

Public Document Pack

**Democratic Services Section
Legal and Civic Services Department
Belfast City Council
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS**

4th November, 2022

MEETING OF PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

In addition to those matters previously notified to you, the following report will also be considered at the meeting to be held at 5.15 pm on Tuesday, 8th November, 2022.

Yours faithfully,

John Walsh

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

3. Committee/Strategic Issues

- (a) Community Infrastructure Pilots (Pages 1 - 12)

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Subject:	Community Infrastructure Pilot Update
Date:	8 th November 2022
Reporting Officer:	David Sales, Director of Neighbourhood Services, CNS
Contact Officer:	Kelly Gilliland, Neighbourhood Services Manager, CNS Margaret Higgins, Lead Officer – Community Provision, CNS

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	The purpose of this report is to update members on the proposed Community Infrastructure Pilot approved by Committee on 9 th November 2021.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	Members are asked to note and approve the update in terms of revised governance and timescales for the Community Infrastructure Pilot projects.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<u>Background</u> Community infrastructure is commonly defined as a complex system of facilities, programmes, and social networks that aims to improve people's quality of life. These services, networks and physical assets work in tandem to form the foundation of a strong neighbourhood.
3.2	During Summer/Autumn 2021, Council commenced their engagement process to update the community plan for Belfast, the Belfast Agenda. The need to build and enhance community infrastructure and to contribute to neighbourhood regeneration across the four quadrants of the

city has been identified as a priority and is a key commitment in the draft refreshed Belfast Agenda plan (due to be formally consulted on Jan-Mar 2023).

3.3 Committee (alongside Area Working Groups) previously considered reports in May and November 2021 which agreed the approach proposed within them (namely the development of Community Infrastructure Pilots) to help address weak community infrastructure in targeted localities, with members subsequently deciding that there should be 8 pilot projects developed (2 per area – N, S, E & W, rather than the 4 – one per area of the city initially proposed).

3.4 It was agreed that Neighbourhood Integration Managers, supported by the Neighbourhood Services Manager aligned with community planning and the community provision review, within Neighbourhood Services/CNS would lead on developing and delivering the approach, working alongside identified internal and external stakeholders, and key communities/community groups within the 8 areas selected. The table below, outlines the NIM for each area, as well as the areas chosen by members for targeting.

East Neighbourhood Integration Manager – Kathy Watters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ormiston DEA – Braniel • Lisnasharragh DEA – Clonduff
South Neighbourhood Integration Manager – Denise Smith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Botanic DEA – Ballynafeigh (including Annadale) • Balmoral DEA – Finaghy
North Neighbourhood Integration Manager – Eimear McCullough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oldpark DEA – Mid Antrim Road (Limestone/Glandore) • Castle DEA – Lower Shore Road
West Neighbourhood Integration Manager – Alice McGlone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colin DEA – Black’s Gate (former Visteon site) • Court DEA – Glencairn

3.5 **Explanation for delay – resource pressures within CNS/Neighbourhood Services**

Planned development and delivery of the initiative has been significantly impacted since committee/council approval was given in late 2021. In particular, the high level of vacancies which have existed within Neighbourhood Services (95 posts as at October 2022), has adversely impacted on the delivery of business-as-usual activities as well as any new or emerging work. In addition, in early 2022, the departures of both the Neighbourhood Services Director and one of the four Neighbourhood Services Managers, meant that the capacity of the senior team was also reduced by 40% for several months. These factors, along with the need to reinstate business-as-usual activities which had been de-prioritised during Covid, severely impacted the ability to progress the pilot initiatives.

However, as per the recent updates to Area Working Groups – there has been a realignment of portfolio areas with one NSM now focussed on community funding and capacity and neighbourhood integration – specifically supported by the NIMs as well as staff within the Belfast Health Development Unit and Community Resource Unit to take forward more developmental, opportunistic and problem-solving related actions – as identified by members and via community planning. Now that the fourth Neighbourhood Services Manager is in post (from October 2022), it will mean that this team will have more capacity – certainly in the last quarter of the year to pick up some of the priority developmental action (albeit with a caveat that there is now an urgent

need to take forward member and community priorities in relation to addressing cost-of-living pressures).

