

West Belfast Area Working Group

Thursday, 27th October, 2022

HYBRID MEETING OF THE SPECIAL WEST BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

Members present: Councillor McCann (Chairperson),
Alderman McCoubrey;
Councillors Beattie, Carson, Corr, Matt Collins,
Donnelly, Duffy, Garrett, Hutchinson, McCabe,
McLaughlin, Verner and Walsh.

In attendance: Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes
Ms. S. Murtagh, Programme Manager; and
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported on behalf of Councillors Canavan, Michael Collins and Thompson.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 25th August were agreed as an accurate record of proceedings.

Declarations of Interest

Following receipt of legal advice that some of the proposed projects were either currently in the planning process or were likely to have to apply for planning if they were to proceed, Councillors Carson, Matt Collins, Garrett and Hutchinson, as Members of the Planning Committee, declared an interest and left the meeting. They did not return as this was a one item agenda.

Councillor Duffy declared an interest as a Board Member of the Collin Neighbourhood Partnership and removed himself from proceedings during consideration of this project.

Councillor Walsh declared an interest in respect of Fáilte Feirste Thiar in that he was an employee of the organisation and removed himself from proceedings during consideration of this project.

Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund

The Working Group considered the following report:

“1. Introduction

Members will be aware that the Council has recently launched its £10m Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund. This report provides an outline of the applications received in the West area. In line with

the agreed process, Members are asked to make recommendations to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on which applications they now wish to move forward to *Stage 2 – Development Stage*.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note the update provided on the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund,
- Note the applications that did not meet the minimum threshold and that these applicants are to be advised that they have been unsuccessful. Feedback on their applications will be provided to Groups.
- Consider which projects they wish to recommend to SP&R Committee to move forward to *Stage 2 – Development* under the Fund. In considering this, Members are asked to note that it is recommended that a maximum of 3 or 4 projects are progressed at this stage given the level of funding available and current resource capacity, and;
- Note the proposed approach that the Council will provide a response to each applicant that is not moving forward to Stage 2 at this time, outlining other potential avenues of support.

3. Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund

Background

The Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund is a £10m capital fund to help groups deliver capital projects that will make a real, long-term difference in their communities. Members will recall that the fund was originally £8m and has been bolstered by an additional £2m via the reallocation of year end surpluses. The fund attracted significant interest and a high volume of applications was received. Members were advised that they would be updated on the outcome of the *Stage 1 - Application* stage once all the applications were collated and reviewed by an assessment panel against the agreed project assessment matrix. This is now complete subject to legal validation.

The Fund encompasses a three-stage process, approved by Council in November 2021. Stage 1 is the application phase; Stage 2 is the development phase and Stage 3 is the delivery phase. The application stage closed on 12 May 2022. In line with the timeframe presented to Members in November 2021, an intensive period of eligibility review, validation, panel assessment and moderation has now been completed. Applications that have scored over the minimum threshold are now presented to Members for consideration.

Assessment process

As agreed by Council, projects were assessed and scored against four key criteria: affordability, feasibility, deliverability, and sustainability. Assessments were made solely on the basis of information supplied by the applicant within their submission. This included the application form and supporting documentation provided by applicants by the closing date such as business plans and economic appraisals.

The NRF is an outcomes focused programme aligned to three key themes emerging from the City Recovery Framework: social economy, environmental sustainability and neighbourhood tourism. The fund is adopting an Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) approach derived directly from these three themes and all applications have been specifically assessed in terms of their alignment to these outcomes.

Applications summary

A total of 101 organisations requested the application pack and 61 organisations submitted an application. The proposals presented in the applications showcase a wide variety of exciting new ideas for the city as well as enhancements to existing facilities. Overall, the standard of the applications was very high, and this is reflected in the proportion that achieved above the threshold (75%).

Total applications:

	Total	South	North	West	Shankill	East	Location to be determined
Total applications	61	13	16	14	3	13	2
Total above threshold	46	9	14	13	3	7	0

STAGE 1 APPLICATION RESULTS

The information presented below is based on the application forms and is presented for Members' consideration.

