



Subject:	Update on Special Meetings of the Area Working Groups – Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund Stage 1 Applications
Date:	18th November, 2022
Reporting Officer:	Sinead Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes
Contact Officer:	Shauna Murtagh, Programme Manager

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime 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/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To ask the Committee to approve the minutes of the most recent meetings of the Area Working Groups, which considered the applications received under the Council's Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund and recommended projects to be moved forward to Stage 2- Development in line with the project pathway for NRF projects, as agreed by the Committee in November 2021.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. approve the West Belfast AWG minutes <i>of 27th October, as attached at Appendix 1;</i>ii. approve the North Belfast AWG minutes <i>of 2nd November, as attached at Appendix 2;</i>

	<p>iii. approve the East Belfast AWG minutes of <i>3rd November</i>, as attached at Appendix 3; and;</p> <p>iv. approve the South Belfast AWG minutes of <i>7th November</i>, as attached at Appendix 4.</p>															
3.0	Main Report															
	<u>KEY ISSUES</u>															
3.1	<p>Area Working Group Minutes</p> <p>Members agreed, in June 2016, that the Area Working Group minutes would be submitted to the SP and R Committee for approval going forward, in line with the Council's commitment to openness and transparency and to ensure a consistent approach with other Member-led Working Groups.</p>															
3.2	<p>The most recent round of meetings of the Area Working Groups were special meetings which focused on the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund. Members will be aware that the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund is the Council's new funding stream designed to support capital projects across the city aligned to three thematic areas – neighbourhood tourism, environmental sustainability and social economy.</p>															
3.3	<p>Members will recall that the fund was originally £8m and that it has been bolstered by an additional £2m, via the reallocation of year end surpluses bringing it up to £10m. This additional £2m was allocated in line with the original allocation model i.e. 50% proportion of population per quadrant of the city and 50% proportion of the population that is in top 20% area of multiple deprivation giving the final amounts available per area as outlined below -</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="236 1227 1465 1505"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Agreed allocation £8m</th> <th>Revised allocation £10m</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>£1,947,983</td> <td>£2,434,979</td> </tr> <tr> <td>South</td> <td>£1,539,795</td> <td>£1,924,744</td> </tr> <tr> <td>East</td> <td>£1,830,001</td> <td>£2,287,501</td> </tr> <tr> <td>West</td> <td>£2,682,221*</td> <td>£3,352,776</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>* Proportional allocation to Shankill from overall West (Shankill - £705,759)</p>		Agreed allocation £8m	Revised allocation £10m	North	£1,947,983	£2,434,979	South	£1,539,795	£1,924,744	East	£1,830,001	£2,287,501	West	£2,682,221*	£3,352,776
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3.4	<p>The Committee agreed a 3 Stage process for the NRF projects in November 2021, as outlined below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 1 - Application Stage (Emerging project) –an open call application process via the completion of an application form. Once received it was agreed that officers from across the Council would then carry out an assessment of projects using an assessment matrix designed to test projects against 4 abilities (affordability, feasibility, deliverability and sustainability). Members agreed that projects had to score over 55 in order to be considered to proceed to the next stage (Stage 2 – Development). 															

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 2 – Development (Uncommitted project) - Project development stage - at this stage a business case/economic appraisal (commensurate with the scale of the project) will be undertaken along with detailed designs and project costings. If an EA or similar has already been undertaken then the findings of this EA will be tested. Additional support (if required) will also be looked at (capacity building etc.). Due-diligence checks will be carried out in line with arrangements under LIF, BIF and SOF programmes. Proposed that this stage will be timebound to 6 months to allow decisions on projects to be taken at the same time. • Stage 3 – Delivery (Committed project) - Delivery stage – This is likely to be subject to a number of preconditions for particular projects including the return of a satisfactory tender. Due diligence checks will be carried out again in line with arrangements under LIF, BIF and SOF programmes. At this stage an indicative budget will be assigned to a project in line with the Council's three stage approval process. Projects will not receive a final investment decision until tenders are returned.
3.5	<p>Members will be aware that the application stage for NRF closed on 12th May, 2022. There was substantial interest in the fund with requests for over 100 application packs and 61 applications received in total. The proposals presented in the applications showcase a wide variety of exciting new ideas for the city as well as enhancements to existing facilities. In line with the pathway presented to the Committee in November 2021, an intensive period of eligibility review, validation, panel assessment and moderation was undertaken with the outcome of this reported into each AWG. Through the AWGs, Members will be aware that the standard of applications received was very high, and this is reflected in the proportion that achieved above the threshold (75%). It was also noted to Members that even with the increased budget for NRF that the Fund was massively overly subscribed.</p>
3.6	<p>The outcome of the assessment process was presented to the AWGs and they were asked to consider recommending a number of projects to SP and R to move to <i>Stage 2 - Development</i>. To inform their recommendation, the AWGs received the same information on each application which had reached the minimum threshold (above 55). In considering this, Members were asked to note the delivery resource implications and also the overall budget envelope available for each area. It was also emphasised to Members that they were not making any investment decisions in a particular project at this stage. This will only be 'in principle' when projects are moved to <i>Stage 3 – Delivery</i>. It was also highlighted for Members that it was recognised that not every project which had reached threshold could be recommended to be progressed to <i>Stage 2 - Development</i>. Given this, it is proposed that applicants will be advised of the outcome and in addition to being able to request feedback on their application, officers will work with applicants to help identify alternative potential sources of support. For example, some applicants will also be able to avail of business support and mentoring through the</p>

