

West Belfast Area Working Group

Thursday, 25th May, 2017

MEETING OF WEST BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

Members present: Councillor Magennis (Chairperson);
Councillors, Austin, Beattie, Bell, Bunting, Corr,
Collins, Garrett, Heading and O'Hara.

In attendance: Mr. G. Millar, Director Property and Projects;
Mr. N. Grimshaw, Director of City and
Neighbourhood Services;
Mrs Rose Crozier, Assistant Director;
Mr. D. Rogan, Head of Contracts;
Mr. G. Dickson, Policy and Performance Analyst; and
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillors Attwood, Carson, Groves, Hutchinson, McConville, McVeigh and Walsh.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 27th April were agreed as an accurate record of proceedings.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Outstanding Actions – Decision Tracker

The Director of Property and Projects explained that the Decision Tracker document had been emailed to Members before the meeting and provided the Working Group with a brief overview of actions taken since the last meeting held on 27th April.

Noted.

Queen's University Belfast Outreach Work

The Working Group was reminded that, at its meeting on 27th April, it had agreed to receive from representatives of Queen's University Belfast details of the University's contribution to the Belfast agenda. Accordingly, Mr. D. Corbett, Community Engagement Manager, Ms. A. Cummins, Community Impact Officer, Mr. R. Feeney, Head of Public

Engagement, and Mr. A. Stewart, Public Affairs Manager, were welcomed by the Chairperson.

Mr. Feeney informed the Working Group that Queen's University was ranked among the top 1% of universities in the world and had gained a global reputation as a centre of teaching excellence and innovative research. The Members were then provided with a presentation, which outlined the role which the university played at a local and strategic level, together with its notable achievements, future plans and the main challenges which it faced. During the presentation and the ensuing discussion, the following points emerged:

- West Belfast accounted currently for 786 of the university's student population and for 4663 of its alumni;
- at a community level, 11,000 students were involved in clubs and societies, 3,000 students were involved in volunteering and 17 homework clubs for children and young people were being facilitated;
- Easter camps and summer revision schools were also being considered;
- the university had established a unique pilot Pathways Opportunity Programme, which offered those groups which were under-represented currently within the student population an alternative entry route into the university;
- the university was working with the Northern Ireland Executive to address the issue of underfunding in third level education in Northern Ireland, which was currently the lowest in the United Kingdom;
- should funding levels continue to be cut, there were be 2,000 fewer student places available in the university by 2020;
- in 2015/2016, 37% of UCAS students in Northern Ireland had enrolled in universities overseas; and
- the university would be launching a Social Charter in May and was currently developing a Corporate Plan, which would in due course be presented to the Council.

Mr. Fenny then provided clarification on a number of issues which had been raised by the Members which included the impact of Brexit, the gender pay gap throughout Queen's and the numbers of young people leaving Northern Ireland to study elsewhere and not returning. The representative concluded by emphasising the importance of continued partnership working between Queen's University and the Council through, for example, the Belfast Agenda and the Local Development Plan and, having been thanked by the Chairperson, the representatives left the meeting.

The Working Group noted the information which had been provided.

GLL – Annual Report 2016-17

The Working Group was advised that representatives from GLL were in attendance to provide an update in respect of GLL's Annual Report (review of year two).

Accordingly, Mr. G. Kirk, Regional Director, and Mr. R. McKenna, Regional Community Sports Manager, were welcomed by the Chairperson.

The Regional Community Sports Manager commenced the presentation by drawing the Members' attention to the membership statistics for the leisure centres based in the west of the City, as follows:

Centre	Members 2016	Members 2017
Andersonstown	2629	2985
Brook	54	87
Falls	1420	1694
Shankill	807	918
Whiterock	905	1124
	Swim School 2016	Swim School 2017
Andersonstown	633	897
Falls	217	265
Shankill	109	156
Whiterock	259	321

He advised that there had been an approximate 20% overall increase in leisure centre visits and highlighted that the uptake of swimming lessons had also increased significantly.

