

South Belfast Area Working Group

Monday, 22nd January, 2018

MEETING OF SOUTH BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

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

In attendance: Mr. N. Grimshaw, Director of City and Neighbourhood
Services;
Mr. G. Millar, Director of Property and Projects;
Mrs. R. Crozier, Assistant Director, City and
Neighbourhood Services; and
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Minutes

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

Matters Arising

The Working Group agreed that it would be beneficial to obtain an update from the Urban Villages representatives on a more regular basis.

It was noted that a number of other matters arising from the minutes had been listed on the agenda and would be considered over the course of the meeting.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Lyons declared an interest in relation to the Belfast Boat Club presentation, in that he was a member of the Planning Committee, which would be required to determine a planning application for the project, and left the meeting whilst the presentation was being delivered.

Presentations

John Murray Lock House

The Working Group was informed that representatives of the Lower Ormeau Residents' Action Group (LORAG) were in attendance in order to outline the organisation's plans for the development of the John Murray lock house on the Lagan Walkway.

Accordingly, Ms. N. Brennan, Healthy Living Centre Manager, Shaftesbury Community and Recreation Centre, and Mr. R. McKenna, LORAG Board Member, were welcomed by the Chairperson.

Ms. Brennan informed the Working Group that LORAG provided support to the residents and community of the Lower Ormeau area and reviewed the services which it delivered through the Shaftesbury Healthy Living Centre.

Mr. McKenna reported that the organisation had in 2017 purchased the John Murray lock house, with a view to creating a community living hub. It was envisaged that the facility would allow access to and enjoyment of the River Lagan, connect people and communities, offer employment opportunities and provide an alternative to anti-social behaviour and would link into the Lagan Gateway Project and the wider Belfast Agenda.

He explained that LORAG had secured funding of £30,000 from the Department for Communities to enable a consultation exercise and a feasibility study to be undertaken around its proposal and that designs and a business case were due to be completed before the end of March. The next phase, which would cost in the region of £52,800 to complete, would focus upon the enabling works required to be undertaken in advance of the project and would include site investigation work, the replacement of lock gates and various fees. He confirmed that LORAG was seeking funding from the Working Group to meet the costs associated with those works. In terms of the funding of the project overall, an application had passed through the first stage of the Urban Villages capital development funding process and was in the process of being assessed.

Ms. Brennan and Mr. McKenna then addressed a number of issues which had been raised by the Members and left the meeting.

The Working Group noted the information which had been provided.

Belfast Boat Club

The Working Group was informed that Mr. T. Burns, Honorary Manager, and Mr. P. Weir, Captain, were in attendance in order to outline proposals for the development of the Belfast Boat Club and they were welcomed to the meeting.

Mr. Weir reported that the Belfast Boat Club, which had been founded in 1875 and had currently 1,000 members, offered a range of sporting facilities, including canoeing, rowing, squash and tennis and that it worked in partnership with organisations such as Rowing Ireland, Ulster Squash, Ulster Tennis, as well as schools and community groups.

Mr. Burns stated that the work which was being undertaken currently by the Council and the Lagan Navigation Trust around the Lagan Gateway Project should result in a marked increase in visitors to the Lagan Valley Regional Park and surrounding area. In order to complement that work, the Belfast Boat Club was proposing to construct within its grounds a new café/restaurant, which would be accessible to the public, as well as enhancing current parking provision and creating a civic space close to the Lagan weir. It was examining also the possibility of developing a heritage exhibition which would be dedicated to the River Lagan and the Lagan Navigation Canal. The Club would, in the near future, be seeking planning approval for the project, which it was estimated would cost £1/2 million to complete. Mr. Burns confirmed that the Club was keen to continue its engagement with the Council and the presentation concluded with a discussion around

potential sources of funding for the project and options for the management of the facility.

Mr. Burns and Mr. Weir were thanked by the Chairperson and left the meeting.

The Working Group noted the information which had been provided.

Update on Lagan Gateway Project

The Working Group noted a presentation by the Director of Property and Projects outlining the various projects which the Council had already delivered as part of the regeneration of the River Lagan, providing an update on the current Lagan Gateway Project and identifying future development proposals.

