

East Belfast Area Working Group

Thursday, 2nd September, 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 De Faoite, Flynn, Hanvey, Howard,
M. Kelly, Kyle, Long, McMullan and Mulholland.

In attendance: Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes;
Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy;
Ms. K. Watters, Neighbourhood Integration Manager;
Mr. K. Heaney, Portfolio Manager;
Ms. P. Conway, Development Surveyor;
Mr. J. Uprichard, Community Planning Officer; and
Ms. K. McCrum, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillors Brooks, McReynolds, Newton and Smyth.

Minutes

The Working Group agreed that the minutes of the meeting of 21st June were an accurate record of proceedings.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were recorded.

Presentations

Refresh of Belfast Agenda - Co-Design Approach

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy reminded the Working Group that it had been four years since the Council had published the Belfast Agenda, the city's first community plan. He confirmed that the Review of the Belfast Agenda had launched in June, and that there was a legislative requirement to publish an updated Belfast Agenda by April, 2022.

He advised that the aim was to build a society that values and takes care of people of all ages and to make sure that everyone had the opportunity to reach their full potential. He highlighted the importance of Elected Members and partners informing this work and shaping the focus of the Belfast Agenda for the next four years (2022-2026).

He advised that a co-design approach had been adopted for refreshing the Belfast Agenda. A promotional launch video was played which showed the intended engagement programme to encourage all partners to contribute. The Director explained the timeline for the review process and confirmed that consultation of the draft plan was proposed to take place between January and March 2022.

He provided an overview of an updated Belfast Agenda 'city strategy' document which included the Council's long-term vision and outcomes, population indicators (how success would be measured) and the new 4-year priorities. He added that an easy-read version would be made available also.

He described the proposed 8 priority themes for 2022 – 2026 which included: Economic Recovery; Employability and Skills; Educational Attainment; Housing; Community Recovery and Neighbourhood Regeneration; Health Inequalities; Climate Resilience and Sustainability; and Active and Sustainable Travel. Also highlighted were four proposed cross-cutting themes, including Inclusive Growth, Children and Young People, Good Relations and Shared Future, and Older People.

He explained that this would include Underpinning Delivery Action Plans which included actions to deliver the 4-year priorities and would be based on criteria such as:

- Partnership activity providing collaborative gain / not business as usual activity;
- Designed to contribute to the Belfast Agenda outcomes / deliver wellbeing for Belfast residents; and
- Include 'area specific' elements making the 'Belfast Agenda' more meaningful to communities.

The Director provided details of the level of engagement and feedback to date and outlined the forthcoming events scheduled for targeted groups. He highlighted that an Elected Member Workshop had been planned for Friday, 3rd September and encouraged all Members to attend.

The Director encouraged the Working Group to get involved, help build momentum and continue the Belfast Conversation in order to help shape Belfast's future. He advised that the supporting survey was available online at yoursay.belfastcity.gov.uk and proactive promotion of the process was underway via the Council's Social Media Channels. He added that further information would be sent to the Members to disseminate and share with relevant groups, and that hard copies of the survey were available at local libraries, community centres and leisure centres.

In closing, he drew attention to the connection between this work and that of the Integrated Care System, which was next on the agenda, allowing partners to work together on a number of cross-cutting health issues.

A Member commented that engagement with external groups and organisations had in the past been limited and questioned how active their involvement was in the current process. The Director advised that, whilst the approach to Community Planning in Northern Ireland was still under development, in recent years, it had been gathering momentum and partnership working was active both in terms of human and financial resources across a number of projects.

At the request of a Member, the promotional launch video was circulated to the Working Group to allow further dissemination via social media.

Following discussion, the Working Group noted the information which had been provided.

Future Planning Model: Integrated Care System

Ms. O. Barron, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, provided an overview of the Department of Health's consultation into a proposed new model of planning and managing services through an Integrated Care System.

The Working Group was advised that this was defined as "A collaborative partnership between organisations and individuals with a responsibility for planning, managing, and delivering care, services and interventions to meet the health and wellbeing needs of the local population and which, through taking collective action, deliver improved outcomes for individuals and communities and reduce health inequalities."

