



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	Area Working Update
Date:	19 th June 2014
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Property & Projects, Ext: 6217
Contact Officers:	Sinead Grimes, Programme Manager, Ext: 6203

1.0	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Members are aware that since their inception the AWGs have played an integral role in recommending investment decisions in terms of LIF and Local Interventions to the SP&R Committee. It was also previously agreed at SP&R in November 2012 that the AWGs would play a central part in recommending decisions related to the Belfast Investment Fund (BIF) given their knowledge of local areas. The final decisions on what projects to invest in under BIF lies with the SP&R Committee.
1.2	It is recommended that this report is read in conjunction with the report on DSD projects which is also on the agenda for discussion at Committee today as these are closely interlinked.
2.0	Current status – BIF projects
2.1	Members are aware that BIF was established to enable the Council to take a lead role and work in partnership to deliver key investment projects across the city. An overview of the objectives of BIF is attached at Appendix 1. Members have previously agreed an approval process for all BIF projects which reflects the Stage Approval process that all capital projects must go through whereby decisions on which projects progress are taken by SP&R Committee in its role as investment decision maker.
2.2	Members will recall that a detailed report on area working was taken to SP&R in March where it was highlighted that it is key that investment decisions on projects are not taken in isolation and it is important the links and inter-dependencies between projects and different funding streams are taken into consideration. This is particularly important in the case for BIF projects which Members are subject to securing match funding of at least 50% from other sources.
2.3	Importantly Members will also appreciate that the investment context is changing as under LGR the Council will become the regeneration authority for the city with a transferring regeneration budget. Members will be aware that DSD funding will cease to exist next March and this will have an impact on the match funding requirement. There are a number of projects where DSD are identified as a potential funder and where funding has been profiled in principle but not yet committed.
2.4	In April SP&R Committee agreed to move a number of BIF projects to Stage 2 (development of an OBC) due to their state of readiness, potential funding being available etc. These included Stranmillis Gateway (part of the wider Lagan Corridor project), St. Comgall's and the development of a pitch at St. Mary's CBS. Members are asked to note that two of these projects are dependent on securing DSD in order to meet the BIF criteria of securing 50% match funding and DSD have asked for confirmation from the Council that these projects will be part of the Council's forward work plan in order to bid for funding for these projects. -

Project	Project details	Overall Cost	BIF funding sought	Match funding
St. Mary's CBS – Pitch development	Development of a community/school sports training facility including a 3G Pitch with changing pavilion, community gym and training room	£1.4m	£600k	DSD - £600k – not secured St. Mary's - £200k
Stranmillis Gateway (part of the Lagan Corridor project)	development of a cascade weir, a lock, an iconic footbridge, a commercial facility and high quality landscaping with associated paths which will see the development of a gateway for the Lagan and the Lagan Valley Regional Park.	£3.5m	£1.75m	Ulster Garden Villages £1m DSD £80k

However there are a number of issues which Members are asked to consider in relation to these projects. These are outlined below

2.7 St. Mary's CBS Pitch Development –

Members are asked to note that -

- The St. Mary's proposal is dependent on receiving £600k from DSD. **At the moment this money is not yet committed. DSD have indicated that they could bid for this money if they get commitment from the Council that this project will be part of the Council's Forward Work Plan (Members are asked to refer to the 'DSD –Capital Project Update report' which is also on the agenda for discussion today)**
- The Council would look to front-load DSD monies on this project, **however if the 600k from DSD is not spent by the end of March 2015 then this will have implications for the 50% match funding criteria of BIF**
- DSD have indicated that one of their likely conditions of funding will be that the **Council deliver this project** due to the limited capacity of the school to do this. This will have resource implications for the Council in terms of overall project delivery.
- Planning permission is in place for this however there needs to be further work in terms of design. **The delivery programme will need to be tested to see if £600k of work can be delivered in time for the end of March deadline.** Members are asked to note that the **delivery timescale for this project is already tight** and this is without the possibility of any procurement challenges and/or any other unforeseen circumstances which could delay the delivery timeline – again if this was delayed this would have an impact on the match funding requirement
- a key component of this project will be to develop a **secured community access agreement for the facility – this is not yet in place** and will require further consultation with the school, Parks & Leisure Department and Legal Services.
- The trustees of the school have written asking that BCC undertake delivery and stating that they are keen to work with BCC/DSD to resolve the above issues.

2.5 Stranmillis Gateway

Members are asked to note that -

- The Stranmillis Gateway project is **not currently at a state of readiness where it can be delivered.** Work is currently underway on an Economic Appraisal and working up detailed design in order to allow the project to be fully costed.
- DSD have indicated that they would be happy to fund the costs of these pieces of work. **At the moment this money is not yet committed. DSD have indicated that they could bid for this**

