



Subject:	Physical Programme Update
Date:	21 August 2026
Reporting Officer:	Sinead Grimes, Director of Property & Projects
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Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

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No

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Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.

Insert number

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1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Sometime in the future

Never

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

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No

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1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues
1.1	The Council's Physical Programme currently includes over 200 capital projects with investment of £150m+ via a range of internal and external funding streams, together with projects which the Council delivers on behalf of external agencies. The Council's Capital Programme forms

	part of the Physical Programme and is a rolling programme of investment which either improves existing Council facilities or provides new facilities. This report presents a request for an approval under the Capital Programme.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is requested to – Capital Programme Stage Movements - • Fire Service Blitz Memorial – Agree that the project is moved to <i>Stage 3 – Committed</i> with a maximum allocation of up to £5,000. • Depot Charging Scheme 2026/27 - Agree that the project is moved to <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted</i> to allow options to be fully worked up, with further detail to be brought back to Committee in due course. • Drumglass Park SuDS Project – Agree that the project is moved to <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted</i> to allow options to be fully worked up, with further detail to be brought back to Committee in due course. Note that this project is fully funded by NI Water and DfI. • Belfast Castle - Agree that the project is moved to <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted</i> to allow options to be fully worked up, with further detail to be brought back to Committee in due course. • City Hall Programmable Floodlighting Replacement - Agree that the project is added to the Capital Programme at <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i> to allow a business case to be developed. • Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall 3010 Modernisation - Agree that the project is added to the Capital Programme at <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i> to allow a business case to be developed. Project Updates • Girdwood Hub Health & Safety Works - Agree up to £300,000 to carry out essential health and safety remedial works • Capital Letters of Offer - to note the update in relation to capital letters of offer. • Contracts awarded in Q1 2026/27 - to note the update in relation to contracts awarded.
3.0	Main report <u>Key Issues</u>
3.1	Physical Programme Members will be aware that the Council runs a substantial Physical Programme. This includes the rolling Capital Programme – a multimillion regeneration programme of investment across the city which improves existing Council assets or provides new council facilities. The Property & Projects Department is happy to arrange a site visit to any projects that have been completed or are underway.
3.2	<u>Capital Programme - Proposed Movements</u> Members have agreed that all capital projects must go through a three-stage process where decisions on which capital projects progress are taken by the Committee. This provides assurance as to the level of financial control and will allow Members to properly consider the

opportunity costs of approving one capital project over another capital project. Members are asked to note the following activity on the Capital Programme:

Project	Overview	Stage movement
Fire Service Blitz Memorial	Sculpture to be installed in City Hall featuring Fire Service helmets and a Women's Voluntary Service cap to recognise their efforts and sacrifices during the Belfast Blitz.	Stage 3 – Committed with a maximum budget of £5,000
Depot Charging Scheme 2026/27	Further improvements to electric vehicle (EV) charging provision at Council depots.	Move to Stage 2 – Uncommitted
Drumglass Park SuDS Project	Nature based drainage solution at Drumglass Park.	Move to Stage 2 – Uncommitted
Belfast Castle	Phased capital improvement programme for Belfast Castle with the aim of enhancing customer experience, accessibility and operational efficiency.	Move to Stage 2 – Uncommitted
City Hall Programmable Floodlighting Replacement	Proposed replacement of the existing 'Illuminate' programmable floodlighting system on the City Hall	Add at Stage 1 - Emerging
Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall 3010 Modernisation	Priority modernisation works for Waterfront Hall and Ulster Hall	Add at Stage 1 - Emerging

3.3 Fire Service Blitz Memorial

Members will recall that this project was moved to *Stage 2 – Uncommitted* in October 2023. The project involves the design, commissioning and installation of a permanent memorial in City Hall to acknowledge and remember the efforts and sacrifices of the Fire Services from Belfast and Dublin and the crucial role of the Women's Voluntary Service during the Belfast Blitz (April–May 1941). The proposed sculpture features two Fire Service helmets and a Women's Voluntary Service cap cast in bronze resin. This will be mounted on a plaque on a stainless-steel stand in the reception area of City Hall. **Members are asked to agree that the project is moved to Stage 3 – Committed with a maximum allocation of up to £5,000. The Director of Finance has confirmed that this is within the affordability limits of the Council.**

3.4 Depot Charging Scheme 2026/27

This project was added to the Capital Programme at *Stage 1 – Emerging* in June 2026. To meet climate change targets and legislative requirements, the Council must consider its current fleet and the transition required to reach zero emissions. In January 2026 part funding was secured through the Cabinet Office Depot Charging Scheme to install EV chargers at Blanchflower, Duncrue, Mallusk, Ormeau, and Belfast Zoo. The project aims to improve the EV charging on Council sites and will support the fleet transition and overall decarbonisation of Council fleet. The funding stream is now open again for this year and funding is available for up to 70% of project costs with the remainder being met by the Council. **Members are asked to agree that 'Depot Charging Scheme 2026/27' is moved to Stage 2 – Uncommitted to allow the options to be fully worked up, with further detail to be brought back to Committee in due course, and update regarding the funding opportunity referred above.**

