

# West Belfast Area Working Group

Thursday, 24th November, 2016

## MEETING OF WEST BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

- Members present: Councillor Magennis (Chairperson); and Councillors, Austin, Beattie, Bell, Carson, Collins, Corr, Garrett, Heading, Hutchinson, McConville, O'Hara and Walsh.
- In attendance: Mr. D. Rogan, Head of Contracts;  
Mr. G. Millar, Director Property and Projects;  
Mr. N. Grimshaw, Director of City and Neighbourhood Services;  
Ms. N. Gallagher, Director of City Centre Development;  
Ms. N. Lane, Good Relations Manager;  
Mr. G. Dickson, Policy and Performance Analyst; and  
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillors Attwood, Bunting, Groves and McVeigh.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 27th October, 9th and 15th November were agreed as an accurate record of proceedings.

### **Declarations of Interest**

- Councillor O'Hara declared an interest in respect of agenda item 6, viz., Update on Local Investment Fund, as a volunteer at Saints Youth Club; and
- Councillor Beattie declared an interest in respect of agenda item 6, viz., Update on Local Investment Fund, as an employee of Blackie River Community Group

### **Update on Local Investment Fund**

The Director of Property and Projects provided an update on the status of those projects which had yet to be completed under LIF1, together with those which had been approved recently for funding under LIF2.

He reported that, through the original LIF1 allocation, Members of the former West and Shankill AWGs had supported 24 projects, to date, through the full allocation of £1,617,500. Of the 24 projects, 21 projects (totalling over £1.1 million of LIF investment) had been completed and the remaining 3 were all at delivery stage.

He continued that, when the second phase of the LIF had been agreed, £1,200,000 was allocated to the West AWG. To date, a total of 17 new projects had been agreed in principle support, as well as additional support to two LIF 1 projects. Of the

17 projects, seven had passed due diligence and two were at the pre-construction stage and one project had been completed.

The Working Group were advised that the funding of £70,000 for the Sliabh Dubh proposal was no longer required as alternative funding had been granted to the project.

Following consideration, it was proposed by Councillor Corr, seconded by Councillor Carson and agreed that the £70,000 funding would be reallocated to the undernoted projects and recommended to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for financial support under LIF2, subject to the required criteria being met:

- an additional £30,000 to the MMA Regional Centre of Excellence (Whiterock);
- £25,000 to the Blackie River Community Group; and
- an additional £15,000 to the Lamh Dhearg GAC

The Director of Property and Projects concluded by drawing the Members' attention to the list of all 41 projects which highlighted the projects where there had been significant progress.

### **Outstanding Actions – Decision Tracker**

The Director of Property and Projects tabled a Decision Tracker document and explained that the document encompassed actions agreed from each of the items of the last meeting to provide feedback and a status update of any outstanding actions. He explained that he would continue to provide such an update, if the Working Group agreed to that approach.

He provided the Working Group of a brief overview of actions from the last meeting held on 27th October.

The working group noted the information which had been provided and agreed that this approach would form a standing item on the agenda of future meetings.

### **Presentation – City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy**

The Director of City Centre Development provided the Working Group with a verbal update on the progress of the City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy with particular emphasis on the Western Quarter which comprises the southern section of Inner West between Castle Court and Wellington Place.

She advised that as the Members would be already aware, there were ongoing issues in terms of dilapidation and dereliction, with the areas worst affected located at the western end of Castle Street. In addition, anti-social behaviour had been an ongoing issue in the area over a number of years. She detailed that the Council had been working closely with the City and Neighbourhood Services Department and the Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership to try and address some of these ongoing issues. The Council and Belfast City Centre Management staff and officers from the PSNI had also recently attended meetings with the Castle Street Traders to address complaints around street cleanliness and the management of anti-social behaviour and she outlined a number of specific actions that had been agreed.

The Working Group noted the significant redevelopment proposals being brought forward by private developers and the Council's intention to develop an approach to the city centre animation across the whole of the city centre area.

### **Presentation – Department of Justice: Interfaces**

(Ms. N. Lane, Good Relations Manager, attended the Working Group in connection with this item.)

