

Mr Maguire commenced by provided the context to the initiative. Ms. Kinnear then provided an overview of the work to date. She advised that 4 political breakfasts had been held between September 2023 and June 2024 to encourage engagement with political representatives from all parties with a mandate in North Belfast. In addition, a series of North Belfast conferences had been attended by various stakeholders from the voluntary, statutory and funding sectors.

The representative advised that through this work to date the need for a new North Belfast Partnership had been endorsed, with its vision and mission also endorsed as follows:

Vision – “North Belfast is recognised as a great place to live, work, visit and invest”; and
Mission – “To make North Belfast the best it can be”.

The Working Group was advised that the draft role of the new Partnership had been endorsed as follows:

- To provide a strategic vision and context for guiding regeneration, planning and development;
- To identify and promote a portfolio of strategic regeneration activities;
- To identify investment priorities and support the sourcing of suitable financing;
- To provide a clear and overarching North Belfast wrap around activity plan which incorporates and recognises the importance local neighbourhood action plans;
- To act as promotional champion for North Belfast; and
- To contribute to the design, development and implementation of existing and emerging relevant policies, projects and initiatives.

The role of the new Partnership was not to act as a delivery agent. The representative detailed the four proposed strategic priorities which included, People and Communities, Place, Pride and Prosperity.

The Working Group was advised that the draft overarching themes of the new Partnership had been endorsed as the following eleven thematic actions:

- Theme 1 : Early Intervention for Children and Families
- Theme 2 : Destitution /Poverty
- Theme 3 : Inclusive Communities
- Theme 4 : Safer Communities
- Theme 5 : Cultural , Arts ,Sport and Faith
- Theme 6 : Regeneration
- Theme 7 : Health and Wellbeing
- Theme 8 : Economic Prosperity
- Theme 9 : Education
- Theme 10 : Youth
- Theme 11 : Environment

The Members were advised that the Department for Communities (DfC) had included the North Belfast Community Partnership six-month pilot (October 2024 – March 2025) as part of its Transformation bid. If successful, the pilot would see the development of the eleven thematic plans, a base line survey conducted by Ulster University, an independent evaluation of the process undertaken by Queen’s University and a fourth conference to showcase the work undertaken, to help identify commonalities and agree a way forward.

The Presentation concluded with the representatives advising on the election of the Chairs of the thematic working groups for the pilot. The Members noted that an explanation of the roles and responsibilities of the thematic Chairs would be issued to all persons listed along with expression of interest forms in August 2024. Completed expressions of interest forms for the role of chair would be voted on by the members of each theme in early September 2024, with appointment initially scheduled to be made by late September 2024 for the duration of the six month pilot only (October 2024- March 2025).

Following a query from a Member as to why Neighbourhood Tourism was not a separate thematic action, the representative acknowledged the importance of tourism and noted that there would be duplication across several of the thematic areas with tourism being a key factor in at least three of the eleven actions.

Several of the Members welcomed the volume of work that had been undertaken to date and commended the open and transparent way in which it had been undertaken.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for the informative presentation, and they left the meeting.

PeacePlus

The Good Relations Manager presented the Working Group with an update on the PEACEPLUS Community Action Plan for Belfast. He commenced by advising that the Programme was worth £15m / €17m funding to Belfast City Council, this would be made up of 3 themes and 16 individual projects. The three themes were as follows:

- Theme 1 – Local Community Regeneration and Transformation;
- Theme 2 – Thriving and Peaceful Communities; and
- Theme 3 – Celebrating Cultures and Diversity.

The officer advised that, in terms of capital projects relating to Theme 1, these would consist of facilities that would be used by people from across the city. The project idea was a LGBTQIA + Hub – this would involve the redevelopment of the first floor of 2 Royal Avenue to provide a dedicated space for organisations representing the LGBTQIA + with a shared space services approach to the ground floor. He advised that this project idea would be progressed by the Council's Property and Project Unit, and that associated animation projects would likely be procured, with options for procurement currently under consideration.

He then referred the Members to the proposals/project ideas for each of the four areas of the city under Theme 1, with the proposal for North being 'Access to the Hills' - building upon the Forth Meadow Community Greenway proposed extensions to the routes at Glencairn and Ligoniel.

