

# South Belfast Area Working Group

Monday, 23rd February, 2026

## MEETING OF SOUTH BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

Members present: Councillors Brennan, T. Brooks, Bunting, McKay, McKeown and Murray.

In attendance: Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Property and Projects; Ms. S. Rafter, Neighbourhood Integration Manager; and Mrs. L. McLornan, Committee Services Officer.

(Councillor T. Brooks was elected as Chair for the meeting, given that apologies had been received from the Chairperson)

### **Apologies**

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from the Chairperson (Councillor Groogan) and the Lord Mayor (Councillor Kelly).

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 24th November were approved by the Working Group.

### **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor McKeown declared an interest in item 5, Request to present at a future meeting – Rosario Football Club, in that his child was a member of the club. He did not participate in the discussion relating to that item.

### **Drumglass Park**

(Mr. N. Gowdy, Project Manager (Physical Programmes) was in attendance for this item.)

The Chairperson welcomed the Project Manager and Mr. M. Sefton and Mr. G. Heron from NI Water to the meeting.

The Project Manager provided the Working Group with an overview of the Drumglass Park project, which was part of a broader initiative to implement sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) which aligned with the city's Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan and the Department for Infrastructure's "Living With Water" Strategy.

The Working Group was advised that Drumglass Park had a history of surface water drainage issues due to an underground culvert which connected to the combined

sewer system. During heavy rainfall, the culvert increased pressure on the sewer network, leading to flooding and pollution risks.

The project proposed a nature-based solution, creating a permanent pond to manage surface water, improve ecological diversity, and provide educational and recreational benefits to the community.

The NI Water representatives explained that the pond would be situated in a naturally low-lying area of the park and was designed to store water during heavy rainfall, reducing pressure on the sewer system. It would have a depth of 70 cm, rising to a maximum of 120 cm during storm events, with a storage capacity of 300 m<sup>3</sup>.

The initiative was expected to set a precedent for future sustainable drainage projects in Belfast, treating water as a valuable resource rather than a hidden issue. Construction was anticipated to begin in late 2026, following consultations, detailed design development, and statutory approvals.

In response to a Member's suggestion that the project could request input from local schools, including Victoria College which was adjacent to the Park, the Director and NI Water representatives confirmed that they would be happy to engage with the schools nearby.

The Director advised that, along with the City and Neighbourhood Services Department, they were working well with NI Water to advance the project.

The Working Group agreed that it was content with the project to proceed.

### **Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund**

The Director of Property and Projects presented the following report:

#### **“1 Introduction**

**The Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (NRF) is a capital programme with a budget of £10,280,000 to help groups deliver capital projects that will make a real, long-term difference in their communities. The NRF Programme is currently at *Stage 3 – Delivery Stage*. It is an outcomes focused programme aligned to three key themes of social economy, environmental sustainability and neighbourhood tourism. Members are updated on a quarterly basis on the headline status of the NRF projects via Area Working Groups as part of the Physical Programmes Update report. This report provides more detailed information on the Fund and the status of projects in South Belfast.**

#### **2. Recommendations**

**Members are asked to:**

- **Note the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund update for South Belfast.**

- Consider if any projects are to be timebound to ensure progress across the programme.

### 3. NRF Allocation Model and Allocations

The allocation model per area for NRF as agreed by Members is based on 50% proportion of population per quadrant of the city and 50% proportion of the population that is in the top 20% area of multiple deprivation. Members agreed the allocations of the total programme budget of £10,280,000 as shown below.