Applications scoring below threshold

Organisations that scored below threshold (Location to be determined: 2, West: 1) will be notified that they have been unsuccessful and provided with feedback on their applications as well as advice regarding other potential sources of support.

All Area Working Groups will be advised that a total of 2 applications did not determine a location for their project as a site or building has not been secured. Neither project reached above

threshold. Although both applications demonstrated reasonable alignment to themes and outcomes, overall both applications required more detailed information in several other areas to acquire higher scores. A summary is provided below.

Details of applications below threshold – Location to be determined:

Project Name, Brief Description & Theme
<p>Supported Employment & Sales Training (SEST) CIC <u>SEST CIC</u></p> <p><i>Theme: Social Economy</i></p> <p>The project will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase of a building and development of a call centre. <p>Eligibility issues- SEST CIC – Full set of requested financial records was not available.</p>
<p><u>Belfast Community Energy Action</u></p> <p><i>Theme: Social Economy & Environmental Sustainability</i></p> <p>The project will include:</p> <p>Making energy efficiencies and installing solar panels, energy storage and EV chargers as appropriate that is co-owned by a local Belfast neighbourhood.</p>

Details of application below threshold - West:

Project Name, Brief Description & Theme
<p>Spórtlann CIC <u>Soilse na Spórtlainne</u></p> <p><i>Theme: All</i></p> <p>The project will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of floodlighting to the soccer and multi-sport training pitch to extend the periods of usage through the winter and autumn and to encourage more sporting teams to avail of the facilities.

Applications scoring above threshold

Members are aware that the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund is now a £10m capital programme. The total allocation towards West

projects is £3,352,776. The proportion allocated to Shankill is £705,759 and relevant projects are outlined separately below. The remainder of funding allocated to West Belfast is £2,647,017. No allocations of funding will be made until business cases are produced after Stage 2 - Development. All the applications have now been reviewed by an assessment panel against the agreed project assessment matrix.

Details of applications above threshold – West:

Project Name, Brief Description & Theme
<p>Fáilte Feirste Thiar <u>The Mountainview Hotel</u></p> <p><i>Themes: All</i></p> <p>The project will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building a socially owned environmentally friendly 65 bedroom hotel located on the new Glenmona development in West Belfast.
<p>Patrick’s Sarsfield’s GAC <u>Improving the Environment at Patrick Sarsfield’s GAC</u></p> <p><i>Themes: Environmental Sustainability & Neighbourhood Tourism</i></p> <p>The project will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 700m Urban Nature Trail with low-level lighting and historical storyboards throughout • Solar panels on one side of the roof of the main clubhouse building. • Installation of 2 e-charging ports for electric/hybrid vehicles • Bicycle stand • Outdoor Educational Space/Sensory Garden/ Equipment • Urban Health Space to include self-weight restive outdoor equipment, strength outdoor equipment, athletic running / sprinting lanes, sport specific games stations
<p>St. John’s GAC <u>Corrigan Park Redevelopment Project</u></p> <p><i>Theme: Neighbourhood Tourism</i></p> <p>The project will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of a new <i>Changing Places</i> Toilet Facility. • Construction of two concrete terraced standing areas to accommodate up to 1,100 additional spectators.. • Replacement of a dilapidated boundary wall.

Whiterock Children's Centre
Whiterock Children's Centre's New Purpose-Built Childcare and Family Support Centre

Themes: Social Economy & Neighbourhood Tourism

The project will include:

- Development of a brand-new fit for purpose 3-storey childcare and family support centre. by demolishing the existing facility and relocating the new facility on the same site closer to the Whiterock Road.

Michael Davitt's GAC
Michael Davitt's Community Heritage Centre

Themes: All

The project will include:

- Transforming a large redundant site adjacent to Páirc Mac Daibhéid located in Beechmount, West Belfast.
- Creation of e a museum/exhibition space, multipurpose hall and supporting ancillary services.

Glór na Móna
Croí na Carraige - 'The Heart of the Rock' - Phase 1

Themes: All

The project will include:

- Development of a flagship multi-purpose youth, community, family and heritage hub on the derelict land adjacent to our current community hub Gael-Ionad Mhic Goill in the Upper Springfield Area of West Belfast. It will incorporate their existing building and provide space for Irish language youth provision, a heritage exhibition gallery and office space.