The Good Relations Manager then provided the Members with a detailed breakdown of each of the proposed projects, participant numbers and estimated budget under the three themes, as follows:

THEME	PROJECT NAME	PARTICIPANTS	EST BUDGET
Thriving and Peaceful Communities	Capacity Building - Community Empowerment Programme	1000	£903,578
Thriving and Peaceful Communities	TPC2 Health and Well Being	1620	£853,000
Thriving and Peaceful Communities	TPC3 Youth Inspiring Future Belfast	2106	£970,861
Thriving and Peaceful Communities	TPC4 Sports for Peace	1600	£711,646
Thriving and Peaceful Communities	TPC5 Employability Language Up	816	£447,513
Thriving and Peaceful Communities	TPC6 Arts in Communities	496	£695,744
Celebrating Cultures and Diversity	CCD1 Inter Faith and Belief	870	£304,564
Celebrating Cultures and Diversity	CCD2 Community Connections Ethnic Minority	752	£638,135
Celebrating Cultures and Diversity	CCD3 LGBTQIA + Community Engagement Programme	624	£391,672
Celebrating Cultures and Diversity	CCD4 Community Empowerment Ex-Politically motivated prisoner community	750	£493,006
Celebrating Cultures and Diversity	CCD5 From Multi-culturalism to Inter-culturalism. Culture and Heritage	2565	£949,990

The Good Relations Manager advised that the PEACEPLUS Programme Board had recommended that mobilisation of the Action Plan be progressed as close to the original timeframe as possible, which might require condensed delivery to achieve targets by 1-2 months, with contract awards up to December 2027. The Members' attention was drawn to an indicative timeframe and they were asked to note that there would be pre-market engagement sessions at least a week before each of the tenders opened, that tenders would be open for a minimum of 4 weeks and that they might be subject to change based on any feedback from the market. The Members were encouraged to forward the details of any groups or organisations which they felt should be added to the database for the circulation of relevant tender documentation.

The Good Relations Manager concluded by advising that each Project Manager would be responsible for the implementation, delivery and management of each of the projects on a cross disciplinary approach across all three themes, this would include:

- Pre-Commencement Conditions;
- Capacity Checks;
- Implementation Conditions;
- Letter of Offer and Terms and Conditions of funding;
- Pre-market engagement for each specific project; and
- Procurement.

Following a suggestion, the Good Relations Manager undertook to advise the Peace Programme Manager to liaise with the officers involved with the Belfast Stories as it was felt that this project would align with the project theme and potentially could be further developed with a joined-up approach.

Following a further query, he also advised that he would ask the Peace Programme Manager to liaise directly with Alderman McCullough regarding the boundaries in North Belfast in regard to TPC2 Health and Well Being and how these boundaries had been decided. He also undertook that an officer would liaise directly with Councillor Anglin regarding the data being used.

The Chairperson thanked the Good Relations Manager for his comprehensive update.

Noted.

Physical Programmes Update

The Senior Programme Delivery Manager presented 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 on 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 including recently completed projects at Appendix 1:**
 - **Local Investment Fund - Women's Tec, and;**
 - **Playground Improvement Programme - New Lodge Playground.**
- **Note the update on Holy Cross Trust / Houben Centre (*The Parent Room*) project, that no further updates were received from the Group and to consider the recommendation that the LIF project is withdrawn;**
- **Note the reallocation of an additional £68,179 to North NRF and consider any recommendations on allocations to any existing NRF projects or retaining it as a contingency provision; and**

- Note the updated list of external capital funding opportunities.

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 38 have been completed; 2 are at delivery stage; 1 at pre-construction stage, and 2 remain at due diligence/ initial stages.

LIF breakdown – North	LIF 1		LIF 2	
	Projects	Value (£)	Projects	Value (£)
Number of Projects Completed	23 (92%)	£996,500	15 (83%)	£693,201
Number of Projects On-going Delivery	1 (4%)	£66,000	1 (11%)	£75,000
Number of Projects in Pre-construction			1 (6%)	15,000
Number of Projects in Initial Stage (Due Diligence)	1 (4%)	£65,000	1 (6%)	£15,000
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 provides 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
NLIF2-19	Women's Tec	£46,667	Complete	Completed.	Complete
NLIF2-22	Sailortown, St. Joseph's Church Refurbishment	£75,000	On Ground	On ground. HED approval received and construction work on gallery continues.	Continue engagement with group and HED.