Appendix 2 outlines in more detail the actions identified under the **draft Belfast Agenda Community & Neighbourhood Regeneration theme**, you will see that these include development of four place-based community plans, as well as to develop local demonstrator interventions, models for capacity building, and new and innovative ways of strengthening civic voice and participation – as well as a number of other actions relevant to what was originally intended by Council in taking forward the community infrastructure pilots. Incorporating these aims within community planning will allow us to broaden the approach to include other partners, maximising opportunities for collaborative gain and focus.

3.6 **Neighbourhood Integration linkages with Community Planning**

It had been previously recommended to establish a new advisory group for developing and overseeing the Community Infrastructure Pilots initiative which would be made up of representatives from the Living Here Board, AWGs, DfC, NICVA, NIHE, Volunteer Now and relevant BCC staff. However, as work has developed over the past year in relation to community planning and refreshing the Belfast Agenda (particularly under the ‘Community and Neighbourhood Regeneration’ theme) officers are now recommending that the group which has been established to develop and deliver the action plan under this theme is potentially best placed to consider how we (Council and wider stakeholders) improve our community capacity building approaches going forward (as per the draft actions outlined in 3.6). Core membership of this group includes: BCC, BHSCT, DfC, NIHE, PHA, PSNI, SPPG (formerly HSCB) along with reps from each of the Belfast Area Partnerships (North rep selected via North NRPs) and two reps from the VCSE Panel under Community Planning.

3.7 **In-year actions**

Neighbourhood Integration Managers have been working alongside key staff from across CNS and wider Council on an area basis during 2022/23 – and this has included work and engagement within the localities identified for targeting within the original community infrastructure pilot approach. However, during this time the NIMs have also been tasked with supporting a broad range of other developmental efforts such as Covid response and recovery funding-main link for strategic and thematic partners, introduction of Social Supermarkets, Urban Villages (planning/community engagement/monitoring), thematic working in support of community planning (connectivity-Complex Lives-Children & Young People), being the key ‘area’ link and navigator internally (obo Directors, Senior Managers and members) as well as externally obo VCSE and statutory partners and stakeholders.

3.8 **Financial & resource implications**

P&C Committee originally agreed 15k per area (x 4) in May 2021, community infrastructure pilots were referenced in a broader report on ‘Community Development and Capacity Building Support’ brought to P&C Committee in November 2021 which stated, ‘further detail will be provided the next round of Area Working Groups when areas will be selected.’ AWGs then met during Nov and Dec 2021 with a proposal tabled that each AWG should select two pilot sites and that 15k per pilot would be allocated for a 2-year period (from Apr 22 to Mar 24). A subsequent report was then taken through SP&R Committee in December 2021 which noted the 8 pilots (2 per area) selected by the AWGs.

3.9	<p>In each of the reports from that time, it was stated that <i>‘all financial resources outlined in this report can be delivered through existing budgets’</i> and it was originally intended to use departmental underspends to provide funding for the pilots.</p> <p>Members will be aware of the current deficit reported to SP&R in August and that all underspends are to be used to address these significant costs in-year.</p> <p>Updated forecasts for Quarter 2 are due to be reported to SP&R on 18th November. Finance colleagues are aware of the priority of these pilots and are currently working to identify how these costs might be met from future departmental underspends or the realignment of specified reserves as part of the medium term financial plan in line with the other pressures facing the council at this time.</p> <p>In late December/early January, Council will also finalise decisions on the Capacity and Revenue Grant funding awards. Thus, early in the New Year, we will have a clearer position in relation to available budget, as well as knowledge of who will be the lead capacity building Council-funded organisations for the next 3-year period 23/24-25/26, and furthermore we will have the final version of the refreshed Belfast Agenda produced in March 2023, meaning that we will then be able to review how best we improve our efforts to address capacity at a citywide and neighbourhood level.</p>
3.10	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications and Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>The activity outlined in this report will be Equality and Rural Needs screened as part of the screening exercise on the overall Community Planning approach.</p>
4.0	Appendices
4.1	<p>Appendix 1: Item 3e: People and Communities Committee, 9th November 2021: Community Development and Capacity Building Support</p> <p>Appendix 2: Belfast Agenda Refresh – Community & Neighbourhood Regeneration theme draft actions</p>