The Regional Director proceeded to highlight the various challenges and opportunities that leisure faced and he welcomed questions from the Members.

Following a query from a Member regarding the Heathwise (Exercise Referral Scheme), the Regional Community Sports Manager advised that a new contract had been negotiated with BH DU which had resulted in 4 full time positions having been recruited. The Committee noted that local GP's had been written to and advised that the scheme was fully operational again. In addition to this, an incentivised membership of £20.00 per month was being offered to users following successful completion of the scheme.

A Member suggested that it might be useful if GLL representatives were to make a presentation to the Local Commission Group (LCG) and he agreed to facilitate this.

The representatives also addressed several queries regarding the closure of the Andersonstown Leisure Centre which included staffing issues and the transfer of users to other facilities. Several Members raised concerns about the ability of people from disadvantaged backgrounds being able to travel to the mobile facilities and other centres whilst the Andersonstown Leisure Centre was being rebuilt.

Following discussion, it was agreed that as part of the mobilisation plan, officers would investigate the various options available, including transportation options, to assist locals in availing of the alternative leisure offerings whilst the Andersonstown Centre was out of use and that a report would be submitted to a future meeting.

Presentation – Fáilte Feirste Thiar

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. Harry Connolly, representing Fáilte Feirste Thiar and Mr. Kevin Crawford representing, the Rodney McCorley Society, to the meeting.

Mr. Connolly provided the Members with an update on the background of the proposal for the James Connolly Interpretive Centre which had already secured support from the Belfast City Council LIF Fund. He then updated the Working Group on the current status of the project, as follows:

- with the support of McGurk architects they were taking the proposed 'change of use' planning application through Belfast City Council;
- an economic appraisal had been approved by the Department for Communities;
- Redhead had developed a proposed exhibition scheme;
- commitments had been secured from the American Trade Union Movement to support the development of the project; and
- they had secured the support of James Connolly's family and of the 1916 Relatives Association.

He advised that the purchase of the derelict site had been completed in October 2016 and he reiterated that the aim of the project was to refurbish the derelict site on the Falls Road into a state of the art Interpretive Centre, which would conserve the heritage of James Connolly and the important role that he played in Irish History.

The representative concluded the presentation by taking the Members through the key stages of the proposal. He advised that, with the current absence of the Northern Ireland Assembly, the project remained stuck at stage 3. The contract with Belfast City Council required the project to have the necessary funds in place by December 2017 and they were therefore seeking further support from the Council in order to progress the project.

The Chairperson thanked Mr. Connolly for his presentation and Mr. Crawford was then invited to address the Working Group.

Mr. Crawford advised the Members that he had previously addressed the Working Group in, August 2016, during which he had provided a comprehensive update on the Societies vision to develop a modern interpretative museum which they hoped to transform into a must-see attraction on the local tourism trail. The representative advised the Working Group that the finished project would include an interpretative museum, guest accommodation, a coffee dock, restaurant and further development of the extensive gardens.

Mr. Crawford then updated the Working Group on the current status of the project. He advised that, following a scoping exercise, McGurk Architects had been appointed to carry out the design scheme and to take this scheme through planning and other professional and technical reports were being progressed.

The representative concluded the presentation by stating that he was aware that there was currently no funding available but he asked the Working Group to consider this project should any additional funding become available.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for attending and they retired from the room.

The Working Group noted that no funding was available at present but agreed to consider funding both these projects should additional funds become available.

Physical Programme Update

The Director of Property and Projects provided the Members with a verbal update which included details on the progress of those projects which had yet to be completed under the Local Investment Fund LIF phase 2. He confirmed that LIF phase 1 was now complete.

In addition, he advised that under the Capital Programme there was some projects still under consideration but as yet they remained uncommitted, including:

- the Service Yard at Falls Park; and
- and the City Cemetery Project which was seeking HLF funding.

During discussion the Members congratulated the staff from the Property and Projects section on the excellent work undertaken in respect of the Clonard Boxing Club, Blacks Road Playpark and Lagmore Community Centre which were all excellent examples of local regeneration.