NLIF057	Ardoyne Holy Cross Boxing Club <i>(UV – ABC Trust Hub)</i>	£66,000	On Ground/ Due Diligence stage	On ground. The overall Urban Villages scheme will also incorporate this LIF scheme. Work is underway on the overall scheme and is progressing well.	Continue engagement with Group and with UV
NLIF2-05	Mercy Primary, Crumlin Road	£15,000	Tender stage	Approved at Due Diligence in June. Procurement process is now underway.	Continue engagement with school.
NLIF014	Westland Community Centre - new building <i>(Link to UV Project)</i>	£65,000	Due Diligence stage	DD 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 TEO
NLIF2-03	Holy Cross Trust/ Houben Centre <i>(The Parent Room)</i>	£15,000	Due Diligence stage	Agreed in June 2018. In February 2024, per NAWG agreement a letter was sent to the group to determine if they wish to remain in the process with a deadline of 30 May 2024. No response has been received.	AWG to note the project update and that no further updates were received from the Group. AWG to consider the recommendation that the LIF project is withdrawn.

4. Belfast Investment Fund

Members are reminded that 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	Stage 3 - Cavehill Tennis Club- £71k, Malgrove -£950k, Cultural Community Hub - £350k Stage 1 - Cliftonville Community Forum, Sunningdale Community Centre - no commitment
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BIF Ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
BIF49	Cavehill Tennis Club	£71,413	On Ground	On ground. Completion remains conditional on favourable weather conditions.	Continue engagement with the group.
BIF15	Malgrove	£1,758,607	Stage 3 - Committed	Awaiting a Planning decision. Project will be taken in to Due Diligence following return of tenders.	Continue engagement with the group.
BIF43	Cultural Community Hub	£350,000	Stage 3 - Committed	Planning approval was granted on 3 May 2024. Procurement preparation is underway. Project will be taken in to Due Diligence following return of tenders.	Continue engagement with the group and stakeholders.

5. Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund

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. Members will note that in April 2024, Council agreed an additional allocation of £280,000 to NRF on top of the original £10m. Following the agreed funding allocation model and the agreed project pathway, the overall NRF allocation for North has therefore increased from £2,434,979 to £2,503,158, an increase of

£68,179. It was also agreed that any additional funding is only allocated to existing projects which have already passed the threshold level and/or already been agreed at Stage 3 - Delivery. Each NRF 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.

Members will recall that in May, the North Area Working Group deferred the consideration of this additional amount to a future meeting. Members are asked to consider allocating any recommendations on allocations from the additional £68,179 to existing North NRF projects or retaining it as a contingency provision.

