



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	Area Working Update – including update on BIF and LIF
Date:	20 September 2013
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1.0	Relevant Background Information
	Role of the Area Working Groups
1.1	Members are aware that the Area Working Groups (AWGs) were established last year as a means of connecting Members to local areas in preparation for their role in community planning under the Reform of Local Government. In governance terms, the AWGs were established to have an advisory role, informing the implementation of the Investment Programme. It was agreed that the AWGs would have no delegated authority and no budget.
1.2	Since this time, the AWGs have played an integral role in recommending investment decisions for their areas in terms of the Local Investment Fund, the Feasibility Fund and Local Interventions Funds to the SP&R Committee. It was also previously agreed at SP&R last November that the AWGs would play a central part in the decisions related to the Belfast Investment Fund (BIF) given their knowledge of local areas and projects. Members are asked to note Property & Projects is happy to facilitate site visits for Members/Party Groups to any of the Council physical projects (including those funded under the Capital Programme and LIF) as they may help inform future investment decisions under BIF.
1.3	Members will be aware that BIF (previously the City Investment Fund) was established in 2007 to enable the Council to take a lead role and work in partnership to deliver key investment projects in the city. At its meeting in March 2012, SP&R Committee reviewed and confirmed the objectives for BIF. These are attached at Appendix 1. Given both the changed needs of the city as well as the broader economic context, it was agreed that BIF support should be extended to include programmes of capital investment (or clusters) as well as single iconic projects, which demonstrated a cumulative transformational or iconic impact . It was further noted at this meeting by the SP&R Committee that in order to ensure a balanced investment across the city , and given the scale of investments, that the time horizon for BIF would be over three terms of Council , from 2007 when BIF was initiated through to 2019/20. This balance will need to be considered in the context of investments which have already been made and the money available for allocation which is currently anticipated as £20m by 2015.
1.4	One of the key objectives of BIF is to lever investment from the private and public sectors and Members further agreed in November 2012 that projects must secure at least 50% match funding from other sources. It was also agreed that there should be no ongoing revenue implications .

1.5	Members, at this meeting, agreed an approval process for BIF projects which is attached for Members attention at Appendix 2. It is important to note that BIF is a citywide fund and that individual allocations of money are <u>not</u> being made against particular areas. AWGs do not have any delegated authority and can only make recommendations to the SP&R Committee. The final decision on which BIF projects the Council will invest in will be determined by the SP&R Committee in its role as the Council's investment decision maker.						
1.6	This approval process reflects the Stage Approval process that SP& R has previously agreed that all Council capital projects must go through whereby decisions on which projects progress are taken by SP&R Committee. The first stage of this process is the development of a Strategic Outline Case which will test the four abilities of the projects – i.e. feasibility, deliverability, affordability, sustainability. The development of an SOC does not constitute a decision to invest in a project. Members are asked to note that any costs associated with the development of SOCs will come from the Feasibility Fund and not the BIF per se.						
1.7	Members will appreciate that the role of SP&R as the investment decision maker does present the potential for the Committee to decide to over-rule the proposals or priority projects put forward by an AWG. While this situation has not emerged to date in relation to local investment decisions, there may inevitably be a tension between those decisions made on the basis of local needs and those made from a city perspective which emphasises the importance of city and area planning. SP&R Members will therefore be required to use their civic leadership role and focus on agreeing those projects which can have maximum benefits and investment return on both city-level and area level outcomes in line with the investment principles that were agreed by Members that underpin the Investment Programme -Balanced investment across the city; Good relations and equality; Partnership and integration; Value for money and Sustainability						
2.0	Key issues						
2.1	Following the Committee decision in November, each AWG was presented with the long-list of suggested BIF projects for their area (see Appendix 4). In the interim period, individual AWGs have received presentations from emerging projects and been able to question groups on proposals.						
2.2	In May 2013, Committee agreed that a list of BIF projects (to go forward to the next stage to develop up an outline case and test their feasibility) from each AWG should be brought back in August with clearly expressed outcomes to address identified needs in each area. At this stage it was anticipated that first decisions on SIF projects would be available to help inform the decision making process.						
2.3	A current status of the AWG position in relation to emerging BIF projects is outlined below.						
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>AWG</th> <th>Current status in relation</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>Currently considering their emerging BIF projects.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>South</td> <td> Have recommended that 3 projects be referred to SP&R to move to the next stage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lagan Corridor* - Markets Tunnels at Lanyon - Gilpins (* Members are asked to note that the South AWG has used an aggregation of their LIF feasibility to progress a preliminary study on this project) </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	AWG	Current status in relation	North	Currently considering their emerging BIF projects.	South	Have recommended that 3 projects be referred to SP&R to move to the next stage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lagan Corridor* - Markets Tunnels at Lanyon - Gilpins (* Members are asked to note that the South AWG has used an aggregation of their LIF feasibility to progress a preliminary study on this project)
AWG	Current status in relation						
North	Currently considering their emerging BIF projects.						
South	Have recommended that 3 projects be referred to SP&R to move to the next stage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lagan Corridor* - Markets Tunnels at Lanyon - Gilpins (* Members are asked to note that the South AWG has used an aggregation of their LIF feasibility to progress a preliminary study on this project)						

