

# East Belfast Area Working Group

Thursday, 3rd March, 2022

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

Members present: Alderman Sandford (Chairperson),  
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Alderman Haire);  
Aldermen Copeland, Dorrian and Rodgers; and  
Councillors Brooks, de Faoite, Flynn, Hanvey, Howard,  
M. Kelly, Kyle, Long, Mulholland and Newton.

In attendance: Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes;  
Ms. C. Taggart, Neighbourhood Services Manager;  
Ms. P. Conway, Strategic Sites Development Surveyor;  
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer; and  
Mrs. G. Boyd, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

An apology for inability to attend was reported from Councillor Smyth.

### **Minutes**

The Working Group agreed that the minutes of the meeting of 3rd February were an accurate record of proceedings.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were declared

### **Presentation**

#### **Hawarden Tennis Club**

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. S. Garvin and Ms. S. Cooke to the meeting.

Ms. Cooke thanked the Working Group for acceding to their request to present. She commenced her presentation by giving the Working Group an overview of the background to the club:

- it was a small 3 court, family friendly tennis club based in East Belfast;
- it had approximately 250 members from all sections of the community;
- it was formed in 1927;
- membership had increased in the last few years by more than 500% and had managed to thrive during the pandemic;

She continued by advising the Members that the club offered the following services:

- Parent and Child Tots Tennis;
- Full weekly Junior Programme (beginners up to Ulster representatives);
- Junior Club Night
- A varied social calendar for both adult and junior members ;
- A full adult tennis programme ranging from beginner club players to elite training sessions;
- Fun group sessions and weekly cardio sessions;
- they had a large number of members who were representative on both the national and international tennis scene; and
- Indoor facilities included squash court, table tennis, pool table and bar, but that it faced competition from local clubs which offered other indoor facilities.

After school cross-community activities for kids from Strandtown and St Joseph's Primary school, which served as an introduction to the club where they and their families could hopefully, and often did, join as members. They would like to expand the initiative to include Bloomfield Collegiate School in order to attract more teenage girls into the club, as there was evidence of a high dropout rate within tennis.

She then outlined their development plans for the future:

- they were keen to be more 'inclusive' and open doors to the wider community;
- tennis should be accessible to all and there were many adaptations which could be made;
- a review of the current facilities had highlighted a need for a disabled toilet facility on the ground floor – the club had applied for that under 'Sport NI Better Facilities Grant' and had been successful. They wanted to give individuals with disabilities the opportunity to benefit from the physical, social and mental aspects of not only playing sport but from being included and making friends for life within a club environment.
- they were also keen to open up their indoor space to the local community. Prior to Covid they had groups use it for yoga etc. and that was the plan for the future.

She concluded the presentation by explaining their reasons for seeking financial support:

- the condition of the 3 tennis courts was deteriorating which was increasingly becoming a concern and could jeopardise the club's long term future.
- They had taken remedial action over the years but it was looking more likely that they will need to completely replace the surface of each court.
- Initial quotes were in excess of £60,000.
- The club had limited cash reserves which was understandably eroded by operational expenditure to maintain the clubhouse, pay general bills, fees etc.
- They had increased their cash reserves by attracting a large number of new members and fund raising activities. However, those were insufficient to cover the huge one-off cost of having to resurface their courts.

A Member asked if the £60,000 was to resurface the three courts. Mr. Garvin advised the Working Group that it was for all three courts but he explained that £60,000 was an estimate for the resurfacing as they would not know the state of the tarmac beneath.

The Chairperson thanked the Harwarden representatives for their presentation and advised them that the Working Group would be in contact in due course. Ms. Cooke and Mr. Garvin retired from the meeting.

After the representatives had left the meeting, the Members had a brief discussion and agreed that the request would be best discussed at a Special meeting of the Working Group.

The Director of Physical Programmes agreed to identify a date towards the end of March, in conjunction with the Chairperson, on which to hold the meeting.

## **Update on Alleygating and Alleyway and Transformation Programmes - Verbal Update**

### **Alleygates Scheme Phase 5 (verbal Update)**

The Neighbourhood Services Manager provided the Members with an update in respect of the Alleygate Scheme. She advised the Members that the 12-month plan had been presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and that it was due to be ratified at the March Council meeting.

