



Subject:	Community Infrastructure Pilot Update
Date:	8 <sup>th</sup> 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

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
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"/>

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update members on the proposed Community Infrastructure Pilot approved by Committee on 9 <sup>th</sup> November 2021.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	Members are asked to note and approve the update in terms of revised governance and timescales for the Community Infrastructure Pilot projects.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	<b><u>Background</u></b> 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.

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

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&amp;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&amp;R on 18<sup>th</sup> 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><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications and Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></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>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices</b>
4.1	<p>Appendix 1: Item 3e: People and Communities Committee, 9<sup>th</sup> November 2021: Community Development and Capacity Building Support</p> <p>Appendix 2: Belfast Agenda Refresh – Community &amp; Neighbourhood Regeneration theme draft actions</p>