

North Belfast Area Working Group

Tuesday, 26th August, 2025

NORTH BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

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

In attendance: Mr. D. Logan, Physical Programmes Senior Delivery
Manager;
Ms. M. Wilson, Neighbourhood Services Integration
Manager; and
Ms. C. Donnelly, Committee Services Officer.

Election of Chairperson

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

Moved by Councillor Murphy,
Seconded by Councillor Anglin, and

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

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported for Councillors Cobain and Doran.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 27th May were approved by the Working Group.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Physical Programmes Update

The Physical Programmes Senior Delivery Manager outlined 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 – City of Belfast (Mallusk) Playing Fields and Michelle Baird Playground at Appendix 1.

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 action.*

LIF Ref	Project	LIF Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
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NLIF2-22	Sailortown, St. Joseph's Church Refurbishment	£75,000	On Ground	On ground. Construction works on the gallery paused due to resourcing issues with the contractor. BCC officers are assisting the group to resolve this issue.	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 has commenced and is due to complete by September 2025. 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	Consultant team ready to be appointed upon receipt of Letter of Offer. Draft version of LOO returned to UV with comments.	Continue engagement with Group and TEO
NLIF2-23	Ardoyne Youth Club and Benvue Community Centre	£15,000	Initial stage	Projects presented to Due Diligence panel for consideration. Benvue as Lead Organisation are required to provide information in line with normal funding approval process. Information outstanding at present with the group confirming it will be provided September 2025.	Continue engagement with Groups.

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	<p>Stage 3 - Cavehill Tennis Club- £71k, 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
BIF15	Malgrove	£1,758,607	Stage 3 - Committed	Received approval at June 2025 Planning Committee. Issue of Green Form subject to NIEA and SES responses. Procurement of contractor underway.	Continue engagement with planners and statutory agencies re responses.
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. Continuing to respond to funder queries, to close out funding payment.	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. Due Diligence completed on 26 June. Tender report received. 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. Awaiting supplementary Letter of Offer from UV. Additional funding application has been successful. Outcome of second additional funding application pending. Outstanding legal issues are being progressed.	Continue engagement with the group.
Belfast Orange Hall Refurbishment	£154,696	Stage 3- Committed	Procurement stage. Due Diligence completed on 26 June. Funding agreement is being prepared.	Continue engagement with the group.
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. Pack submitted to HED and Building	Continue engagement with the group.

			Control for approval. Heading towards procuring works contractor within the next 2 months.	
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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	Project completed. Refurbishment works at Michelle Baird Memorial Playground completed.
Sporting Pitches Investment 24/25	Project completed. City of Belfast (Mallusk) Playing Fields – all works now complete, includes establishment of two additional grass GAA pitches; installation of x4 ballstop netting systems and goals. Reconstruction/ relocation of two synthetic cricket wickets; additional land drainage and hedge planting along site boundary with Park Mews.
Sporting Pitches Investment 25/26	<i>Stage 3 Committed.</i> Details being worked up with CNS.
North Foreshore - Development Sites Infrastructure Works	On ground. <i>Stage 3 Committed.</i> Gas Extraction Pipework contractor is on site. 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)	<i>Stage 3 Committed.</i> Reservoir improvements at Waterworks and Alexandra Park. SEUPB PEACEPLUS funding of €13.5m to enhance shared space and connectivity. Planning application submitted.
Cathedral Gardens (including Belfast Blitz)	<i>Stage 3 Committed.</i> Technical designs complete. Contractor procurement is underway and returns closing end of August 2025.
Alleygating Phase 5 – City wide	<i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> Works progressing. Progress made with the commencement of the