	<p>money if they get commitment from the Council that this project will be part of the Council's Forward Work Plan (<i>Members are asked to refer to the 'DSD –Capital Project Update report' which is also on the agenda for discussion today</i>).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members are asked to note that it is envisaged that both the EA and the design work for this project will be completed by the Autumn time and so it is likely that the DSD monies (if secured) could all be spent this year
2.8	<p>Members are therefore asked to -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> consider if they agree IN PRINCIPLE that the above projects can be progressed – Members are asked to note that this will dependent on getting confirmation from DSD that monies can be secured for these projects and that all monies can be committed and spent this year – particularly in the case of St. Mary's CBS where if this cannot be committed then this will have implications for the 50% match funding criteria note that in the case of the St. Mary's CBS project that this will commit the Council to a £600k investment under BIF – again it is stressed that this would be contingent on getting confirmation from DSD that their monies can be secured and note that the St. Mary's CBS project would be required to be delivered by the Council and that there are a number of other outstanding issues to be resolved in terms of this project ie community access agreement.
2.9	<p>Members are asked to note that work is continuing on the development of the OBC for St. Comgall's and that the Council is working closely with Falls Community Council and OFMDFM on this project.</p>
3.0	<p>Belfast Investment Fund – Additional projects</p>
3.1	<p>The East AWG has recommended that an additional project, the development of a new community facility by Bloomfield Community Association, be added to the emerging BIF list. Members are asked to be asked to consider if they wish to progress the project as recommended by the East AWG to be moved to Stage 1 (i.e. the development of an SOC) which will test its feasibility in the first instance. Members are asked to note that this does not constitute a final decision to invest in any project.</p>
3.2	<p>An emerging BIF project proposed via the West AWG is for the development of a community facility at Blackmountain however it was not possible for this to be progressed due to land ownership issues. Members are asked to note that the Council has been informed that there may now be an opportunity to acquire this land and Members' approval is sought to authorise officers to enter into negotiations to acquire this land using BIF funding.</p>
4.0	<p>Belfast Investment Fund – Going forward</p>
4.1	<p>As outlined above, the Council will become the regeneration authority for the city from 1st April 2015 taking over responsibility for this function from DSD. DSD funding was a key mechanism for many projects for securing the 50% match funding which is required under the current BIF criteria. Members are also aware that the Council's boundary is changing which will see it take in additional 50,000 people. There is a need for the Council to start planning in terms of investment for the new enhanced geographical boundaries of the Council. At present none of the current proposed BIF proposals are within the new boundaries of the enhanced city council area.</p>
4.2	<p>Members will also appreciate that many of the BIF projects which have been proposed have not been given a strategic context nor detailed their overall benefit at a city wide level. Under LGR the Council will also become responsible for developing a community plan for the city and as part of this the new Transformational Committee will be looking at the roles, responsibilities and governance</p>

	arrangements for the new Area Working Groups. Furthermore, future DSD regeneration funding to BCC will be allocated in line with community plans and regeneration policy.
4.3	Members will also be aware that all LIF is due to complete at the end of the current Council term (end of March 2015). LIF has been a key mechanism for helping Members engage at a local level and for helping to progress smaller neighbourhood projects. There will be further slippage in LIF spending as some joint projects with DSD do not go forward.
4.4	In light of the above and the changing context of local government roles and responsibilities and the new areas, Members are asked to consider if it is now timely to look at the objectives and criteria of BIF and consider if there is scope for BIF and LIF to be realigned with future DSD funding as a neighbourhood regeneration fund in the future . Members are asked to note that if they agree to this that further consultation and work with Members will be undertaken in the coming months
4.0	Equality Implications
Emerging equality implications to be considered as further details emerge of projects	
5.0	Recommendations
Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and -	
Belfast Investment Fund – St. Mary’s CBS pitch project and Stranmillis Gateway	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consider if they agree IN PRINCIPLE that the above projects can be progressed – Members are asked to note that this will depend on getting confirmation from DSD that their monies can be secured and also that their monies can be committed and spent this year – particularly in the case of St. Mary’s CBS where if this cannot be committed then this will have implications for the 50% match funding criteria. St. Mary’s – note that this will commit the Council to a £600k investment under BIF – again it is stressed that this would be contingent on getting confirmation from DSD that their £600K can be secured and committed by end of March 15 note however that this project would be required to be delivered by the Council and that the delivery programme for this project (in order to get £600k worth of work completed by end of March) is already very tight 	
Belfast Investment Fund – Additional projects	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consider if they wish to progress the project as recommended by the East Area Working Group (new community facility for Bloomfield Community Association) to be moved to Stage 1 (development of an SOC) which will test its feasibility in the first instance agree if they wish to authorise officers to enter into negotiations to acquire land at Blackmountain 	
Belfast Investment Fund – Going forward	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider if, in the context of the Council becoming the regeneration authority from 1st April 2015, its new role as being responsible for developing a community plan for the city and its enhanced boundaries, that the objectives and criteria of BIF should be re-examined and consider the scope for BIF and LIF to be repackaged as a wider neighbourhood regeneration fund. Members are asked to note that if they agree to this that further consultation and work with Members will be undertaken in the coming months 	
6.0	Appendices
Appendix 1 – Belfast Investment Fund objectives	

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. The SP&R Committee in **March 2012** also agreed to use the funding to support transformational/ iconic programmes or clusters of capital investment as well as single iconic projects. In **November 2012** Committee agreed an approval process for BIF projects (see appendix 2) and stipulated that projects must be at least 50% match funded from other sources and with no revenue consequences for council. It was further agreed that the time horizon for BIF was to be three council terms (2007 through to 2019/20).