Subject:	Community Development & Capacity Building Support
Date:	9 th November 2021
Reporting Officer:	Ryan Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Kelly Gilliland, Neighbourhood Services Manager Margaret Higgins, Lead Officer – Community Provision

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	The purpose of this report is to update members on the types of support available from within the Community Provision section of the City & Neighbourhood Services Directorate in Council which local groups can avail of, and members can promote, to groups that they are working with or who approach them for advice or assistance.
2.0	Recommendations
	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the contents of the report.
3.0	Main report
	<u>Background</u>
3.1	Following an amendment to the minutes of the P&C Committee meeting held in September 2021 at the full Council meeting held on 4 th October 2021. Members had asked for a report to be brought to the next P&C committee meeting which outlined ‘ <i>capacity building and potential further funding for other groups.</i> ’ In response, officers have outlined within this update the community development and capacity support services that are currently provided by Belfast City Council’s

Community Services Unit as well as several other service areas within Community Provision. It is however worth noting that staff within Community Provision can, and often do, link in with wider Council services both within City & Neighbourhood Services Directorate (e.g. Environmental Health/Open Spaces and Street Scene/Waste Collection) as well as in other Departments across Council who can also offer a range of support services to groups and individuals.

3.2 **The Community Services Unit**

Council's Community Services unit sits within the wider Community Provision team. The Unit continues to provide a range of services to support community activity and community development across the city. Many groups and organisations require support to plan and deliver programmes, particularly in the context of Covid recovery. Council has 27 community centres with dedicated staff attached to them who will support groups to access for bookings and programmes.

Staff within the CSU are able to support groups via three main areas outlined in more detail below.

1. Direct financial support through grant aid

Funding of approximately £2 million is made available annually to 100+ Belfast-based community and voluntary organisations under two main funding streams – Community Capacity and Facilities Support. Members agreed at October Council meeting that awards for 21/22 would be rolled over into the 22/23 financial year. Officers will develop a new multi annual bid that will open for applications in Autumn 2022.

During the Covid response and recovery period, a number of previous funding streams were combined to create a more accessible, less bureaucratic process to access support with smaller micro and medium grants of up £1,500 and £5,000 respectively allocated to community projects and events. Council allocated almost £1million to 350 projects in August/September 2021 for delivery until 31 March 22. Applications for both these funding streams will open again in January/February 2022.

2. Advice and information

Council officers in the Unit can provide specialist support in relation not only to funding but also in relation to issues such as safeguarding, volunteering and child/youth development. They will also act as conduit and facilitate access to other council and external services (statutory and voluntary).

3. Capacity building – training and development

Community Development Officers can provide training and mentoring in a range of development areas. There are 3 hard copy toolkits which can be accessed by groups; *Running a Community*

Organisation, Facilities Management and Collaborative Working. Community Development Officers can also provide group facilitation support to develop business and project plans. Those in need of assistance should contact their local community development officer in the first instance. Groups can be directed to community@belfastcity.gov.uk with requests for support in relation to any of the areas of work listed below.

3.3 **Community Awareness & Resource Education & Promotions Team**

The Community Awareness Team works to discourage litter, dog fouling and graffiti in the city through campaigns, school visits and programmes, and competitions. The Resource Education and Promotions Team promotes waste and resource awareness including waste reduction, reuse and recycling to the public, schools and businesses in the city.