At the request of a Member, it was agreed that a report would be submitted to a future meeting of the Working Group which would take the Members through the Physical Programme process.

Noted.

Invitation to attend Belfast Healthy Cities Event

The Policy Officer explained to the Members that, in June 2016, Belfast Healthy Cities had hosted an event which had focused on the development of child friendly places in the city called "Children's Voices, Children's Places". He explained that more than 250 primary school children from 11 schools across Belfast had presented their views on what made a child friendly place to a panel made up of councillors, planners and other statutory representatives. The proposals had included more child friendly bins, safer crossings at schools, improved use of school grounds and new facilities such as pitches and BMX tracks.

The Working Group was advised that, due to the success of the event, 15 schools had signed up to attend this year and that Belfast Healthy Cities had approached the Council to request the attendance of councillors at the events this year. The Policy Officer advised the Working Group that the event was being run over two days and that the west Belfast event was being held alongside schools from the south and east of the City between 10am and 12.30pm on Tuesday, 13th June, at the Girdwood Community Hub.

The Working Group agreed that Councillor O'Hara would attend the event on behalf of the West AWG.

Future Agenda Items

The Working Group noted the following future deputations and agenda items:

- Translink - Update on Transport Hub;
- St John's GAA; and
- Election of new Chairperson.

Date of Next Meeting

The Working Group noted that the next meeting would take place on Monday, 26th June at 4.30 p.m.

Chairperson

North Belfast Area Working Group

Tuesday, 30th May, 2017

NORTH BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

Members present: Councillor McCabe (Chairperson);
Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Campbell);
Aldermen Convery and L. Patterson; and
Councillors Clarke, Corr Johnston and Magee.

In attendance: Mr. N. Grimshaw, Director of City and
Neighbourhood Services;
Mr. D. Rogan, Head of Contracts;
Mrs. C. Taggart, Community Development Manager;
Mr. G. Dickson, Policy Analyst; and
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Aldermen Browne, McKee and Spence and Councillor McAllister.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 26th April were agreed as an accurate record of proceedings.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Decision Tracker

The Group noted that the Decision Tracker document had been emailed to the Members before the meeting and the Working Group noted the actions which had taken place since the last meeting.

Presentations

Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) Annual Report

The Working Group was advised that representatives from Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) were in attendance to provide an annual report on the leisure centres in the north of the city. Accordingly, Mr. G. Kirk, Regional Director, and Mr. R. McKenna, Regional Community Sports Manager, were welcomed by the Chairperson.

The Regional Director of GLL outlined the usage figures for the four centres in North Belfast for 2016 as follows:

Centre	Pools usage 2016	Fitness usage 2016	Sports usage 2016
Ballysillan	80,588	24,902	60,611
Girdwood	n/a	20,216	78,850
Grove	129,834	54,831	40,337
Loughside	n/a	59	3,441

The Working Group also noted that memberships for three out of the four centres in North Belfast had remained steady or had increased slightly between 2016 and 2017. A number of Members stated that this was encouraging to see.

Mr. Kirk outlined that the Healthwise referral programme had been challenging for the company in recent months due to a significant decrease in the funding it received from the NI Executive.

The Regional Community Sports Manager explained that, in terms of tackling the recent anti-social behaviour issues at Girdwood, his team was working with a number of young people in the area and he outlined that a number were signed up to work for GLL over the summer in order to create a development path for them.

In response to a Member's question regarding the significantly lower usage of Loughside Recreation Centre, Mr. Kirk explained that, as the Grove Wellbeing Centre was within walking distance of Loughside, it was inevitably more popular for those wishing to avail of the much larger gym facilities.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their presentation and they retired from the meeting.

QUB Community Outreach Work

The Working Group was advised that representatives from Queen's University Belfast were in attendance to provide details of the University's contribution to the Belfast agenda. Accordingly, Mr. D. Corbett, Community Engagement Manager, Ms. A. Cummins, Community Impact Officer, Mr. R. Feeney, Head of Public Engagement, and Mr. A. Stewart, Public Affairs Manager, were welcomed by the Chairperson.

