

North Belfast Area Working Group

Wednesday, 29th January, 2020

NORTH BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

Members present: Councillor Maskey (Chairperson);
Councillors Baker, Cobain, Ferguson,
Murphy, Magee, McAllister, O'Hara and Whyte.

In attendance: Mr. N. Grimshaw, Director of City and
Neighbourhood Services;
Mr. R. Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services;
Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes; and
Ms E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services Officer.

Election of Chairperson

The Area Working Group noted that it was required to elect a Chairperson for the coming year.

Moved by Councillor Murphy,
Seconded by Councillor Magee and

Resolved – that Councillor Maskey be elected to serve as
Chairperson to the North Belfast Area Working Group until June, 2020.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillor McCusker.

Declaration of Interest

In relation to item 6) Physical Programme Update, Councillors Maskey and Baker declared an interest in that they worked for or were associated with organisations, which had applied for funding, and they retired from the meeting whilst that item was under consideration.

Terms of Reference

The Committee noted the Terms of Reference for the Area Working Group which had been approved by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 20th September and noted that quarterly meetings had been scheduled, with the option for additional meetings if required.

Neighbourhood Regeneration

The Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services provided an introduction to Neighbourhood Regeneration and described the governance role of the North Area Working Group to support this. He explained the Department's intention to integrate services to solve problems and benefit neighbourhoods, through the use of joined up working and analysis of data.

He tabled a copy of the Belfast Agenda - Statement of Progress, together with North Belfast Area Profile data.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services provided a presentation on Neighbourhood Regeneration and Area Working which included a summary of the following key themes:

- Belfast Agenda and Governance;
- Integrated Service Delivery;
- Capital investment;
- Evidence based decision making;
- Local Development Plan;
- City Regeneration; and
- Economic Development.

He updated the Working Group on a new model of neighbourhood working, to improve services and create better integrated, flexible and responsive team working. He summarised such changes under Open Spaces and Streetscene; City Protection; Community Provision; and Resources and Fleet.

He provided a brief overview of the Physical Programme funding streams and highlighted a map of North Belfast which illustrated the physical project locations.

In relation to the Area Profile data, he stated that the document provided unique local characteristics by harnessing the latest data available. He summarised the data and analysis of crime, education, lone parents, and environmental factors effecting the area and advised that the analysis concluded that the main issues facing North Belfast included:

- Anti-Social Behaviour;
- Mental health;
- Educational underachievement;
- Benefit reliance;
- Unemployment;
- Burglary and theft;
- Pupil suspensions; and
- Physical health and long-term illness.

He informed the working group of how the Local Development Plan and Belfast Agenda were key strategic documents for the future development, economic growth and regeneration of the City and further explained their relevance to the Area Working Group considerations.

He advised that future meetings would incorporate a facilitated workshop, to identify key issues and the potential to explore and focus on particular geographical areas within North Belfast.

During discussion, Members highlighted the need to receive Area Data as soon as possible so that the Councillors could prepare for the planned Workshop.

After discussion, the Working Group noted the update on Neighbourhood Regeneration.

Area Specific Issues

Mountain Biking on Cave Hill

The Working Group was reminded of the work that had been undertaken and presented to the North Area Working Group during 2018 and 2019 in relation to mountain biking at Cave Hill.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services provided an update on the progress in relation to the actions which had been agreed by the North Area Working Group in March 2019, which included the completion of the Identification and mapping of mountain bike club proposed trails, externally facilitated discussions with residents group and an environmental impact assessment by a consultant.

It was reported that engagement with key stakeholders was ongoing and processes were in place to manage the ongoing use of the site by mountain bikers in the interim period.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services advised that further work was being progressed in terms of developing a 'pilot' route and further updates would be provided in due course.

Noted.

Girdwood

The Working Group was reminded that, following on from an issue raised by Councillor Dorrian at the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 24th January, in relation to the potential to close of the gates at Girdwood Hub on a more permanent basis (when the Centre itself wasn't open) due to ongoing anti-social behaviour (ASB) in and around the site, it was agreed that a report be submitted to the North Area Working Group for consideration.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services advised Members of the concerns which had been raised in relation to ASB since the Hub had opened in early January 2016. He explained that residents had experienced noise pollution and nuisance/abusive behaviour as well as acts of vandalism to their property and that ASB had also caused disruption to the centre programming and centre staff and users, together with physical damage to the building (for example, broken windows).