	East	Currently considering their emerging BIF projects
	West	Currently considering their emerging BIF projects
	Shankill	Have recommended that St. Andrew's Church be referred to SP&R to move to the next stage
2.4	Whilst it is intended that Members final decisions on priorities should be informed by factors such as SIF projects and city and area priorities, it was highlighted to Committee in August that some AWGs are keen to move certain BIF schemes to feasibility stage because of timescale constraints, the level of investment and the need to secure at least 50% funding from other sources.	
2.5	Members are therefore asked to consider if they wish to progress the projects as recommended by the South and Shankill Area Working Groups to be moved to Stage 1 (i.e. the development of a Strategic Outline Case) which will test their feasibility in the first instance. Members are asked to note that this does not constitute a final decision to invest in any project.	
2.6	As with all capital projects, the outcome of the SOC's will be reported back to the SP&R Committee which can then take a decision on whether projects are progressed to the next stage or are stopped. As highlighted the SOC will test the 4 principles which guide all Council's investments: (1) affordability inc. consideration of available match funding; (2) deliverability; (3) feasibility; and (4) sustainability. A report outlining the framework for finalising BIF investment decisions will be brought to a future meeting of SP&R.	
3.0	Area Planning – Next steps	
3.1	Members are asked to note that it is important that even if some potential BIF projects are progressed to the next stage and the development of an outline case that the emphasis on city and area priorities remains. Best practice from elsewhere highlights that planning needs addressed at a broad city level, within larger constituent parts of the city including the city centre and also from the community grassroots up – in some cases using physical projects as a catalyst. Members are also aware that there are various frameworks in place which set a city wide context including the Masterplan, the Investment Programme and the Corporate Plan.	
3.2	At an area level however Members will acknowledge that areas are not homogenous and that within local areas (North, South, East, West and Shankill) there are vast differences with individual areas/neighbourhoods requiring different interventions and focus from others. Members are aware the good examples of local area based planning are taking place across the city. These have tended to be driven by thematic issues, specific geographical areas, particular area needs or on an individual project basis. Some examples of the work which is already underway or planned is outlined for Members is attached at Appendix 3. Members will note that this list is not comprehensive and there are many examples of good area planning, led both by the Council and by a range of other agencies and groups, already happening on the ground across the city.	
3.3	Members are asked to note that all of these developed and emerging plans, together with other masterplans which are being led by DSD and the various NRP plans which are already in place, can provide a nucleus for the development of area frameworks which can inform Members' investment decisions.	
3.4	A workshop, facilitated by the Centre for Local Economic Studies (CLES), is being arranged for all Members in early October to help Members consider these issues and work through approaches to creating effective investment and interventions at a local level. Further proposals on how the Council will address city and area planning issues will	

be forthcoming over the next number of weeks.

4.0 Area Working Group updates – September

South AWG - Local Intervention

4.1 The South AWG made the following recommendation for the consideration of the SP&R Committee in relation to their Local Intervention money:

Proposal	£	AWG Comments
Finaghy Traders' Group	£12,600	That £12,600 be allocated from the South AWG's Local Intervention Fund to assist the Finaghy Traders' Group to undertake retail development and promotional activities on the understanding that the Group would contribute a sum of £1,400 for that purpose – i.e. 10% of the total anticipated costs - in addition to the amount to be granted by the Council.
Ormeau Road Business Association	£10,800	That £10,800 be allocated from the South AWG's Local Intervention Fund to assist the Ormeau Road Business Association to undertake retail development and promotional activities on the understanding that the Association would contribute a sum of £1,200 for that purpose – i.e. 10% of the total anticipated costs - in addition to the amount to be granted by the Council.

5.0 Local Investment Fund Update

5.1 Members will recall that they were informed last month at Committee that the full allocation of **£5million** under the local Investment Fund had been committed in principle to **67 projects** across the city. **20 projects** totalling **£1.26m** received funding formal agreements at the LIF event in May.

5.2 Members are asked to note that since this time a number of other LIF projects have now received funding agreements including

ELIF027	Templemore Avenue School	£100,000 towards the renovation of the building
NLIF007	North Belfast WISP	£50,000 towards building renovations
SLIF061	Donegall Pass Community Forum	£38,000 towards a community garden
ShLIF021	West Belfast Orange Hall	£50,000 towards improvements to the Hall
NLIF035	Ligoniel Connect Project	£50,000 towards a youth training suite

5.3 A number of other projects are in the final stages of due-diligence (including WLIF020 Divis Joint Development Committee; ELIF015 Short Strand Community Centre; SLIF052 Mornington Community Project). Due-diligence work is continuing on the other projects which have been approved in principle and officers are working closely with groups to ensure that all information is being forwarded to the Council. Area Working Groups will be kept up to date on the status of their LIF proposals on a regular basis regarding where they are in the due-diligence process.

6.0 Resource Implications

Financial: Any costs associated with the development of Strategic Outline Cases for emerging BIF proposals will be met from the Feasibility Fund.