#### *NRF – Area budgets and agreed allocations*

| Area  | Total budget allocation | Allocated to projects in principle | Contingency        | Unallocated |
|-------|-------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| North | £2,503,158              | £2,434,979                         | £68,179            | 0           |
| South | £1,978,637              | £1,978,637                         | 0                  | 0           |
| East  | £2,351,551              | £2,350,000                         | 0                  | £1,551      |
| West  | £3,446,654              | £3,426,875                         | £19,762 (Shankill) | £17         |

In South Belfast the financial position to date is shown below:

| Total budget allocation | Total Net Spend to date | Balance Remaining |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| £1,978,637              | £594,673 (30%)          | £1,383,964 (70%)  |

### 4. NRF Process

Members agreed a 3 Stage process for the NRF projects:

- Stage 1 - Application (Emerging project)
- Stage 2- Development (Uncommitted project)
- Stage 3 - Delivery (Committed project)

A total of 20 projects are at *Stage 3 – Delivery* and received in-principle allocations. A total of three projects remain at *Stage 2 – Development* which means business cases were completed, but allocations were not made; and a total of 23 applicants remain at Stage 1 which means the applications passed threshold. Projects at Stages 1 and 2 form the reserve list which comprises 26 projects.

### 5. Current Overall Status

**Offers In Principle** - Letters of Offer in Principle have been issued to all 20 projects - South, North, West (24 Jan 2024), East (11 Jul 2024) which initiated the full Due Diligence process.

**Design stage** - Design consultant teams are in place for 16 of the 20 projects and have completed or are working up detailed designs and costings.

**Planning process** – Planning approval has been secured for eight projects, a decision is awaited on five lodged applications. Planning permission is not necessary for two projects.

**Partnership funding** – Match funding of approximately £14m has been secured in principle across 14 projects.

**Project Funding Agreements** – as under LIF and BIF, NRF funding agreements are issued to groups after Due Diligence and tender stage. These agreements confirm the funding offer once the contract amount is known. Four agreements have been issued to groups under NRF.

**Projects underway** – Five projects are currently on site – Belfast Orange Hall, Michael Davitt’s Community Heritage Centre, Sólás new build project, Act Initiative Community Hub & Visitor Centre and Ardoyne Youth Enterprise (AYE) Community Hub. Two building purchases have completed – Act Initiative and Market Heritage Hub.

**6. South Belfast NRF Update**

In South Belfast there are five Stage 3 projects under NRF. One of the projects Sólás New Build is currently on site. Market Heritage Hub building purchase has been completed. Lagan Water Access Activity Hub is awaiting a decision on its planning application. Two of the projects, GVRT – Branching Out and Redevelopment of former School of Music have a funding shortfall. This was reported to AWG Members previously. For additional detailed information, please see the table below.

In South Belfast, there is one Stage 2 project and there are three Stage 1 (Reserve) projects. Current information on the Stage 2 project Riddel’s Warehouse can also be found below.

| Stage 3 Projects          |                                   |               |  |                     |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|--|---------------------|
| Project Name & NRF Themes | Description                       | Cost Estimate | NRF allocation & match funding secured | Current status      |
| Sólás New Build Project   | Development of a new three-storey | £2,531,849    |  | • Planning secured. |

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| <p><b>Social Economy &amp; Neighbourhood Tourism</b></p>  | <p>building that will expand the capacity of Sólás to fully accommodate all core Special Needs' services and key activities.</p>   |                   | <p>NRF - £362,141<br/> Clothworker's Foundation - £100,000<br/> Wolfson Foundation - £100,000<br/> Community Ownership Fund (COF) - £750,000<br/> Goodman Foundation - £500,000<br/> Gostling Foundation - £250,000<br/> Sólás - £437,859</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design Team appointed by Sólás.</li> <li>• Project started on site in October 2025 and is managed by Sólás.</li> <li>• NRF funding will be used towards fit-out in late 2026.</li> <li>• Funding agreement being prepared.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>GVRT - Branching Out project</p> <p><b>Social Economy</b></p>                                | <p>Refurbishment and extension of GVRT/TREE facility on the Donegall Road to ensure it is fit for purpose and can meet the demands for additional places and programmes.</p> | <p>£1,865,643</p> | <p>NRF - £500,000<br/> DfC - £40,000</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning application approved.</li> <li>• DfC has provided funding to appoint a design team to bring the project up to contractor procurement.</li> <li>• Contractor appointment to take place late 2026.</li> <li>• Council in discussion with DfC and other funders about potential funding. Funding gap remaining of approximately £1.37m.</li> </ul> |
| <p>Lagan Water Access Activity Hub</p> <p><b>Social Economy &amp; Neighbourhood Tourism</b></p> | <p>Development of a water activity hub by LORAG at the McConnell's Lock on the River Lagan at Lower Ormeau to include construction of a footbridge across</p>                | <p>£458,900</p>   | <p>NRF- £308,248<br/> DfC - £150,652</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design Team appointed.</li> <li>• Planning application submitted.</li> <li>• Match funder DfC will deliver the</li> </ul>  |

