

North Belfast Area Working Group

Tuesday, 27th May, 2025

NORTH BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

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

In attendance: Mr. D. Logan, Physical Programmes Senior Delivery
Manager;
Ms. M. McKay, Enterprise and Business Growth Manager
Ms. A. Diver, Climate Programme Manager;
Mr. R. Weir, Estates Surveyor;
Ms. M. Wilson, Neighbourhood Services Integration
Manager; and
Ms. C. Donnelly, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies for inability to attend were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 25th February were approved by the Working Group.

Declarations of Interest

The Chairperson (Councillor Doran) declared an interest in respect of the item under the heading of 'Physical Programmes Update' in that he was employed by Westland Community Group Ltd.

Councillor Maskey declared an interest in respect of the item under the heading 'Enterprise and Business Growth'.

Presentations

Community Navigators Programme – Ashton Community Trust Health and Wellbeing Team

The Chairperson welcomed Ms. I. Sherry and Mr. S. Barr to the meeting.

Ms. Sherry addressed the Working Group with a presentation on the Community Navigators Programme. She outlined the history of the programme, a multi-disciplinary service to provide support to those affected by the conflict and those experiencing poor physical and mental health, impacted by suicide, self-harm and those experiencing situational and emotional crisis.

She highlighted the following service impact indicators for 2024/25:

- 290 engagements to de-escalate violence/aggression within the Emergency Department;
- 327 engagements to de-escalate from suicide ideation;
- 89 engagements with 72 individuals impacted by domestic violence; and
- 2 assists with ligature removals.

She stated that there had been a growing demand for a place-based crisis de-escalation service within the city and explained that the service was comprised of a multi-disciplinary team that included community practitioners, mental health liaison teams, substance use practitioners and a health inclusion team.

She explained that any client over 18 years old who did not require immediate medical intervention could be referred to the service via a number of service providers, that included PSNI, GP out of hours service and political representatives.

She outlined the following service options:

- De-escalation and Risk management;
- Therapeutic support/psycho-social engagements;
- Mental Health Assessment pathway review;
- Onward Referral/s;
- Hardship Support (e.g. food and fuel poverty); and
- Transport/Taxi.

Ms. Sherry concluded by summarizing the next steps in the programme implementation, that included an independent analysis by Impact Research Centre, building upon evidence based need and defining the required resources and financial backing.

In response to a question from a Member with regard to a fixed location, Ms. Sherry stated that options were being considered for a location in north Belfast and explained that although the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust had offered support for resourcing the programme, financial capital would need to be sourced to provide a permanent locations for the service.

The Chairperson thanked Ms. Sherry and Mr. Barr for the presentation

Noted.

Enterprise and Business Growth

The Enterprise and Business Growth Manager outlined the following report to the Working Group:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

The purpose of this report is to update members on the business support available to constituents and businesses in their areas including Go Succeed – the regional initiative to support business start-up and growth that is being led by Belfast City Council on behalf of the 11 councils.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- Note and endorse the progress to date on the delivery of the Enterprise Support Service (Go Succeed) in North Belfast and beyond, with the objective of driving more and better businesses
- Promote opportunities for business support to constituents where relevant and appropriate
- Provide recommendations to Enterprise and Business Growth team on community and stakeholder engagement in the North Belfast area

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Go Succeed (Enterprise Support Service)

The Go Succeed service has now been operational for around eighteen months and has reached thousands of potential entrepreneurs and businesses across Northern Ireland.

By way of background, Belfast City Council led on a successful funding application to UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF). This provided £17 million of support for the period November 2023 to March 2025; £12 million programme delivery and £5 million for small grants. Following receipt of the funding agreement in September 2023, the service became operational in November 2023.

Belfast City Council, as lead for the service, has now secured additional funding via an application to UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) of £9.2 million for the 2025/2026 financial year, ensuring continuity of the service. The focus over the next year, alongside delivery of the service, will be working to secure a more permanent funding source.

