



Subject:	DfI Blue Green Infrastructure Fund – Active Travel Projects
Date:	6 th April 2022
Reporting Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Director, City Regeneration & Development
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Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	To update the Committee on DfI's Blue Green Infrastructure Funding relating to Active Travel Projects and seek approval to further progress the proposed project around enhanced connectivity on the Greater Clarendon North South Spine to RIBA Stage 3.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Members of the Committee are asked to:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note the Letter of Offer from DfI for capital funding to deliver Active Travel Enabling projects has been signed and officers are working to deliver the secure cycle units, covered cycle units and cycle repair stands under this Letter of Offer. Agree to progress the proposal to develop the designs for the Greater Clarendon North South Spine connectivity project, in conjunction with Belfast Harbour Commissioners, with a view to attracting further capital funding for delivery.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>The CG&R Committee received an update in relation to the Blue and Green Infrastructure Fund in March 2022, which included noting the status of discussions with the Department for Infrastructure in relation to the funding proposals around Active Travel Enablers, agreeing to advanced procurement of covered cycle stands and repair stations and the delivery route of secured cycle stands via an EOI process. In addition, Members were provided with an overview in relation to the proposal to develop designs for the Greater Clarendon North South Spine and agreed officers would work with DfI and others, to secure funding and bring designs through to RIBA Stage 3.</p>
3.2	<p>The Letter of Offer in respect of the project proposal for Active Travel Enablers has been signed and returned to the Department with progress being made against delivery in terms of scoping and procurement, with a detailed report to be brought to Committee at a future meeting to include consideration on locations of repair stands and covered cycle stands as well as the EOI process on secured stands.</p>
3.3	<p><u>Report</u></p> <p>Following the report presented to Committee in March 2022, there has been a series of discussions between DfI and Council in relation to the funding proposal around the development of designs for the Greater Clarendon North South Spine. As Members will recall the project is directed at the enhancement of connecting routes to and from the city centre and the Greater Clarendon area. This will better link communities from the Greater Clarendon / Sailortown area to and from the city centre. Given issues of severance with the city centre this was identified as a priority connectivity project in the Greater Clarendon and Sailortown Masterplan / Accessibility Guide progressed by DfC in conjunction with BCC, DfI and other partners including local communities.</p>
3.4	<p>As previously reported to Committee the 'North-South Spine' concept was developed as part of the Greater Clarendon & Sailortown Masterplan and subsequent Public Realm & Accessibility Design Guide, which noted the importance of improved north-south pedestrian</p>

	<p>and cycle links (and east-west links) in terms of integrating Greater Clarendon and Sailortown into the city centre, enhancing local links to the Cathedral Quarter and City Quays, and linking the two new proposed city parks at Cathedral Gardens and City Quays.</p>
3.5	<p>Following submission of the business case to DfI and indication from the Department that an offer of circa 50% funding may possibly be made, albeit with a very tight timeline for delivery, the Committee are asked to note that this application for funding has not been awarded at this stage. The Department however have indicated that if the proposal was further developed, with a cost plan and initial designs, there is a possibility of further funding in future years to support delivery / construction of the scheme. In essence feedback has concluded that there is a need for Council to further develop the feasibility of the project in order to attract further funding.</p>
3.6	<p>The progression of this proposal will enable Council to actively adopt the principles of A Bolder Vision and help to connect the communities in Sailortown to the city centre. Alongside the emerging plans for 'City Quays Gardens', it is proposed to develop similarly ambitious streetscape and open space design proposals for adjacent connecting streets. The proposed area takes in Tomb St, Corporation St, and design development would focus on enhancing local public realm and ease of movement, while contributing to wider city connectivity, including pedestrian and cycle links between City Quays and Custom House Square, the Cathedral Quarter and UU campus and accommodation. This scheme would complement and enhance the proposed Little York Street / Little Patrick St scheme which is currently under design development to address the already secured Developer Contributions from recent developments in the area.</p>
3.7	<p>Following recent discussions with Belfast Harbour Commissioners (BHC), there is now a proposal that the feasibility work for the North South Spine scheme could be co-funded (50/50) and co-delivered with BHC and Council up to RIBA Stage 3, pending Council approval. BHC has indicated their approval in principle to this, subject to agreement on the scope of works. This work would be brought forward under the existing BCC/BHC Memorandum of Understanding with a view to preparing the scheme to a position that could attract project delivery partner funding in future years.</p>
3.8	<p>The proposed scheme may include, but would not be limited to, enhanced pedestrian crossings, dedicated cycle lanes, soft landscaping, lighting, resurfacing, open space, street furniture. In line with the RIBA Plan of Work, preparation of design information to Stage 3 will include site appraisal, concept development, options appraisal, business case</p>

	development, feasibility studies, development of project brief / budget / programme and stakeholder engagement.
3.9	Specific outputs from the currently proposed design development work will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RIBA Stage 3 Report • Outline Specification • Cost Plan • Planning application submitted
3.10	Taking this approach will develop the project to be in a position to attract future funding should it become available. On completion of the stages outlined above, the project will be in a much stronger position to bid for future funding streams. As previously reported to Committee there are a number of developer contributions which have been agreed in principle for public realm provision in this area. It would be advantageous to have a better defined and developed project in order to fully utilise these contributions, and to aid negotiation of potential future developer agreements that could also support delivery of this project.
3.11	Finance & Resource Implications
	Up to £100,000 from approved City Regeneration and Development budget for 22/23 under the budget line Active Travel, Connectivity and City Infrastructure, and up to £100k contribution from BHC (subject to agreement on scope).
3.12	Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment
	Equality of opportunity and good relations, and disability duties screening will be carried out on the schemes prior to implementation.
4.0	Appendices -Documents attached
	Appendix 1: North South Spine