The challenges facing the health and social care sector were outlined, as were the social determinants of health, including socioeconomic factors, physical environment, health behaviours, and health care.

She explained that the current commissioning system had been found to be overly bureaucratic and lacking in clarity of accountability of decision making, and so with the closure of the Health and Social Care Board, the Local Commissioning Group's would also cease.

She advised that the Health Minister had granted approval for a programme of work to develop an Integrated Care System (ICS) model in NI which would adhere to the principles of delegated local level decision-making and funding (with the exception of specialised services to be planned, managed and delivered regionally), and support an outcomes based approach underpinned by accountability.

The Working Group was presented with the principles and values which underpinned the emerging Framework, as well as the proposed 4-tiered model, as set out below, which adopted a population health needs approach informed by local intelligence:

- Regional Group – regional coordination, oversight and accountability – planning and managing specialist services;
- 5 Area Integrated Partnership Boards (AIPBs) – Local planning and delivery based on identified population needs in the local area in line with the strategic direction;
- Locality Groups - Integrated Care Partnerships (ICPs), GP Federations and Community Pharmacies linking with Community Planning – supporting and delivering interventions at a local level supporting AIPBs;
- Community Groups – GP Practices, Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDTs), voluntary and community groups and organisations – supporting and delivering interventions at a community level.

The Working Group was then presented with the proposed membership model for the Area Integrated Partnership Boards (AIPBs), which included involvement beyond the Health and Social Care Trust, including GPs, the Public Health Agency, Community Planning, service users and community and voluntary representatives.

Ms. Barron confirmed that following the consultation period, it was envisioned that the ICS model would be implemented by March/April 2022, after which it would be reviewed and refreshed as necessary.

A number of the Members commented upon the high levels of demand within the primary care sector and the knock-on effect at A&E departments, with questions raised about how this approach would tackle the problems that people were experiencing in accessing health care, whilst minimising disruption to the current system.

Ms. Barron advised that, while the Covid-19 pandemic had not caused the problems, it had exacerbated them. She commented upon the pressures being experienced at both primary and secondary care settings, including workforce shortages, and detailed some of the actions underway to improve the situation, such as improved communication and referral systems and the delivery of Urgent Care Centres. She added that the community-based approach of the Integrated Care System was also expected to help address some of the issues.

In response to a query regarding the temporary closure of the out-of-hours GP service at Forester Green Hospital, Ms. Barron confirmed that staffing shortages had led to the consolidation of hours, and that the situation was under review.

After discussion, the Chairperson thanked Ms. Barron for her presentation and the Working Group noted the information that had been provided.

Forward Planning Emerging Opportunities

The Neighbourhood Integration Manager advised that EastSide Partnership was keen to talk to the Working Group about the Connswater Community Greenway and its plans for development of the wider EastSide Greenway. She also asked the Members to advise her of any areas of work that they would like to be presented over the next number of months.

The Working Group agreed that a focused meeting regarding Greenways in East Belfast should be scheduled to encompass this request alongside an update on the Sydenham Greenway, and to discuss their alignment to corporate work regarding city connectivity.

Discussion took place regarding the need to conduct a major review of those capital projects that were now completed, whilst agreeing the direction for East Belfast in the years ahead. The Director of Physical Programmes confirmed that this was one of the ambitions of the Area Planning work being undertaken by the City and Neighbourhood Department, with the aim of aligning capital projects with the Belfast Agenda and area level outcomes.

The Working Group noted that a Special Area Working Group Meeting was scheduled in October to review a number of outstanding Physical Programme projects.

At the request of a Member, the Neighbourhood Integration Manager undertook to contact the East Belfast Community Development Agency in order to seek an update regarding their Youth Practitioners Forum, particularly youth provision types, levels and the challenges being faced.

Physical Programme Update

The Director of Property and Projects submitted the undernoted report in respect of an update on the Council's Physical Programme.