Mr. Feeney informed the Working Group that Queen's University was ranked among the top 1% of universities in the world and had gained a global reputation as a centre of teaching excellence and innovative research. The Members were then provided with a presentation, which outlined the role which the university played at a local and strategic level, together with its notable achievements, future plans and the main challenges which it faced. During the presentation and the ensuing discussion, the following points emerged:

- North Belfast accounted currently for 736 of the university's student population and for 4,563 of its alumni;
- at a community level, 11,000 students were involved in clubs and societies, 3,000 students were involved in volunteering and 17 homework clubs for children and young people were being facilitated;
- the university had established a unique pilot Pathways Opportunity Programme, which offered those groups which were under-represented currently within the student population an alternative entry route into the university;

- the university was working with the Northern Ireland Executive to address the issue of underfunding in third level education in Northern Ireland, which was currently the lowest in the United Kingdom;
- should funding levels continue to be cut, there were be 2,000 fewer student places available in the university by 2020;
- in 2015/2016, 37% of UCAS students in Northern Ireland had enrolled in universities overseas, and that that number would increase year on year if action was not taken; and
- the university would be launching a Social Charter in May and was currently developing a Corporate Plan, which would, in due course, be presented to the Council.

Mr. Feeney concluded by emphasising the importance of continued partnership working between Queen's University and the Council through, for example, the Belfast Agenda and the Local Development Plan.

During discussion a number of Members emphasised that one of the key issues was to tackle the brain drain, where thousands of young people were leaving Northern Ireland to live and work elsewhere.

After discussion, the Chairperson thanked the representatives for their informative presentation and they left the meeting.

The Working Group noted the information which had been provided.

Urban Villages Initiative

The Head of Contracts advised the Committee that representatives from Urban Villages would be in attendance at the next meeting of the Area Working Group to outline a list of their emerging capital projects.

Noted.

Update on Local Investment Fund

The Head of Contracts provided the Working Group with an overview of the projects which were currently due to receive funding through the Local Investment Fund in the north of the City.

A Member stated that the Belfast Model School for Girls project no longer required LIF funding and that it should be removed from the list.

The Head of Contracts advised the Working Group that the following two projects would be assessed by officers in terms of feasibility, with details submitted to a future meeting:

1. Ardoyne Shankill Health Partnership; and
2. North Belfast Alternatives and Good Morning North Belfast.

After discussion, the Working Group:

1. noted the update which had been provided; and
2. agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that the Brantwood and Loughside FC projects be phased into 2 phases, each subject to match funding being secured within 12 months.

Invitation to Belfast Healthy Cities Event

The Policy Officer explained to the Members that, in June 2016, Belfast Healthy Cities had hosted an event which had focused on the development of child friendly places in the city called "Children's Voices, Children's Places". He explained that more than 250 primary school children from 11 schools across Belfast had presented their views on what made a child friendly place to a panel made up of councillors, planners and other statutory representatives. The proposals had included more child friendly bins, safer crossings at schools, improved use of school grounds and new facilities such as pitches and BMX tracks.

The Working Group was advised that, due to the success of the event, 15 schools had signed up to attend this year and that Belfast Healthy Cities had approached the Council to request the attendance of councillors at the events this year. The Policy Officer advised the Working Group that the separate event for North Belfast would be held between 10am and 12.30pm on Tuesday, 20th June, at the Girdwood Community Hub.

The Working Group agreed that Councillor Magee would attend the event on behalf of the North AWG.

Future Agenda Items

The Working Group noted the following future deputations and agenda items:

- Update on ASB work across north Belfast;
- Update from Belfast Hills;
- Harbour Commissioner Update;
- Yorkgate Interchange Update; and
- Update on the work of the support services/youth workers implemented by the DPCSP.
- Mr. D. Morrow, Director of Community Engagement at the Ulster University.

Date of Next Meeting

The Working Group noted that the next meeting would take place on Thursday, 29th June at 4p.m.