He provided an overview of the work which had been done over the past three years by the Site Management Sub-Group of the Forum to try to resolve the issues driving the ongoing ASB which included additional security measures such as additional CCTV and defensive planting. He confirmed that Community Safety-led Responses included Safer Neighbourhood Officers and Anti-Social Behaviour Officers and a Protocol with Education Authority and suggested that potential further developments included the piloting of an ASB Clinic and North Belfast PCSP funding for the deployment of 'on street' workers.

He explained the current process for considering gate closures at Girdwood and advised that the Council was currently drafting a protocol for gate closures at Girdwood which would be tabled at the next Site Management Group for consideration and comment.

He advised that continued engagement and follow up with ASB incidents would take place over the next few months, together with a special agenda youth-focussed meeting of the Forum for mid-February where the Department of Justice and Education Authority would also be invited to attend.

During discussion, Members raised concern in relation to the impact ASB was having on residents of the area and users and staff of Girdwood.

The Working Group noted the information provided and that a further update would be submitted to a future meeting.

Physical Programme Update

(Councillor Magee in the Chair during the LIF status update.)

The Director of Physical Programmes provided an update on the progress of those projects which had been approved by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee under the following Funding Schemes:

Local Investment Fund (LIF)

She explained that LIF was a £9m fixed programme of capital investment in non-council neighbourhood assets, over two tranches, with the North being allocated £1.127m under LIF1 and £800,000 under LIF2.

She outlined funding spend to date for each tranche, at key stages of the delivery process:

Table 1. LIF breakdown - North	LIF 1		LIF 2	
Stage/ Description	Projects	Amount/ Value (£)	Projects	Amount/ Value (£)
Number of Projects Completed	22 (88%)	£956,500	11 (57.5%)	£546,400
Number of Projects On-going Delivery			1 (5.5%)	£20,000
Number of Projects in Pre-construction	2 (8%)	£106,000	2 (11%)	£80,134
Number of Projects in Initial Stage (Due Diligence)	1 (4%)	£65,000	5 (26%)	£151,667
Total Number of Approved Projects	25*	£1,127,500	19**	£798,201

**This includes additional funding for a LIF 2 project, Ballysillan Youth for Christ.*

*** This includes additional funding for two LIF 1 projects, Marrowbone Parochial Hall and Jennymount Church.*

She highlighted that Appendix 1 provided a detailed overview of progress and actions around the remaining 11 live projects. Of the 7 which were at due-diligence or initial stage, the Director of Physical Programmes suggested the following actions:

PROJECT	FUNDING	STAGE	ACTION/RECOMMENDATION
Westland Community Centre - new buildings	£65,000	Due Diligence stage	Continued engagement with Group
Women's Tec	£31,667	Due Diligence stage	Continued engagement with Group in terms of the lease

Ardoyne Shankill Health Partnership	£15,000	Due Diligence stage	Continued engagement with Group
Ardoyne Holy Cross Boxing Club	£66,000	Initial stage	Continued engagement with Group and with UV
Intercomm, Antrim Road	£75,000	Initial stage	Propose that a letter is sent seeking confirmation if group wish to either withdraw or engage in LIF process and provide the necessary information, by an appropriate deadline with update to be brought to next AWG
Mercy Primary, Crumlin Road	£15,000	Initial stage	Propose that a letter is sent seeking confirmation if group to clarify position, with update to be brought to next AWG
Holy Family Parish Church	£15,000	Initial stage	Propose that a letter is sent seeking confirmation if group wish to either withdraw or engage in LIF process and provide the necessary information, by an appropriate deadline, with update to be brought to next AWG

Belfast Investment Fund (BIF)

The Director of Physical Programmes provided a brief overview in relation to the Belfast Investment Fund (BIF) and reminded the Working Group that North Belfast had been allocated £5.5m. She advised that, in North Belfast, 7 projects had received an 'In-Principle' funding commitment under BIF, thereby fully allocating its £5.5m: and 2 projects were on the longer BIF list:

