

East Belfast Area Working Group

Thursday, 7th March, 2019

MEETING OF EAST BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

Members present: Alderman Haire (Chairperson);
The High Sheriff of Belfast (Alderman Sandford);
Aldermen Copeland and McGimpsey; and
Councillors Dorrian, Hussey, Johnston,
Kyle, Long, McReynolds, Mullan and Newton.

In attendance: Mr. N. Grimshaw, Strategic Director of City and
Neighbourhood Services;
Mr. G. Millar, Director of Property and Projects; and
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillors Armitage, Graham, Howard and O'Neill.

Minutes

Alderman McGimpsey stated that he had made a declaration of interest in relation to Item 5, Physical Programme, in that, while he was not a member of Lagan Village Youth and Community Centre Steering Committee, he had attended meetings of the Group and had provided advice. The Area Working Group agreed that this be added to the minutes.

Subject to this variation, the Working Group agreed that the minutes of the meeting of 7th February were an accurate record of proceedings.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were recorded.

Hollywood Arches Greenway's Projects (Proposals for Ballymacarrett Walkway 'Options Site' and Bloomfield Walkway Update)

The Area Working Group considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Introduction Hollywood Arches Greenway’s Projects

1.1 As Members are aware, Officers are working on wider improvement plans for the east of the City which will regenerate key stretches of the Comber Greenway linking down to Titanic railway halt. These projects will improve both the open spaces and the travel infrastructure and have been developed through

an Area Working approach with our partners (Eastside Partnership, UV, DfI Roads, the Education Authority) to ensure joined-up thinking and consistency of design between projects so that together, we are delivering the best possible result for communities. (See Appendix 1 on mod.gov – Wider Greenway Improvement Plans for East)

1.2 Projects include:

- Bloomfield Walkway Project
- Ballymacarrett Walkway – Island Street Project
- ‘BCC Options site’, Ballymacarrett Walkway

1.3 Member’s will recall that at February’s Area Working Group, an update was provided about DfI’s commitment of funding for the first phase of environmental improvements at the Bloomfield Walkway, under the condition that BCC lead on all further project development work and consultation, and deliver the project (which the AWG subsequently agreed to). It was also advised that Officers were in the process of finalising the engagement plan with the view to carrying out consultation, making final revisions and having works on site late March. Members have since been undated on planned events. Further details of the project and engagement are set out below. (see Section 2.0)

1.4 At last month’s AWG meeting, Members were also reminded of their previous request for Officers to engage further with all parties who had expressed interest in the regeneration of the ‘BCC Options site’ at Ballymacarrett. This was so that, in addition to the original open space/play park proposal for which £800k CCG underspend had now been ring-fenced, further option(s) could be refined and brought back for consideration. This exercise has now been completed and direction from Members is now being sought in regards to the two options for the site which are being presented for discussion (see Section 3 below).

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The AWG is asked to:

- note the project updates for the Bloomfield Walkway Environmental Improvements scheme as well as the Ballymacarrett – Island St Project as set out in the relevant sections below
- consider the two options for the BCC ‘Options Site’ as set out in Section 4 of the report and illustrated in Appendices 4 and 5 on mod.gov, and agree which should be progressed
- (If ‘Option 2’ is preferred) – Members are asked to agree on the general location of each land-use zoning within the ‘Options Site’, and for Officers to engage further in

regards to potential sale of land parcels to the EA/ for private development.

3.0 Bloomfield Walkway Project (Environmental Improvements)

- 3.1** With agreement for BCC/Dfl partnership working for the Bloomfield Walkway environmental improvements project now in place – attention is focused on community and public engagement. As Members are aware (*via email dated 25th Feb*) - two public information sessions are scheduled over the coming days which will give the public the opportunity to come along and hear more about the plans from Officers from Dfl and BCC and share their feedback, i.e.
- Friday 8 March (2pm-7pm), Eastside Visitor Centre
 - Monday 11 March (10am-3pm), Walkway Community Centre
- 3.2** To ensure local awareness and publicity for the project and engagement events, a mail drop to local residents has taken place, posters have been displayed in local community venues and the walkway itself. This is being further supported by use of social media platforms by ourselves and our partners, as well as Council's website at www.belfastcity.gov.uk/walkways
- 3.3** Proposed improvement works include: landscaping (planting and grass mounding), street furniture, upgrading of all paths, decorative railings, and new lighting which will all enhance the amenity space aesthetically as well as improved accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists. Officers hope to have works started on-site by the end of March and completed by early July (apart from the trees planting element which will be the autumn planting season). Diversions will be in place around the perimeter of the secured site for the duration of the build period.
- 3.4** The scheme will build upon recent investments from Dfl's path widening works along the walkway as well as Council's LIF funded play park and multi-use games area to create a welcoming, safe and attractive linear park for the local community to enjoy. The works will also improve accessibility for cyclists and walkers along this stretch of the Comber Greenway.
- 3.5** Later phases (Phase 2 & 3) for which funding is still to be secured, focus on reconfiguration of carpark, and development of the fenced 'community area' to rear of the Village Church and Walkway Community Centre.
- 3.6** In the coming weeks, Officers from City and Neighbourhood Services will engage with the local community sector about to develop proposals for the programming of the space which may include a family focused opening event for the scheme in the