Chairperson

South Belfast Area Working Group

Wednesday, 31st May, 2017

MEETING OF SOUTH BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

Members present: Councillor Dudgeon (Chairperson); and
Councillors Lyons and Nicholl.

In attendance: Mrs. R. Crozier, Assistant Director, City and
Neighbourhood Services;
Mr. D. Rogan, Head of Contracts;
Mr. J. Uprichard, Policy Analyst; and
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 21st April were approved.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Update on the Council's Car Parking Strategy

(Ms. A. Doherty, Planning and Transport Officer, Mr. D. Connolly, Environmental Health Manager, and Mr. M. McKenna, Urban Development Officer, attended in connection with this item.)

The Working Group was reminded that, at its meeting on 24th April, it had agreed to receive at its next meeting an update on the Council's Car Parking Strategy.

The Planning and Transport Officer reminded the Members that the City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy had identified car parking as a major issue for the City centre and that the Council had been working to develop a strategy for car parks both inside and outside its ownership.

She reported that a draft strategy had been published for consultation in 2016 and provided a brief summary of the responses which had been received. The overall response from the consultation had been supportive of the strategy's objectives and the Council's vision of offering 'sufficient, high quality and appropriately located parking which supported economic development and regeneration within the City by balancing the requirements of residents, businesses, commuters and visitors.' She confirmed that a report would, on 14th June, be submitted to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee providing further details around the responses to the consultation, including a number of issues which had been raised during briefings for the Political Parties, and seeking the Committee's endorsement of the final strategy for publication. She concluded by outlining the actions which would be taken across the various Council Departments to implement

the action plan which would accompany the Strategy, some of which would involve external bodies such as the Department for Infrastructure, Translink and private car park operators.

The Environmental Health Manager and the Urban Development Officer provided the Working Group with details of two reviews which would be undertaken as part of the overall car parking strategy. The first of those, which had been commenced by the internal Parking Order Working Group, was reviewing the Council's off-street parking provision in the context of, for example, pricing, hours of operation, information systems and naming. The second review, which would be undertaken jointly by officers of the Property and Projects Department, the Planning and Place Department and the City Centre Development Section, would review Council-owned surface car parking provision to consider potential options for consolidation and redevelopment and would involve community consultation around issues such as potential locations and design options.

The officers then provided clarification around a number of car parks in South Belfast and were thanked by the Chairperson.

The Working Group noted the information which had been provided.

GLL Annual Report 2016/2017

The Working Group was informed that Mr. G. Kirk, GLL's Regional Director, was in attendance in order to present GLL's Annual Report for 2016/2017.

Mr. Kirk reminded the Working Group that, since January, 2015, GLL had been operating leisure centres across Belfast on behalf of the Council. He provided a brief overview of the organisation's achievements for 2016/2017, under its four strategic elements of Better Business, Better Communities, Better People and Better Services, and drew the Members' attention to the following key points:

- the number of centres being managed by GLL had risen from 12 in 2015 to 14 in 2016;
- total memberships had risen from 8,452 to 16,515 between 2015 and 2016;
- 2,100 membership sales had been generated through online registration;
- 49% of customers had booked services, courses and classes using the online booking facility;
- the number of children who had enrolled in the Better Swim School had risen from 1,250 in 2015 to over 3,000 in 2016;
- the MacMillan 'Move More' Cancer Programme had been launched in leisure centres; and
- the Belvoir Activity Centre had been one of four centres in Belfast to have attained Quest Accreditation (a UK quality scheme for sport).

In terms of South Belfast, Mr. Kirk referred to the opening earlier in the year of the new £21.75m state-of-the-art Olympia Leisure Centre 2017 and outlined GLL's plans for the enhancement of activities at the Belvoir Activity Centre and the Ozone Centre. He concluded by confirming that, in 2017/2018, GLL was expecting to make further

progress through, for example, the introduction of new programmes and activities and that it would continue to support other initiatives and organisations.

The Chairperson thanked Mr. Kirk for his presentation, following which the Working Group noted the information which had been provided.