She stated that Stephen Leonard, the lead officer for this work, would provide an update at the next meeting of the Area Working Group.

Noted.

### **Alleygate Transformation**

The Neighbourhood Services Manager updated the meeting in relation to the Alleygate Transformation Scheme. She reported that the demand for the scheme had been huge, with over 80 sites listed and highlighted that the scheme would need considerable resources. She updated that, to date, officers had not been able to assess all the sites as there was not sufficient staffing resources available to do so. In addition, the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) was not contributing any revenue funding towards the scheme, only capital funding. She advised that the Council would allocate a dedicated resource to assess the applications, align the workplan and draw down the money from DfI. The Working Group was advised that Council officers had met with DfI to confirm finances for the scheme and had advised that any available funding would be carried forward to the next financial year. The Members were also advised that there had been discussion in regard to progressing the top priority applications, however, it was difficult to move forward on any of the applications without applying the criteria to all the applications to ensure every application was considered fairly.

A Member asked if consideration could be given to an issue with an existing Council alleygate at Parkgate Crescent. There was a significant gap between the hedging and the structural support of the alleygate which was allowing unfettered access and egress from the alley, thus rendering the gate ineffective. The Member asked if it could be remedied either under the alleyway transformation programme or perhaps via maintenance on the existing alleygate stock, as the gap was encouraging Anti-Social behaviour in the alleyway along with a number of other cleansing issues. The Neighbourhood Services Manager agreed to investigate the matter and report back directly to the Member.

Several Members remarked on the delay in progressing the Alleygate Programme. While they recognised the impact of Covid, they wanted it expedited. The Working Group requested that the update report would be submitted to the March Strategic Policy and Resources Committee meeting.

A number of Members noted the aforementioned gaps in the list. The Members asked to see the full list of alleygate requests and that this list be shared with all elected members (rather than just those on Strategic Policy and Resources) to allow them to review and feedback any gaps.

A Member requested that the report include information in relation to the criteria based scoring matrix which was applied to each application. The Members sought clarification to allow them to understand how the high, medium and low ratings were applied and why there

could be discrepancies between, for example, the PSNI rating and the Council rating. A Member used an example of the Jocelyn Street gate, where the PSNI had rated it as medium but the BCC rating was low. The Neighbour Services Manager undertook to provide him with an explanation for the difference.

Further Members also requested the total number of alleygates to be agreed this round.

Noted.

### **Update on the Physical Programme**

The Working Group considered the undernoted report:

**“1. Introduction**

**The Council’s Physical Programme covers projects under a range of funding streams including the Capital Programme, the Leisure Transformation Programme, the Local Investment Fund (LIF), the Belfast Investment Fund (BIF), Social Outcomes Fund (SOF) and the new Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (NRF); in addition, the programme covers 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, and;**
- **Note that confirmation has been received from Braniel Church that additional funding of £60,000 in relation to the BIF project is being met by the group, allowing the final investment decision to be taken.**

**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: 19 projects received In Principle support under LIF1 and LIF2, of which 18 have been completed; 1 project remaining at initial stage, the Lagan Village Youth and Community Association.**

LIF breakdown – East	LIF 1		LIF 2	
Stage/ Description	Projects	Amount/ Value (£)	Projects	Amount/ Value (£)
Number of Projects Completed	7 (100%)	£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 (8%)	£15,000
<b>Total Number of Approved Projects</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>£877,500</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>£1,161,589</b>

The table below provides an overview of progress and actions around the remaining live project.

LIF Ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action / recommendation
ELIF2-17	Lagan Village Youth and Community Association	£15,000	Initial stage	Approved by SP&R Committee in October 2020. DfC funding commitment received of £35,000 and awaiting final confirmation on land transfer. Initial enabling works and site fencing to commence imminently. The transfer of the lease will soon to be completed allowing works to commence, subject to a successful outcome of the group's	Continue engagement with the group.

				application to Alpha funding.	
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### LIF funding

Members will recall at their meeting on November 2021, AWG agreed to discuss the remaining funding which is available under LIF and BIF, and the requests received to date for funding support. The table shows the remaining funding under the LIF programme. Members will note that there is no remaining funding under BIF as this is fully allocated at this stage.

