

North Belfast Area Working Group

Tuesday, 26th November, 2024

NORTH BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

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

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

Apologies

No apologies for inability to attend were reported.

Minutes

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

Declarations of Interest

The Chairperson (Councillor Doran) declared an interest in relation to item 2 on the agenda, Physical Programmes Update, in that he was Secretary of Westland Community and Residents' Association.

Physical Programmes Update

The Director of Property and Projects 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 project at Appendix 1 - Belfast Investment Fund – Cavehill Tennis Club.
- Consider the reallocation of £15,000 LIF funding, and;
- Consider the reallocation of an additional £68,179 NRF funding to any existing NRF projects or retaining it as a contingency provision.

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 1 remain at due diligence/ initial stage.

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		
Total Number of Approved Projects	25 *	£1,127,500	17 **	£783,201

**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
NLIF2-22	Sailortown, St. Joseph's Church Refurbishment	£75,000	On Ground	On ground. Construction work ongoing on the gallery.	Continue engagement with group and HED.

NLIF057	Ardoyne Holy Cross Boxing Club <i>(UV – ABC Trust Hub)</i>	£66,000	On Ground	On ground. The overall Urban Villages scheme will also incorporate this LIF scheme. Work is ongoing 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	Procurement process is nearing completion. Contractor to be appointed imminently.	Continue engagement with school.
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 governance model. Group undergoing capacity building. Procurement of Design Team has begun.	Continue engagement with Group and TEO

LIF funding reallocation – On 27 August 2024, Working Group noted the recommendation to withdraw the LIF project at Holy Cross Trust/ Houben Centre, noting that the withdrawal and reallocation of funding would be considered at a future meeting of the Working Group. The recommendation to withdraw the LIF project was agreed at SP&R Committee in September 2024. The AWG is asked to consider the reallocation of £15,000 LIF funding from the withdrawn Holy Cross Trust/ Houben Centre project.

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	Complete	Project completed. The club is planning an Informal event on 28 Nov 2024.	Continue engagement with the group.
BIF15	Malgrove	£1,758,607	Stage 3 - Committed	Awaiting a Planning decision. Planning have requested additional site surveys which are underway.	Continue engagement with the group.
BIF43	Cultural Community Hub	£350,000	Stage 3 - Committed	Procurement of works contractor is underway.	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 2024, 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	Stage 3— Belfast Orange Hall, Ulster Supported Employment Ltd (USEL), Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum, Sailortown Regeneration Group, Ardoyne Youth Enterprises, 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>
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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	Meeting held with group following design team appointment. Project progressing well.	Continue engagement with the group.
Cliftonville Community Enterprise	£1,452,700	Stage 3- Committed	Design team has been appointed. Meeting held with group. Project progressing satisfactorily.	Continue engagement with the group.
Ardoyne Youth Enterprises – Community Hub <i>(Link to UV Project)</i>	£154,696	Stage 3- Committed	Main funder TEO is updating the business case as estimates have risen significantly. Additional funding opportunities being explored.	Continue engagement with the group.
Belfast Orange Hall Refurbishment	£154,696	Stage 3- Committed	Project progressing satisfactorily, surveys and inspections ongoing to inform tender for contractor.	Continue engagement with the group.
St Joseph’s Restoration project	£154,696	Stage 3- Committed	Structural survey complete and procurement for design team has begun.	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 24/25	On ground. City-wide playgrounds improvements. Works at three sites across the city including Michelle Baird Memorial Playground. Progressing.
Sporting Pitches Investment 24/25	On ground. Agreed at P&C Committee in June 2024. Works at four sites across the city including Mallusk Playing Fields. Progressing.
North Foreshore - Development Sites Infrastructure Works	On ground. The storm drain installation for the western part of the site is complete. Procurement exercises for Landfill Gas Ring Main and Foul Pumping Station are underway. Preferred route for NIE connection is through Harbour Estate; NIE to confirm programme subject to potential work with Translink.