	installation for Phase 5a. 115 gates remain to be installed and works to resume in Sep 25. Programme breakdown to be submitted by contractor (showing each area) and works to be completed by February 2026.
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. However, further discussions ongoing with C&NS to confirm the current requirements & schedule of accommodation for the new facility.
Waste Plan – Waste Transfer Station Upgrade	<i>Stage 2- Uncommitted.</i> Business case stage. Link to Duncrue Masterplan and citywide kerbside scheme.
Communications Boards	<i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted.</i> Inclusive communication boards in playgrounds. Outline business case prepared and request at August SP&R to move to Stage 3.
Historic Cemeteries	<i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted.</i> Restoration programme for heritage cemeteries in the city including Friars Bush, Knock Cemetery, Clifton Street Cemetery, Balmoral Cemetery and Shankill Graveyard. Scoping work underway for Phase 2 works, whilst the Phase 1 H&S works to Clifton Street are currently on site and due to complete October 2025.
Historic Tiled Street Signs	<i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted.</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. External funder currently assessing application.
Electric Vehicle Charging Network	<i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted.</i> Land Asset Assessment underway to identify a long list of sites suitable in principle. Outline business case being worked up. 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. Procurement for design teams nearing completion and planned appointment of ICT in August 2025. Project steering group and stakeholder engagement ongoing.

Access to the Hills – connections from Cavehill to Divis Mountain and Black Mtn	Stage 2- Uncommitted. Complementary scheme to developing further connections to the Hills at Ligoniel, Glencairn and Cavehill.
Loughside Playing Fields	Stage 1 – Emerging. Creation of a modular changing and flexible space facility. Early stage design works underway with a view to moving to procurement.
Mobile Changing Places modular facility	Stage 1 – Emerging. This facility will be for use across the city. Specification developed and project moving to procurement. Initial meetings held with CNS in terms of operational requirements, management, bookings and maintenance.
Basketball Courts	Stage 1 – Emerging. The work includes creation or upgrades of basketball courts at five BCC park sites including Victoria Park, Alderman Tommy Patton Memorial Park, Ormeau Park, Blacks Road Park and Páirc Nua Chollann. Strategic outline case prepared and request at August SP&R to move to Stage 2.
Duncrue Masterplan	Stage 1- Emerging. Redevelopment of the whole Duncrue site which aims to improve the efficiency of the site. Strategic outline case being worked up.
Connectivity - Access to Hills Programme (city wide)	Stage 1- Emerging. 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. Members Steering Group meeting held on Thursday, 21 August 2025.
Belfast Bikes Expansion	The tender for a new provider/ operator has been completed. Project delivery progressing, with the new bikes due to come into operation in Autumn 2025.
Little York Street/ Little Patrick Street Public Realm Improvements	This work is under S76 Developer Contributions. Public Realm Improvements – terms of reference submitted. Progressing.

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 <i>(links to LIF programme)</i>	On ground. Partnership project with DfC, DfI, Flax Trust, and UV. Phase 2 of the project is due to complete September 2025. The final phase, installation of sports hall is due to complete Autumn 2025.
Ballysillan Playing Fields	On ground. Partnership project with UV, DfC and DfI. Major works commenced, on-site.
Ardoyne Youth Enterprises (AYE) Social Enterprise Project <i>(links to NRF programme)</i>	Business case stage. Awaiting supplementary Letter of Offer from UV. Additional funding application has been successful. Outcome of second additional funding application pending. Outstanding legal issues are being progressed.
Sunningdale Community Centre <i>(links to BIF programme)</i>	Business case stage. Currently working with the group and UV to identify an alternative site for development.
Westland Community Centre <i>(links to LIF programme)</i>	Business case stage. Consultant team ready to be appointed upon receipt of Letter of Offer. Draft version of LOO returned to UV with comments.

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
Reconnected Belfast - Waterworks and Alexandra Park €13.5m SEUPB PEACEPLUS	Enhancements to shared space and connectivity within and between Waterworks and Alexandra Park. Five Design Information Sessions held. Steering Group and Project Board meetings scheduled. Procurement for design team nearing completion with planned appointment of ICT in August 2025.

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. Moderation and assessment complete for appointment of ICT end of August 2025. Project steering group and stakeholder engagement ongoing.
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At the request of a Member, the Physical Programmes Senior Delivery Manager agreed to circulate an update on the Access to Hills project to the Working Group.

The Working Group noted the content of the report.

Employability and Skills Update

In the absence of the reporting officer, the Working Group agreed to defer the item to a future meeting.

Request to present: North Belfast Community Partnership

The Working Group acceded to the request from North Belfast Community Partnership to present to a future meeting.

Chairperson