Human: Officer time in working with groups on developing their project proposals

Assets: none at present

7.0 Equality Implications

As part of the Stage approval process, a screening will be carried out on each project to indicate potential equality and good relations impacts and any mitigating actions needed.

8.0 Recommendations

Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and -

- agree the request from the South and Shankill AWGs that their prioritised BIF projects (Lagan, Gilpins and Markets Tunnels – South and St. Andrews Church – Shankill) are progressed to Stage 1 and the development of SOCs to test their feasibility, affordability, sustainability and deliverability. Members are asked to note that this does not constitute a final decision to invest in any project.
- note the scope and location of area based working which is already taking place across the city as outlined in Appendix 3
- note that a workshop on area planning, to be facilitated by CLES, is being held in October
- agree the Local Intervention recommendation as proposed by the South AWG (Finaghy Traders' Association and Ormeau Road Business Association)
- note the update in respect of the Local Investment Fund

9.0 Appendix

Appendix 1 – Belfast Investment Fund objectives

Appendix 2 - Belfast Investment Fund (BIF): Approval process

Appendix 3 – Examples of area based planning across the city (either underway or planned)

Appendix 4 - Emerging list of suggested BIF projects

Appendix 1 – Belfast Investment Fund Objectives

The City Investment Fund (now BIF) was designed to enable the Council to take a lead role and work in partnership to deliver key investment projects which:

- Promote the image of Belfast as a place to visit
- Enable and/or promote the city as a place in which to do business
- Bring financial or other economic returns to the city which help to build the city's rate base
- Promote Belfast as a city in which its citizens have pride and belief in a brighter future.
- Enhance the city's strategic, social, cultural and environmental infrastructure.
- Provide a lasting legacy for future generations.

The objectives for the City Investment Fund were agreed in December 2007:

- create a focal point for the Council to play a leading role in the development of the city;
- create a 'can do' attitude amongst its citizens and create a sense of place and pride;
- encourage investment from and engagement of public, private and voluntary sectors, in the achievement of that aim; and
- to contribute to the Council's priorities and vision for the city.

These objectives were reconfirmed by the SP&R committee in March 2012.

Appendix 2

**Belfast Investment Fund (BIF)
Approval process**



Appendix 3 – Examples of area planning across the city (either planned or underway)

- **South** - Inner South NRP is keen to work up proposals for the broader Markets, Lower Ormeau and Donegall Pass areas and potentially linking with the Southwest NRP which includes Sandy Row. Importantly though this will look beyond the boundary of the NRP and looking at the overall development of a plan for the whole Inner South area. The Lagan Corridor is also a potential area plan and a regeneration plan around Olympia is also being progressed.
- **East** - Next steps, including working with DSD and the East Belfast Partnership, are being progressed on the back of the recent Opportunity Workshop in Inner East. Members are also aware the IBM Smarter Cities Challenge, which is focusing on identifying an alternative approach to help the city tackle issues of persistent segregation and deprivation, is taking place from the 16 September –4 October. Inner East, including the Short Strand, has been chosen as one of two areas for this study and the results from this could help inform a specific plan for this area.
- **West** - A detailed multi-agency plan has now been developed for the Lower Falls/Divis Intervention. The catalyst for the development of this plan was the Council agreeing to put £100,000 of its intervention money towards this project last year. Upper Springfield/Black Mountain/Highfield is the other area which has been chosen for the IBM Smarter Cities Challenge which could result in an area plan and help contextualise the Whiterock Community Corridor scheme. A regeneration plan around Andersonstown and Casement is also being progressed
- **North** –Members will recall that they agreed in June that the North Belfast Gateway would be submitted to SEUPB as the Council’s key Peace IV project. This will require a detailed plan to be developed around this. Members will be aware that the Council has received notification from SEUPB that the Council has been successful in obtaining funding for the development of the Girdwood Hub. This presents an opportunity to develop a wider plan for the site and surrounding area.
- **Shankill** – The Shankill AWG is currently considering options in relation to their £100,000 intervention money.

Note – this list is not exhaustive and there are many other examples of good area planning, led both by the Council and by a range of other agencies and groups, already happening on the ground across the city

Appendix 4 - Belfast Investment Fund – suggested project ideas (mentioned in the Investment Programme, AWGs, other discussions)

NORTH	SOUTH
Crumlin Road Gaol	Lagan Canal
Crumlin Road Courthouse	Markets Tunnels at Lanyon
North Belfast Cultural Corridor	Gilpins site
St Kevin's Hall	An Droichead
Girdwood – wider site	EAST
Six Links	Vocational College
Grace Women's Centre	Strand Cinema Community Arts Project
Marrowbone Phase II	SHANKILL
Ardoyne Holy Cross Boxing Club	St. Andrew's Church
	Shankill Piazza/Urban Square
WEST	Springfield Dam
St Comgall's	Argyle Business Park
An Sportslann	
Donegal Celtic	
Belfast Hills & Black Mountain	
Raidió Fáilte	
Corpus Christi – pitches	
St Mary's Christian Brothers – sports arena development	
Conway Mill	
Bullring	

Bold text - AWG recommendation to move to next stage – development of an Outline Case