North Belfast – NRF overview

North	<p>Stage 3— Belfast Orange Hall, Ulster Supported Employment Ltd (USEL), Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum, Sailortown Regeneration Group, Ardoyne Youth Enterprises,</p> <p>Stage 1 (Reserve)— <i>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</i></p>
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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	Integrated Consultant Team has been appointed.	Continue engagement with the group.
Cliftonville Community Enterprise	£1,452,700	Stage 3- Committed	Procurement of design team is underway, to be appointed this month.	Continue engagement with the group.
Ardoyne Youth Enterprises – Community Hub	£154,696	Stage 3- Committed	UV project. Funding package being reviewed by TEO due to escalating costs.	Continue engagement with the group.
Belfast Orange Hall Refurbishment	£154,696	Stage 3- Committed	Architect has been appointed and project is progressing.	Continue engagement with the group.
St Joseph's Restoration project	£154,696	Stage 3- Committed	Works identified that can be carried out with reduced budget. Structural survey underway.	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
Playground Improvement Programme	Project complete. New Lodge playground completed.
North Foreshore - Development Sites Infrastructure Works	On ground. The Landfill Gas Ring Main and Foul Pumping Stations procurement has been commenced. NIE connection required for future supply is being progressed.
North Foreshore - Giant's Park	A complex development agreement is now in place with Giant's Park Belfast Limited (GPBL). This agreement commits GPBL to deliver over 250 acres of phased development over a number of years in four distinct hubs: Adventure Hub, Welcome Hub, Pit Stop Hub, Distributions and Logistics Hub. Works are due to commence on site in Autumn 2025.
Reservoir Safety Programme <i>(links to PeacePlus)</i>	<i>Stage 3 Committed.</i> An application was submitted under SEUPB PeacePLUS Theme 1.4 funding programme. SEUPB is expected to make announcements in mid-September 2024.
Cathedral Gardens (including Belfast Blitz)	<i>Stage 3 Committed.</i> Design team work ongoing. Planning application is currently being finalised.
Alleygating Phase 5 – City wide	<i>Stage 3 Committed.</i> Committee agreed 51 gates and works to be programmed for Autumn 2024. Remainder to be agreed at further committees.
LTP - Girdwood Indoor Sports Facility	<i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted.</i> DfC partnership project. Design team continues to develop designs to Planning Stage.
Relocation of Dunbar Link Cleansing Depot	<i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted.</i> Viable alternative site at Corporation Street Car Park being assessed by design team. Designs progressing to RIBA stage for the Planning application, which will be lodged once discussions on easements with NI Water are resolved.
Glencairn Park/ Ligoniel Park Greenway	<i>Stage 2- Uncommitted.</i> Project outline details submitted to DfI as part of the Greenway Development projects.

Access to the Hills – connections from Cavehill to Divis Mountain and Black Mountain	<i>Stage 2- Uncommitted.</i> This will also be considered within the wider study and is part of the PeacePlus 'Access to the Hills' application.
Waste Plan – Waste Transfer Station Upgrade	<i>Stage 2- Uncommitted.</i> OBC being worked up. Link to Duncrue Masterplan and citywide kerbside scheme.
Connectivity - Access to Hills Programme (city wide)	<i>Stage 1- Emerging.</i> Feasibility study presented to Members in Autumn 2023. Three of the identified routes submitted in the PeacePlus Local Action Plan application.
Belfast Bikes Expansion	Expansion in the North area for Phase 4: <i>Yorkgate</i> – Translink have confirmed that the area for the Belfast Bikes docking station will be complete in August 2024.

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 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
ABC Trust Health and Leisure Hub <i>(links to LIF programme)</i>	Partnership project with LIF, DfC, Dfl, Flax Trust, and UV. LoO addendum approved by all partners to confirm additional funding. Phase 2 progressing well with project completion anticipated in 2025.
Ballysillan Playing Fields	Partnership project with UV, DfC and Dfl Living With Water Programme. Planning approval secured. The funder TEO have now issued an addendum to the LOO which is being processed. Tender process complete. It is anticipated that a main contractor will be appointed and on site in Autumn 2024.
Ardoyne Youth Enterprises (AYE) Social Enterprise Project <i>(links to NRF programme)</i>	<i>As above at NRF.</i> Partnership project with Urban Villages. Costs have escalated since business case stage and are now being reviewed with the main funder TEO. Full funding package not yet in place. Planning approval secured. Demolition works and site investigations completed. Outstanding legal issues are being progressed and DD is in process.

<p>Sunningdale Community Centre (links to BIF programme)</p>	<p>Council is acting as delivery agent for project proposed on Council land. The project is to be fully funded by TEO Urban Villages Initiative. A planning application has been submitted. Legal matters in relation to land arrangements are ongoing. Cost estimates to be reviewed by the funder.</p>
<p>Westland Community Centre (links to LIF programme)</p>	<p>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.</p>

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
<p>Forth Meadow Community Greenway project</p>	<p>Project completed. Signage package to be installed subject to agreement via Committee and Council.</p>
<p>Reconnected Belfast - Waterworks and Alexandra Park</p>	<p>SEUPB is expected to make announcements in mid-September 2024 on applications under Theme 1.4.</p>

8. Capital funding opportunities

Members are asked to note the updated version of the list of external capital funding opportunities attached at Appendix 2 which may be of assistance to groups and clubs.”

The Working Group noted the report and the recommendation to withdraw the LIF project at Holy Cross Trust, noting that the withdrawal and reallocation of funding would be considered at a future meeting of the Working Group.

Chairperson