Summer. More information on this will be brought back to AWG in due course. Conversations are also ongoing with DfI Rds in regards to Management and Maintenance requirements.

4.0 Ballymacarrett Walkway – ‘BCC Options site’

4.1 At October’s Area Working Group, Members were updated about a number of external interests expressed regarding the regeneration of BCC’s land at Connswater Community Centre adjacent to C.S Lewis Square. Although it was recognised that £800k CCG project underspend had now been ring fenced for a previously designed ‘play-park’ /recreational space scheme on the site, it was agreed that at that stage nothing should be ruled out and a process of further engagement with all parties about each proposal, including their land-use requirements should be progressed. This process is now complete and two options are now presented for Members’ consideration:

4.2 Option 1 - Original play-park /open space scheme around existing community facility - original concept design drafted in consultation with centre staff in 2016 (See *Appendix 4 on mod.gov*)

4.3 Option 2 - High level ‘masterplan’ reflecting all existing/new interests, and proposing most appropriate location for each land-use zoning (i.e. play-park/recreational space, private development, community and young people services provision). (See *Appendix 5 on mod.gov*)

Option 2 includes the following land - use zones:

1. Community/ Children and Young Peoples Services Zoning

4.4 This zoning includes a number of complementary new build projects which together would create a ‘hub’ which maximises the service offer to the local community. This land-use reflects the Education Authority’s current interest in purchasing land to build a centre for local children and young person’s services (*emerging preferred option in 2018 Economic Appraisal*); as well as our own interest in building a replacement, fit-for-purpose community facility at this location to enhance local service provision.

2. Private Development Zoning

4.5 Proposed new 3-4 storey building in corner site overlooking C.S Lewis Square as proposed by local developer. Initial proposal is for primarily residential building with possible commercial/ community or other use on ground floor. [Note any future land sale would be taken forward through a development brief via the open market]

3. Play-park/Recreational Space Zoning

- 4.6** Open space development for which £800k CCG project underspend had been ring fenced. The proposed location (on the existing community centre building) dictates that this would be the last phase of development, i.e. new community facility built before existing structure demolished/site cleared. This asset would physically complement the proposed new facilities within the adjacent community and young person zoning.
- 4.7** Part of the Ballymacarrett Walkway – Island Street project funding has been confirmed for improvements to Comber Greenway ‘path’ that cuts through the ‘BCC Options Site’. As a next step the intention is to make an application to DfI Roads for the realignment of the existing pathway towards the site boundary in order to maximise the useable space within the site regardless of land-uses. *(see Appendix 3 on mod.gov - ‘BCC Options Site’ boundary and path realignment).*
- 5.0** **Ballymacarrett Walkway – Island Street**
- 5.1** Officers are also working with the DfI, UV and Eastside Partnership on plans for a greenway and cycling improvement scheme for Ballymacarrett Walkway and Island Street, which links the Hollywood Arches and Titanic railway halt.
- 5.2** Draft designs have been prepared and proposed works include the creation of a segregated cycle path along Island Street, and environmental improvements to the walkway including upgrading of paths, improved lighting, and landscaping.
- 5.3** Preparations for community/public consultation later this Spring is underway, and will feed into UV’s ongoing business case development process for the project. A further update on this project and engagement events will be brought to AWG in due course.”

After discussion, the Area Working Group:

1. noted the project updates for the Bloomfield Walkway Environmental Improvements scheme and the Ballymacarrett – Island St Project;
2. agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that Option 2 be progressed for the BCC ‘Options Site’, as set out in Section 4 of the report and in Appendix 5 on mod.gov; and
3. agreed on the general location of each land-use zoning within the ‘Options Site’, and that officers would engage further regarding the potential sale of land parcels to the EA/for private development.

Strand Arts Centre

The Director of Property and Projects provided the Working Group with an update on the status of the Strand Arts Centre proposal and explained that the project was currently under consideration by the Department for Communities' economists.

After discussion, the Working Group agreed that intervening at this stage would not be appropriate and that it would consider the Strand Arts Centre proposal at its next meeting, which would be in the new Council term.

Chairperson