1. Introduction

The Council's Physical Programme covers projects under a range of funding streams including the Capital Programme, the Leisure

Transformation Programme, LIF, BIF, Social Outcomes Fund (SOF) and the projects that the Council is delivering in behalf of other agencies. This report outlines the status of projects under the Physical Programme.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to:-

- note the physical programme update for East Belfast
- consider the proposed schedule for the BIF/ LIF projects site visits
- note on the update on the proposals for works to the Henry Jones Playing Fields entrance on the Church Road as part of the wider works being undertaken by DFI

3. Local Investment Fund

LIF is a £9m fixed programme of capital investment in non-council neighbourhood assets, over two tranches: LIF 1 (2012-2015) - £5m total funding pot, allocated across each AWG areas; and LIF 2 (2015 -2019) - £4m allocation with the East being allocated £1.127m under LIF1 and £1.2m under LIF2.

Each LIF project proposal is taken through a Due Diligence process prior to any funding award. Table below outlines funding spend to date for each tranche, at key stages of the delivery process: 20 projects received In Principle support under LIF1 and LIF2, of which 18 have been completed; 2 projects at initial stage, Westbourne Presbyterian Church – Titanic People and Lagan Village Youth and Community Association.

LIF breakdown – East	LIF 1		LIF 2	
	Projects	Amount/ Value (£)	Projects	Amount/ Value (£)
Number of Projects Completed	7 (87%)	£877,500	11 (92%)	£1,146,589
Number of Projects in Delivery				
Number of Projects in Pre-construction				
Number of Projects at Initial Stage (Due Diligence)	1 (13%)	£250,000	1 (8%)	£15,000
Total Number of Approved Projects	8	£1,127,500	12	£1,161,589

The table below provides an overview of progress and actions around the remaining live projects. Members are asked to note the status of the current live LIF projects and the ongoing actions.

LIF REF	PROJECT	FUNDING	STAGE	STATUS	ACTION / RECOMMENDATION
ELIF 002	Westbourne Presbyterian Church – Titanic People	£250,000	Due Diligence stage	Committed in principle September 2012 - Costs for the project have significantly increased since the project was originally proposed some 8 years ago. Group presented at East AWG on 6 May. On 21 June 2021, AWG agreed to undertake a site visit to the BIF/ LIF projects including Westbourne/ Titanic People. <i>Link to UV project – see below.</i>	Site visit to be arranged.
ELIF2-17	Lagan Village Youth and Community Association	£15,000	Initial stage	Approved by SP&R on 23rd October 2020. DfC Letter of Offer (£35k) signed and awaiting final confirmation of land transfer. Initial enabling works and site fencing to commence imminently. Alpha funding application to be submitted.	Continue engagement with the group.

4. **Belfast Investment Fund**

BIF is a £28m investment fund for regeneration, partnership projects, with a minimum £250k investment from Council BIF. In East Belfast 9 projects have received an In-Principle funding commitment under BIF. There are 5 projects on the longer BIF list. Each of the ‘In Principle’ projects are taken through a 3-stage approval process, including a rigorous Due Diligence process before any Funding Agreement is approved and put in place. Table below provides a summary of BIF allocated projects i.e. project stage; project title; and the funding allocated.

Summary of BIF allocated projects:

East	Stage 3—Willowfield—£560k (completed); H&W Welders—£2.37m; Strand—£1.8m; Bloomfield—£440k Stage 2—Lagan Village Youth & Community—no commitment Stage 1—East Belfast Mission; Belmont Bowling Club; Bloomfield Presbyterian Church; St. John’s Orangefield, Church of Ireland—no commitment / on long list
Outer East	Stage 3 —TAGIT- £434k; Braniel—£390k; Hanwood—£396k; Castlereagh Presbyterian Church—£382k; Lisnasharragh Community Schools—£398k

The table below provides an overview of the remaining projects. Members are asked to note the actions and recommendations.