3.4 **Community Safety Team**

Officers within the Community Safety Team work with Elected Members, Statutory Agencies and Independent Representatives to identify and take forward local and citywide priority actions within the Policing and Community Safety Partnership structure. Within the Team there are also a number Anti-Social Behaviour Officers and Safer Neighbourhood Officers. ASB Officers can engage with local communities, partner agencies and via multi-agency forums to address issues of ASB, they link in with the relevant PCSP and can host community surgeries in priority areas to allow residents to report issues directly.

Safer Neighbourhood Officers offer guidance, support and advice on community safety issues. They can challenge low-level antisocial behaviour, enforce laws relating to on-street drinking and environmental crime. They work alongside Police, Youth Workers and BCC park wardens to address low level ASB mainly in BCC parks and open spaces and hotspot areas across the city including the City centre.

3.5 **Good Relations Team**

Good Relations officers provide advice and support for groups throughout Belfast in the application process for Council grants as well as for funding from other bodies such as The Executive Office's Central Good Relations Fund, Heritage Lottery, Community Relations Council, NI Housing Executive, among others. Staff within the team can provide support to local community organisations to develop relationships, networks and partnerships on an inter-community basis in order to promote the development of Good Relations at the local level. Members can direct queries to goodrelations@belfastcity.gov.uk

3.6	<p>Open Spaces and Active Living (OSAL) Unit</p> <p>The OSAL Unit can offer advice and assistance to groups wishing to run events or programmes in our parks and open spaces – assisting them through the application process. They also organise Council-led events and activities in our outdoor spaces throughout the year as well as administering Council’s allotments allocation scheme. In addition, our Parks Outreach team works at a more area level to assist local groups and communities to make better use of, and support improvements to our local parks and public spaces and to organise, promote and deliver events, etc. The Unit can be contacted at outdoorleisure@belfastcity.gov.uk</p>
3.7	<p>Sports/Leisure Development Unit</p> <p>The Sports/Leisure Development Unit can provide information, advice and support on a range of issues and initiatives such as coach education and sports development planning for clubs. The team offers funding under the ‘Support for Sport’ theme such as development grants for small interventions as well as larger club programmes, grants for small scale international events, and financial support for talented individuals. The team also co-funds, alongside PHA, the Active Belfast Grants administered and managed by the Belfast Health Development Unit. They work with governing bodies and clubs at local/community level to take forward priorities and actions under BCC’s Boxing Strategy, the GAA Joint Management Partnership and the Stadia Community Benefits Initiative (in partnership with GAA & IFA). They work with local clubs to ensure that partner and facilities management agreements in place with Council are achieving their aims and objectives. Please contact the team at leisure@belfastcity.gov.uk</p>
3.8	<p>Belfast Health Development Unit (BHDU)</p> <p>Belfast Health Development Unit is co-located team comprising staff from BCC, BHSC and the Public Health Agency based in Council. The focus of their work is on addressing health inequalities across a number of areas – currently drugs and alcohol and mental health, physical activity and nutrition, healthy ageing and lifelong learning. Staff work closely with the funding partners, Community Planning and key multi-agency partnerships and forums to identify and take forward key priorities and actions within these work areas. The Unit can be contacted by emailing mlbt@bhdu.org</p>
3.9	<p>Community Infrastructure Pilots</p> <p>Members will recall that Council is also developing a Community Infrastructure Pilot that will work in identified areas across the city. Recent experience shows that communities require support and resources from a range of services within Council and other organisations/agencies. The development of the community infrastructure pilot will be an opportunity to take an integrated</p>

	<p>approach to identifying and responding to area needs. Further detail will be provided the next round of Area Working Groups when areas will be selected.</p> <p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p>
3.10	<p>None.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications and Rural Needs Assessment</u></p>
3.11	<p>The majority of the support provided in relation to advice, training, capacity building and financial aid provided by the services with Community Provision is aimed at addressing inequalities, fostering good relations and promoting equal access to services (internal and external to Council).</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None


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WHY IS THIS A PRIORITY FOR BELFAST?