|  |   |            |  |  |
|--|---|------------|--|--|
|  | the lock to the outer wall and the development of a floating pontoon.   |            |  | pontoon and footbridge element.  |
| Redevelopment of former School of Music<br><i>Social Economy</i> | Redevelopment of the derelict listed former School of Music on Donegall Pass by Fitzroy Presbyterian Church to include a range of social economy, charitable and creative ventures. | £2,308,248 | NRF - £308,248<br><br>TEO (tbc) - £2,000,000                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design team appointed and working towards planning application. They have been liaising with DfC Historic Environment Division due to listed building status.</li> <li>• Structural surveys have been completed.</li> <li>• TEO Urban Villages is currently updating the Business Case.</li> <li>• Discussions ongoing regarding how best to take the project forward.</li> </ul> |
| Market Heritage Hub<br><i>All</i>                                | Regeneration of the old St Malachy's Convent School/Warehouse at Sussex Place by Market Development Association into a vibrant new community heritage hub and visitor attraction.   | £2,729,369 | NRF - £500,000<br>COF - £300,000<br><br>Architectural Heritage Fund - £250,000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NRF and COF funding has been successfully expended on the building purchase.</li> <li>• Group is engaging with National Lottery Heritage Fund regarding building refurbishment. Discussion ongoing.</li> <li>• Funding gap of approximately £1.68m.</li> <li>• Design Team to be appointed and</li> </ul>   |

|                                      |  |       |   |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|-------|---|--|
|                                      |  |       |   | planning will be required.   |
| <b>Stage 2 Project</b>               |  |       |   |  |
| Riddel's Warehouse<br><br><i>All</i> | Riddel's Warehouse is a building at risk that will be restored as a Grade B+ listed heritage asset and repurposed as a permanent, sustainable makerspace for creative and digital industries in Belfast city centre. The project will also provide a unique performance and exhibition space and will act as a landmark tourist destination. | £7.5m | NRF - £0<br>National Lottery Heritage Fund - £4.6m<br>Ulster Garden Villages and others - £800k | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group is seeking support to unlock capital funding for restoration and fit out.</li> <li>• Preparatory and repair works have started.</li> <li>• Design Development at RIBA Stage 3.</li> <li>• Group applied for funding from National Lottery Heritage Fund for Delivery Stage. The decision will be made in June 2026. The success of the application would increase if additional partnership funding could be raised.</li> </ul> |

## 7. Next Steps

The Teams will continue to work with the groups to develop the NRF projects, taking them through Due Diligence, Design, Planning and contractor appointment stages as required, in line with the project pathway and best practice in construction.

Members will be aware as with all physical projects, challenges can emerge throughout the delivery stage such as planning and building consent approvals, or issues with title or land etc. This has been greatly minimised because of early Due Diligence that was carried out, as well as the business case process.

Furthermore, funding gaps remain a key challenge for a number of projects that were not allocated a full funding package via the NRF Programme. Officers will continue to work with the groups to find potential additional sources of

**external funding. Escalating costs represent a significant challenge for all projects in the current economic climate.**

**Members will continue to be updated via the Physical Programme AWG Update reports each quarter.**

**Members are asked to note the update provided on projects under the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund.**

**Members may wish to consider if any projects are to be timebound to ensure progress across the programme.”**

The Director advised the Working Group that she would bring an update on the projects every six months, to ensure that they were all being kept under review.

In respect of the Market Heritage Hub, the Director advised the Working Group that the project had been in discussions with the Heritage Lottery Fund and that she would keep the Members updated in respect of any further progress.

The Working Group noted the update which had been provided.

