



Subject:	Local Investment fund – Proposed Awards Ceremony and Dinner
Date:	20 th April 2018
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Finance and Resources Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive
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Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to seek Member's views on a proposal to hold an Awards Ceremony and Dinner in the Autumn time to mark the extent of the projects delivered under the Council's highly successful £9m Local Investment Fund (LIF) Programme.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to; <ul style="list-style-type: none">• note the update on the current status of the £9m LIF programme as at 3.9 below which has provided support to 131 projects across the city with 90 projects already completed and another 23 either on the ground or at tender preparation stage

- note some of the **testimonials from groups who have received LIF funding** which evidences the significant impact that this has had at a local level through-out the city
- in light of the above, consider the **proposal to host an Awards Ceremony/Dinner in the City Hall to mark the impact of LIF in the Autumn time** (provisional date of 25th October) to which community groups who have benefitted from funding, all Elected Members (including Members who have left Council since the launch of LIF) and council officers who have supported LIF will be invited
- note that if agreed, further details on the ceremony and arrangements, will be brought to Members in due course for consideration

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

LIF – Role of Members

3.1 Councillors in their civic leadership role have been central to the LIF Programme. Members will be aware that in February 2012, the Council launched its ambitious £150m Investment Programme to counter the effects of the economic downturn and the key aims of the initiative included boosting the local economy, supporting businesses, creating employment and training opportunities and supporting capital projects across the city. The Investment Programme was conceived, developed and supported by all six political parties on the Council; demonstrating collective city leadership in action to address the key economic, social and physical challenges facing the city. **The Councillors were however clear from the outset that the commitments in the Investment Programme needed to be balanced and stretch beyond the city centre and that they wanted to reach into communities across the city to make a difference to the lives of local people.** They also recognised that **small area based capital schemes would make a significant and direct difference to the lives of our ratepayers.**

3.2 Reflecting this, in April 2012, the Council launched a **£5m Local Investment Fund designed to support neighbourhood projects to help regenerate local areas.** At this time it was also recognised that councillors, using their local mandate and their role as democratically Elected Members for the city, were best placed to understand their local areas and identify key local needs and projects. Area Working Groups (AWGs) made up of local Councillors from the relevant District Electoral Areas (DEAs) were therefore established to help support the delivery of LIF and the wider Investment Programme and to help identify and champion projects that made a difference. Members further agreed a set of criteria for all LIF projects including that support would be for capital only and with a minimum threshold of £15,000 and a maximum investment of £250,000.

3.3 Since 2012 Members, through the AWGs, have played a key role in identifying local priorities, bringing forward LIF proposals and making recommendations to SP&R on investment decisions for local areas through the LIF. This underlined the important role of local councillors and their ability to deliver for the local communities. At its heart the establishment of the LIF allowed Members the opportunity to fund a wide range of diverse schemes across the city with the common purpose of improving lives in local areas.

Importantly the LIF Programme also assisted in developing Members thinking in regard to the new function of community planning which has resulted in the development of the Belfast Agenda.

3.4 Members will be aware that following the success of LIF1 the SP&R Committee in 2015 agreed to extend the LIF programme with a further **£4million allocated to LIF 2** making an overall investment since 2012 of £9million in local areas.

LIF – Role of officers

3.5 At the same time a robust and extremely detailed officer support framework and governance was put in place for LIF projects including -

- the establishment of a thorough due diligence process which has been supported by a cross-departmental due-diligence group which has meet on at least a monthly basis since the establishment of LIF. This Group is made-up of officers from the Project Management Unit, Estates, Legal Services, Financial Services, Corporate Policy and City & Neighbourhood Services. This Group has represented real collaborative working at its best across the Council and has ensured that the Investment Programme value for money principle was fully adhered to
- a project sponsor being assigned to each group to guide them through each stage from the initial project proposal form, to taking groups through the due-diligence process to guiding them through the delivery and claims process and following up on the evaluation
- a delivery mechanism through the project management unit

3.6 Members will be aware that some of the Groups who have benefited from funding under LIF are small community groups who have limited capacity and the input of officers has been instrumental in the success of LIF. Without the hard work and support of officers from across the Council many of these LIF projects could not have been delivered.

LIF – Role of communities

3.7 While the previous paragraph highlights the capacity limitations of some groups others of course proved highly capable. The LIF Programme has however assisted in the development of community groups and the creation of groups where none previously existed and further

enhanced the capability and capacity of others. Many of the groups who received LIF funding have gone onto obtain additional funding and to date all have proved sustainable.

3.8 As part of the requirements of LIF all completed projects have had to undertake a monitoring and evaluation visit and a further exercise will consider the outcomes of the Programme over time. But over and above this the enormous and enhanced community capacity which LIF has helped to engender should be recognised.