Total LIF Allocation (LIF 1 and 2)	Amount Allocated To Date*	Amount Remaining**
<b>£2,327,500</b>	<b>£2,113,089</b>	<b>£230,009</b>

*\*This includes additional funding for BIF TAGIT Boxing Club (£9k) and Braniel Church (£65k).*

*\*\* This includes the reported underspend amount for Walkway Community Centre (£15,598).*

#### 4. Belfast Investment Fund

Members are reminded BIF is a £28m investment fund for regeneration, partnership projects, with a minimum £250,000 investment from Council. 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:

<b>East</b>	<p>Stage 3—Willowfield—£560k; H&amp;W Welders—£2.37m; Strand—£1.8m; Bloomfield—£440k</p> <p><i>Stage 2—Lagan Village Youth &amp; Community—no commitment</i></p> <p><i>Stage 1—East Belfast Mission; Belmont Bowling Club; Bloomfield Presbyterian Church; St. John's Orangefield, Church of Ireland, Tullycarnet Community Support Services—no commitment / on long list</i></p>
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<b>Outer East</b>	<p>Stage 3 —TAGIT- £434k; Braniel—£390k; Hanwood—£396k; Castlereagh Presbyterian Church—£382k; Lisnasharragh Community Schools—£398k</p>
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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
<b>BIF1 4</b>	<b>H&amp;W Welders Club</b>	£2,370,000	Complete	Project completed.	Continue engagement with the group re post monitoring
<b>BIF1 2</b>	<b>Strand Arts Centre</b>	£1,800,000	Stage 3 – design stage	In November 2021, Members noted the increase in cost estimates following the RIBA Stage 2 Design Report. The total cost estimate is £5,320,000 which includes construction inflation and theatre/cinema specifics. The total project budget exclusive of these items is estimated at £4,657,000. Members agreed to progress to RIBA Stage 3 and submit to Planning, and the Application has since been submitted (January 2022).	Continue engagement with the group.
<b>BIF1 3</b>	<b>Bloomfield Community Association</b>	£440,000	Stage 3 - Committed – In Principle	A new Economic Appraisal/ Business Plan was completed in July 2021. Cost of preferred option is £745,054. Application to DfC for	Continue engagement with the group and partners.

				<p>funding deficit of £305,054 has been prepared and will be submitted once group provide supporting information for application requested.</p>	
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### Outer East BIF Projects

BIF Ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action / recommendation
<b>BIF18</b>	<b>TAGIT Boxing Club</b>	£434,000	Stage 3 – Complete	Project completed. Project officially launched on 25 February 2022.	Continue engagement with the group re post monitoring
<b>BIF37</b>	<b>Lisnasharragh Community Schools Project</b>	£398,000	Stage 3- On Ground	Project works at Lisnasharragh PS and Cregagh PS commenced on November 21 and January 22, respectively. Planned completion by April 2022.	Continue engagement with the group/ schools and Education Authority.
<b>BIF25</b>	<b>Braniel Church</b>	£390,000	Stage 3 – Tender stage	Tender return over allocated funding amount. EAWG and Braniel Church to fund the deficient in the construction budget. Confirmation now received from Braniel regarding their funding contribution - see below.	Continue engagement with the group
<b>BIF38</b>	<b>Castlereagh Presbyterian Church</b>	£382,000	Stage 3 – Due Diligence	Costs of works currently estimated at	Continued engagement with group.



				<p>£325,200.  Church approval for works now in place. In December Members recommended that additional information be requested from the Church in respect of whether there would be any congregational funding or whether they had investigated other external funding streams; who the end users of the facilities would be; and that a further site visit be arranged to the Church. Officers liaising with group regarding outstanding information.</p>	
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**BIF 25 Braniel Church**

Members will recall at its meeting in February 2022, it was recommended to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that match funding of up to £65,000 be allocated to the Braniel Church project, from the uncommitted allocations within the East area, provided that the Church would agree to commit £60,000 toward the cost of the project and that the Church would confirm that to officers, in writing, by 25 February 2022, and an update would be provided to the East AWG to note that all funding was in place before a final investment decision be taken and the contract awarded.

**Note that confirmation has been received from Braniel Church that additional funding of £60,000 in relation to the BIF project is being met by the group, allowing the final investment decision to be taken.**

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
<b>Eastside Visitor Centre</b> <i>Link to UV project</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 completed, and study with UV in final stages of their approval process. In parallel to information collation to take the project through Due Diligence still ongoing.