Scoil na Fuiseoige
Curam Leanaí na Fuiseoige

Theme: Social economy

The project will include:

- Purchase of a new eco modular build to be sited at the front of their existing building to expand their provision.

Conway Mill
Conway Mill - redeveloping for the future

Themes: All

The project will include:

- Redevelopment of three spaces – the Drying Room to provide a unique wedding and arts venue; the Old Mill attic to provide a new start-up hub with hot desk facilities for new businesses, and demolition of an unused building to provide extra disabled car parking and bike spaces around the complex.

The Westcourt Centre
Westcourt Uplift Project

Theme: Social economy

The project will include:

- A new external passenger lift to permit wheelchair users and people with mobility issues to access the first floor of the premises;
- Replacement windows;
- Refurbishment/replacement of railings and boundary walls around the perimeter of the premises and on the first floor balcony area;
- Façade maintenance including repointing and repairs to brickwork and architectural details.

Lamh Dhearg
Renewable Energy & External Lighting Improvement scheme

Theme: Environmental sustainability

The project will include:

- Development of a renewable energy project comprising installation of a 15kw Wind Turbine / battery storage facility.
- External Lighting Improvement Scheme to including upgrading existing floodlights at main pitch, installation of LED street lighting around the perimeter of the walkway and playpark.

St. Gall's
Milltown Community Development

Themes: Environmental Sustainability & Neighbourhood Tourism

The project will include:

- Building a structure suitable to maximise the playing needs of St Gall's GAA members and families, providing an education centre for Ulster Wildlife and flexible workspace.

Colin Glen Trust
Colin Glen Eco Air-Cruizer

Themes: All

The project will include:

- Installation of an Eco-Cruizer - a cable bicycle suspended at treetop level that transports riders high into the air. This will give them an up-close view of the natural landscape into the heart of Colin Glen Forest Park.

Colin Neighbourhood Partnership
Regeneration of Cloona House

Theme: Neighbourhood Tourism

The project will include:

- Refurbishment works to the Grade B listed Cloona House including new windows, doors and other works to improve the building.

Details of applications above threshold – Shankill:

Project Name, Brief Description & Theme

Action for Community Transformation (ACT) Initiative
The ACT Initiative Community Hub & Visitors' Centre

Themes: Social economy and Neighbourhood tourism

The project will include:

- Purchase and development of ACT's central office and Community Hub to include a Visitors' Centre that features a historical exhibition.

Lower Shankill Community Association
The Road

Themes: Social economy and Neighbourhood tourism

The project will include:

- Development of a capital tourism project based around the shared history of the Shankill Road and its contribution to Belfast.

Glencairn
Glencairn Community Project (Hub)

Theme: Social economy

The project will include:

- Development of a purpose-built community and youth facility within the Glencairn estate to meet both the needs of the community and provide statutory youth provision within the area.

Next Steps

Members will appreciate that given the level of funding available and current resources it will not be possible for each project to be moved to Stage 2 – Development. At this stage it is recommended that a maximum of 3 or 4 projects per area are moved to the next stage - West and Shankill are considered two separate areas.

Projects agreed to be moved forward to Stage 2 – Development

The projects agreed to be moved forward to Stage 2 – Development will be allocated a Project Sponsor who will work closely with the Group throughout the Stage 2 Development Stage. The exact requirements for Stage 2 will be dependent on the individual status and needs of each project, for example it could be the development of a business case or economic appraisal, testing of a business case, capacity building and/or the development of detailed designs. The assigned Project Sponsor will meet with the Group once decisions are ratified by Council and will work with the Group to determine requirements.

Members are asked to note that it is proposed that the development phase will be timebound to six months with updates on all projects to be brought back to the AWGs at the same time. At the end of this stage, recommendations to Committee will include a detailed update on each project, seeking approval for funding. Projects that receive approval will be issued with a Letter of Offer in principle and will move to Stage 3 - Delivery. However,

a final investment decision will not be taken until a tender has been returned.