The service aims to be the go-to source for expert business advice across the region. It represents the councils' collective response to our statutory responsibility and offers a set of connected enterprise support services where individuals, entrepreneurs or businesses can access a continuum of support to meet their needs, depending on their stage of development.

The key objectives of the model are to:

- Nurture a strong entrepreneurial culture, recognising enterprise as a viable career option and/or a route out of economic inactivity
- Enable a vibrant and productive business base across Northern Ireland
- Increase the proportion of 'innovation-active' businesses in NI and embed this more firmly with enterprise/ start-up agenda
- Diversify the representation amongst those supported by the enterprise and innovation ecosystem
- Delivery a service designed with the user in mind
- Focus on adding value to existing support available in the ecosystem

- Providing regional coverage while ensuring that delivery reflects local differences/nuances.

Go Succeed provides a continuum of support from early-stage enterprise awareness through to starting, growing, and scaling a business. The concept was that the service would help people get the right support at the right time – and would also help maximise other available funding streams by helping businesses to navigate the complex support ecosystem.

The service has been established to deliver across three core areas – **Start, Grow and Scale** – with tailored support for clients aligned with their growth ambitions.

- **Start**: this element of the service aims to identify individuals with entrepreneurial intentions as well as reaching those individuals who do not have an intention to start a business but could be encouraged to do so. There is specific, targeted support for a range of underrepresented groups. The menu of support available includes masterclasses, peer support networks and 1-1 mentoring
- **Grow**: this element of the service provides support for existing businesses. 1-1 mentoring is allocated based on the business' potential to grow and innovate. Masterclass and peer support network activity are also provided to support existing businesses to make key decisions on issues such as entering new markets or accessing finance for growth
- **Scale**: this part of the service is geared to supporting start-ups that have the potential to go on and generate at least £1m in revenue after 3 years. Support is delivered through 1-1 mentoring which aims to enable access to finance or further support through Invest NI, Catalyst or others.

In addition to the tiered menu of support, small grants of up to £3,000 (up to 50% of capital costs) are available to entrepreneurs or businesses accessing support through the service who demonstrate growth potential.

The delivery is underpinned by investments such as a wide-reaching marketing and communications campaign; a call handling service to deal with phone enquiries as well as an online portal to deal with online requests for support and a regional CRM system to enable tracking of client engagement across the service.

Belfast Performance Update

Since the service launched in November 2023, we have achieved the following by way of Belfast performance:

- 4,059 individuals 'reached' through a range of community outreach activities. This has included:
 - Sector specific events and self-employment academies for those in the hair and beauty industry including

delivery of aspirational workshops and hands-on mentoring support for over 80 newly qualified individuals.

- Delivery of a female-focused 'inspiring enterprise' event for a group of 100 female entrepreneurs providing practical support to starting or growing their enterprise.
 - Working with apprenticeship providers across Belfast to deliver aspirational workshops to 100s of 16–18-year-olds encouraging entrepreneurship as a very real and achievable pathway for consideration.
 - Facilitation of the '22 under 22' initiative, designed to unearth, recognise and fast track 22 exceptional potential entrepreneurs in the City.
 - Increasing awareness of enterprise among young people at the Young Enterprise Big Market event in St George's Market in December 2025.
- 1528 Belfast entrepreneurs supported through start up activity (1-1 mentoring, masterclasses, peer support networks) with 367 (24%) of these entrepreneurs being from the North Belfast area
 - 888 Belfast businesses supported through growth activity (1-1 mentoring, masterclasses, peer support networks) with 237 (27%) of these businesses being based in the North Belfast area.

315 Belfast businesses have accessed Go Succeed Grants since the launch in February 2024, drawing down over £1 million. These grants have enabled businesses to purchase capital and/or revenue items which will support their future growth plans.

