

# South Belfast Area Working Group

Monday, 20th March, 2017

## MEETING OF SOUTH BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

Members present: Councillor Dudgeon (Chairperson); and  
Councillor Craig.

In attendance: Mr. D. Rogan, Head of Contracts; and  
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.

### Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillors McAteer and Nicholl.

### Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 27th February were approved.

### Matters Arising

#### Shaftesbury Square

The Working Group noted that a letter had now been forwarded to the agent acting on behalf of the owner of the former public toilets in Shaftesbury Square requesting the removal of the fencing/hoardings around that building.

### Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

### Presentation – Belfast Transport Hub

The Chairperson welcomed to the meeting Mr. C. Conway, the Chief Executive of Translink, and Mr. L. McComb, Programme Director, who were in attendance to provide an update on the Belfast Transport Hub.

Mr. Conway informed the Members that the eight hectare city neighbourhood development, which would be delivered as part of the Belfast Transport Hub, had recently been named 'Weavers Cross', to reflect the views expressed by local communities and organisations in terms of the heritage and geography of the area. He provided details of the nature and scale of the £175 million project, which would include a new hub building and civic square, both of which would be named in due course, and confirmed that it would:

- provide the main transport gateway to cities/towns and airports across the region and beyond;

- comprise over 100,000 m<sup>2</sup> of flexible mixed use space and significant residential and amenity space;
- support tourism and provide an attractive and unique investment opportunity;
- provide 460 – 560 construction jobs and further employment in the longer term, as adjacent sites became more attractive for regeneration; and
- increase social cohesion and community connectivity with, for example, the new Ulster University campus, Queen’s University/Urban Villages, the City Hall/Linen Quarter and the Grosvenor Road/RVH.

He explained that Translink had, as part of the formal planning process, adopted a two stage consultation approach, the first of which had been launched in November 2016. In terms of the key findings, 88% of respondents had, in principle, supported the hub proposals, 82% had supported the creation of the new civic square and 56% had been satisfied with the overall proposals and design. A number of recurring themes had been identified around disability access, cycling and parking provision, building design and noise and air quality and those had been reflected within the second consultation, which had been launched in February.

In terms of the timescale associated with the project, he confirmed that, once the second phase of the consultation had been concluded and the responses evaluated, the project would proceed to the formal planning stage. He drew the Members’ attention to an announcement which had been made in January by Mr. C. Hazzard, the former Minister for Infrastructure, which had confirmed that the hub building element of the project would require to be ‘called in’ for determination by that Department. Mr. Conway pointed out that an additional application, covering the remainder of the scheme, would be required to be submitted to the Council. It was envisaged that, should both applications be approved before the end of this year, the development brief would be released early in 2018 and be followed by the appointment of a developer partner, with the facility being fully operational by late 2020.

He concluded by outlining the work which was being undertaken to address a number of issues which had been raised by the Members around streetscaping, cycle and parking provision and traffic modelling and was thanked by the Chairperson.

After discussion, the Working Group noted the information which had been provided. It was agreed that the Head of Contracts would, for its next meeting, obtain clarification around the requirement for two separate planning applications to be submitted for the project and that it would, if necessary, recommend that the Chief Executive forward to the Department for Infrastructure a letter requesting that the matter be placed wholly in the hands of the Council.

## **Other Business**

### **Belfast Investment Fund**

The Head of Contracts reminded the Working Group that, in September, 2016, it had received from representatives of Linfield FC, the Belfast Battalion of the Boys’

Brigade and Belvoir FC details of a joint project to develop a community sports hub within the Belvoir Park. The following month, it had agreed to add this as a Stage 1 – Emerging Project, under the Belfast Investment Fund, and to ring-fence £250,000 of the additional £500,000 which the Council had made available for projects in those areas which had been transferred in from Lisburn and Castlereagh under Local Government Reform.

He informed the Working Group that a number of technical issues had since emerged with the project and that officers were, as part of the due diligence process, examining the possibility of adopting a phased approach for its delivery.

After discussion, the Working Group endorsed that course of action, should that be feasible.

### **Locality Planning – Visit to Belvoir/Milltown Area**

The Working Group noted that information on the forthcoming locality planning visit to the Belvoir/Milltown area, which was scheduled to take place at 4.30 p.m. on Thursday, 27th April, would be forwarded to Members in the lead up to the visit.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

The Working Group noted that its next meeting would take place at 4.30 p.m. on Monday, 24th April.

Chairperson