The Chairperson welcomed Mrs. B. McAtamney, Mr. J. Chittick and Mr. K. Boyce to the meeting, representing the Department of Justice.

Mrs. McAtamney thanked the Working Group for the opportunity to present. She reported that the Government had a number of strategic commitments to reduce and remove interface barriers and she detailed these as follows:

- Community Safety Strategy 2012 – 2017 (to seek agreement with local communities to reduce the number of interface structures);
- Executive Together Building a United Community Strategy (TBUC) (to create a 10 year programme to reduce, and remove by 2023, all interface barriers and create a support package); and
- Fresh Start (to contribute to the conditions that would allow the removal of peace walls and the creation of a shared future through delivery of confidence and relationship building measures).

Mrs. McAtamney reported that TBUC was the only commitment where a target had been set.

The representative proceeded to outline the Department of Justice objectives and principles along with the challenges that it faced in delivering these, which included economic, political, social and technical challenges. She stated that it had already been recognised that cross-departmental and joint statutory body working would be necessary in order to address the challenges and help create the conditions in order to enable the removal of the interfaces.

Mrs. McAtamney concluded the presentation by outlining the work to date, including that specific to West Belfast. The Working Group noted that in West Belfast, there were currently 18 structures of which partial removal had been achieved for two.

The representatives addressed a number of questions following which they left the meeting.

The Good Relations Manager provided an update regarding information on interfaces in West Belfast and advised that the Department of Justice would be opening a funding stream for programmes in early 2017 concerning barrier removal.

She explained the programme of work that was currently taking place regarding interface sites and informed the group of the various programmes already in existence across Belfast.

She asked the Group to consider which interface sites they would like to prioritise for funding in West Belfast and ideas for programming. She highlighted the following areas for consideration: Lower Falls/Shankill cluster which includes Northumberland Street, Townsend Street and North Howard Street; Carnanmore Park/Glen River Park (Suffolk); Springmartin Road and welcomed Members' feedback.

The Working Group agreed 'in principle' the potential sites and noted that further update reports would be submitted in due course.

### **Presentation – Casement Park and Belfast Rapid Transport**

The Director of Property and Projects reported that as agreed at the last meeting representatives from Belfast Rapid Transit (BRT) and Casement Park were in attendance to discuss the developments at Andersonstown in conjunction with the new Andersonstown Leisure Centre proposal.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. Ciaran de Burca (Project Director, Belfast Rapid Transit) and Mr. Rory Miskelly (Casement Park Project Director) to the meeting.

The Working Group were provided with an overview of the three projects, which included the common issues across these projects such as car parking, minimising the disruption to local residents and businesses both during the construction phase and once completed and the overall opportunities for wider regeneration of the area.

After discussion, the Chairperson thanked the representatives for attending and the Working Group and agreed that a report would be submitted to a future meeting on the potential collaboration and partnership arrangements that could be established between the Council, BRT and Casement Park.

### **Date of Next Meetings**

The Working Group agreed to cancel the December meeting which was scheduled to be held on Thursday, 22nd December and they also approved the following schedule of meetings and agreed that it would meet at 4.30 p.m. on those dates:

Thursday, 26th January;  
Thursday, 23rd February;  
Thursday, 23rd March; and  
Thursday, 27th April.

Chairperson

# South Belfast Area Working Group

Monday, 28th November, 2016

## MEETING OF SOUTH BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

Members present: Councillors Dudgeon (Chairperson); and  
Councillors Boyle, Craig, Hargey and McAteer.

In attendance: Mr. G. Millar, Director of Property and Projects;  
Mr. D. Rogan, Head of Contracts;  
Mrs. S. Toland, Assistant Director, City and  
Neighbourhood Services; and  
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.

### Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 31st October were approved.

### Matters Arising

#### Update on Urban Villages Initiative - Workshop

The Director of Property and Projects confirmed that work had commenced around the delivery of the workshop to discuss issues of relevance to South Belfast, in the context of the Urban Villages and other initiatives, and that would be likely to be held early in 2017.