The Enterprise and Business Growth team would welcome any guidance from working group members to increase engagement in the North Belfast area. Constituent referrals or enquiries can be sent to the Enterprise and Business Growth team via gosucceed@belfastcity.gov.uk

3.2 Go Social (Social Economy Support)

Developing the social economy sector has been a priority of the NI Executive for some time and Belfast City Council is aware of the important and unique contribution which the sector can, and does, make to the local economy. In the 2024/25 year the demand for Belfast City Council's 'Go Social' programme, aimed at encouraging more start-ups within the local Social Economy, has increased with over 60 individuals starting their social enterprise/cooperative.

Via our dedicated 'Go Social' service we offer enhanced support to those thinking of starting up a new business as a social enterprise or co-operative and we encourage existing SE businesses to join our social economy register to help us on our journey to grow the sector. Go Social support is open to individuals, groups and existing organisations seeking to set up, or transition to, a social enterprise or cooperative model.

We recognise setting up a social enterprise or cooperative can be difficult due to navigating complex legal structures and governance along with tackling a social cause or issue. Our Go Social support helps clients via specialist 1-1 mentoring support, access to networking opportunities and best practice visits as well as peer to peer support.

As part of our investment in the sector, Belfast City Council also deliver the Social Economy Incentive Fund which provides grants to new or developing social economy businesses in early growth stages. Each year we launch the fund in September with grants provided for up to £10,000, applications are assessed by a panel with shortlisted applicants invited to pitch. The fund is available to Belfast-based social enterprises and co-operatives, we would encourage anyone interested to sign up to our enterprise and business growth newsletter to be the first to hear about the fund launching again in September.

The Enterprise and Business Growth team would welcome any guidance from working group members to increase engagement in the North Belfast area. Constituent referrals or enquiries can be sent to the Enterprise and Business Growth team via gosucceed@belfastcity.gov.uk

3.3 Test trading

The Enterprise and Business growth team also offer fully funded opportunities for those receiving support through our services to test their products or services at St George's Market.

This opportunity gives businesses starting out, or those who have been in business for less than two years, the opportunity to test trade their products at our thriving, award winning St George's market.

Taking part is free of charge, and businesses have the opportunity to test trade up to six times – a fantastic opportunity to gain real customer feedback, insights from other traders and hone their sales pitch.

The Enterprise and Business Growth team would welcome any guidance from working group members to increase engagement in the North Belfast area. Constituent referrals or enquiries can be sent to the Enterprise and Business Growth team via gosucceed@belfastcity.gov.uk

4.0 Financial & Resource Implications

There are no financial or resource implications for members to consider.

5.0 Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment

Equality impact assessments for all of the above services have been completed."

The Working Group agreed to:

- Note and endorse the progress to date on the delivery of the Enterprise Support Service (Go Succeed) in North Belfast and beyond, with the objective of driving more and better businesses;
- Promote opportunities for business support to constituents where relevant and appropriate; and
- Provide recommendations to Enterprise and Business Growth team on community and stakeholder engagement in the North Belfast area.

Physical Programmes Update

The Physical Programmes Senior Delivery Manager provided 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 the recently completed project – Mercy Primary, Crumlin Road LIF project at Appendix 1; 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 is at pre-construction stage, and 1 remains at due diligence/ initial stage.

LIF breakdown – North	LIF 1		LIF 2	
Stage/ Description	Projects	Value (£)	Projects	Value (£)
Number of Projects Completed	23 (92%)	£996,500	16 (89%)	£708,201