BIF REF	PROJECT	FUNDING	STAGE	STATUS	ACTION / RECOMMENDATION
BIF14	H&W Welders Club	£2,370,000	Stage 3 – on ground	Works on site progressing well. Project due for completion September 2021. Council officers currently liaising with H&W Welders representatives around land	Continue engagement with the group and partners.

				transfer and site operations post completion. Lease details agreed by SP&R Committee on 20 th August.	
BIF12	Strand Arts Centre	£1,800,000	Stage 3 – design stage	<p>Development of revised Stage 1 Design Report for £4.6m preferred option. Match funding from DfC secured in principle, awaiting for committed funding based on the revised design report.</p> <p>The proposed refurbishment to the Strand Arts Centre will focus on extensive alterations and upgrades to bring the building up to a suitable standard and increased level of accessibility.</p> <p>Group presented to AWG in May 2021 and approval from following SP&R received to release £40,000 of allocated BIF to SAC to progress the project to RIBA Stage 2 and update the costs. Will be brought back to AWG in October.</p> <p>On 21 June 2021, AWG agreed to undertake a site visit to the BIF/ LIF projects including SAC.</p>	<p>Continue engagement with the group.</p> <p>Site visit to be arranged.</p>
BIF13	Bloomfield Community Association	£440,000	Stage 3 committed – In Principle	<p>Committed in principle September 2016 with Group given 6-9 months to secure match funding (would have been June 2017). No significant progress for more than 3 years.</p> <p>Discussed at East AWG on Feb 2021 and agreed to update the business case for the project and to undertake discussion with DfC. The revised Economic Appraisal/ Business Plan is complete and is currently being reviewed.</p> <p>On 21 June 2021, AWG agreed to undertake a site visit to the BIF/ LIF projects including Bloomfield CA.</p>	<p>Continue engagement with the group and partners.</p> <p>Site visit to be arranged.</p>

Outer East BIF Projects

BIF REF	PROJECT	FUNDING	STAGE	STATUS	ACTION / RECOMMENDATION
BIF27	Hanwood Project	£396,000	Complete	Project fully complete.	Continue engagement with the group re post monitoring
BIF18	TAGIT Boxing Club	£434,000	Stage 3 – On Ground	On Ground. Works commenced in October 2020. DfC match funded (£150k). Planned completion in 14 September 2021. Additional funding needed approximately £9k for equipment to meet full requirements.	Continue engagement with the group, DfC and partners
BIF25	Braniel Church	£390,000	Stage 3 – Tender stage	Work ongoing with group to progress the scheme. Planning Permission has now been secured LA04/2020/0639/F. Tender package preparations underway in consultation with Design Team and group.	Continue engagement with the group.

BIF37	Lisnasharragh Community Schools Project	£398,000	Stage 3 – Design stage	Project moved to Stage 3 in June 2018. Education Authority will be responsible for delivery and will procure contractor. The EA have recently advised the Council that the tender procurement exercise is now complete but the returns are above the tender estimates. After Value Engineering (VE) has taken place, the preferred tender is approximately £81k over the funding allocated from BIF. Other funding sources are being sought at this time but none secured at present. EA have sought advice from CPD regarding how to cover the construction inflation costs. Awaiting confirmation from EA.	Continue engagement with the group/ schools and Education Authority. Seek additional funding.
BIF38	Castlereagh Presbyterian Church	£382,000	Stage 3 – Due Diligence	Project moved to Stage 3 in March 2018. Project at final Due Diligence stage. Group presented to the AWG in June 2021 on a revised/ scaled back project proposal not dependant on additional funding - to address sustainability and energy efficiency issues with building (external doors, windows roofing, toilets) and its outcomes/benefits. Church approval for works now in place and group collating remaining information required as part of Due Diligence. On 21 June 2021, AWG agreed to undertake a site visit to the BIF/ LIF projects including Castlereagh PC.	Continued engagement with group. Site visit to be arranged.

Members are asked to note that AWG have confirmed in many occasions that the Lagan Village Youth and Community Centre, currently at BIF Stage 2- Uncommitted, is their reserve project and should be considered first if any funding became available through the BIF programme.

BIF/ LIF projects site visits – Members will recall that at their meeting on 21 June 2021, the AWG 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. In addition, AWG also agreed to visit the Lagan Village Youth Community Association. Given the number of visits to be undertaken it is proposed that these are split over two sessions as outlined below:

- **Tuesday, 21st September (over lunch time) – Westbourne Church/ Titanic People and Strand Arts Centre**
- **Thursday, 23rd September (over lunch time) – Castlereagh PC, Bloomfield CA and Lagan Village Youth and Community Association**

Members are also asked to note that prior to the first COVID lockdown in March 2020 they had agreed to visit King George V Playing Fields, Ballymacarret Recreation Centre and Strandburn Park steps. Members are asked if they wish to still progress these and if agreed it is proposed a separate site visit is arranged for this.

