

South Belfast Area Working Group

Monday, 28th November, 2022

MEETING OF SOUTH BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP
HELD IN THE LAVERY ROOM AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Bunting (Chairperson); and
Councillors Gormley, Groogan, T. Kelly, Lyons,
McAteer, McDonough-Brown, McKeown, Murray
and Spratt.

In attendance: Mr. J. Greer, Director of Economic Development;
Mr. F. Grant, Assets Development Manager;
Mr. D. Logan, Project Manager, Physical Programmes;
and
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 10th October and 7th November were approved by the Working Group.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Request to Present - Edenderry Village Energy Co-operative

The Working Group agreed to receive at a future meeting a presentation on the work of the Edenderry Village Energy Co-operative.

Expansion of Belfast Bikes Scheme 2022/23

The Director of Economic Development submitted for the Working Group's consideration the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 To update the Working Group on the status of the Belfast Bikes expansion scheme and to agree final locations for next phase of expansion.**

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Working Group is requested to:

- note the current status of the Belfast Bikes expansion scheme; and
- agree final locations for the next phase of expansion.

3.0 Main Report

Background

3.1 The Belfast Bikes scheme was launched in 2015, as part of the Council's physical investment programme. The Department for Regional Development provided initial capital funding for the scheme as part of its Active Travel Demonstration Projects budget. The scheme launched with a network of 30 docking stations and 300 bikes. The scheme has been operated by NSL continually since inception, using bikes and supporting infrastructure from 'Nextbike' by TIER. The scheme currently operates with 573 bikes (including those in reserve for new stands) and 50 docking stations.

Current Expansion Status

3.2 The City Growth and Regeneration Committee, on 12th May 2021, granted approval for an additional four Belfast Bikes docking stations to be deployed using DFI Active Travel funding. Installation began in Q1 2022/23 and the current status is as follows:

- Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre was installed on 7th July 2022 and is operational;
- Olympia Leisure Centre was installed on 25th October 2022 and is operational;
- Kennedy Centre installation has been postponed due to delays by the supplier - it is expected to be operational by late November; and
- Waterworks installation has been postponed due to delays by the supplier - it is expected to be operational by late November;

An additional station at Titanic Quarter was completed in May 2022, funded by developer contribution.

Future Expansion 2022/23

3.3 The City Growth and Regeneration Committee, on 9th June 2021, agreed to proceed with 15 docking stations, details of

which have been circulated. An investment of approximately £525,000 is required, based on cost estimates from previous network expansions. The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, on 18th June 2021, agreed to invest £500,000 in the expansion proposal.

- 3.4 Eight stations will be installed in the upcoming phase, which should be completed by 31st March, 2023. Seven stations will follow in the next phase the following year (2023/24).
- 3.5 The following areas were agreed previously by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, with the final locations of each docking station to be agreed through the Area Working Groups:
- North: Yorkgate and Shore Road
 - West: St. Mary’s College and Shankill Road
 - South: Lisburn Road and Malone Road
 - East: Castlereagh Road, Upper Newtownards Road.
- 3.6 Options and recommendations for each location will be presented during the meeting, for discussion and agreement by the Working Group.
- 3.7 The options for the Malone Road area are:
- Elms Village
 - Danesfort
- 3.8 The options for the Lisburn Road area are:
- Drumglass Park
 - Lisburn Road (opposite Tesco)
- 3.9 A site expansion matrix was previously agreed by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for future expansion and has been circulated. Although it is not required for determining the final locations in this phase, it has been used to help demonstrate the application of this matrix.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.10 There are no specific financial or resource implications contained within this report.

Equality or Good Relations Implications

- 3.11 None.”

After discussion, the Working Group agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that Drumglass Park and the Elms Village be selected for the next phase of the Belfast Bikes Scheme in South Belfast.

Update on Physical Programme

The Working Group considered the following report:

“1. Introduction

The Council’s Physical Programme covers projects under a range of funding streams including the Capital Programme, the Leisure Transformation Programme, the Local Investment Fund (LIF), the Belfast Investment Fund (BIF), Social Outcomes Fund (SOF) and the new Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (NRF); in addition, the programme covers projects that the Council is delivering in behalf of other agencies. This report outlines the status of projects under the Physical Programme.

2. Recommendations

The Working Group is asked to:

- i note the physical programme update for South Belfast, and;
- ii note the project movements for Coffee Culture (BIF46) and Arts and Digital Hub (BIF48) to BIF *Stage 2 - Uncommitted* and the respective funding allocations as part of the Sandy Row Area projects.