### **Physical Programmes Update**

The Director of Property and Projects presented the following report to the Working Group:

**“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 South Belfast including the recently completed projects – Sandy Row Arts & Digital Hub, Strangford Ave Playing Fields Enabling Works at Appendix 1.**
- Note that Waterfront Hall Smoke Curtains project can be removed from the Capital Programme.**

**3. Local Investment Fund (LIF)**

Members are reminded that 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 area; and LIF 2 (2015 -2019) - £4m allocation.

A summary is provided below.

| LIF breakdown – South                    | LIF 1        |                   | LIF 2        |                 |
|--|--------------|-------------------|--------------|-----------------|
|  | No. Projects | Amount (£)        | No. Projects | Amount/ (£)     |
| Number of Projects Completed             | 13<br>(100%) | £1,083,600        | 11<br>(100%) | £796,000        |
| <b>Total Number of Approved Projects</b> | <b>13</b>    | <b>£1,083,600</b> | <b>11</b>    | <b>£796,000</b> |

The table below shows an overview of the recently completed project.

| LIF Ref | Project        | Funding | Stage    | Status   | Action/ Recommendation             |
|---------|----------------|---------|----------|--|------------------------------------|
| SLIF017 | Finaghy Bridge | £30,000 | Complete | Artwork on the bridge was completed. Further environmental improvements at the bridge with planters and artwork on several utility boxes being progressed. Quotes for planters obtained and identification of owners of the utility boxes ongoing. | Continue engagement with partners. |

All 24 LIF projects in South Belfast have been completed.

#### 4. Belfast Investment Fund (BIF)

Members are reminded that BIF is a £28m investment fund for regeneration partnership projects, with a minimum £250k investment from Council. BIF – South Belfast was allocated £5.5m; with an additional £500k ringfenced for new areas (outer South) that had joined the District area under Local

**Government Reform. In South Belfast, 6 projects received an In-Principle funding commitment, thereby fully allocating its £5.5m, and £500k pot of funding. Each 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.**

**Summary of BIF allocated projects.**

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| <b>South</b> | Stage 3 - Lagan Gateway - £2.1m; Lanyon Tunnels - £1.3m; Bredagh GAC - £700k; Arts & Digital Hub - £584k; Coffee Culture - £286k<br>Stage 2 - Sandy Row Open Space project- £479k |
|--------------|---|

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| <b>Balmoral DEA</b> | Stage 3 - Knockbreda Parish Church Hall - £250k; Linfield FC/ Boys Brigade and Belvoir FC - £250k |
|---------------------|---|

| Ref          | Project                      | Funding  | Stage               | Status   | Action/ Recommendation  |
|--------------|------------------------------|--|---------------------|--|---|
| <b>BIF04</b> | <b>Lagan Gateway Phase 2</b> | £1,428,650<br><i>BIF- £579,324</i><br><i>Dfl Greenways- £714,326</i> | Stage 3 - Committed | Planning Approval (green cert) expected early 2026, response from NIEA still outstanding. External match funding is in place from Dfl. Contractor procurement complete and letter of award issued to successful contractor. Ongoing discussions with neighbouring landowners regarding Right of Way and Land Agreements. | Continue engagement with the public, landowners and key stakeholders. |
| <b>BIF07</b> | <b>Market Arches</b>         | £3.3m<br><i>BIF -£1.3m</i><br><i>UV – £2m t</i>                      | Stage 3- Committed  | Different options costed and OBC submitted to The Executive Office (TEO). Tender process for ICT to commence at the end of February 2026.  | Officer engagement with TEO, DfC and Dfl as key funders.              |
| <b>BIF48</b> | <b>Sandy Row Arts</b>        | £1,456,155<br><i>BIF-£584,167</i><br><i>UV-£871,988</i>              | Stage 3- Committed  | <b>Project completed.</b><br>Official opening to   | Continue engagement with the group.                                   |

