



Subject:	Physical Programme Update
Date:	22 November 2024
Reporting Officer:	Sinead Grimes, Director of Property & Projects
Contact Officer:	Shauna Murtagh, Portfolio Manager

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	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime 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	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 requests for stage movement approvals under the Capital Programme, along with updates on capital planning, the temporary container at Cathedral Gardens and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Programme and Capital Financing 2025/26 – Note the update on the Capital Programme and Capital Financing 2025/26. • Capital Programme Stage Movements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ St George's Market – New Stalls – Agree that the project is moved to <i>Stage 3 – Committed</i> and held at Tier 0 – Scheme at Risk pending further development of the project and a satisfactory tender return; and that necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate 'framework' arrangements) be initiated with contract to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver. ○ Waterfront Hall Chiller Units - Agree to move the project to <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted</i> to allow the options to be fully worked up, with further detail to be brought back to Committee in due course. ○ Innovation Factory Access Control – Agree to move the project to <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted</i> to allow the options to be fully worked up, with further detail to be brought back to Committee in due course. • Cathedral Gardens – Note that the temporary active travel container at Cathedral Gardens will be relocated to Strangford Avenue, subject to final installation arrangements. • Shared Prosperity Fund – Note the update on Shared Prosperity Funding for 2024/25.
3.0	Main report <u>Key Issues</u>
3.1	Capital Programme and Capital Financing 2025/26
	In March 2024 Members agreed to a series of workshops regarding future capital priorities linked to the medium-term financial planning process. To prepare for this it is agreed that a series of Party Group Briefings are to be held to update Members on the existing Capital

Programme, ascertain future priorities to determine the level of financing required, as well as exploring the implications of any future investment decisions and the potential impact on the district rate. **These briefings are now being scheduled for late November and early December in line with the rates setting process for 2025/26.**

As Members will be aware, the Capital Programme has an expenditure horizon of around three years. CIPFA capital planning guidance recommends taking a longer-term view (8-10 years). The Council is continuing to adopt this best practice approach for the Capital Programme, alongside the standard planning for short to mid term programme requirements in 2025/26. Work as usual still continues, and any project at an appropriate stage of readiness is still brought before Members via the three stage approvals process.

This activity feeds through to the planned consultation on the draft Corporate Plan in early 2025, and the target date of March 2025 to publish the Corporate Plan.

Members are asked to note the update on Capital Programme and Capital Financing 2025/26.

3.2

Capital Programme - Proposed Movements

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. Members are advised that the Property & Projects Department is happy to arrange a site visit to any projects that have been completed or are underway.

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:

Project	Overview	Stage movement
St George’s Market – New Stalls	Replacement of market stalls in St George’s Market.	Move to Stage 3 – Committed
Waterfront Hall - Chiller Units	Replacement of the chiller units at the Waterfront Hall to ensure adequate cooling for events and operational requirements.	Move to Stage 2 – Uncommitted
Innovation Factory Access Control System	Procurement of a replacement for the access control system at the Innovation Factory.	Move to Stage 2 – Uncommitted

<p>3.3</p>	<p><u>St George’s Market – New Stalls</u></p> <p>In March 2024, SP&R Committee agreed that St George’s Market – New Stalls project be moved to Stage 2 – Uncommitted to allow a business case to be developed. The project is for the replacement of the 180 market stalls in St Georges Market. The current stalls are more than 18 years old and many are in a poor state of repair, presenting a health and safety risk both for staff and for traders. An Outline Business Case has now been worked up in line with the three stage approvals process.</p> <p>Members are asked to agree that ‘St George’s Market – New Stalls’ is moved to Stage 3 – Committed and held at Tier 0 – Scheme at Risk pending further development of the project and a satisfactory tender return; and that necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate ‘framework’ arrangements) be initiated with contract to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.</p> <p><u>Waterfront Hall – Chiller Units</u></p> <p>3.4 The existing chiller units at the Belfast Waterfront Hall have reached the end of their economic life. The proposal is to replace the existing chiller units with high efficiency equivalents to improve performance and resilience. An Outline Business Case will now be worked up on the proposal.</p> <p>Members are asked to agree that ‘Waterfront Hall – Chiller Units’ is moved to Stage 2 – Uncommitted to allow the options to be fully worked up, with further detail to be brought back to Committee in due course.</p>
<p>3.5</p>	<p><u>Innovation Factory Access Control</u></p> <p>The project is for the replacement of the access control system at Innovation Factory. The current system is no longer fit for purpose. As previously advised, this project is progressing at pace. There is a requirement to upgrade the system which includes new door controllers, readers, and associated software. An Outline Business Case will now be worked up on the proposal.</p> <p>Members are asked to agree that ‘Innovation Factory Access Control’ is moved to Stage 2 – Uncommitted to allow the options to be fully worked up, with further detail to be brought back to Committee in due course.</p>
	<p><u>Cathedral Gardens</u></p>
<p>3.6</p>	<p>Members will be aware that the Cathedral Gardens project is at Stage 2 – Uncommitted on the Capital Programme. A temporary Active Travel Hub had been installed in the space via external funding comprising two shipping containers. Members will recall that the hub was a</p>

	<p>temporary measure rather than part of the overall masterplan for Cathedral Gardens. Sustrans held a temporary licence to provide active travel services at the hub, which has now expired. The containers can be relocated for use elsewhere.</p> <p>Relocation of the containers to Strangford Ave Playing Fields would complement recent works to improve accessibility for people with disabilities, including replacement of gates and extending pathways, and the creation of a loop suitable for wheelchairs and adapted bikes. This site is situated across the road from a school campus shared by four disability schools which cater for 660 young people who have a physical or learning disability. Although recent improvements have been welcomed, the logistics of transporting pupils and bikes to and from the park is incredibly challenging and has proved unsustainable. The bike storage container will provide a location for bikes to be stored, including adapted bikes for pupils with a physical disability and will enable a disability bike programme to be delivered from the park. The containers can also allow a wider outdoor recreational programme to be developed, supported by CNS Department.</p> <p>Members are asked to note that the temporary active travel container at Cathedral Gardens will be relocated to Strangford Avenue, subject to final installation arrangements.</p>
	<p>Shared Prosperity Fund</p>
3.7	<p>Members will recall that in September the Council received a report on a funding opportunity under the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) for 2024/25. The Council has since been successful in securing the full allocation of £1,787,615 for Belfast. The funding received is for the list of activities as agreed by Members, namely: pitch improvements; playgrounds improvements; Vacant to Vibrant scheme; feasibility studies for key city centre sites and assets; and a programme of animation, lighting enhancements and marketing linked to key city events (e.g. Halloween, Christmas). Work is complete on several of the activities - this approach was permissible under the eligibility criteria, and work is underway on the delivery of the remaining activities for completion by end March 2025.</p> <p>Members are asked to note the update on Shared Prosperity Funding for 2024/25.</p>
3.8	<p>Financial & Resource Implications</p> <p><i>Financial Implications</i> – A financial allocation of £1,787,615 is secured for the SPF activities in 2024/25.</p> <p><i>Resource Implications</i> – Officer time to deliver.</p>
3.9	<p>Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment</p> <p>All capital projects are screened as part of the stage approval process</p>

4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None