

East Belfast Area Working Group

Thursday, 12th January, 2023

HYBRID MEETING OF EAST BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

Members present: Councillor Long (Chairperson),
Aldermen Dorrian, Haire and Rodgers;
Councillors Bower, Douglas, De Faoite, Flynn,
Kyle, Maghie, McMullan and Smyth.

In attendance: Ms. K. Watters, Neighbourhood Integration Manager;
Ms. S. Kalke, Project Sponsor;
Mr. F. Grant, Assets Development Manager
Mr. M. Doherty, Project Manager; and
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were reported from the Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor Kelly, Aldermen Copeland and Sandford and Councillors Howard and Newton.

The Chairperson advised that Alderman Sandford was in hospital, and the Working Group agreed that its best wishes for a speedy recovery be conveyed to him.

Minutes

The Working Group agreed that the minutes of the meeting of 3rd November were an accurate record of proceedings.

Declarations of Interest

Aldermen Dorrian and Rodgers, and Councillors Maghie, McMullan and Smyth declared an interest in item 3. Update on Physical Programme, in that they were Council representatives on the Eastside Partnership Board. Alderman Rodgers also declared an interest in that he was a shareholder of Glentoran Football Club.

In relation to item 2. Expansion of Belfast Bikes Scheme 2022/2023, Councillor Long declared an interest in that one of the option sites for a new docking station was close to his home.

Expansion of Belfast Bikes Scheme 2022/23

The Working Group considered the following report and associated appendices:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 To update Members 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 Committee is requested to:

- note the current status of the Belfast Bikes expansion scheme;
- to 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 Belfast City Council's physical investment programme. The Department for Regional Development provided initial capital funding for the scheme as part of their 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 At CG&R on 12 May 2021 it was agreed that an additional four Belfast Bikes docking stations would 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 7 July 2022 and is operational;
- Olympia Leisure Centre was installed on 25 October 2022 and is operational;
- Kennedy Centre installation has been postponed due to delays by supplier; it is expected to be operational by late January;
- Waterworks installation has been postponed due to delays by the supplier; it is expected to be operational by late January.

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

Future expansion 2022/23

3.3 At CG&R on 9 June 2021 it was agreed to proceed with 15 docking stations outlined in the expansion proposal in Appendix 1. An investment of approximately £525,000 is required, based on cost estimates from previous network expansions. At SP&R on 18 June 2021 members agreed for £500,000 to be invested in the expansion proposal.

- 3.4 Eight stations will be installed in the upcoming phase, which should be completed by 31 March 2023. Seven stations will follow in the next phase the following year (2023/24).
- 3.5 The following areas were agreed previously by SP&R Committee, with the final locations of each docking station to be agreed through 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 Members.

The options for Castlereagh Road area are:

- Connswater Community Greenway
- Greenville Park

- 3.7 The options for Upper Newtownards area are:

- Upper Newtownards Road/North Road; Strandtown
- Upper Newtownards Road/Eastleigh

- 3.8 A site expansion matrix (see Appendix 2) was previously agreed by SP&R for future expansion. 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.

3.9 Financial & Resource Implications

Finance

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

3.10 Equality or Good Relations Implications

None.”

After discussion, the Working Group agreed that Connswater Community Greenway, for the Castlereagh Road area, be selected for the next phase of the Belfast Bikes Scheme in East Belfast.

In relation to the Upper Newtownards Road area options, the Working Group agreed that a site visit be arranged to view the proposed sites, together with the suggested options at Sandown Road and Bloomfield Collegiate and noted that a Special Meeting be scheduled to reconsider the options for the Upper Newtownards Road as soon as possible.

Update on Physical Programme

The Project Manager provided an overview of 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 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

Members are asked to:

- Note the physical programme update for East Belfast;
- Consider the Cregagh Sports Club proposed site visit;
- Note the proposed site visit on LTP- Templemore project towards the end of January

3. Local Investment Fund

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 with the East being allocated £1.127m under LIF1 and £1.2m under LIF2.

Each LIF project proposal is taken through a Due Diligence process prior to any funding award. Table below outlines funding spend to date for each tranche, at key stages of the delivery process: 22 projects received In Principle support under LIF1 and LIF2, of which 18 have been completed; 1 project in delivery, 1 project at pre-construction; 2 projects at due diligence stage.

LIF breakdown – East	LIF 1		LIF 2	
	Projects	Amount/ Value (£)	Project s	Amount/ Value (£)
Number of Projects Completed	7 (70%)	£861,902	11 (92%)	£1,146,589
Number of Projects in Delivery	1 (10%)	£70,000		
Number of Projects in Pre-construction			1 (8%)	£15,000
Number of Projects at Initial Stage (Due Diligence)	2 (20%)	£100,000		
Total Number of Approved Projects	10	£1,031,902	12	£1,161,589

The table below provides an overview of progress and actions around the remaining live project.

Ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action / Recommendation
ELIF30	Cregagh Sports Club	£70,000	On Ground	Project on site and will be phased with the extension to ball stop fencing taking place in early 2023 and the enhancements to the car park to follow soon after. Works due to be completed in spring/summer 2023. The Club is keen to arrange for the AWG to undertake a site visit to its premises at Gibson Park Gardens to view the status of the project and to discuss their plans to develop into a Community Hub.	Continue engagement with the group. Consider the Club proposed site visit.
ELIF2-17	Lagan Village Youth and Community Association	£15,000	Pre-Construction	Approved by SP&R Committee in October 2020. DfC funding commitment received of £35,000. DfC have committed a further £20,000 through the Levelling Up Fund. The land for the project has now been transferred to the Group. A successful application was made to the Alpha fund for an additional £25,000 along with funding from both BCC and DfC. Designs are being finalised and it is hoped the project will complete prior to March 2023.	Continue engagement with the group.
ELIF29	Cycling Ireland	£70,000	Due Diligence	Discussed at Due Diligence on 20 October 2022. Number of issues to be resolved. Internal discussions ongoing. To be discussed at DD future meeting.	Continue engagement with the group and key stakeholders.
ELIF31	Bloomfield FC, Clonduff FC, East Belfast FC and Glentoran Academy	£30,000	Due Diligence	Proceeding to due diligence this month.	Continue engagement with the group and key stakeholders.

4. Belfast Investment Fund

Members are reminded BIF is a £28m investment fund for regeneration, partnership projects, with a minimum £250,000 investment from Council. In East Belfast 9 projects have received an In-Principle funding commitment under BIF. There are 5 projects on the longer BIF list. Each of the 'In Principle' projects are taken through a 3-stage approval process, including a rigorous Due Diligence process before any Funding Agreement is approved and put in place. Table below provides a summary of BIF allocated projects i.e. project stage; project title; and the funding allocated.

Summary of BIF allocated projects:

East	Stage 3—Willowfield—£560k; H&W Welders—£2.37m; Strand—£1.8m; Bloomfield—£440k Stage 2—Lagan Village Youth & Community—no commitment Stage 1—East Belfast Mission; Belmont Bowling Club; Bloomfield Presbyterian Church; St. John's Orangefield, Church of Ireland, Tullycarnet Community Support Services—no commitment / on long list
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Outer East	Stage 3 —TAGIT- £434k; Hanwood—£396k; Lisnasharragh Community Schools—£398k; Braniel—£390k; Castlereagh Presbyterian Church—£382k
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The table below provides an overview of the remaining projects. Members are asked to note the actions and recommendations.

Ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
BIF12	Strand Arts Centre	£1,800,000	Stage 3 – design stage	In November 2021, Members noted the increase in cost estimates following the RIBA Stage 2 Design Report. The total cost estimate is £5,320,000 which includes construction inflation and theatre/ cinema specifics. The total project budget exclusive of these items is estimated at £4,657,000. Members agreed to progress to RIBA Stage 3 and submit to Planning – which was secured in August 2022. Additional funding from the Heritage Fund has been secured. A Levelling Up application was also recently submitted with a decision anticipated in early 2023.	Continue engagement with the group. Council acting as grantee for development grant from the Heritage Fund.
BIF13	Bloomfield Community Association	£440,000 plus £60,009 reallocation - £500,009	Stage 3 - Committed – In Principle	<i>[No change from previous update].</i> A new Economic Appraisal/ Business Plan was completed in July 2021. Cost of preferred option is £745,054. An application for match funding has been submitted to DfC but is contingent on budget availability. Officers are continuing to look at other options in relation to the funding deficit.	Continue engagement with the group and partners. Note that project has not progress because funding has not come available.

Outer East BIF Projects

Ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
BIF25	Braniel Church	£390,000 plus £65,000 reallocation	Stage 3- On Ground	Works progressing well. The completion of the project is now anticipated in April 2023.	Continue engagement with the group
BIF38	Castlereagh Presbyterian Church	£382,000	Stage 3 – Due Diligence	AWG site visit was held on 9 December 2022. The scope of the project is now reflective to the funding committed to the project. Project will now proceed to Due Diligence.	Continued engagement with group and progress Project through Due Diligence.

5. Social Outcomes Fund

SOF is £4m ringfenced capital investment programme with a focus on local community tourism projects. There is one project under

SOF for East Belfast - Eastside Visitor Centre – with an In-Principle funding commitment. Similar to BIF, all projects are subject to Due Diligence process prior to any funding award.