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|--------------|---|--|--|---|--|
|              | <b>&amp; Digital Hub</b>                        |  |  | take place on Wednesday 18 February 2026. First artist in resident studio in Northern Ireland.<br><i>Part of Sandy Row Area projects.</i>   |  |
| <b>BIF46</b> | <b>Coffee Culture</b>                           | £1,317,679<br><i>BIF-£286,519<br/>SOF-£100,000<br/>Cost Risks-£100,000<br/>UV- £531,160<br/>DFC-£300,000</i> | Stage 3- Committed   | Contractor appointed. Works to commence February 2026. Sod cutting will take place on 18 February (photo call on site).<br><i>Part of Sandy Row Area projects.</i>  | Continue engagement with the group.              |
| <b>BIF33</b> | <b>Linfield FC/ Boys Brigade and Belvoir FC</b> | £250,000   | Stage 3- Committed   | NIHE internal approval received to lease land to Belvoir FC and NIHE solicitor is drafting lease. ICT procurement process to be undertaken.   | Continue engagement with the group and partners. |
| <b>BIF47</b> | <b>Sandy Row Open Space project</b>             | £479,314*  | Stage 2- Uncommitted<br><i>Part of Sandy Row Area projects</i> | Detailed design presented to Translink following further public consultation events. Reinstatement underway but queries raised from Translink in terms financial commitment. Ongoing issues with Translink in relation to progressing the scheme, taking account the requirements of their licence.<br><i>*The remaining balance of the ringfenced allocation for the Sandy Row Area projects</i> | Continue engagement with the group.              |

## 5. Social Outcomes Fund

SOF is a £4m ringfenced capital investment programme with a focus on local community tourism projects. 3 projects in South Belfast received an In-Principle funding commitment, and 2 have completed. Similar to LIF and BIF, all projects are subject to Due Diligence process prior to any funding award. Members are asked to note the progress update of the remaining project in the table below.

**SOF – South Belfast project overview**

| Project                 | Award  | Status and update   | Action/ Recommendation                                   |
|-------------------------|--|---|--|
| SOF02<br>Coffee Culture | £1,149,821<br><i>SOF-£100,000<br/>BIF-£286,519<br/>UV- £463,302<br/>DIC-£300,000</i> | Contractor appointed. Works to commence February 2026. Sod cutting will take place on 18 February (photo call on site). | Continue engagement with the group and key stakeholders. |

**6. Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund**

See separate detailed report on NRF.

**7. Capital Programme**

The Capital Programme is a rolling programme to either enhance existing Council assets or build/buy new assets or facilities. Table below provides an update on current live projects South Belfast area. Members are asked to note status and update.

**South Belfast – Capital programme overview**

| Project                                      | Status and update   |
|--|---|
| Strangford Ave Playing Fields Enabling Works | Project completed.  |
| Sporting Pitches Investment 25/26            | <i>Stage 3 Committed.</i> Pitch improvement works agreed at SP&R Committee in December 2025. This includes works at Wedderburn Park, Falls Park, Marrowbone Millenium Park, Westlands Pitch and others. Perimeter fencing to enclose 2 existing grass pitches at Wedderburn Park. Planning application for Wedderburn submitted January 2026. Also, Planning approvals now obtained for Falls Park and Clarendon Playing Fields. Planning decision for Marrowbone Park expected in March 2026. Westlands fencing/ gates completed November 2025. Belfast Met Campus small-sided games pitches completed September 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 be completed by March 2026.  |

