

East Belfast Area Working Group

Tuesday, 31st January, 2023

HYBRID MEETING OF EAST BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

Members present: Councillor Long (Chairperson);
Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor M. Kelly;
The High Sherriff, Councillor Kyle;
Aldermen Copeland, Dorrian, Haire and Rodgers;
Councillors Bower, Douglas, Flynn, Howard,
Maghie, McMullan, Newton and Smyth.

In attendance: Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes;
Ms. S. Kalke, Project Sponsor;
Mr. F. Grant, Assets Development Manager; and
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Expansion of Belfast Bikes Scheme 2022/23

The Working Group was reminded that, at the City Growth and Regeneration Committee on 9th June, 2021, it had been agreed to proceed with 15 docking stations as part of the expansion proposal of the Belfast Bikes Scheme. An investment of approximately £525,000 was required, based on cost estimates from previous network expansions. At the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 18th June, 2021, it had been agreed that £500,000 be invested in the expansion proposal.

The Assets Development Manager explained that eight stations would be installed in the upcoming phase, which should be completed by 31st March, 2023, with seven stations to follow in the next phase the following year (2023/24).

He highlighted that the following areas had previously been agreed 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; and
- East: Castlereagh Road, Upper Newtownards Road.

He reminded the Working Group that, at its last meeting, the location on the Castlereagh Road docking station had been agreed, however, in relation to the Upper Newtownards Road area options, it had been agreed that a site visit be arranged to view the proposed sites, together with the suggested options at Sandown Road and Bloomfield Collegiate/Astoria Gardens.

He advised that the site visit had taken place on 19th January. During discussion at the site visit, the previously suggested location at Eastleigh Street was deemed unsuitable due to safety concerns.

He provided an overview of the following remaining locations for consideration:

- Option 1 – Upper Newtownards Road/North Road; Strandtown;
- Option 2 – Upper Newtownards Road/Astoria Gardens; and
- Option 3 – Upper Newtownards Road/Sandown Rd Carpark.

During discussion, the Project Sponsor provided further information on the implementation process, and the requirement to liaise with landowners and businesses, depending on which option was taken forward.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor McMullan,
Seconded by Councillor Maghie,

The Working Group agrees that the new docking station be located at Upper Newtownards Road/Sandown Rd Carpark (option 3).

On a vote, five Members voted for the proposal and ten against and it was declared lost.

Further Proposal

Moved by the High Sherriff, Councillor Kyle,
Seconded by Councillor Flynn,

Resolved - The Working Group agrees that, in the first instance, the new docking station be located at Upper Newtownards Road/ Astoria Gardens (option 2), subject to agreement with landowners and local businesses, and that the Upper Newtownards Road/Sandown Rd Carpark (option 3) be the reserve option for the area if the approval for option 2 is not forthcoming.

Physical Programme Update (Verbal Update)

The Director of Physical Programmes informed the Working Group that the Levelling Up bid for the Strand Arts Centre which had been led by the Council had been successful. She highlighted that the Council had only just received confirmation of the award of funding and was due to meet with the Levelling Up Team and that an update report would be brought to a future Area Working Group meeting.

She also reminded the Working Group that a site visit had been scheduled for the Templemore Site on Tuesday, 7th February to liaise and discuss issues with local residents.

The Director of Physical Programmes advised that a request had been received from the Eastside Partnership in relation to a Feasibility Study for Newtownards Road 2030. She noted that there were a number of Council assets in the area, including CS Lewis Square, Connswater Community Greenway, Tamar Street etc. She advised that the Partnership had asked the Council, NIHE and the Department for Communities for a contribution towards the Feasibility Study, and that, if agreed, the Council's contribution could come from the existing Physical Programmes budget.

The Working Group noted the update and, given the Council assets in the area, agreed to the request from Eastside Partnership for the Council to contribute to the feasibility study for Newtownards Road 2030.

Chairperson