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> Reservoir improvements at Waterworks and Alexandra Park. SEUPB PeacePLUS funding application has been successful, securing €13.5m funding to enhance shared space and connectivity within and between Waterworks and Alexandra Park area of North Belfast. Awaiting Letter of Offer.
Cathedral Gardens (including Belfast Blitz)	<i>Stage 3 Committed.</i> Design team work ongoing. Planning application was submitted in September 2024. Detailed design progressing and engagement within all stakeholders ongoing.
Alleygating Phase 5 – City wide	<i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> 61 gates across all four areas of the city will be programmed to start within this financial year. Programme received and works started in October to be completed in December 2024.
LTP - Girdwood Indoor Sports Facility	<i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted.</i> DfC partnership project. Design team continues to develop designs to Planning Stage. Officers continue to respond to queries from DfC economist regarding the business case.
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. Built-over permission in principle received. Consultants exploring amended design options.
Glencairn Park/ Ligoniel Park Greenway	<i>Stage 2- Uncommitted.</i> Progressing. Engagement with DfI ongoing.
Access to the Hills – connections from Cavehill to Divis Mountain and Black Mountain	<i>Stage 2- Uncommitted.</i> Part of the Belfast PeacePLUS Local Action Plan. Complementary scheme to developing further connections to the Hills at Ligoniel, Glencairn and Cavehill. PeacePLUS Local Action Plan funding has been announced and the Letter of Offer is awaited.
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 are part of the PeacePLUS Local Action Plan. Funding has been announced and the Letter of Offer is awaited.
Belfast Bikes Expansion	Expansion in the North area for Phase 4: <i>Yorkgate</i> – will be installed in November 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 NLIF057)</i>	Partnership project with DfC, DfI, Flax Trust, and UV. Phase 2 progressing well with project completion anticipated in 2025.
Ballysillan Playing Fields	Partnership project with UV, DfC and DfI Living With Water Programme. Contractor appointed, due on site in November 2024.
Ardoyne Youth Enterprises (AYE) Social Enterprise Project <i>(links to NRF programme)</i>	<i>As above at NRF.</i> Main funder TEO is updating the business case as estimates have risen significantly. Additional funding opportunities being explored.
Sunningdale Community Centre <i>(links to BIF programme)</i>	Council is acting as delivery agent for project proposed on Council land. Planning permission still not secured. Legal matters in relation to land arrangements are ongoing. Architect to develop a proposed redesign programme.
Westland Community Centre <i>(links to LIF programme)</i>	<i>As above under LIF.</i> Partnership project with UV. Work is progressing on the land arrangements and governance model. Group undergoing capacity building. Procurement of Design Team has begun.

PEACE IV and PEACEPLUS – Capital Projects

Members are asked to note updates on the capital projects that are related to the PEACE Programmes.

North Belfast – Capital Projects overview

Project	Status and update
Forth Meadow Community Greenway	Project completed. Signage package subject to agreement.
Reconnected Belfast - Waterworks and Alexandra Park	SEUPB PEACEPLUS funding application has been successful, securing €13.5m funding to enhance shared space and connectivity within and between Waterworks and Alexandra Park area of North Belfast. Letter of Offer has been received and is under review.
Access to the Hills	Part of the Belfast PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan. Complementary scheme to developing further connections to the Hills at Ligoniel, Glencairn and Cavehill. PEACEPLUS funding has been announced and the Letter of Offer is awaited.”

The Working Group:

- Noted the Physical Programme update for North Belfast;
- Agreed, with regard to the reallocation of £15,000 LIF funding, that officers would engage with Ardoyne Youth Club and Benview Community Centre to scope out project proposals and provide an update to a future meeting of the Working Group; and
- Agreed that the additional £68,179 NRF funding would be retained in contingency for the agreed projects progressing under the funding stream.

Chairperson