

North Belfast Area Working Group

Tuesday, 23rd January, 2018

NORTH BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

Members present: Councillor Campbell (Chairperson);
Aldermen Convery, Spence and
Councillors Clarke, Magee and Murphy.

In attendance: Mr. G. Millar, Director of Property and Projects;
Ms. R. Crozier, Assistant Director,
Mr. G. Dickson, Policy Analyst; and
Ms E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services Officer.

Election of Chairperson

The Area Working Group noted that, due to the resignation of the former Chairperson, it was required to elect a new Chairperson until June, 2018.

Moved by Councillor Magee,
Seconded by Councillor Clarke and

Resolved – that Councillor Campbell be elected to serve as
Chairperson to the North Belfast Area Working Group until June, 2018.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of the Lord Mayor, Councillor McAllister, and Alderman Patterson.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 30th November were agreed as an accurate record of proceedings.

Declaration of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Decision Tracker

The Working Group noted that the Decision Tracker document had been emailed to Members before the meeting and provided Members with a brief overview of actions since the last meeting held on 30th November.

During discussion, the Director answered Members' questions in relation to Local Investment Fund Projects. He provided an update on the North Belfast Alternatives and the Good Morning North Belfast project and explained that the Northern Ireland Housing Executive would be unable to consider extending the lease for the proposed premises

unless North Belfast Alternatives had requested it. He highlighted that Councillor Corr Johnston would be informed of the update, as she had initially brought the project forward for consideration. In relation to the Star Neighbourhood Centre and Intercomm Ireland Projects, he highlighted that, as the projects funding allocation were interlinked, funding would be confirmed once they had both reached the same project stage. He also advised that an update on the Marrowbone Parochial Hall project would be provided to Councillor Murphy before the next meeting.

Noted.

Presentation – Doggy Dynamos

The Chairperson welcomed to the meeting Ms. A. McKernon, Ms. H. Carlin, Ms. M. O’Gorman and Ms. A. O’Neill, Directors of Doggy Dynamos Funpark.

Ms. McKernon provided an overview of the proposal to create a dynamic and innovative dog park in North Belfast. She explained that the goal of the Doggy Dynamos Funpark was to provide a safe place for people to bring dogs to exercise, get health-related information, and the pets and their owners to socialise. She advised that the Funpark would boost employment for young people who wanted a career working with animals, combat social exclusion among older people and support local businesses supplying dog products.

She informed the Working Group that that they had established the city’s first and only dog park at the former B&Q warehouse on Boucher Road, which included an agility course, secure area, large and small dog pens, agility run and coffee area. However, they now sought their own site to take the initiative a step further as a dog-centered co-op.

She provided background to the initiative and reported that, since September 2017, the pop-up park had:

- approximately 40 to 50 dogs and owners using the facility over just two hours or so on week nights;
- a once a month Sunday operation which attracted between 80 to 100 dogs;
- approximately 2500 followers on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and meetup.com; and
- collected 374 signatures in a petition from their customers who would like to see a permanent dog park in the city.

Ms. O’Gorman advised that the proposal would provide a platform for local dog businesses to sell and market their products and services and the pop-up initiative had proved that a dog park was sustainable.

Ms. O’Neill explained how she had volunteered and gained casual employment at the Funpark and how the initiative would help to improve the health of participants as well as socialise their dogs.

During discussion, the representatives confirmed that they required land of half an acre or more, with the potential for a building, and consideration for parking, electricity and water. They clarified that initial start-up costs would be required for course equipment, benches, sheltered area, fencing, tea/coffee bar, shop, toilets and operational consumables.

During Members’ questions, they explained that the Doggy Dynamos Funpark was designed differently to the Council Dog Park, and once in operation, they planned to consider biomass dog-dirt recycling. They advised that the funding required would depend

on the scale of the site and that they intended to explore a community share offer to help fund the venture to deliver the permanent dog park.

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

Following further discussion, the Working Group agreed that a business plan, which detailed the full requirements of the Funpark, was required so that the Working Group could further consider the project.