3. Local Investment Fund (LIF)

Members are reminded LIF is a £9m fixed programme of capital investment in non-council neighbourhood assets, over two tranches: LIF 1 (2012-2015) - £5m total funding pot, allocated across each AWG areas; and LIF 2 (2015 -2019) - £4m allocation. Each LIF project proposal is taken through a Due Diligence process prior to any funding award. The table below outlines funding spend to date for each tranche, at key stages of the delivery process: 24 projects received ‘In Principle’ letters under LIF1 and LIF2, of which 21 have been completed; 1 project at delivery stage, 1 at pre-construction stage and 1 project still at initial stage. Further details of these are outlined below.

LIF breakdown – South	LIF 1		LIF 2	
<i>Stage/ Description:</i>	<i>No. Projects</i>	<i>Amount (£)</i>	<i>No. Projects</i>	<i>Amount/ (£)</i>
Number of Projects Completed	12 (92%)	£1,053,600	9 (82%)	£676,000
Number of Projects in Delivery			1 (9%)	£80,000

Number of Projects in Pre-construction			1 (9%)	£40,000
Number of Project in Initial Stage (Due Diligence)	1 (8%)	£30,000		
Total Number of Approved Projects	13	£1,083,600	11	£796,000

The table below provides an overview of progress and actions around the remaining live projects – Holylands Area Improvement Initiative (£80,000), Finaghy Bridge (£30,000) and The Lock House (£40,000). Members are asked to note the status of the live LIF projects and the ongoing actions.

LIF Ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
SLIF2-07	Holylands Area Improvement Initiative	£80,000	On ground	Contractor on site at present and will completion at the end of November 22. Pilot of 14 trees (Jerusalem Street, Palestine Street and Carmel Street)	Continue engagement with the contractor, group and partners
SLIF2-13	LORAG- The Lock House	£40,000	Design stage	Partnership project with UV. Letter of Offer received. At detailed design stage and planning application has been submitted. Contractor to start landscaping work in December 2022, with main contractor to start in Feb 2023.	Continued engagement with the group; engagement with UV regarding overall project and spending profile.
SLIF017	Finaghy Bridge	£30,000	Design stage	Dfl Roads Highways Team are taking the lead on design and the Council will contribute the LIF funding to Dfl.	Continue engagement with Dfl Roads.

4. Belfast Investment Fund (BIF)

Members are reminded BIF is a £28m investment fund for regeneration partnership projects, with a minimum £250k investment from Council BIF – South Belfast was allocated

£5.5m; with additional £500k ringfenced for new areas (outer South) that had joined the District area under Local Government Reform. In South Belfast, 6 projects received an in-principle funding commitment, thereby fully allocating its £5.5m, and £500k pot of funding. Each project is taken through a 3-stage approval process, including a rigorous Due Diligence process before any Funding Agreement is approved and put in place.

Summary of BIF Allocated Projects

South	<p>Stage 3—Lagan Gateway—£2.1m; Lanyon Tunnels—£1.3m; Bredagh GAC- £700k</p> <p>Stage 1— Coffee Culture, and Arts & Digital Hub (BSCR IT Exam Centre project) and Sandy Row Open Space project [Sandy Row area projects, formerly Gilpins]— £1.35m</p> <p>Stage 1—<i>Belfast Islamic Centre—no commitment</i></p>
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Balmoral DEA	<p>Stage 3 - Knockbreda Parish Church Hall—£250k</p> <p>Stage 2— Linfield FC/ Boys Brigade and Belvoir FC—£250k</p>
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Ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action/Recommendation
BIF04	Lagan Gateway	£2.1m	On ground	Phase 1 complete and bridge pier murals complete. Design of Phase 2 of the project underway and match funding application made to DfI for Phase 2. Consultation complete and planning in early 2023. Members are receiving a separate update on this project at the AWG.	Continue engagement with the group and key stakeholders.
BIF19	Bredagh GAC	£700,000	Tender stage	Tender process for refurbishment complete and awaiting Tender Award. Due Diligence process is almost complete with access to adjacent land for duration of contract confirmed. Contractor expected to be appointed following DD meeting in mid-December 2022.	Continue engagement with the group.