5. Social Outcomes Fund

SOF is £4m ringfenced capital investment programme with a focus on local community tourism projects. There is one project under SOF for East Belfast - Eastside Visitor Centre – with an In-Principle funding commitment. Similar to BIF, all projects are subject to Due Diligence process prior to any funding award.

Project	SOF Award	Status and update
Eastside Visitor Centre <i>Link to UV project – see below</i>	£700,000	The proposal is for the extension of the existing visitor centre at C.S. Lewis Square. Council and UV agreed that this is a joint project with Pop Eastside (UV). Project business case development process now complete and study with UV and in final stages of their approval process. In parallel to information collation to take the project through Due Diligence still being ongoing - preparation has begun to make ready for the procurement of full design team to take the next stage of project forward.

6. Capital Programme

The Capital Programme is the rolling programme of enhancing existing Council assets or building / buying new assets. Members are reminded of the 3-stage approval process in place for every project on council's Capital Programme, as agreed by SP&R Committee. The table below provides an update on current live projects in East Belfast. Members are asked to note the status and update.

East Belfast – Capital programme overview

Project	Status and update
LTP- Avoniel	Stage 3 – Committed. On Ground. Completion anticipated by late Autumn 2021. AWG visited the project site on 5th August 2021.
LTP- Templemore- NLHF	Stage 3 – Committed. On Ground. Completion anticipated by summer 2022. AWG visited the project site on 5th August 2021.
Pitches Programme- Blanchflower Playing Fields – New pitch and floodlighting	Stage 3 – Committed – On Ground. Link with H&W Welders Club- Blanchflower Playing Fields (BIF). Planned completion September 2021.
New Crematorium	Stage 3 - Committed – Design underway.

	Public consultation opened in 9 August until 25 October 2021.
Shared Youth and Community Facility Inner East	Stage 1- Emerging. Officers to work jointly with the EA to develop business case/ plan on a potential youth facility at the council owned Ballymacarrett site. Strategic options study and discussions ongoing.
Ballymacarrett Area Masterplan	Stage 1- Emerging. Linked to Connswater Community Greenway. Link to the UV/Dfl funded Ballymacarrett Walkway Environmental and Cycling Infrastructure Improvement project.

Photos of the recent project activities are attached in Appendix 1. When appropriate, as per Covid-19 public health guidance, the Physical Programmes Department is happy to arrange further site visits.

Church Road Footway – BCC site entrance works – Members are asked to note that there is a proposed Dfl road enhancement scheme for new pavement and associated works on the Church Road. Part of this encompasses the entrance to the Council’s Henry Jones Playing Fields. Members will be aware that the entrance to Henry Jones currently provides for one vehicle at a time and there is no dedicated pedestrian access. At busy times this can lead to a bottleneck at the entrance and a build-up of traffic on a busy road. In addition, the lack of a dedicated pedestrian access poses a health & safety risk to those on foot or trying to cross the road. The works proposed by DFI provide an ideal opportunity to carry out works to the entrance of Henry Jones to improve vehicular and pedestrian access as this can be aligned to the works being undertaken and will provide a timely and cost-effective way to deal with the current traffic and pedestrian issues at the location. The proposed works to the entrance include – extending the existing entrance to allow for vehicular two-way access and egress, two pedestrian accesses (one either side of the enhanced vehicular entrance), new pedestrian footways linking up with the new footpath works being brought forward by DFI, new entrance gates and realignment of fencing etc. DFI are intending for their improvement works to commence early in the new year and the works to the entrance will link in with this. The scheme design is underway with Dfl which will incorporate the BCC design elements.