Projects not being moved forward to Stage 2 – Development at this stage

The projects not being progressed to Stage 2 at this time will be advised of the outcome. Groups will be offered the opportunity to request feedback on their application. In addition, it is proposed that officers will help Groups identify alternative potential sources of support. For example, some applicants will also be able to avail of business support and mentoring through the Council's Social Enterprise & Co-operative Support Programme and Enterprise Framework. This will be tailored to each individual project.

It is recommended however that projects that reached threshold but 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.

Members are asked to:

- Note the update provided on the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund,
- Note the applications that did not meet the minimum threshold and that these applicants are to be advised that they have been unsuccessful. Feedback on their applications will be provided to Groups.
- Consider which projects they wish to recommend to SP&R Committee to move forward to *Stage 2 – Development* under the Fund. In considering this, Members are asked to note that it is recommended that a maximum of 3 or 4 projects are progressed at this stage given the level of funding available and current resource capacity, and;
- Note the proposed approach that the Council will provide a response to each applicant not moving forward to Stage 2 at this time, outlining other potential avenues of support.

4. Financial and Resource Implications

Financial - NRF *Stage 2 Development* expenditure will be funded via the agreed NRF budget of £10m.

Resources – Officer time from Physical Programmes Department.

5. Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment

The Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund has been equality screened.”

The Director of Physical Programmes took the Members through the detail regarding the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund, as outlined in the aforementioned report.

She advised that the fund had attracted significant interest with 101 organisations having requested the application pack and 61 organisations having applied for funding. She continued by expressing thanks to the Physical Programmes staff for the work and effort that they had put into assessing the applications received within the projected timescale.

The Director then provided an overview of the assessment process, as previously agreed by Council, reporting that the applications had been assessed and scored against the following four key criteria: affordability, feasibility, deliverability, and sustainability. She drew the Members' attention to the applications that had scored below the threshold and advised that each organisation would be notified that it had been unsuccessful and provided with feedback on the application.

The Members noted the applications that had not reached the threshold and welcomed the fact that officers would offer feedback to those organisations in respect of their application. The Members encouraged further liaison with all applicants not moving forward at this stage on any other potential sources of support that might be available.

The Director of Physical Programmes took the Members through the applications that had scored above the threshold in the West.

Following consideration, it was proposed by Councillor Beatie, seconded by Councillor McLaughlin and agreed that the following three projects would progress to Stage 2 – Development under the NRF:

- Fáilte Feirste Thiar – The Mountainview Hotel;
- Glór na Móna – Croi na Carraige – 'The Heart of the Rock' Phase 1;
and
- Michael Davitt's GAC – Michael Davitt's Community Heritage Centre.

The Working Group then considered the applications above the threshold in the Shankill area, following which it was proposed by Alderman McCoubrey, seconded by Councillor Verner and agreed that the following three projects would also progress to Stage 2 – Development under the NRF:

- Action for Community Transformation (ACT) Initiative – The ACT Initiative Community Hub and Visitors Centre;
- Lower Shankill Community Association – The Road; and
- Glencairn – Glencairn Community Project (Hub).

The Working Group noted that applicants that had reached above minimal threshold but not been successful in progressing to Stage 2, at this time, would be informed accordingly and that each applicant would be offered the opportunity for their application to be retained on the list at Stage 1 – Application stage for consideration if a reserve list was required.

Accordingly, the Working Group agreed:

- 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:
 - Fáilte Feirste Thiar – The Mountainview Hotel;
 - Glór na Móna – Croi na Carraige – ‘The Heart of the Rock’ Phase 1; and
 - Michael Davitt’s GAC – Michael Davitt’s Community Heritage Centre.
- iv. to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that the following three projects be progressed to Stage 2 – Development in Shankill:
 - Action for Community Transformation (ACT) Initiative – The ACT Initiative Community Hub and Visitors Centre;
 - Lower Shankill Community Association – The Road; and
 - Glencairn – Glencairn Community Project (Hub).
- v. to note the proposed approach and 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.

The Director of Physical Programmes reminded the Members that the NRF was an open call application process, as this was a restricted item, the recommendations from the Area Working Group would need to be ratified by both the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and Council, following which all applications would be notified accordingly.

Chairperson