Number of Projects On-going Delivery	1 (4%)	£66,000	1 (6%)	£75,000
Number of Projects in Pre-construction				
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	17 **	£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
NLIF2-05	Mercy Primary, Crumlin Road	£15,000	Complete	Project completed.	Continue engagement with school re post monitoring.
NLIF2-22	Sailortown, St. Joseph's Church Refurbishment	£75,000	On Ground	On ground. Construction works ongoing on the gallery.	Continue engagement with group and HED.
NLIF057	Ardoyne Holy Cross Boxing Club (UV – ABC Trust Hub)	£66,000	On Ground	On ground. The overall Urban Villages scheme will also incorporate this LIF scheme. Phase 2 of the project is underway and due to complete over the summer. The final phase, installation of sports hall is due to be completed by Autumn 2025.	Continue engagement with Group and with UV
NLIF014	Westland Community Centre - new building (Link to UV Project)	£65,000	Due Diligence stage	Due diligence ongoing including on part of site owned by NIFRS. Consultant team ready to be appointed once funding is confirmed.	Continue engagement with Group and TEO
NLIF2-23	Ardoyne Youth Club and Benview Community Centre	£15,000	Initial stage	Approved at SP&R Committee in December 2024. Officers have engaged with both Ardoyne Youth Club and Benview Community	Continue engagement with Groups.

				Centre to progress the proposal and agree scope of works.	
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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
BIF15	Malgrove	£1,758,607	Stage 3 - Committed	Awaiting a Planning decision. Planning is awaiting statutory consultee responses.	Continue engagement with planners.
BIF43	Cultural Community Hub	£350,000	Stage 3 - Committed	Discussions with potential funder have progressed and should secure the additional budget required in order to begin works, subject to business case.	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. The overall NRF allocation for North was £2,503,158. Five projects received an In Principle funding commitment and a contingency sum of £68,179 has also been retained. 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.

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	Procurement stage. Procurement exercise carried out for contractor and tender returns being assessed. Discussed at Due Diligence on 15 May. Draft funding agreement is being prepared.	Continue engagement with the group.
Cliftonville Community Enterprise	£1,452,700	Stage 3- Committed	Development stage. Land boundary issue being addressed. DfC await an LPS valuation for both plots of land to enable them to proceed with a Business Case appraisal for the proposal.	Continue engagement with the group.
Ardoyne Youth Enterprises – Community Hub <i>(Link to UV Project)</i>	£154,696	Stage 3- Committed	Development stage. Updated business case approved by TEO and Letter of Offer to be updated. Outcomes from additional funding applications are expected in Summer. Outstanding legal issues are being progressed.	Continue engagement with the group.
Belfast Orange Hall Refurbishment	£154,696	Stage 3- Committed	Procurement stage. Tender significantly exceeds the budget. The procurement is being rerun with a	Continue engagement with the group.

			further reduction of the scope of works to include external improvements to the roof, walls and windows to optimise the NRF budget. The project remains subject to final due diligence.	
St Joseph's Restoration project	£154,696	Stage 3- Committed	Procurement stage. Design team preparing tender for contractor. Scope of works reduced to accommodate the current budget.	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. Stage 3 Committed. City-wide playground improvements. Works have been undertaken at three sites across the city including the Michelle Baird Memorial Playground. Works were delayed for a number of weeks due to issues around contractor resources. Handover is now expected by early June 2025.
Sporting Pitches Investment 24/25	On ground. Stage 3 Committed. Works being undertaken at various sites across the city including Mallusk Playing Fields. Final elements of work now being completed including installation of ballstop nets and GAA goal posts with handover expected by end May 2025. Shale pitch conversion to grass GAA is almost complete and turfing works will be completed when weather conditions are more favourable as a sustained period of rain is required. Two synthetic cricket wickets have been relocated to middle terrace and are now operational. Additional land drainage and hedge planting along site boundary with Park Mews is complete.
North Foreshore - Development Sites Infrastructure Works	On ground. Stage 3 Committed. Foul Pumping Station contractor appointed. NIE upgrade connections to fully service the site development have started (with completion anticipated at end of 2026).
Reservoir Safety Programme (links to PEACEPLUS)	Stage 3 Committed. Reservoir improvements at Waterworks and Alexandra Park. SEUPB PEACEPLUS funding of €13.5m to enhance shared space and connectivity. The technical design is currently in development.