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
<b>Pitches Programme- Blanchflower Playing Fields – New pitch and floodlighting</b>	Stage 3 – Committed. Project completed.
<b>LTP- Avoniel</b>	Stage 3 – Committed. Project completed.
<b>LTP- Templemore- NLHF</b>	Stage 3 – Committed. On Ground. Completion anticipated by summer 2022.
<b>New Crematorium</b>	Stage 3 – Committed – Scheme at tender preparation stage. Design and Planning discussions underway.
<b>Sydenham Greenway</b>	Stage 2- Uncommitted. OBC to be worked up.
<b>Shared Youth and Community Facility Inner East</b>	Stage 1- Emerging. Officers investigating the potential 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, initial mapping exercise complete and with Council officers for review.
<b>Ballymacarrett Area Masterplan</b>	Stage 1- Emerging. Linked to Connswater Community Greenway.  Link to the UV/DfI funded Ballymacarrett Walkway Environmental and Cycling Infrastructure Improvement project.
<b>Playground Improvement Programme 2021/2022 (City wide)</b>	Stage 3 – Committed Project. Clarawood Playground. Works to start in Spring and completion expected end of May 2022.
<b>Alleygating Phase 5 – City wide</b>	Stage 3 – Committed Project. Update to be brought to future AWG

## 6. Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund

Members are reminded that the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund has recently been launched and is a new £8m capital programme to support capital projects across the city. The fund is now open for Stage 1 applications via an open call process and will close on 12 May 2022. Communications activity is already underway via a variety of tools to promote the fund to as wide an audience as possible.

## 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	Status and update
<b>Walkway Community Association</b>	Project is progressing satisfactorily following discussions with the contractor and funder to resolve issues in relation to the escalating costs of supply, contractors delay in ordering key materials and Covid related matters. Minor adjustments to the building façade have been agreed to balance project costs and a planning application was presented to the Planning Committee on 15 February 2022. Estimated completion April 2022.

### Urban Villages Initiative

<b>Project</b>	<b>Status and update</b>
<b>ProKick Community Gym</b>	Council is acting as Delivery Partner. Programme progressing well with estimated completion date June 2022.
<b>Pop EastSide- Landmark East</b> <i>Link to SOF 'Eastside Visitor Centre'</i>	The project proposal is for the extension of the existing visitor centre at C.S. Lewis Square. Council and UV have agreed that this is a joint project with Pop Eastside (UV). Final draft OBC completed and is in the UV approval process. Council investigating charges against site and UV undertaking a VFM exercise. At design stage.
<b>Pitt Park redevelopment</b> <i>Council asset</i>	This project is on a Council site and the Council is acting as Delivery Partner. The Business Case has been approved. The Letter of Offer is expected imminently. Design stage.
<b>East Belfast Mission Accommodation project</b>	Council is acting as Delivery Partner. The Business Case has been approved. Revised refurbishment options are being explored with the Group and additional funding options are being considered.
<b>Eastside Souk</b>	Emerging project at feasibility stage.
<b>Titanic People Exhibition</b>	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. Following a site visit on 4 November 2021, Members took the decision to withdraw the previously allocated LIF funding. Members stressed their desire to continue to work with the Group to explore alternative funding sources and how the project can link with other projects in the area. The Council is waiting on a detailed project proposal and Business Case from UV. Options in relation to the funding gap are being explored.

### **DfC funded projects**

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

<b>Project</b>	<b>Status and update</b>
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<b>Prokick Community Gym</b>	On Ground. Link to UV project
<b>Lagan Village Youth and Community Centre</b>	Initial stage. Link to LIF project
<b>Clarawood Play Park</b>	Initial stage. Part of the Playground Improvement Programme. Works to start in Spring and completion expected end of May 2022.”

The Members expressed their thanks to the Director of Physical Programmes and her team for the sterling work that they were doing to progress works through all of the funding streams and the capital programme.

The Working Group noted the contents of the report.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

The Working Group agreed to change the date of its next quarterly meeting, which was due to be held on Thursday, 5th May, which was Polling Day for the upcoming Assembly Elections. It agreed, therefore, that the next quarterly meeting would be held on Monday, 16th May at 5pm.

Chairperson