7. Externally funded programmes

The Council is the delivery partner for a number of government departments on significant capital investment programmes, namely Social Investment Fund (SIF) and the Urban Villages Initiative (UV) funded by the Executive Office, and number of schemes with DfC. The following is an overview of projects within each programme relevant to East Belfast.

Social Investment Fund

Project	Award	Status and update
Walkway Community Association	£1,523,863	Project commenced on site 7 December 2020. Project is due for completion in early 2022. Legal Services is progressing the registration of boundary rectifications via Land Registry, this process is expected to complete in the very near future.

Urban Villages Initiative

Project	Status and update
Eastside Greenway Ballymacarrett	Project completed May 2021.
Pro-Kick Community Gym	Council acting as delivery agent. Project designs completed and tender process being finalised. Planning application approved in May 2021. It is anticipated that contractor will be on site September 2021. Supplemental LoO received from TEO increasing funding allocation by £191k.
Pop EastSide- Landmark East <i>NB partner funder of SOF project 'Eastside Visitor Centre'</i>	The proposal is for the extension of the existing visitor centre at C.S. Lewis Square. Council and UV agreed that this is a joint project with Pop Eastside (UV). Project business case development process now complete and study with UV and in final stages of their approval process. In parallel to information collation to take the project through Due Diligence still being ongoing - preparation has begun to make ready for the procurement of full design team to take the next stage of project forward. Link to SOF project.
Pitt Park redevelopment <i>Council asset</i>	Council acting as delivery agent. Business case completed and approved which includes findings from recent public consultation. LoO expected imminently. Design team appointed.
East Belfast Mission Accommodation project	Council acting as delivery agent. Emerging project. Reduced funding options have been produced and submitted to EBM Board for response. Additional funding options (potentially via DfC) are being explored by the Group. Project designs have been revised and costs updated for inclusion in Business Case which is progressing.
Eastside Souk	Council acting as delivery agent. Emerging project. Revised project scope, design and costs being prepared by Group and consideration being given to different site location. Ongoing discussions progressing between UV and the Group.
Titanic People Exhibition	Partnership project with UV. Emerging project. Design options, surveys and costs have been reviewed and concerns remain regarding building safety, associated costs in making the site secure, viability of the project given available investment and project outcome measures. The Group presented to East AWG in May and it was agreed that the position would be reviewed again in October 2021 when the UV Business Case was prepared. Discussions remain ongoing with the Group and additional funding options are being explored with DfC. The Council is waiting on detailed project proposal and Business Case from UV.

Members are also invited to view the UV Capital area video links from Executive Office on Eastside UV area: [Summary aerial film across all five UV areas](#) and [EastSide Urban Village Capital Aerial film](#)

DfC funded projects

Members are asked to note the update on projects match funded by Department for Communities.

Project	Status and update
Hanwood Centre -roof replacement	Project completed
Eastside Greenway - Ballymacarrett	Project completed
Prokick Community Gym	Project underway. Link to UV project
TAGIT Boxing Club	On Ground. Link to BIF project
Avoniel Leisure Centre	On Ground. Link to Capital Programme project
Blanchflower Improvements	On Ground. Link to Capital Programme project
Lagan Village youth and Community Centre	Initial stage. Link to LIF project

Following consideration of the report, the Working Group agreed to undertake the following site visits:

- Tuesday, 21st September (over lunch time) – Westbourne Church/ Titanic People and Strand Arts Centre;
- Thursday, 23rd September (over lunch time) – Castlereagh PC, Bloomfield CA and Lagan Village Youth and Community Association;
- Date(s) to be arranged - King George V Playing Fields, Ballymacarret Recreation Centre, Strandburn Park steps, TAGIT Boxing Club, H&W Welders Club and Blanchflower Playing Fields Project.

The Working Group also noted the update on the proposals for works to the Henry Jones Playing Fields entrance on the Church Road as part of the wider works being undertaken by DFI, and the wider Physical Programme Update for East Belfast.

Date of Next Meeting

The Working Group agreed that the date of the next meeting would be rescheduled from Monday, 11th October to Thursday 7th October, 2021, with updates provided in relation to the Strand Arts Centre, Bloomfield Community Association, Titanic People and Castlereagh Presbyterian Church projects.

Chairperson