Cathedral Gardens (including Belfast Blitz)	<i>Stage 3 Committed.</i> Procurement stage. Technical design stage work ongoing. Planning approval granted. Belfast Blitz memorial forms part of the overall scheme. First stage of contractor procurement is underway.
Alleygating Phase 5 – City wide	<i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> Works progressing. Progress made with the commencement of the installation for Phase 5a. Members agreed in February to proceed with the gating order for Phase 5b, with an estimated completion timeline following the enactment of four to six months.
LTP - Girdwood Indoor Sports Facility	<i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted.</i> Business case stage. DfC partnership project. Design team continues to develop designs to Planning Stage. Officers continue to respond to queries from DfC regarding the business case.
Relocation of Dunbar Link Cleansing Depot	<i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted.</i> Business case stage. RIBA Stage 2 Concept Design complete. The exterior layout and red line boundary is to be finalised ahead of a planning application being submitted.
Waste Plan – Waste Transfer Station Upgrade	<i>Stage 2- Uncommitted.</i> Business case stage. Link to Duncrue Masterplan and citywide kerbside scheme.
Electric Vehicle Charging Network	<i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted.</i> Business case stage. Land Asset Assessment underway to identify a long list of sites suitable in principle. Progressing.
Access to the Hills - Glencairn Park/ Ligoniel Park	<i>Stage 2- Uncommitted.</i> Business case stage. Part of the Belfast PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan to develop connections to the Hills at Ligoniel, Glencairn and Cavehill. The procurement for the design team is underway and anticipate that a design team will be appointed by early Summer 2025.
Access to the Hills – connections from Cavehill to Divis Mountain and Black Mtn	<i>Stage 2- Uncommitted.</i> Complementary scheme to developing further connections to the Hills at Ligoniel, Glencairn and Cavehill.
Historic Cemeteries	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Restoration programme for heritage cemeteries including Knock Cemetery, Clifton Street, Friar's Bush and Balmoral Cemetery. Scoping work underway. Strategic case prepared and request at May SPR to move to Stage 2.
Historic Tiled Street Signs	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Capital restoration programme for the historic Belfast tiled street signs across the city. Scoping of signs is continuing along with opportunities for external funding. Strategic case prepared and request at May SPR to move to Stage 2.
Loughside Playing Fields	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Creation of a modular changing and flexible space facility. Early stage design works underway.
Mobile Changing Places modular facility	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> This facility will be for use across the city. Specification developed.
Communications Boards in Playgrounds	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Inclusive communication boards in playgrounds. Initial capital funding secured via UKSPF recouped monies for first phase of installation at 29 playground sites. Strategic case prepared for overall rollout and request at May SPR to move to Stage 2.
Duncrue Masterplan	<i>Stage 1- Emerging.</i> Redevelopment of the whole Duncrue site which aims to improve the efficiency of the site.
Connectivity - Access to Hills Programme (city wide)	<i>Stage 1- Emerging.</i> Feasibility stage.
North Foreshore - Giant's Park	A complex development agreement is 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. The first planning application for the Adventure Hub was submitted in December 2024. Construction works are expected to commence on site in late 2025.
Belfast Bikes Expansion	A new provider/ operator has been appointed. Currently in transition phase. The new scheme will be launched in Autumn.

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 & Leisure Hub (links to LIF programme)	On ground. Partnership project with DfC, DfI, Flax Trust, and UV. Phase 2 of the project is due to complete over the summer. The final phase, installation of sports hall is due to be completed by Autumn 2025.
Ballysillan Playing Fields	On ground. Partnership project with UV, DfC and DfI. Completion of tree clearance works. Awaiting review of construction environmental management plan by NIEA for discharge of planning conditions and commencement of works.
Ardoyne Youth Enterprises (AYE) Social Enterprise Project (links to NRF programme)	Business case stage. Updated business case approved by TEO and Letter of Offer to be updated. Additional funding applications have been submitted and outcomes are expected in Summer 2025. Outstanding legal issues are being progressed.
Sunningdale Community Centre (links to BIF programme)	Business case stage. Planning application withdrawn. UV remain committed to supporting the project. Currently working with the group and UV to identify an alternative site for development.
Westland Community Centre (links to LIF programme)	Business case stage. Due diligence ongoing including on part of site owned by NIFRS. Consultant team ready to be appointed upon receipt of Letter of Offer.