<i>Summary of BIF allocated projects</i>	
North	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 3—Cancer Lifeline—£650k; Grace Family Centre —£1.6m • Stage 2- Malgrove- £500k; Old Grove/ Basement Youth Club/ Elim Church Ireland - £1.5m; • Stage 1—Marrowbone Park £500k; Ulster Scots Hub (Braeheid project)- £500k; Cultural Community Hub - £250k • Cliftonville Community Forum, Sunningdale Community Centre - no commitment

She updated the Working Group on the status of the remaining projects and suggested the following actions be taken forward:

<i>PROJECT</i>	<i>FUNDING</i>	<i>STAGE</i>	<i>ACTION/RECOMMENDATION</i>
Basement Youth Club/ Elim Church (Old Grove)	£1,500,000	Design stage	Continue engagement with the group and DE. Project to be brought back to DD.
Malgrove	£500,000	Uncommitted	Continue engagement with the group. Options being looked at in terms of value engineering etc.
Marrowbone Millennium Park	£500,000	Emerging	Continue with stakeholder engagement, in particular around funding shortfall. Meeting being arranged with UV and DFC
Ulster Scots Hub	£500,000	Emerging	Propose that a letter is sent seeking confirmation if group wish to either withdraw or engage in BIF process and provide the necessary information, by an appropriate deadline with update to be brought to next AWG AWG is asked to note that a similar letter has been sent by UV before Christmas
Cultural Community Hub	£250,000	Emerging	Meeting to be held end of January Update on project to be brought to next AWG.

During discussion, the Director of Physical Programmes advised she would provide feedback on the status of the Rainbow Project raised by Councillor McAllister.

Capital Programme

The Director of Physical Programmes reminded the Working Group of the 3 stage approval process in place for every project on the Council's Capital Programme, as agreed by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. She summarised the current status of the live projects for North Belfast as follows:

Project	Status and update
North Foreshore - Development Sites Infrastructure Works	Stage 3 – Committed Project. Electricity infrastructure upgrade currently being progressed
Alleygating Phase 4 – City wide	Stage 3 – Committed Project. On Ground
Boodles Dam	Stage 3 – Committed Project. Tender preparation stage
LTP - Girdwood Phase 2	Stage 2 – Uncommitted Project. DfC approved commencement of procurement for IDT.
Belfast Zoo – Programme of Works (Works to the Large Cats Enclosure and the Aviary)	Stage 2- Uncommitted Project. OBC being worked up.

During discussion, the Director of Physical Programmes advised that, in relation to the North Foreshore, she would update Members on the cycling and electricity infrastructure.

Externally- funded programme

The Director of Physical Programmes explained that the Council was the delivery partner / agent for a number of government departments on key capital investment programmes, namely the Executive Office Social Investment Fund (SIF), the Executive Office Urban Villages (UV) Programme, and number of schemes with the Department for Communities Regeneration directorate. She provided the following overview of projects within each programme relevant to North Belfast:

SIF – North Belfast projects overview

Project	Status and update
Joanmount Methodist Church	Project completed 18 December 2019.
PIPS Suicide Prevention Ireland	Currently on programme, anticipated completion 14 February 2020.
North Belfast Women's Initiative & Support Project	Project at tender stage, contractor likely to be appointed in February 2020.
Arts for All	Funding withdrawn due to cost implications.

During discussion, the Director of Physical Programmes advised she would provide further information on the Arts for All project to Councillor McAllister.

Urban Villages – North Belfast projects overview

Project	Status and update
John Paul II Youth Club MUGA and Amphitheatre	Project and handover completed. Also received LIF funding.
Sacred Heart Marrowbone	Project on ground. To be completed by end of March 2020. Link to LIF project.
Marrowbone Millennium Park <i>NB Linked to BCC BIF (as per Section 3 update above)</i>	Funding deficit - Letter of Offer pending. Project at consultation stage.
Ballysillan Playing Fields	Letter of Offer pending. Project at consultation stage.

After discussion, the Working Group:

- noted the Physical Programmes update for North Belfast and that officers would arrange site visits to any projects as required;
- noted the LIF and BIF project updates - in particular projects to be written to, seeking confirmation if they wished to remain within the process and, if so, supply the information required within a 3 month deadline;
- noted the SIF update and programme closure on March 2020 and the impact (funding removal) on the Arts for All project; and
- noted that it had been agreed in principle by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in December that £8m was committed to a new Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund and work was being undertaken by officers on the matter to be considered at Party Group briefings in February or March.

Chairperson