BIF07	Lanyon Tunnels	£1.3m	Stage 3-Committed	Urban Villages has been approached as potential funder in place of SIF. Ongoing discussions with group, DfC and TEO. Surveys and reports collated and sent to Planning. The business case is under consideration by DfC.	Officer engagement with Executive Office and DfC as key funders, and key stakeholders.
BIF33	Linfield FC/ Boys Brigade and Belvoir FC	£250,000	Stage 3-Committed	Update as previously reported: Proposal for Phase 1A of larger sports hub project –Belvoir FC's grass football pitch, road access works and resurfacing carpark. Planning consent for wider development in place. Wider masterplan requires funding hence project has stagnated. NIHE have agreed in principle the land disposal and have instructed their solicitor accordingly. The Boys Brigade and Project Promoter are working with officers to fulfil the Due Diligence requirements.	Continue to engage with all stakeholders regarding the wider masterplan. More focussed liaison with Belvoir FC. Project Officers to attend forthcoming steering group with BB/Linfield FC regarding moving Phase 1A forward.
BIF46	Coffee Culture	£286,519	Stage 1-Emerging <i>Part of Sandy Row Area projects</i>	Partnership project with UV. Letter of Offer approved. Funding package via UV, DfC, SOF and BIF. Due Diligence process is now complete for this stage.	Move to Stage 2-Uncommitted. Project progressing to detailed design.

BIF48	Sandy Row Arts and Digital Hub	£584,167	Stage 1- Emerging <i>Part of Sandy Row Area projects</i>	Partnership project with UV. Business Case progressing. In August 2022, SAWG agreed to increase the total funding allocation to £584,167 so that UV Letter of Offer can be released. Due Diligence process is now complete for this stage.	Move to Stage 2- Uncommitted. Project progressing to detailed design.
BIF47	Sandy Row Open Space project	£479,314*	Stage 1- Emerging <i>Part of Sandy Row Area projects</i>	Work is progressing, location being confirmed with an exploration of potential opportunities in terms of final project, urban farm to allotments or a mixed development based on community needs. <i>*The remaining balance of the ringfenced allocation for the Sandy Row Area projects</i>	Continue engagement with the group.

5. Social Outcomes Fund

SOF is £4m ringfenced capital investment programme with a focus on local community tourism projects. 3 projects in South Belfast received an in-principle funding commitment. Similar to LIF and BIF, all projects are subject to Due Diligence process prior to any funding award. Members are asked to note the progress update of each project in the table below.

SOF – South Belfast Projects Overview

Project	Award	Status and update	Action/ Recommendation
SOF04 Belfast South Community Resources (SRCF)	£80,000	On Ground. Development of a Tourism Trail to complement the Transport Hub. Council as acting as delivery agent for the project and will assist in the maintenance of signage as part of the council-wide upkeep of tourism signage.	Continue engagement with the group

		Project on site and should be completed by late November 2022.	
SOF02 Coffee Culture	£100,000	As above at BIF46. Partnership project with UV. Letter of Offer approved. Funding package via UV, DfC, SOF and BIF. Due Diligence process is now complete for this stage.	Continue engagement with the group and key stakeholders.

6. Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund

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. On 7th November 2022, the Working Group considered the feedback on *Stage 1-Applications* in the South Belfast area and made recommendations to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on which applications they wish to move forward to *Stage 2 – Development Stage*. In line with the agreed process, the outcome of special AWGs has been taken through the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and are now subject to Council ratification on 1st December.

7. Capital Programme

The Capital Programme is a rolling programme to either enhance existing Council assets or build / buy new assets or facilities. Table below provides an update on current live projects South Belfast area. Members are asked to note status and update.

South Belfast – Capital Programme Overview

Project	Status and Update
Alleygating Phase 5 – City wide	<i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> Approved at SP&R Committee on Sept 2022 with the list of alleygates to be taken forward.
Palm House, Botanic Gardens	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Link to Tropical Ravine
Belfast Bikes Expansion	Further expansion – there is a separate report being presented to Members at this AWG on Belfast Bikes proposed locations.

8. Externally Funded Programmes

The Council is the delivery partner for several government department on key capital investment programmes, namely Social Investment Fund (SIF) and Urban Villages (UV) from the Executive Office as well as a number of schemes with DfC and

DfI. The following is an overview of projects within each programme relevant to South Belfast.

Urban Villages Initiative

Table below is the status update on UV projects in South Belfast – note the UV programme has a defined South Belfast geography (Sandy Row; Donegall Pass and Markets).

UV – South Belfast Projects Overview

Project	Status and update
Coffee Culture <i>SOF and BIF</i>	As above at BIF46. Partnership project with UV. Letter of Offer approved. Funding package via UV, DfC, SOF and BIF. Due Diligence process is now complete for this stage.
The Lockhouse— Gateway to the River / Walkway	As above at SLIF2-13. Partnership project with UV. Letter of Offer approved. At design stage and planning application has been submitted. Contractor will start landscaping work in November 2022.
Sandy Row Arts and Digital Hub <i>BIF (formerly IT Exam Centre)</i>	Partnership project with UV. Business Case progressing. In August 2022, SAWG agreed to increase the total funding allocation to £584,167 so that UV Letter of Offer can be released. Due Diligence process is now complete for this stage.
Accidental Theatre (Shaftesbury Square)	Business Case at preliminary stage and progressing.