The Working Group agreed to undertake a visit to Dublin to meet with Waterways Ireland and view various projects which it had delivered.

Update on Local Investment Fund

The Working Group considered the following report:

“1. Introduction

Through the Local Investment Fund, Members committed their initial allocation of £1,127,500 to 13 projects and the Phase 2 funding allocation of £800,000 to a further 9 projects. From the initial allocation of funding, the projects at Finaghy Bridge and Taughmonagh Community Forum are yet to pass due diligence, meaning 11 of the 13 projects are either practically complete or complete.

Of the phase 2 allocation, project works are either ongoing or complete for eight of the nine projects. The Holylands Area Improvement Initiative has yet to progress beyond due diligence.

A full progress report of all projects has been circulated.

The table below outlines the financial allocations and remaining balance. Members will recall that at its last meeting (November 2017) the group received notice that Ormeau Boxing Club withdrew from the LIF process, thereby providing £40,000 for reallocation. In addition, at its meeting in January 2017, members agreed to decommit a total of £47,900 towards the cost of additional alleygates in south Belfast.

PHASE	TOTAL ALLOCATION	AMOUNT ALLOCATED TO DATE	AMOUNT AVAILABLE
LIF1	£1,127,500	£1,127,500	£0
LIF2	£800,000	£760,000	£40,000
TOTAL	£1,927,500	£1,887,500	£40,000

2. Holylands Area Improvement Initiative (SLIF2-07)

The Council is continuing to liaise with the Department for Infrastructure (Dfi) and is in negotiations about responsibility for the future ownership of the trees. The Local Investment Fund Due Diligence group will not approve the project until this is confirmed. The Director of Property and Projects sent a recent letter to Dfi asking if the Department can provide a commitment to future ownership, including the management and maintenance of the trees. A response should be received in advance of the February meeting.

3. Recommendation

The Working Group is requested to:

- note the update on all LIF and LIF2 projects being delivered in South Belfast; and**
- give consideration to reallocating the remaining LIF balance of £40,000.”**

The Director of Property and Projects provided an update on those LIF and LIF2 projects which had still to be completed. In terms of the Holylands Area Improvement Initiative, he confirmed that clarification had now been provided by the Department of Infrastructure around the ownership and future maintenance of the trees which would be planted, which meant that the project could now proceed to the due diligence stage.

After discussion, the Working Group noted the information which had been provided and agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that the £40,000 remaining within the LIF2 budget be ring fenced for LORAG's John Murray lock house project, details of which had been provided earlier in the meeting, until such time as a business case had been submitted and fully assessed.

Alleygating Programme

(Ms. A. Allen, Safer City Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Working Group was informed that the Safer City Manager was in attendance in order to facilitate further discussion around elements of the alleygating programme for South Belfast.

During that discussion, a Member requested that consideration again be given to installing alleygates to the rear of properties in Wellesley Avenue and Wellington Park in order to address longstanding issues around anti-social behaviour in that area.

The Safer City Manager reminded the Working Group that, at its meeting on 23rd January, 2017, it had agreed to remove two proposed alleygates to the rear of 19-3 Wellington Park, 18-104 Wellesley Avenue and to the side of 18, 104 and 106 Wellesley Avenue from a list which Members had identified for funding under Phase IV of the Council's alleygating scheme, on the basis that the site survey had revealed significant site suitability issues. She pointed out that any alternative proposal for those

locations would be subject to approval being granted by the Department for Infrastructure and on funding of £5,000 becoming available.

After discussion, the Working Group agreed that the Safer City Manager should discuss with the Department for Infrastructure other potential options for the installation of alleygates in Wellesley Avenue/Wellington Park. It agreed also that Members should identify other locations in South Belfast which would benefit from alleygates and that the Safer City Manager should begin the process of assessing those, in readiness for any future funding becoming available.

Public Access Defibrillator Pilot Programme

The Assistant Director reported that the People and Communities Committee, at its meeting on 5th December, had approved the roll out of the third phase of the public access defibrillator programme across a further eight Council sites, subject to those sites being endorsed by the respective Working Groups.

