

# East Belfast Area Working Group

Monday, 21st June, 2021

## MEETING OF EAST BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Alderman Sandford (Chairperson)  
Aldermen Copeland, Dorrian, Haire and Rodgers; and  
Councillors Brooks, De Faoite, Flynn, Hanvey, Hussey,  
M. Kelly, Kyle, McMullan, McReynolds, Mulholland and  
Smyth.

In attendance: Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes,  
Ms. C. Taggart, Neighbourhood Services Manager,  
Ms. K. McCrum, Democratic Services Officer; and  
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer

### **Election of Chairperson**

In line with its agreement of 6th February 2020, the Working Group was requested to nominate a Member of the Democratic Unionist Party or the Alliance Party to serve as Chairperson of the East Area Working Group for the year June 2021 – May 2022.

Moved by Alderman Haire,  
Seconded by Alderman Rodgers and

Resolved – that Alderman Sandford would serve as Chairperson of the East Area Working Group for the year June 2021 – May 2022.

### **Apologies**

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillors Howard and Newton.

### **Minutes**

The Working Group agreed that the minutes of the meeting of 6th May were an accurate record of proceedings.

### **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Kyle declared an interest in the Lagan Village Youth and Community Association, in that he was Chairperson of the group. However, as it was an update from the Director of Physical Programmes and did not require a decision, he remained in the meeting for the item.

## Presentation

### Castlereagh Presbyterian Church

The Chairperson welcomed the Rev. M. Burnside, Mr. A. McCann and Mr. B. Knox, Architect, to the meeting.

Mr. Knox provided the Working Group with an overview of the planned works to the Church Hall along with a construction cost estimate from a Quantity Surveyor. The proposed works included works to external doors and windows, roofing works, upgrading works to the toilet facilities and boiler house, and electrical and mechanical works. He outlined that the cost guidance included a 5% cost for design risk/contingency.

In response to a Member's question, the Director of Physical Programmes advised the Working Group that the cost of materials had risen in recent years, some by as much as 30%, and that the Working Group should be mindful of that. She reminded the Members that the only way of knowing the final cost of a project would be when the tender costs were received.

Mr. McCann advised the Members that 600 new houses were being built in the surrounding area and that there was already significant use of the Church by the local community. He outlined that the Church worked with the two local schools and permitted them to use the Church premises for free. The Members were advised that upgraded footpaths on Church Road were due for completion soon and, as the Church backed onto the Henry Jones Playing Fields, they would like to be able to offer the use of their car park, and the use of the Church Hall, to allow the Playing Fields to be used at full capacity, with cars being able to safely park off the road. He added that the Church would be organising fundraising events to raise some money towards the renovations themselves.

The Rev. Burnside outlined that the Church Hall was used by a wide range of external groups in the community, including mums and toddlers' groups, the Girls' & Boys' Brigade, bowling groups, dance, drama and fitness classes, the Badminton Union of Ireland and for blood donation sessions.

A number of Members stated that Church Road was dangerous and that it was difficult to park on or to cross.

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

The Director of Physical Programmes reminded the Working Group that it had, in principle, agreed to provide £382,000 towards the project, but that it was at "Stage 1 – uncommitted". She outlined that all projects had to go through the due diligence process. The Members were advised that the plans presented at the meeting had not been scrutinised by officers yet, as they had only been received that morning, but that they seemed to be a scaled back version of the project, with their estimated costs now at £325,000.

After further discussion, the Working Group agreed:

- to undertake a site visit to the BIF/LIF projects under consideration, namely, Castlereagh Presbyterian Church, Bloomfield Community

Association, the Strand Cinema and the Westbourne/Titanic People project in order to familiarise themselves with the projects.

The Working Group further agreed, at the request of the Director of Physical Programme, to undertake a site visit to the two leisure facilities in East Belfast which were currently under renovation, the Templemore Baths and Avoniel Leisure Centre.

The Working Group agreed that the date and time of the site visits would be agreed in consultation with the Chairperson.

### **Lagan Village Youth and Community Association Hall – Verbal Update**

The Director of Physical Programmes reminded the Working Group that, at the last meeting, she had advised the Members that Lagan Village Youth and Community Association (LVYCA) had unfortunately had a fire in their building and that they were awaiting the outcome of a fire safety report.

She reported that the safety report had since come through and that everything except the cost of the fridge would be covered by their insurance claim.

She outlined that LVYCA was the agreed reserve project under Belfast Investment Fund (BIF) and that, if money was to become available through BIF, it would be next in line to receive funding.

The Neighbourhood Services Manager advised the Working Group that the City and Neighbourhood Services Department might be able to assist the LVYCA with the costs of a new fridge through a grant and that they would contact them to offer assistance.

After discussion, the Working Group agreed to also visit the LVYCA site as part of the BIF/LIF projects which were under consideration.

Chairperson