Japanese Knotweed

(Mr. S. Leonard, Environmental Health Manager, and Mr. A. Curran, Scientific Unit Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Working Group was reminded that, at its meeting on 24th April, it had agreed that an update be provided at its next meeting on the management and control of Japanese Knotweed across the City.

The Environmental Health Manager informed the Working Group that Japanese Knotweed was a highly invasive non-native species which could be dealt with most effectively either by excavation and deep burial within its existing site or disposal at a licensed landfill site or through the sustained application of an appropriate herbicide. The plant was prescribed under the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 and enforcement responsibility rested with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency.

The Scientific Unit Manager reported that the Council received regular enquiries and complaints regarding the presence of Japanese Knotweed on residential and commercial sites and on vacant land. Officers had met recently with their counterparts within the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and had agreed a number of actions to be taken to raise awareness of the plant and its overall control. For example, an information article had been drafted for inclusion within the summer edition of City Matters, which would be augmented by additional technical details on the Council's website, and officers from the City and Neighbourhood Services and Property and Projects Departments would review the procedures for dealing with Japanese Knotweed on Council-owned properties and land. They would continue also to liaise with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency to identify further opportunities for the effective control of the plant.

In response to a question from a Member, the Assistant Director confirmed that local councils had no legislative authority to deal with Japanese Knotweed beyond their own properties and open spaces. She highlighted the significant resource implications which would be involved if they were to provide an external eradication service and drew the Working Group's attention to a motion which, in September 2016, had been passed by the Northern Ireland Assembly, which had called upon the then Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to bring forward proposals for a regional programme to eradicate the plant.

The Environmental Health Manager and the Scientific Unit Manager were thanked by the Chairperson, following which the Working Group noted the information which had been provided.

Belfast Healthy Cities Event

The Policy Analyst reminded the Working Group that, in June, 2016, Belfast Healthy Cities had hosted an event entitled 'Children's Voices, Children's Places in the City Hall. Over 250 children from eleven local primary schools had participated in the event and had addressed a panel comprised of Elected Members, planners and

representatives of other statutory organisations on issues such as the need for child-friendly places to be developed in the City.

He confirmed that fifteen primary schools, including three from South Belfast, would be taking part in this year's event, which would take place from 10.00 a.m. till 12.30 p.m. on 13th and 20th June in the Girdwood Community Hub. The first event would feature schools from east, south and west Belfast, whilst the second would involve those from the north of the City, given that it had the highest representation of participants. Belfast Healthy Cities had sought nominations from Members to participate in the panel on the day on which schools from their respective areas would be attending.

The Working Group agreed that details of the event should be forwarded to those Members who were not in attendance and that any Member who wished to participate in the panel on 13th June should contact the Policy Analyst.

Update on Local Investment Fund

The Working Group noted a report providing an update on the progress of LIF1 and LIF2 projects in South Belfast and that it would, at its next meeting, receive from the Greater Village Regeneration Trust details of its proposals for the revision of the Blythefield pitch project.

The Chairperson referred to the fact that this would be the last meeting which would be attended by Mr. D. Rogan, as he was due to leave the Council in the near future. He thanked Mr. Rogan for the contribution which he had made to the Working Group over the years and welcomed Mrs. T. Slevin, Project Manager, who would be attending future meetings to provide updates on the various projects being undertaken across South Belfast.

Other Business

The Working Group agreed that the Department for Infrastructure be advised of the need to cleanse street gullies across South Belfast on a more regular basis.

The Working Group noted that the Assistant Director was planning to submit to a future meeting of the People and Communities Committee a report on proposals for the location of a community garden in the Milltown area.

Future Agenda Items

The Working Group acceded to a request which had been received from TRE-ECO, a social enterprise based in South Belfast, to attend a future meeting in order to outline the work which it undertook around environment regeneration and improvement.

Date of Next Meeting

The Working Group noted that its next meeting would take place at 4.00 p.m. on Thursday, 22nd June.

Chairperson