She explained that three sites had been identified in South Belfast, namely, Musgrave Park, Strangford Playing Fields and Ulidia Playing Fields, with the precise location within each site being dependent upon an electrical supply and confirmation by the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service that there were no other public access defibrillators in the immediate vicinity.

The Working Group approved the aforementioned three sites in South Belfast, as part of the third phase of the defibrillator programme.

Request to Address a Future Meeting

The Working Group acceded to a request which had been received from a representative of the Old Stranmillis (Road) Residents' Association to attend a future meeting in order to discuss the potential development of a children's play park on lands off Sharman Road which were owned by the Council.

Update on Olympia Regeneration Project

The Director of Property and Projects submitted for the Working Group's consideration the following report:

"1.0 Purpose and Background

The purpose of this report is to update the South Belfast Area Working Group on the progress on the Olympia Regeneration Project.

Members will be aware that this £21.75m capital project is being delivered in phases, the first being the new leisure facility at Olympia which opened in January 2017. The next stage comprises wider works to the remaining site including a new pitch and play park, re-provision of Midgley Park, and a new tree lined boulevard leading from the Boucher Road.

2.0 Recommendation

The Working Group is requested to note:

- the completed artist brief for the Stadium Art and that procurement is underway; and
- the approach in relation to the naming of the new road via a public competition.

3.0 Update – Olympia Regeneration Project

3.1 Regional Stadium Public Art Project with IFA and DfC

Members will recall that an art project at the National Football Stadium at Windsor Park / Olympia is in development with the Department for Communities and the Irish Football Association via DfC's Regional Stadium Programme. Following a period of stakeholder engagement in December, the artist's brief has now been developed by an external facilitator and the brief has been circulated. Procurement of an artist is now underway with appointment anticipated in February to achieve completion in line with the overall project date by May 2018.

3.2 Naming the New Road

The Olympia Regeneration Project requires the construction of a new road from Boucher Road. The road will serve the National Football Stadium at Windsor Park operated by IFA Stadium Development Co. Ltd; Olympia operated by GLL; the new Olympia Playground operated by the Council; the new Midgley Park operated by Linfield FC, as well as two commercial development sites, potentially including a hotel. There is currently a temporary road in operation for access during construction.

The road will remain in Council ownership rather than become an adopted road, and so it is not necessary to make a formal application under the Council's formal Road Naming and Numbering Policy. Despite this, there is broad agreement that the road should still be formally named. The model of public engagement used for the Connswater Community Greenway structures is proposed, which includes shortlisting suggestions and a public vote. This naming process allows for a two-week consultation period during which the public will have the opportunity to submit ideas for the name; after which a judging panel will meet to consider the submissions and shortlist two or three. Following this, a public vote will be open for several weeks. The name with the most votes will win the vote and the name proposal will be brought to Committee for approval. As with the process at CCG, communication and advertising will be used to engage and inform the public that

the consultation to naming the road is being undertaken. Members of the Working Group will be kept informed as the naming process progresses.

4.0 Conclusion

Work is ongoing to progress the various projects by Property and Projects Department working alongside City and Neighbourhoods Services and other stakeholders.”

After discussion, the Working Group adopted the recommendations set out within the report.

Update on Former Public Toilets in Shaftesbury Square

The Working Group noted that it would in due course be informed of the outcome of discussions which were taking place between Council officers and their counterparts in DfI Roads to identify legislation which could potentially address the longstanding issue of the unsightly fencing/hoardings around the former public toilets in Shaftesbury Square.

Update on Communities in Transition Programme

The Working Group was provided with a presentation which was being delivered to the East, North and West Belfast Area Working Groups on the Communities in Transition Programme. The initiative had been developed to assist the Executive Office in delivering action B4 of the Executive Action Plan on Tackling Paramilitary Activity, Criminality and Organised Crime and included four target areas in the East, North and West of the City.

The Working Group noted the information which had been provided and agreed that it should receive further updates as the initiative progressed.

Other Business

Workshops

The working Group agreed that a workshop/workshops be held over the coming months in order to assist it in identifying future priorities for South Belfast.

Date of Next Meeting

The Working Group noted that its next meeting would take place at 5.00 p.m. on Monday, 26th February.

Chairperson