PEACEPLUS – Capital Projects

Members are asked to note updates on capital projects under the PEACEPLUS Programme.

North Belfast – Capital Projects overview

Project	Status and update
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Reconnected Belfast - Waterworks and Alexandra Park €13.5m SEUPB PEACEPLUS	Enhancements to shared space and connectivity within and between Waterworks and Alexandra Park. A total of 3 Design Information Sessions held with a further session to be arranged. Project Launch was held in April. Procurement of design team for next stage is underway.
Access to the Hills – Glencairn/ Ligoniel <i>Link to Capital Programme</i>	Part of the Belfast PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan. Plan to develop connections to the Hills at Ligoniel, Glencairn and Cavehill. The procurement for the design team is underway and anticipate that a design team will be appointed by early Summer 2025.

9. Capital funding opportunities

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

The Working Group agreed to:

- Note the Physical Programme update for North Belfast including the recently completed project – Mercy Primary, Crumlin Road LIF project; and
- Note the updated list of external capital funding opportunities.

At the request of Councillor Anglin, the Working Group agreed to undertake a site visit to the Floral Hall and extend an invitation to all Elected Members.

Update on EV Charging Point Network Project

The Climate Programme Manager outlined the following four steps of the Council’s draft Low Emission Vehicle Strategy:

- Step 1 – Land Assets Assessment (Council Sites);
- Step 2 – Commercial Agreements;
- Step 3 – Working with Staff and Partners; and
- Step 4 – Fleet Transition.

She explained that the Strategy aimed to assist the Council with procuring public charge points to enable residents, visitors and businesses to transition to electric vehicles in order to reduce emissions, she stated that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee had agreed at its meeting in August, 2024, that the first two steps of the strategy be progressed initially.

She outlined the transport hierarchy in reducing the carbon impact of transport and referred to the Belfast targets to achieve net zero emissions and to be climate resilient by 2050, that included the installation of at least 800 vehicle charging points for public use by 2027 in the Belfast Agenda and 4400 public electric vehicle charging points by 2050, in the Local Area Energy Plan.

She provided the Working Group with an update on the current numbers and types of public chargers in Belfast and on Council owned sites and outlined the actions required by the Council to increase public availability of Electric Vehicle Charging that included an understanding of the challenges and opportunities in operationalising the LEV Strategy, an assessment of the viability and interdependencies of Council sites for chargers, engagement

with key external stakeholders and to progress the actions required to implement step one and step two of the strategy.

The Climate Programme Manager explained that, 44 sites had been suggested as suitable in principle, as part of Phase 1 of the charging network roll out and that there was the potential for 132 to 170 connections across the 44 sites, five of the sites were located in north Belfast and most of the sites had the potential for at least six charge points with 12 spaces. Members were asked to note that sites, spaces, and overall progress on the EV network is dependent on further engagement with stakeholders including ChargePoint operators and NIE.

She stated that there were 30 potential sites to be reconsidered during Phase 2 which were currently not suitable and that 26 sites had been ruled out.

She concluded by providing the Working Group with an overview of the undernoted next steps:

- Exploration of operating models and recommendations;
- Engaging with NIE regarding wide ranging cost variables per site;
- Potential charge point operators;
- Preliminary market engagement exercise;
- Charge Point Operator engagement to assess site viability and revenue forecasts; and
- Equality and rural needs screening;

The Estates Surveyor displayed a site map for the Working Group and pointed out the locations of existing and proposed sites located on Council properties.

In response to a question from a Member with regard to the costs of the EV charge points, the Climate Programme Manager stated that if a charge point operator were to be appointed, depending on the operating model agreed by Council, it could absorb many of the upfront costs, and that following the marketing and engagement stage, a report would be brought to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee outlining the preferred operating model options.

Noted.

Chairperson