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|---|--|
| <b>City Hall – Installation of Stained Glass Windows – LGBT and NHS</b> | <i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> Unveiling of new LGBTQ+ window completed.<br>NHS – Procurement concluded with a contractor appointed and they will attend a future meeting of Installations - City Hall/ City Hall Grounds Working Group to present the initial concept design for the new window.                   |
| <b>City Hall External Christmas Tree provision</b>                      | <i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> Contractor has been appointed and tree order placed.   |
| <b>St George’s Market– New Stalls</b>                                   | <i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> Stalls complete and ready for delivery to the market, date of installation being agreed in consultation with markets team.   |
| <b>Communications Boards</b>  | <i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> Inclusive communication boards in playgrounds. Delivery of 94no. boards received in January 2026, citywide installation underway, completion expected by October 2026.   |
| <b>Musgrave Park Sensory Garden</b>                                     | <i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> Upgrade to sensory garden. New equipment delivered, site works are now underway. Completion expected by end of March 2026.   |
| <b>Basketball Courts</b>  | <i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> The work includes creation or upgrade 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. Design team is currently working on outline designs and preparing tender pack. |
| <b>Ulster Hall Lighting Scheme</b>                                      | <i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> Feature lighting to exterior of Ulster Hall. Design and delivery is to be fully funded by DfC and Linen Quarter BID. Procurement underway.   |
| <b>Electric Vehicle Charging Network</b>                                | <i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> Council agreed that officers begin the tender process based on a Concession Operating model. Specific locations agreed at SP&R Committee in January 2026.  |
| <b>Depot Charging Scheme</b>  | <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted.</i> Business case stage. Installing EV chargers at 5 Council depot sites – Duncrue, Ormeau, Mallusk, Blanchflower and Belfast Zoo. Outline business case prepared and request at February SP&R to move to Stage 3.   |
| <b>Staff Cycle Racks Installation</b>                                   | <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted.</i> Business case stage. Installation of new cycle racks in Cecil Ward Building, City Hall and other premises to improve provision.  |
| <b>Historic Cemeteries</b>  | <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted.</i> Restoration programme for heritage cemeteries in the city including Friar’s Bush, Knock Cemetery, Balmoral Cemetery and Shankill Graveyard. Surveys underway and due to complete by Spring 2026.   |
| <b>Historic Tiled Street Signs</b>                                      | <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted.</i> Capital restoration programme for the historic Belfast tiled street signs across the city. Outline business case prepared and request at February SP&R to move to Stage 3.   |

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| <b>Waterfront Hall Chiller Units</b>           | <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted.</i> Detailed design of the new chiller/ heat pump system is continuing. In order to avoid potential cooling issues next season, a temporary chiller solution has been designed. Outline business case prepared and request at February SP&R to move to Stage 3 and allow tenders to be issued March 2026.                      |
| <b>Waterfront Hall Smoke Curtains</b>          | <i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Modelling of the auditorium has been completed. Following this exercise, and with agreement from Building Control & the Fire Service, no major remedial works are required and the Fire Strategy is to be updated accordingly. <b>AWG is asked to note that this project can be removed from the capital works programme.</b> |
| <b>Wilmont House H&amp;S Works</b>             | <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted.</i> Remedial works to be carried out to ensure the building is made safe for further surveys to enable renovation works. Feasibility study currently underway.   |
| <b>Palm House, Botanic Gardens</b>             | <i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Consultants are continuing to work on the Conservation Management Plan. Draft structural and horticulturalist reports have been received and the full report will be finalised in Spring 2026.  |
| <b>City Hall Security Improvements</b>         | <i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Capital works put forward to make City Hall a safer place for visitors, employees and elected Members. Documents prepared to tender for consultancy team to review the Security Audit Report and deliver the project.   |
| <b>City Hall Preservation</b>                  | <i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Programme of works to ensure the preservation of the City Hall building.  |
| <b>2 Royal Avenue – Landlord Capital works</b> | <i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Capital works to the ground and first floor to meet its obligation to prospective occupiers and ensure the building is fully fit for purpose. Design team working on options for consideration and agreement.   |
| <b>Mobile Changing Places modular facility</b> | <i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> This facility will be for use across the city. Market research and specification scoping is currently ongoing.  |
| <b>Wilmont House</b>                           | <i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Redevelopment of Wilmont House.   |

## 8. Externally funded programmes

The Council is the delivery partner for several government departments on key capital investment programmes, namely Urban Villages (UV) from the Executive Office as well as a number of schemes with DfC and DfI. The following is an overview of projects within each programme relevant to South Belfast.

### Urban Villages Initiative

The table below is the status update on UV projects in South Belfast – note the UV programme has a defined South Belfast geography (Sandy Row; Donegall Pass and Markets).