LIF - Current Status

3.9 To date 131 projects have received in principle support under LIF through both LIF1 and LIF2. A summary of the current status of the LIF Programme is outlined in Table 1 below -

Stage/ Description	LIF1		LIF2	
	Projects	Amount (£)	Projects	Amount (£)
Number of Project Completed	61 (86%)	£4,159,728	31 (52%)	£2,153,296
Number of Project On-going Delivery	3 (4%)	£175,000	8 (13%)	£733,281
Number of Project in Pre-construction	4 (6%)	£271,372	8 (13%)	£511,667
Number of Project in Initial Stage (Due Diligence)	3 (4%)	£350,000	13 (22%)	£536,879
Total Number of Approved Project	71	£4,956,100	60	£3,935,123

3.10 **Headline figures**

- Over 90 projects worth £6.3m have been completed across the city
- 11 projects worth over £900,000 are currently on the ground with a further 12 projects in the pre-construction phase
- 16 projects are in the due-diligence phase
- There is a small amount of unallocated LIF funding (North and East AWGs)
- The average investment under LIF was £67,695

Impact of LIF

3.11 Members will be aware that when it was established in 2012 LIF represented a new form of funding for the Council and provided an opportunity for community groups across the city to access an invaluable funding stream for small capital works which had never been previously available to them. **It is therefore worth noting that many of these projects would not have happened without LIF funding.** Although the amounts under LIF could be considered to be minor compared to traditional capital schemes (under £250,000) the impact to the groups and to local areas has been significant and cannot be under-estimated. Reflecting this Members are asked to note just some of the many testimonials from groups which have received LIF awards

- *“Thanks to the Local Investment Fund and the help of local politicians, Sarsfields GAC is*

able to turn a dark derelict space into a fun, bright new development for club members and the whole of the community.” Sarsfields GAC Development Committee.

- *“Support from the Council has been essential to the success of the project and associated community groups have benefited from its use. From planning to installation the project has been sympathetic to children’s needs and development, with fun at the core of the project.” – St. Mary’s Nursey School*
- *“Without the support from Belfast City Council, this project would not have happened. Alongside funding from Tourism NI and OFMDFM, the council funding was critical. In addition to the funding, the support of elected councillors and council officers has also had a positive impact. This visitor centre will ensure that EastSide makes a significant contribution to making Belfast a must see destination throughout the world.” East Belfast Partnership*
- *“This project has made a real difference that has impacted not only the staff, visitors, and community groups, but more importantly the young people doing their training with us. People who visit the centre are still commenting on how much of an improvement has been made” – Greater Village Regeneration Trust*

Recognition of LIF and promotion of the Council

- 3.12 The LIF Programme itself has been nominated for a wide range of awards and in 2013 it won the ‘*Best Initiative by a Councillor or group of Councillors*’ at the NILGA Local Awards. However Members are asked to note that many of the individual projects which have received LIF support have also been successful in a large number of awards ceremonies held by others – Urban Villages, RICS, sporting bodies etc. **These projects would not have happened without Council support and there is therefore an opportunity for the Council to look at hosting an event** which capitalizes on the investment made under LIF. It is envisaged that the event will **provide an opportunity to showcase projects which have received funding, the invaluable role that Members have played in LIF which reflects their civic leadership role and the recognise the efforts and hard work of staff from across the organisation in supporting the process.**

Proposal for an Awards Ceremony/Dinner

- 3.13 Reflecting all of the above and that LIF1 and LIF2 are nearing completion it is proposed that an Awards Ceremony/dinner is held to mark the success of the overall LIF programme and its impact across the city. Although the full detail has to be worked out if Members are minded to agree the proposal to hold an event then it is proposed that -
- the event be held in the Autumn time in the City Hall (provisional date of 25th October

	<p>being held)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all community groups who have benefitted from funding, all Elected Members and council officers who have supported LIF will be invited – given the numbers of community groups involved it is proposed that groups will be asked to nominate a maximum of two representatives per project • that there is a dinner followed by an Awards Ceremony (details of this to be worked up and brought back). For the Awards Ceremony it is proposed that only projects which are completed by the dates of the Awards and who have completed their monitoring/ evaluation visit will be eligible to be considered for an Award • it is suggested that a judging panel is made up from officers from the Due Diligence panel and Project Sponsors who have intimate knowledge of all projects
3.14	<p>Members are asked to note that it is proposed that the budget for the event will be covered by minor underspends which have been secured from a number of the LIF projects which have been completed and/or as these continue to complete. Members are asked to note that the quantum of these underspends is below the minimum threshold for a LIF project (£15,000) (i.e. it has been £800 underspend on one project, a £43 underspend on another, £1,500 on another etc dependent on the project) and that it would not therefore be practical to split this across the four AWGs. It is estimated that the cost of holding the dinner will be approx. £20,000 and Members are asked to note that this can be accommodated within the LIF underspend across the Programme. Members are therefore asked to agree that this budget, which is within the existing overall LIF allocation, is used for the holding of an event to mark the extent of LIF.</p>
3.15	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p><i>Financial</i> – As outlined in 3.14 above</p> <p><i>Resources</i> – Resources from Property & Projects and appropriate departments in arranging the event</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p>
3.16	<p>None</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 - LIF Projects – Summary of status of all projects