#### Moonstone Street/Mowhan Street

The Assistant Director undertook to forward to the Working Group an update on the progress which had been made since its last meeting to address ongoing issues with antisocial behaviour being experienced by residents of the above-mentioned streets.

#### Edenderry Village Renewal Scheme

The Working Group agreed that the European Officer should continue to attempt to contact a local landowner, with a view to clarifying land ownership issues around Edenderry Village.

### Declarations of Interest

Councillors Boyle, Dudgeon and McAteer declared an interest in relation to the presentation by the South Belfast Partnership Board representatives in that they were Directors on the Board.

Councillor Boyle declared a further interest in that he owned a number of properties within the Botanic District Electoral Area, which he represented on the Council.

### **South Belfast Partnership Board**

The Working Group was informed that representatives of the South Belfast Partnership Board were in attendance in order to provide an overview of its work around the Local Development Plan and related issues, and Ms. B. Arthurs, Mr. M. Graham and Ms. S. Rasmussen, together with Mr. S. Kumar, Queen's University Belfast, were welcomed to the meeting.

The representatives explained that the South Belfast Partnership Board had been established with the aim of enhancing the quality of life for residents of South Belfast through its strategic regeneration, neighbourhood renewal, urban regeneration, economic development and tourism and health and wellbeing work. They pointed out that the Belfast Agenda and the proposed Belfast Transport Hub offered significant opportunities for South Belfast and highlighted a number of potential initiatives which were being considered. Those included the proposed Bankmore Link project, which would deliver a number of the key objectives set out within the Council's 2015 Regeneration and Investment Strategy around increasing employment opportunities, residential population and connectivity and creating green and shared spaces.

In terms of the Local Development Plan, the representatives reported that the Partnership Board would, as part of the consultation process, be seeking the views of around 136 community groups/business representatives in South Belfast. It was planning also to host on 23rd January in Stranmillis College a city-wide seminar on the Plan, which would consider themes such as neighbourhood planning/best practice and community-led development models. Delegates would be addressed by Ms. Jackie Sadek, Chief Executive of UK Regeneration, and it was hoped that there would be input from the Council. The delegates concluded by requesting the Working Group to consider making funding available towards the hosting of the seminar.

The representatives thanked the Working Group for receiving them and left the meeting.

After discussion, the Working Group noted the information which had been provided and agreed that the Director of Planning and Place be recommended to examine current budgets, with a view to making funding available towards the hosting of the seminar.

### **Belfast Investment Fund**

The Working Group was reminded that the Council had, earlier in the year, agreed to make available an additional £5million of BIF funding for projects in those areas which had been transferred in from Lisburn and Castlereagh under Local Government Reform, £500,000 of which had been allocated to South Belfast.

It was reminded further that, at its meeting on 31st October, it had agreed to allocate up to £250,000 of that additional funding towards a joint project being undertaken by Linfield FC, the Belfast Battalion of the Boys' Brigade and Belvoir FC to develop a community sports hub within the Belvoir Park. The Working Group had agreed also that representatives of Knockbreda Parish be invited to attend its next meeting in order to outline their proposals for the upgrading of their church hall, which might qualify for funding under the additional BIF allocation.

Accordingly, Rev. B. Press, Mr. J. Mayes and Ms. K. Vincent were welcomed to the meeting.

Rev. Press informed the Members that Knockbreda Parish Church was the oldest active Church of Ireland parish church in the City and that it formed part of the “Memories of Castlereagh” Heritage Trail. He explained that the current church hall, which had been constructed in 1969 and which was located in the car park of the church, was used for a wide range of meetings and activities hosted by the parish and by other organisations and individuals. The premises consisted of a main hall with a stage area, a minor hall, two small meeting rooms, an office, a kitchen and toilet facilities. However, its restrictive layout and lack of modern facilities, storage space and disability access, meant that it was no longer possible to accommodate the increasing number of requests for its use.

He reported that, following consultation with users, it had been decided that the current facility should be upgraded and that it should be extended to the front and to the side. A new entrance lobby and multi-purpose meeting space would be provided and disability access, kitchen, toilet, storage and office facilities would all be enhanced. He added that it was anticipated that current users would benefit significantly from the improved church hall and that it would offer local residents the opportunity to engage with each other, learn new skills, stay active and volunteer. He concluded by pointing out that the initial estimated cost of the project would be £178,200, exclusive of fees and VAT, and he urged the Working Group to consider meeting that cost through the Belfast Investment Fund.