**UV – South Belfast projects overview**

| Project   | Status and update  |
|---|--|
| <b>The Lockhouse - Gateway to the River / Walkway</b> | Stalled on site due to NI Water issue. Option to resolve this issue agreed by project board. Amended Letter of Offer from TEO received. Expected to be back on-site February 2026. |
| <b>Sandy Row Arts &amp; Digital Hub</b>               | As above at BIF48. <b>Project completed.</b> Official opening to take place on Wednesday 18 February 2026. First artist in resident studio in Northern Ireland.                    |
| <b>Coffee Culture</b>                                 | As above at BIF46. Contractor appointed. Works to commence February 2026. Sod cutting will take place on 18 February (photo call on site).   |
| <b>Market Arches</b>                                  | As above at BIF07. Different options costed and OBC submitted to The Executive Office (TEO). Tender process for ICT to commence at the end of February 2026.                       |
| <b>Redevelopment of former School of Music</b>        | Business case being developed. Approval forecasted before March 2026.  |
| <b>Donegall Pass Good Relations Hub</b>               | Business case being developed. Approval forecasted by March 2026.  |

**PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan - Capital Project**

**Members are asked to note the update on PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan capital project in South Belfast. The Letter of Offer has been accepted and returned to SEUPB.**

| Project                    | Status and update   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>Annadale Open Space</b> | Part of the overall Belfast PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan. Development of a playpark, basketball hoop and a small men's shed. The council is actively seeking funding to develop a 5 aside pitch on the same site. The design team has been appointed, and design is underway, with the view to submitting a planning application in Spring 2026. Stakeholder meetings to include elected Members, will be held on a quarterly basis to provide status updates and to receive community feedback. The third stakeholder meeting will be held on 23 <sup>rd</sup> February 2026. |

**DfC funded projects**

**Below is the status update on projects funded by Department for Communities in South Belfast.**

**DfC – South Belfast projects overview**

| Project | Status and update |
|---------|-------------------|
|---------|-------------------|

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Lower Ormeau Youth Hub – S John Vianney</b>     | Alterations to St John Vianney Youth Centre. Progressing. |
| <b>Holylands Alleygating and Cleansing Project</b> | Link to the citywide Alleygating Phase 5 project.         |

**Dfl funded projects**

**Below is the status update on projects funded by Department for Infrastructure in South Belfast.**

**Dfl – South Belfast projects overview**

| <b>Project</b>               | <b>Status and update</b>   |
|------------------------------|--|
| <b>Lagan Gateway Phase 2</b> | As above as BIF04. Planning Approval (green cert) expected start of 2026, response from NIEA still outstanding. External match funding is in place from Dfl. Contractor procurement complete and letter of award has been issued to successful contractor. Ongoing discussions with neighbouring landowners regarding Right of Way and Land Agreements.” |

At the suggestion of the Director, the Working Group agreed to undertake a site visit to the recently completed Sandy Row Arts and Digital Hub. At the request of a Member, it was agreed that the date would be circulated as soon as possible.

The Director also suggested that the Area Working Group could hold a future meeting at one of the projects.

In response to a Member’s query regarding the potential for a small playpark to be built within Strangford Avenue Playing Fields, the Director advised work was underway on the development of the new 10 year Capital Programme and that she would capture this as part of that work.

A Member queried whether one or two football pitches were required at Wedderburn Park Playing Fields, having recently spoken with some of the players which used the site, and the Director advised that she would engage with her colleagues in City and Neighbourhood Services and revert to the Member.

The Working Group noted the updates provided.

**Update on the South Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Momentum Area Project - Oral update**

The Neighbourhood Integration Manager provided the Working Group with an overview of the project details for South Belfast.

She explained that a training programme had been developed for those working in the hair, beauty and other frontline industries, providing them with the tools to recognise unhealthy relationships and to help signpost those in need to access the available help and resources. The Training would be delivered by Women’s Aid.

In response to a Member's query regarding extending the programme to the Balmoral/Finaghy area, she stated that she had been engaging with a community outreach worker in the Finaghy area and that officers would be happy for Members to suggest any other areas or groups which might wish to avail of the programme.

Noted.

**Request to Present at a Future Meeting –  
Rosario Football Club and Youth Club**

The Working Group agreed to receive a presentation from Rosario representatives at a future meeting.

Chairperson