Presentation - Update on Communities in Transition Programme

(Mr. S. Lavery, Programme Manager, was in attendance in connection with this item.)

The Chairperson advised that Ms. A. Fitzpatrick, Department for Communities, and Mr. A. Quinn, Co-Operation Ireland, were in attendance and they were welcomed to the meeting.

Ms. Fitzpatrick provided an overview of the work which was being carried out through "Communities in Transition", which she explained was a two phase project to support The Executive Office in the delivery of action B4 of the Executive Action Plan on Tackling Paramilitary Activity, Criminality and Organised Crime.

She outlined to the Working Group that the project aims were to:

1. deliver long term prevention;
2. build confidence in the justice system;
3. develop strategies and powers to tackle criminal activity; and
4. build capacity to support transition.

She advised the Members that eight target areas had been selected, with New Lodge and Greater Ardoyne having been chosen within North Belfast.

She outlined the details of Phase 1, which was to be completed by the end of February, 2018, which involved costed Transition Plans being drawn up to identify the priority issues which underpinned the continued influence and coercive control of paramilitarism, as well as proposals on possible future inventions.

The Working Group was advised that the consultation had commenced and that they were operating within a tight timeframe. She emphasised that they would welcome input from all the political representatives and Members should contact Co-Operation Ireland, after the meeting, if they had any further issues they would like to raise.

In response to a Member's question regarding other areas of North Belfast which were not included in the Target areas, Ms. Fitzpatrick advised the Working Group that New Lodge and Greater Ardoyne had been identified through prior analysis and assessment but that she believed successes from the project could be rolled out and used in other areas in the future. She also advised that comments made by Members in relation to the inclusion of other areas of North Belfast would be fed back to the Programme Board.

Ms. Fitzpatrick informed the Working Group that a wider briefing which gave an overview of the Tackling Paramilitarism Programme and complementary projects of the programme could be provided in the future.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance and they retired from the meeting and noted further updates, together with a broader overview of the Programme, would be provided as the programme progressed.

Student Accommodation - Appeals Process

(Ms. N. Largey, Divisional Solicitor, was in attendance in connection with this item)

The Divisional Solicitor provided an overview of the planning appeals process in relation to the Student Managed Accommodation planning applications. She advised that there was no third party right of appeal, however, third parties could request a Judicial Review of the decision making body such as the Council or the Planning Appeals Commission.

In relation to the clustering of Student Accommodation in North Belfast, she advised that a report would be submitted to the next Planning Committee in relation to the number of Student Accommodation that had been applied for, granted approval and developments completed in the Belfast Area.

Noted.

Public Access Defibrillator Pilot Programme

The Assistant Director of City and Neighbourhood Services provided the Working Group with an overview of the Public Access Defibrillator Pilot Programme. She explained that the People and Communities Committee, at its meeting on 5th December, 2017, had agreed to the third phase of installation across a further eight Council sites and that the proposed locations of the defibrillators would be brought to each Area Working Group for its consideration and approval.

She outlined the proposal for defibrillators to be installed in Shore Road Playing Fields and Loughshore Playing Fields as part of the third phase of the public access defibrillator programme in the North of the City. She advised that this was subject to the identification of a suitable location with an electrical supply and confirmation with the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service that there were no other public access defibrillators within a short distance.

During discussion, the Assistant Director confirmed that the Council's Leisure Centres already had Defibrillators in place.

After discussion, the Working Group agreed Shore Road Playing Fields and Loughshore Playing Fields be the location for the placement of defibrillators.

Future Agenda Items

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

- Information sessions on Inner North Belfast Projects;
- Zoo Update;
- Harbour Commissioner Update;
- York Street Interchange Update;
- Update on the work of the support services/youth workers implemented by the DPCSP;
- Alleygate Update;
- Quarterly updates from Ulster University regarding its community engagement and programme of building work;

- Duncairn Arts; and
- Ligoneil Improvement Association.

Date of Next Meeting

The Members agreed that the next meeting of the Working Group be scheduled for 27th February, 2018.

Chairperson