Project	SOF Award	Status and update
Eastside Visitor Centre <i>Link to UV project</i>	£700,000	<i>Business case stage.</i> Partner project with Urban Villages. The project proposal is for the extension of the existing visitor centre at C.S. Lewis Square. Status remains as reported previously - Final draft OBC completed and is in the UV approval process. Council officers are investigating charges against the site and UV economists are continuing a VFM exercise. UV aiming to complete VFM checks and gain approval by end of Feb 2023.

6. Capital Programme

The Capital Programme is the rolling programme of enhancing existing Council assets or building / buying new assets. Members are reminded of the 3-stage approval process in place for every project on council’s Capital Programme, as agreed by SP&R Committee. The table below provides an update on current live projects in East Belfast. Members are asked to note the status and update.

East Belfast – Capital programme overview

Project	Status and update
LTP- Templemore- NLHF	<i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> On Ground. AWG site visit was held in October 2022. Completion of the leisure side of the building is anticipated to be completed by March 2023. GLL are currently working up programme for opening. The completion of the Heritage side of the building is now anticipated to be June 2023. In addition, Members will note that we are proposing a site visit towards the end of January.
New Crematorium	<i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> RIBA Stage 3 Design has been completed and a planning application has been submitted to Lisburn and Castlereagh Council in June 2022. Technical Design is currently being progressed and consultee queries being answered.
Alleygating Phase 5 – City wide	<i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> Consultation process and costs being prepared for each area. Engagement underway with Members to confirm locations.
Sydenham Greenway	<i>Stage 2- Uncommitted.</i> OBC to be worked up.
Shared Youth and Community Facility Inner East	<i>Stage 1- Emerging.</i> Officers to work jointly with the EA to develop business case/ plan on a potential youth facility at the council owned Ballymacarrett site. Strategic options study and discussions ongoing, initial mapping exercise complete and with Council officers for review.
Ballymacarrett Area Masterplan	Link to the UV/Dfl funded Ballymacarrett Walkway Environmental and Cycling Infrastructure Improvement project.
Belfast Bikes Expansion	Further expansion – there is a separate report being presented to Members at this AWG on Belfast Bikes proposed locations.

7. 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 7 November 2022, Members considered the feedback on Stage 1- Applications in the South Belfast area and made recommendations to 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 have been taken through Strategic Policy & Resources Committee and are ratified by the Council. The table below provides an overview of the projects that progresses to Stage 2- Development and the projects that are on the reserve list at Stage 1.

East Belfast – NRF overview

South	Stage 2— Eastside Container Hotel, Impact Belfast, Nevin Spence Centre (NSC) Visitor Experience, Portview Exchange - a makerspace in East Belfast Stage 1 (Reserve)— <i>Development of sporting hub at Wilgar Park, Hosford Community Homes: 335 Newtownards Road—no commitment</i>
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Project name	Status and update
Eastside Container Hotel	<i>Stage 2 – Development (Uncommitted)</i> . Link to SOF Project. Development of 10 unique serviced tourist apartments overlooking the C.S. Lewis Square in east Belfast. Business Case progressing.
Impact Belfast	<i>Stage 2 – Development (Uncommitted)</i> . Regeneration of the former church at 122-128 Ravenhill Road into a state-of-the-art social Impact Hub providing facilities for social impact organisations to work, collaborate, network and grow. The interior fit-out will comprise 65 permanent desks, seminar space and meeting facilities. Meeting with group held in December 2022. Business case to be developed. Planning approval is in place.
Nevin Spence Centre Visitor Experience	<i>Stage 2 – Development (Uncommitted)</i> . Major overhaul of the NSC Visitor Experience, involving a new layout, full re-design, new exhibitions and integration of new augmented reality technology. Business Case progressing.
Portview Exchange - a makerspace in East Belfast	<i>Stage 2 – Development (Uncommitted)</i> . Development of a state-of-the-art studio on the Newtownards Road comprising significant additional artist studio space as well as private rooms, workshops, test labs, a kiln and a retail shop frontage. Business Case progressing.

8. Externally Funded Programmes

The Council is the delivery partner for a number of government departments on significant capital investment programmes, namely Social Investment Fund (SIF) and the Urban Villages Initiative (UV) funded by the Executive Office, and number of schemes with DfC. The following is an overview of projects within each programme relevant to East Belfast.

Social Investment Fund

Project	Status and update
Walkway Community Association	<i>Project underway</i> . Project is in the final stages with anticipated completion in March 2023. This is the final Social Investment Fund project to be delivered by the Council.