Successful community planning needs meaningful, sustained and effective engagement with local people and communities. We will therefore engage with and work alongside our citizens and other key partners across all sectors to develop place based community plans. We recognise each area has its own unique strengths and assets and that successful community-based regeneration is rooted in the identity, culture, assets and connections of people

and the place where they live. As part of the refresh of the Belfast Agenda people told us that there is continuing demand for high quality services, facilities and open spaces being readily available and accessible and many have aspirations to improve the areas in which they live, both from a physical space and quality of life perspective. We want our citizens to support local decision making informed by the development of place based community plans, which will help shape the future for our people, place and services.



Belfast is one of the youngest cities in Europe, with young people up to the age of 21 making up nearly a third of our population, while a fifth of the city is under 15 years old



Today 15% of the population is 65 and older, by 2035 this will grow to nearly a fifth (20%)




UK inflation is expected to continue to operate at elevated levels, which will increase the cost of living and poverty issues for our citizens



More than 56,000 residents in Belfast live in poverty, 28% of children in Belfast grow up in poverty

Our Outcome
Belfast is welcoming safe, fair and inclusive for all




At the end of 2020/21, 28% of all household waste was sent to landfill, while the proportion of household waste sent for preparing for reuse, dry recycling and composting increased to 41%



In 2020, 77.3% of the population lived within walking distance of a park or play area and there were 11,500 street trees in Belfast



Up to 9,800 properties are potentially at significant risk of flooding in Belfast



In 2019, Belfast spent £296m on energy across the city, and is forecast to grow to £466m by 2050

STRATEGIC INTENT	STRETCH GOALS	PROPOSED ACTIONS
<p>Our people, places and services are connected at a neighbourhood level through partnership, planning and delivery supported by strong and empowered communities and citizens</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 12</p>	<p>Develop an integrated approach towards neighbourhood regeneration through the development of 4 place-based community plans</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work together, informed by data, evidence and local intelligence, to design integrated area-based plans that maximise the potential of services, assets and investments to deliver better outcomes and make a difference in people's lives 2. Align with regional strategies (e.g. People & Place and Integrated Care System) that contribute towards area planning and neighbourhood regeneration 3. Develop local demonstrator interventions where there are opportunities to collaborate, improve outcomes and provide solutions to systemic local challenges 4. Develop models for capacity building across all sectors and mainstream learning across the city
	<p>Increase community participation and citizen involvement in local decision making and priority setting</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Co-design an engagement framework to identify community priorities taking account of existing area-based plans and structures 2. Develop new and innovative models to strengthen civic voice and citizen participation, supporting the creation of strong communities with more active, healthy and engaged citizens 3. Deliver a participatory budgeting programme that directly involves local people in delivering projects aligned with shared principles and priorities
	<p>Deliver a number of neighbourhood programmes that improve outcomes for communities in local neighbourhoods</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a strategic approach towards the development and management of neighbourhood assets & facilities exploring community wealth building & asset transfers opportunities 2. Maximise the benefits associated with physical investment programmes using them as a means of making services more integrated and accessible 3. Develop and enhance local culture and tourism programmes and services which contribute towards neighbourhood regeneration 4. Work alongside the City Regeneration and Investment theme to develop a targeted approach to vacancy and dereliction in local neighbourhoods
	<p>Develop and implement targeted interventions for those most affected by the cost-of-living crisis</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expand the network of social supermarkets across the city to ensure that more people can avail of the service 2. Develop a targeted and integrated approach to address fuel poverty 3. Develop and deliver a pilot intervention to tackle transport poverty and its impact on low-income households and individuals accessing essential services 4. Deliver a number of programmes to support grassroots organisations in tackling poverty and addressing hardship in local areas