	<p>Council's Social Enterprise and Co-operative Support Programme and Enterprise Framework. This will be tailored to each individual project.</p> <p>AWGs were also advised that projects which had reached threshold but that are not progressed at this Stage are held at Stage 1, in case any of the projects which are moved forward do not progress beyond Stage 2. If this happens, then projects will be presented again for Members' consideration.</p>
3.7	<p>The AWWs were also advised of the projects which had not met threshold and that in line with the pathway advised, that these projects would be written to outlining that they had been unsuccessful. Again, it was noted that applicants would be provided with the opportunity to request feedback on their applications along with signposting to other potential sources of support. Members are asked to note that there were two city wide projects which did not specify a location that did not reach threshold (Supported Employment & Sales Training (SEST) CIC and NI Community Energy (NICE)). As these did not have a location they were reported into each of the AWWs.</p>
3.8	<p>The Committee is asked to consider the recommendations arising from the special NRF AWWs.</p>
	<p>West Belfast AWW – 27th October, 2022</p>
3.9	<p>The West Belfast Area Working Group agreed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. to note the update on the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund; ii. to note those applications which had not met the minimum threshold (An Spórtlann CIC, Supported Employment and Sales Training (SEST) CIC and NI Community Energy (NICE)) and that the applicants would be advised that they had been unsuccessful and receive feedback; iii. to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that the following three projects be progressed to Stage 2 – Development in West: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fáilte Feirste Thiar – The Mountainview Hotel; • Glór na Móna – Croí na Carraige – 'The Heart of the Rock' Phase 1; • Michael Davitt's GAC – Michael Davitt's Community Heritage Centre, and iv. to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that the following three projects be progressed to Stage 2 – Development in Shankill: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action for Community Transformation (ACT) Initiative – The ACT Initiative Community Hub and Visitors Centre; • Lower Shankill Community Association – The Road; • Glencairn – Glencairn Community Project (Hub), and v. to note the proposed approach that the Council would provide a response to each applicant whose project was not moving forward to Stage 2 at this time, outlining other potential avenues of support.

	North Belfast AWG – 2nd November, 2022
3.10	<p>The North Belfast Area Working Group agreed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. to note the update on the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund; ii. to note those applications which had not met the minimum threshold (Greater Whitewell Community Surgery, The HUBB Community Development Resource Centre, Supported Employment & Sales Training (SEST) CIC and NI Community Energy (NICE)) and that the applicants would be advised that they had been unsuccessful and receive feedback; iii. to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that the following five projects be progressed to Stage 2 – Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum – Cliftonville Community Enterprise project • Ardoyne Youth Enterprise - AYE Youth and Community Hub • Ulster Supported Employment Ltd (USEL) - Green Growth and The Circular Economy project • Belfast Orange Hall - Belfast Orange Hall Refurbishment project • Sailortown Regeneration Group - St Joseph’s Restoration project, and iv. to note the proposed approach that the Council would provide a response to each applicant whose project was not moving forward to Stage 2 at this time, outlining other potential avenues of support.
3.11	East Belfast AWG – 3rd November, 2022
	<p>The East Belfast Area Working Group agreed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. to note the update on the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund; ii. to note those applications which had not met the minimum threshold (Hanwood Trust Company Ltd, Lagan Village Youth and Community Group, Nettlefield Multisports, Ballymac Friendship Trust, Cycling Ulster & Cycling Ireland, Phoenix Education Centre, Supported Employment & Sales Training (SEST) CIC and NI Community Energy (NICE)) and that the applicants would be advised that they had been unsuccessful and receive feedback; iii. to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that the following four projects be progressed to Stage 2 – Development in East: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EastSide Property Belfast Ltd - EastSide Container Hotel project; • Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre (BURC) - Portview Exchange project; • Ulster Rugby - Nevin Spence Centre (NSC) Visitor Experience project; • Impact Belfast – Impact Hub project and;

	<p>iv. to note the proposed approach, that the Council would provide a response to each applicant whose project was not moving forward to Stage 2, at this time, outlining other potential avenues of support.</p>
3.5	<p>South Belfast AWG – 7th November, 2022</p>
	<p>The South Belfast Area Working Group agreed:</p> <p>i. to note the update on the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund;</p> <p>ii. to note those applications which had not met the minimum threshold (Cycling Ulster and Cycling Ireland, Linen Quarter BID, Belfast Central Mission, Southcity Resource and Development Centre and Donegall Road Methodist Church, Supported Employment and Sales Training (SEST) CIC and NI Community Energy (NICE)) and that the applicants would be advised that they had been unsuccessful and receive feedback;</p> <p>iii. to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that the following five projects be progressed to Stage 2 – Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sólás Special Needs Charity – Sólás New Build project • Greater Village Regeneration Trust - Branching Out project • Lower Ormeau Residents’ Action Group (LORAG) - Lagan Water Access Activity Hub • Hearth Historic Buildings Trust - Redevelopment of Riddel’s Warehouse • Fitzroy Presbyterian Church; Redevelopment of Former School of Music, and; <p>iv. to note the proposed approach that the Council would provide a response to each applicant whose project was not moving forward to Stage 2 at this time, outlining other potential avenues of support.</p>
4.0	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p>
	<p>Financial - £10m agreed for NRF.</p> <p>Resources – Officer time from Physical Programmes Department.</p>
5	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment</u></p>
	<p>The Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund has been equality screened.</p>
6	<p>Documents Attached</p>
	<p>Appendix 1 – Minutes of the West Belfast Area Working Group – 27th October 2022</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Minutes of the North Belfast Area Working Group – 2nd November 2022</p> <p>Appendix 3 – Minutes of the East Belfast Area Working Group – 3rd November 2022</p> <p>Appendix 4 – Minutes of the South Belfast Area Working Group – 7th November 2022</p>