DfC Funded Projects

Below is the status update on project funded by Department for Communities in South Belfast.

DfC – South Belfast Projects Overview

Project	Status and update
Belfast Islamic Centre – Renovations of Aldersgate House, University Rd	The Council is the delivery agent for this project. Working in conjunction with BIC and DfC the project has commenced on site as of the 15 August 2022.
Holylands Alleygating and Cleansing Project	Project progressing. Link to the citywide Alleygating Phase 5 project.
Strangford Playing Fields	Feasibility study completed. Potential funding sources are being explored with discussions ongoing with DfC. Officers have submitted an application to DfC Access and Inclusion Fund.

Dfl Funded Projects

Below is the status update on project funded by Department for Infrastructure in South Belfast.

Dfl – South Belfast Projects Overview

Project	Status and update
Lagan Gateway	As above as BIF04. Underway.
Finaghy Bridge	As above at SLIF017. Design stage.
Covered cycle stands Phase 1	<i>Via Revitalisation Programme (DfC, Dfl)</i> Belvoir Activity Centre and Mary Peters Track – installed. Project completed.
Covered cycle stands Phase 2	<i>Via Dfl Active Travel Enablers Blue and Green Infrastructure Fund</i> Botanic Gardens, Ormeau Park - Currently in production and due for installation by May 2023. Potential additional locations: Cherryvale Park, Shaftesbury Centre, Musgrave Park.
Expansion of Belfast Bikes Network	<i>Via Revitalisation Programme (DfC, Dfl)</i> The new station at Olympia in South has been installed. Further stations are also under development via the Council funded scheme.”

During discussion, the Chairperson drew the Working Group’s attention to the Linfield FC/Boys’ Brigade/Belvoir FC project (BIF33) referred to within the report and pointed out that the £250k of BIF funding had been allocated for the provision of a grass pitch for Belvoir Football Club, as part of a wider masterplan involving the three partner organisations.

She referred to the significant delay in commencing the wider project and confirmed that Belvoir Football Club had informed Linfield Football Club and the Boys’ Brigade that it now wished to decouple the grass pitch project from the wider project and move forward with this separately and was requesting the Council to approve the proposal.

After discussion, the Working Group agreed that a report be presented to a special meeting in January addressing the request in greater detail.

Update on Lagan Gateway Scheme - Phase 2

The Project Manager provided the Working Group with an update on Phase 2 of the Lagan Gateway Scheme, which would create a shared walking/cycling greenway connection between Phase 1 and Belvoir Park Forest.

He provided a brief overview of the environmental improvement works which would be required and confirmed that a recent public consultation had provided an opportunity for comments to be made in advance of the submission of the planning application for Phase 2 of the project. The vast majority of respondents were in support

of a proposed greenway and the following potential amendments would be inputted into the final design, in response to concerns which had been raised by the public and other stakeholders:

- felled trees would be replaced, where appropriate, to ensure that the character of the site was retained;
- the final design would consider the arrangement of routes and widths, with all surface materials to be considered throughout the design process and natural materials being preferable to retain the natural character of the site;
- picnic and public spaces would be considered as part of the revised scheme;
- where appropriate, gates would be removed to improve access for all;
- additional bins would be located along the route;
- the need for interpretive panels would be considered in the development of a signage strategy, as part of the next stage of detailed design; and
- cycle stands would be considered at either end of the route but not along the route itself.

He added that, where comments had not led to changes in the proposed development, mitigation measures had, where required, been identified to reduce the potential impact of the proposed development.

In terms of next steps:

- the project board responsible for delivering the scheme would be updated on discussions arising at this meeting;
- the outcomes from the consultation would be published on the Council's 'You Said, We Did' consultation hub;
- a request would be presented to the Planning Service for a further Pre-Application Discussion, now that the consultation had taken place, in line with the Planners' suggestion;
- the Project Team would prepare for the Planning process; and
- Site Investigation work would be carried out in January/February 2023 to inform the design process.

Finally, the Project Manager pointed out that an application had been made to the DfI Green and Blue Infrastructure Fund for additional support for this project. This potential funding would be a key requirement for the design process and if, confirmed, would have a timeline for specific expenditure by the end of March, 2023.

In response to points which had been raised by Members around the need for sensory provision in picnic and play areas, for wheelchair and other accessibility, for effective communication/information and for facilities to be in keeping with their natural surroundings, he confirmed that those were being addressed within the design process. He also provided details of the forthcoming site investigation works and on the enhancement of some elements of Phase 1 of the project.

The Working Group noted the information which had been provided and agreed that the provision of a Belfast Bikes docking station be given priority within the overall Phase 2 project plan, subject to budget.

Chairperson