In response to a number of questions from the Members, the representatives stated that the decision to upgrade and extend the church hall, rather than replace it completely, had been taken largely to ensure that users would not be required to find alternative accommodation whilst work was ongoing. They stated also that Knockbreda Parish was not in a position to contribute to the cost of the project, no financial assistance was being sought from other funding providers and no charges were levied for the use of the church hall, although some organisations did make voluntary donations.

The representatives were thanked by the Chairperson and retired from the meeting.

The Working Group was reminded that, at its meeting on 31st October, it had received from the Council’s European Officer information on the Edenderry Village Scheme, which might qualify also for funding under the additional BIF allocation. It had been agreed that representatives of that initiative should be invited to attend its meeting in January in order to outline the extent of their proposals.

After discussion, the Working Group agreed to defer consideration of the request for funding for the upgrading of the Knockbreda Parish Church Hall, until such time as it had received the presentation on the Edenderry Village Scheme.

### **Update on Local Investment Fund Projects**

The Working Group considered the following report:

#### **“1 Local Investment Fund**

**Through the Local Investment Fund (LIF) members committed their allocation of £1,127,500 initially to 12 projects. Of this total,**

seven projects have been completed (Stage 5). These projects include:

- (SLIF002) Belfast Harlequins – New sports pitch;
- (SLIF007) May Street Presbyterian Church - refurbishments for community use;
- (SLIF038) Greater Village Regeneration Trust - Building for TREE Project;
- (SLIF040) Windsor Women's Centre - office refurbishment;
- (SLIF052) Mornington Community Association - office refurbishment;
- (SLIF054) St. Malachy's Youth Centre - new facility; and
- (SLIF061) Donegall Pass Community Forum - community garden.

Of the remaining five projects, two (Taughmonagh Community Forum and Finaghy Bridge) remain at stage 1 and a further two projects (Belfast South Community Resources and Annadale/Haywood Residents Association) are at stage 3. The remaining project (Women's Aid) is almost complete (stage 4) – the final invoice has been received and needs processing; normal monitoring processes will follow before the project is complete. A more detailed progress update on all projects is attached at appendix 1.

TOTAL LIF ALLOCATION	AMOUNT ALLOCATED TO DATE	AMOUNT REMAINING
£1,127,500	£1,083,600	£43,900*

## 2. Local Investment Fund 2

Given the success of the original LIF it was agreed in March 2015 that a £4m LIF2 would be established and allocated to Area Working Groups (AWGs) on a proportional basis. The South Belfast AWG, consisting of two District Electoral Areas (Balmoral and Botanic) was allocated a total of £0.8m. The table below shows the total allocation to date and the remaining balance.

TOTAL LIF2 ALLOCATION	AMOUNT ALLOCATED TO DATE	AMOUNT REMAINING
£800,000	£796,000	£4,000*



**Members have committed their allocation thus far to 11 projects. Since the last meeting the Sandy Row Community Forum has progressed to stage 3 – their funding agreement has been issued and implementation will commence once the signed copy has been received. The project at Linenhall Library has also been completed in the last month. A more detailed progress update on all projects is attached.**

**\* Members have agreed to make no further LIF investment decisions until the exact prices for the additional alley-gates are known in the New Year and therefore how much of the remaining balance would need to be decommitted.**

**3. Recommendation**

**The Working Group is requested to note the update on all LIF and LIF2 projects being delivered in South Belfast.”**

After discussion, during which the Head of Contracts undertook to provide individual Members with further clarification on projects which they had raised, the Working Group noted the information which had been provided.

**Date of Next Meeting/Future Agenda Items**

The Working Group noted that its next meeting would take place at 5.00 p.m. on Monday, 19th December and agreed that Ms. N. Gallagher, Director of City Centre Development, be invited to attend that meeting in order to discuss issues around the Belfast Transport Hub.

Chairperson