3.5 Drumglass Park SuDS Project

	This project was added to the Capital Programme at <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i> in May 2026. It is an NI Water-led project which aims to introduce a new sustainable drainage system (SuDS), including a new pond, in Drumglass Park. It will provide a nature-based solution to address ongoing issues with surface water and flooding in the area during periods of heavy rainfall. The project is funded by the Department for Infrastructure as part of the Public Sector Transformation Fund – a four-year pilot project which will demonstrate the effectiveness of nature-based Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). SuDS aims to manage surface water through natural drainage processes by slowing, storing and treating rainwater close to where it falls. It will promote biodiversity through native planting while creating an attractive new feature in the park. The project's key objectives are to manage the flooding risk in the area, improve the local environment, provide opportunities for educational outreach, enhance biodiversity and support long term climate resilience. The scheme is being project managed by NI Water with Aecom appointed to design and deliver it on their behalf. DfI are funding the project through the NI Executive's Public Sector Transformation Fund. The Council is a partner in the project as it is being delivered in a council-owned park. Consultation and engagement is a critical element of the project and engagement with local groups, including community groups, the Traders Association and schools, is already underway. Members are asked to agree that this partnership project is moved to Stage 2 – Uncommitted to allow the options to be fully worked up, with further detail to be brought back to Committee in due course.
3.6	Belfast Castle This project was added to the Capital Programme at <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i> in June 2026. Belfast Castle is one of Belfast's most recognised heritage and tourism assets. Situated within Cave Hill Country Park, the castle plays a significant role in the city's visitor economy, civic hospitality offering, weddings and events market as well as wider community engagement activities. However, parts of the building require targeted investment to maintain competitiveness, improve visitor experience, protect the asset, and align the venue with the Council's Corporate Plan priorities. A phased capital improvement programme for Belfast Castle with the aim of enhancing the customer experience, accessibility and operational efficiency has been proposed. As per the three-stage approval process, the strategic outline case has been completed. Members are asked to agree that this project is moved to Stage 2 – Uncommitted to allow the options to be fully worked up, with further detail to be brought back to Committee in due course.
3.7	City Hall Programmable Floodlighting Replacement The project is for the replacement of the existing programmable floodlighting system (illuminate) on the City Hall. The system was installed in 2013 as part of a European programme to promote the use of LED lighting and it received 50% funding for participation in the programme. The system allows the Council to mark significant dates, occasions or achievements using bespoke lighting scenes and has proved to be very successful for the city,

	with around 80 lighting events displayed annually in addition to Christmas and New Year events. The system currently requires replacement as component parts are no longer available. In the interim, pending replacement, it may be necessary to use existing parts of the lighting system on the east and west facades to maintain the lighting on the north façade. Members are asked to agree that the project is added to the Capital Programme at Stage 1 – Emerging to allow a business case to be developed.
3.8	Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall 3010 Modernisation The project is for modernising Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall venues thereby enhancing experiences and securing the future competitiveness and growth. These priority works generally involve replacement of end-of-life assets to ensure safety, maintain performance and protect the reputation of our venues to include ICT modernisation and end of life door access system, lifts replacement, pit covers, etc. Members are asked to agree that the project is added to the Capital Programme at Stage 1 – Emerging to allow a business case to be developed.
	Project Updates
3.9	Girdwood Hub Health & Safety Works In October 2025, Members agreed that the Girdwood Hub Health & Safety Works project was moved to the Capital Programme at <i>Stage 3 – Committed</i>. Health and safety works are required to repair the parapets and the roof and to fix issues which are causing water ingress into the building. Water damage has meant that the youth space currently cannot be used due to health and safety reasons and works are required to ensure ongoing service provision. Members are asked to approve up to £300,000 required to carry out essential remedial health & safety works. The Director of Finance has confirmed that this is within the affordability limits of the Council.
3.10	Capital Letters of Offer Members are asked to note the update in relation to capital letters of offer in Q1 2026/27 at Appendix 1.
3.11	Contracts Awarded Members are asked to note the award of tenders for capital works including services related to works in Q1 2026/27 at Appendix 2.
3.12	<u>Financial & Resource Implications</u> <i>Financial Implications –</i> Fire Service Belfast Blitz – capital allocation of up to £5,000. The Director of Finance has confirmed that this is within the affordability limits of the Council. Girdwood Hub H&S Works – additional capital allocation of up to £300,000. The Director of Finance has confirmed that this is within the affordability limits of the Council. <i>Resource Implications –</i> Officer time to deliver.

3.13	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment</u> The legislation requirements have been met including screening. All physical projects are designed for people and are inherently inclusive and accessible.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 – Capital Letters of Offer in Q1 2026/27 – April to June 2026 Appendix 2 – Contracts Awarded in Q1 2026/27 – April to June 2026