Urban Villages Initiative

Project	Status and update
Pitt Park redevelopment <i>Council asset</i>	<i>Project underway.</i> This UV funded project is on a Council site and the Council is acting as the delivery partner. Letter of Offer has been approved. Contractor expected on site February 2023 pending confirmation of programme from contractor. A planning application for some elements of the works has been submitted and is progressing. Ongoing community engagement information sessions - a stakeholders group meeting has been scheduled for 31 January 2023.
Hosford Community Homes Inclusion Hub	<i>Draft Letter of Offer stage.</i> Council is acting as Delivery Partner. The project is renamed Hosford Community Homes Inclusion Hub. Council has commented on the draft letter of offer and it has been returned to TEO, awaiting issue of final letter of offer. Design team procurement is underway. Project governance structures are being established and it is expected that an initial project board will be convened in January 2023.
Pop EastSide- Landmark East <i>Link to SOF project 'Eastside Visitor Centre' and NRF 'Eastside Container Hotel'</i>	<i>Business case stage.</i> Partner project with Urban Villages. The project proposal is for the extension of the existing visitor centre at C.S. Lewis Square. Status remains as reported previously - Final draft OBC completed and is in the UV approval process. Council officers are investigating charges against the site and UV economists are continuing a VFM exercise. UV aiming to complete VFM checks and gain approval by end of Feb 2023.
Titanic People Exhibition	<i>Business case stage.</i> Design options, surveys and costs have been reviewed and concerns remain regarding building safety, associated costs in making the site secure, viability of the project given available investment and project outcome measures. Members stressed their desire to continue to work with the Group to explore alternative funding sources and how the project can link with other projects in the area. The Council is waiting on a detailed project proposal and Business Case from UV which is expected imminently. DfC funding in the sum of £600,000 has been committed together with UV funding in the sum of £600,000. UV expect to get Business Case Approval by the end of Feb 2023.
Portview <i>Link to NRF 'Portview Exchange'</i>	<i>Feasibility stage.</i> Emerging project at feasibility stage. Business case progressing and expected to complete mid 2023.

DfC and Dfl funded projects

Below is the status update on project funded by Department for Infrastructure and/or the Department for Communities in East Belfast.

Dfl and DfC – East Belfast projects overview

Project	Status and update
Lagan Village Youth and Community Centre	DfC funding commitment received of £35,000. DfC have committed a further £20k through the Levelling Up Fund. Designs are being finalised and it is hoped the project will complete prior to March 2023.
Covered cycle stands Phase 2 –East	<i>Via Dfl Active Travel Enablers Blue and Green Infrastructure Fund</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Avoniel Leisure Centre - supplier/contractor appointment stage - due to be installed by Spring 2023. – Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre - supplier/contractor appointment stage – due to be installed by Spring 2023.
Expansion of Belfast BikesNetwork - East	<i>Via Revitalisation Programme (DfC, Dfl)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Upper Newtownards Road - design and planning stage – Castlereagh Road – design and planning stage

	See above; separate report will be presented in meeting
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EB Northern Ireland Ltd

Project	Status and update
Cherryvale Playing Fields Improvements Pitch 1	The project involves erection of catch nets, spectator and perimeter fencing and path around Pitch 1 at Cherryvale Playing Fields. Pitch 1 is used daily for Gaelic football, camogie and hurling. Majority funding is earmarked from Landfill Communities Fund. EBNI Ltd Letter of Offer received. Procurement of works ongoing and tenders has returned. Appointment of contractor imminent.

During discussion, one Member highlighted the need for the extension and repair of catch nets in the Cherryvale Playing Fields at pitch one. The Project Manager advised that this would be investigated with the City and Neighbourhood Services Department.

After discussion, the Working Group recommended that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee adopt the recommendations as outlined at paragraph 2.0 of the report.

The Working Group also noted that an update would be provided at a future meeting on the progression of the Bloomfield FC, Clonduff FC, East Belfast FC and Glentoran Academy LIF project and the catch nets at Cherryvale Playing Fields.

Orangefield Pavilion Artwork Proposal (Verbal Update)

It was reported that the People and Communities Committee, at its meeting in January, had approved the intent to install a piece of artwork on the wall at Orangefield Pavilion and agreed the approach for codesigning the image (copy available [here](#))

The Neighbourhood Integration Manager highlighted that, as part of the design process, officers had recommended a co design approach with the group of young men, supported by the local artist, and including input from council’s Culture and Arts team, local elected members, and a specialist input from a local mental health charity or art therapy service. She advised that input from Members of the East Area Working Group would be welcomed.

The Working Group noted the update, and that further information would be provided to the Working Group for an expression of interest in taking part in the co-design project.

Chairperson