

North Belfast Area Working Group

Wednesday, 2nd November, 2022

SPECIAL NORTH BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

HELD IN THE CONOR ROOM AND REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillors Bradley (Chairperson),
Councillors Cobain, Ferguson, Magee, Maskey,
McCullough, Murphy, Nelson, O'Hara, Pankhurst
and Whyte.

In attendance: Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes;
Ms. N. Largey, Interim City Solicitor and Director
of Legal and Civic Services;
Ms. S. Murtagh, Programme Manager; and
Mr. G. Graham, Democratic Services Assistant.

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 Maskey, Murphy and Whyte declared an interest and indicated that they would remove themselves from the Planning Committee should any of the development projects be presented before that Committee for its consideration.

Councillor McCullough and Councillor Pankhurst both declared an interest as Members of the Loyal Orange Order and removed themselves from proceedings and took no further part in the meeting.

Councillor O'Hara declared an interest in that his Sister In-Law was a board member in regard to one of the organisations which had submitted a funding application, but which had subsequently failed to meet the required threshold. Upon seeking legal advice in the matter, that, under the circumstance outlined, there was no conflict of interest, Councillor O'Hara was not required to remove himself from the meeting.

Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund – Feedback on Stage 1 Applications

The Working Group considered the undernoted 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 North 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, North: 2) 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
Supported Employment & Sales Training (SEST) CIC <u>SEST CIC</u> <i>Theme: Social Economy</i> The project will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Purchase of a building and development of a call centre. Eligibility issues- SEST CIC – Full set of requested financial records was not available.
<u>Belfast Community Energy Action</u> <i>Theme: Social Economy & Environmental Sustainability</i> The project will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Making energy efficiencies and installing solar panels, energy storage and EV chargers as appropriate that is co-owned by a local Belfast neighbourhood.

Details of applications below threshold – North:

Project Name, Brief Description & Theme
Greater Whitewell Community Surgery (GWCS) <u>Greater Whitewell Community Surgery/Ballygolan project</u> <i>Theme: Social economy</i> The project will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development of a derelict, former school site into a holistic shared site with both community space and shared housing.• Providing a fit for purpose Shared Community Hub for use by the wider Greater Whitewell interface community.
<u>The HUBB Community Development Resource Centre</u> <u>Castle Community Development Trust: (The Castle Centre)</u> <i>Theme: Social economy</i> The project will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transfer of BCC land at the site of the former Grove swimming baths at the confluence of North Queen Street and York Road.

Development of the site into a flagship community, business and social development centre.

Applications scoring above threshold

Members are aware that the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund is now a £10m capital programme. The total allocation towards North projects is £2,434,979. 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 – North:

Project Name, Brief Description & Theme
<p>North City Business Centre (NCBC) <u>NCBC Phase 4 Development – Enterprise Gateway into North Belfast</u></p> <p><i>Theme: Social Economy</i></p> <p>The project will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Building a modern 4 storey development that will provide 30 new units of office/workspace and associated facilities for local micro and small businesses.
<p>Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum <u>Cliftonville Community Enterprise</u></p> <p><i>Theme: Social Economy</i></p> <p>The project will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Building a 750m² social enterprise on Cliftonpark Avenue with a 2 storey childcare facility and 8 enterprise units.
<p>Ulster Supported Employment Ltd (USEL) <u>Green Growth & The Circular Economy</u></p> <p><i>Themes: Social economy and Environmental sustainability</i></p> <p>The project will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extension of their site through construction of a 600m² purpose-built processing unit with storage for recycled and unrecycled materials increasing increase capacity to recycle a wide range of Dry, Mixed Recycling materials (DMR).

Sailortown Regeneration Group
St Joseph's Restoration project

Themes: All

The project will include:

- Stabilising and reopening the Parochial House, a Grade B+ listed Italianate red brick building;
- Work to the Grade B+ listed Church space to assist with remaining water ingress and developing its potential for wider use.

Quaker Service
Frederick Street Quaker Meeting House

Themes: All

The project will include:

- Improvement works to Fredrick Street Quaker Meeting House that will comprise moving Quaker Service's administrative operation to the site and developing social enterprises to include a café/ eatery.

Ardoyne Youth Enterprise
AYE Youth and Community Hub

Themes: All

The project will include:

- Creation of a Community Youth Hub totalling almost 1,000m². It will comprise three main zones – (i) a fully shared and inclusive Community Youth Hub comprising a range of facilities including a flexible activity/ youth space, counselling rooms, coffee point and rest area; (ii) a Creative Learning Centre (CLC) that will include digital and creative skills equipment and workspaces; and (iii) Office space and meeting rooms.

Cumann Cultúrtha Mhic Reachtain
Refurbishment and Extension of *Áras Mhic Reachtain*

Themes: Social Economy and Neighbourhood Tourism

The project will include:

- Improving the organisation's facilities through installation of a lift to all levels of the building for enhanced accessibility, roof works, demolition of existing extension and replacement with a new three storey extension to allow for a new arts business hub and green room accommodating new programmes and services.

Belfast Charitable Society
The Story Shop - Clifton Street

Themes: All

The project will include:

- Refurbishment of the derelict 36 Clifton Street to comprise the following works - Creation of the 'The Story Shop' on the ground floor – an open plan community tourist hub for the local heritage Cluster to showcase local tourism services and work. Development of a community-led housing project for homeless men who have custody of their children.

Ligoniel Improvement Association (LIA)
Ligoniel Cornmill Proposal

Themes: All

The project will include:

- Development of the site of the disused Cornmill into a community environment and heritage centre that will act as a hub for activities, initiatives and provide space for work on environmental issues.

Arts for All
John Luke Arts Centre

Themes: All

The project will include:

- Purchase of a dilapidated commercial building in the Duncairn area of North Belfast and transforming it into the John Luke Arts Centre.
- A gallery, dance studio and art studios for emerging local artists, as well as providing a permanent office and home for the organisation.

North Belfast Working Mens' Club (NBWMC)
Refurbishment of NBWMC Danube Street

Themes: All

The project will include:

- Repairs to the roof of the club, installation of a new heating system, installation of insulation, refreshment of and reglazing of three upper floor rooms together with upgrading the ground floor kitchen, office, toilets and changing facilities.

Belfast Orange Hall
Belfast Orange Hall Refurbishment

Themes: Environmental Sustainability & Neighbourhood Tourism

The project will include:

- Refurbishment works to the Belfast Orange Hall, a Grade B listed building, to ensure it is fit for purpose.
- External and internal improvements to lighting, multiple rooms on different floors including kitchens as well as a new heating system.

Indian Community Centre (ICC)
Indian Community Centre Refurbishment Project

Themes: All

The project will include:

- External and internal refurbishment works to the ICC listed building to ensure it is fit for purpose.
- Improvements including external walls, roof, lighting, heating and the creation and installation of an interpretive exhibition.

Sinclair Seamen's Presbyterian Church
Sinclair Seamen's Church Rejuvenation

Theme: Neighbourhood Tourism

The project will include:

- Rejuvenation of the Venetian style listed church which houses a unique maritime-themed heritage exhibition.
- Improved public accessibility through additional ramped access, building repairs and creation and installation of a new interpretive exhibition.

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.

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 and Good Relations

The Neighbourhood Regenerations Fund has been equality screened.”

The Director of Physical Programmes provided an overview of the report and pointed out that applications for funding had been assessed and scored against the key criteria of affordability, deliverability, feasibility and sustainability. She drew the Members’ attention to the two applications for North Belfast and two city-wide applications which had scored below the threshold and confirmed that each organisation would be informed that they had been unsuccessful and provided with detailed feedback. She reviewed the 14 applications for North Belfast which had scored above the threshold and outlined that, given the level of funding available and current resource capacity, the Working Group was being recommended to select a maximum of 3 or 4 projects at this stage. She reported that it was the intention that, any applications which had met threshold, but which were not being moved forward, at this stage, would be held on a reserve list and could be reconsidered, by the Working Group, should any of the successful projects fail to progress beyond Stage 2.

Following consideration of the funding applications presented to the Working Group, it was:

Proposed by Councillor Cobain,
Seconded by Councillor Murphy,

That the following applications proceed to Stage 2 –Development:

1. Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum
2. Ardoyne Youth Enterprise
3. Ulster Supported Employment LTD
4. Belfast Orange Hall

Following an amendment:

Proposed by Councillor O’Hara,
Seconded by Councillor Whyte,

That the Belfast Orange Hall funding application be removed from the list, going forward to Stage 2, and that the application be replaced by the Sailortown Regeneration Group funding application.

Following further discussion in the matter, Councillor O’Hara withdrew his previous proposal and, it was:

Proposed by Councillor Magee,
Seconded by Councillor O’Hara,

That five funding applications, including both the Belfast Orange Hall and the Sailortown Regeneration Group, go forward to Stage 2, with the outcome

from Stage 2 – Development, to be brought back to the Area Working Group, for further consideration of projects, to be moved forward to Stage 3 – Delivery, as per the agreed process.

Resolved - that the following five funding applications proceed to Stage 2- Development stage.

1. Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum
2. Ardoyne Youth Enterprise
3. Ulster Supported Employment LTD
4. Belfast Orange Hall
5. Sailortown Regeneration Group

Accordingly, the North Area 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 (Greater Whitewell Community Surgery, The HUBB Community Development Resource Centre, 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 five projects be progressed to Stage 2 – Development:
 - Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum – Cliftonville Community Enterprise project
 - Ardoyne Youth Enterprise – AYE Youth and Community Hub
 - Ulster Supported Employment Ltd (USEL) - Green Growth & 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.

The Director of Physical Programmes reminded Members that the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund was an open call application process and that this was a restricted item, with the recommendations from the Area Working Group, going forward to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and Council, for ratification. She stated that all applicants would be notified of the outcome, following Council ratification.

Chairperson