

South Belfast Area Working Group

Monday, 27th February, 2023

MEETING OF SOUTH BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

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

In attendance: Mr. D. Logan, Project Manager;
Mr. A. Ferguson, Senior Development Manager;
Ms. D. Smith, Neighbourhood Services Integration
Manager; and
Ms. V. Smyth, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor Spratt.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 30th January were approved by the Working Group.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Presentation - Donegall Pass Community Enterprises

The Chairperson welcomed representatives from Donegall Pass Community Enterprises (DPCE), namely, Ms. L. McCloy, Capital Project Coordinator, DPCE delivered a presentation and provided the Working Group with background to the organisation. She explained that DPCE's purpose was to ensure a sustainable development in a residential area with mixed tenure opportunities that would offer community benefits and synergy with the rest of the city. Its vision was "to make Donegall Pass a more vibrant and thriving area of inner-city Belfast, that is welcoming and open to ALL."

Ms. McCloy informed the Members that the DPCE Board comprised of 11 Directors who had a breadth of expertise and a good blend of skills to direct and shape the development. She outlined DPCE's strategic aims which were:

- Building back a strong and resilient community;
- A fully involved and inspired community;
- Sustainable income generation; and
- Good governance and leadership.

Ms. McCloy provided the Members with details of the profile of the Donegall Pass area and highlighted a number of the challenges facing the local area and communities.

She outlined details of the 15-year plan which included the development and implementation of a Regeneration Strategy and Good Relations Strategy for the area. Ms. McCloy informed the Members of DPCE's approach and outlined the proposals for a new functional hub; a derelict former PSNI site being taken forward by Urban Villages and Clanmil Housing Association which would be transformational to the area.

Ms McCloy noted that the proposed project would act a catalyst for change in the local area that the community could be part of and benefit from. She outlined a range of the proposed outcomes from the project and also added that social clauses would be built in.

Discussion ensued, and a Member asked Ms. McCloy about next steps and how DPCE would ensure that mechanisms were in place to keep the community informed which would feed into capacity and confidence. Ms McCloy provided an overview of the engagement mechanisms noting that 2 stakeholder groups had been held to date. She provided an assurance that all local community stakeholders would be consulted. She also provided an update on the estimated timelines for completion. Members noted that the provisional timeline reflected that it was a significant capital build.

During the discussion, the Members raised concerns that recent developments around Donegall Pass had not benefited the community and therefore welcomed that the community would be involved in the proposed DPCE development.

The Chairperson thanked Ms. McCloy for her presentation.

Noted.

Update on Physical Programmes

The Working Group considered the undernoted 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 South Belfast.

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	
	No. Projects	Amount (£)	No. Projects	Amount/ (£)
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	Works now complete see attached photos (Appendix 1). Note that this initial phase is a trial. Scoping and outcome of the	Continue engagement with partners

				pilot will inform next steps.	
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. Initial works have commenced on site with the main contractor also expected by Summer 2023, pending planning approval.	Continued engagement with the group and funder.
SLIF017	Finaghy Bridge	£30,000	Design stage	Approved at SP&R Committee in May 2016 to undertake improvements to the bridge. DfI Roads Highways Team are taking the lead on design and the Council will contribute the LIF funding to DfI.	Continue engagement with DfI 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	Stage 3—Lagan Gateway—£2.1m; Lanyon Tunnels—£1.3m; Bredagh GAC- £700k Stage 1— Coffee Culture, and Arts & Digital Hub (BSCR IT Exam Centre
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	project) and Sandy Row Open Space project [Sandy Row area projects, formerly Gilpins]— £1.35m <i>Stage 1—Belfast Islamic Centre—no commitment</i>
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Balmoral DEA	Stage 3 - Knockbreda Parish Church Hall—£250k <i>Stage 2— Linfield FC/ Boys Brigade and Belvoir FC—£250k</i>
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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 ongoing. DfI match funding application for Phase 2 successful, subject to business case approval. Consultation complete and planning in early 2023. Site Investigation started on 15 Feb and due to complete on 28 Feb 2023.	Continue engagement with the group and key stakeholders.
BIF19	Bredagh GAC	£700,000	On ground	Contractor has been appointed and works are due to commence in late February 2023.	Continue engagement with the group.
BIF07	Lanyon Tunnels	£1.3m	Stage 3- Committed	Potential funding under discussion with Urban Villages. Plans have been amended and new planning application is currently in PAD process. DfC to decide on Business Case in early 2023. Further planning responses have been requested	Officer engagement with Executive Office and DfC as key funders, and key stakeholders.

				and are being readied.	
BIF33	Linfield FC/ Boys Brigade and Belvoir FC	£250,000	Stage 3- Committed	Linfield FC/Boys Brigade and Belvoir FC have agreed in principle that Belvoir FC can take forward project. Special AWG meeting held on 30 January 2023 and agreed that the BIF proposal which includes Phase 1 is decoupled from the wider masterplan and that any future phases will be taken forward separately by Linfield FC and Boys Brigade.	Continue engagement with the group.
BIF46	Coffee Culture	£286,519	Stage 2- Uncommitted <i>Part of Sandy Row Area projects</i>	Partnership project with UV – total funding package £900k. Letter of Offer approved. Funding package via UV, DfC, SOF and BIF. Due Diligence process complete. Property purchase complete. Design Team tender process complete. Planning application to be submitted by March 2023.	Continue engagement with the group.
BIF48	Sandy Row Arts & Digital Hub	£584,167	Stage 2- Uncommitted <i>Part of Sandy Row Area projects</i>	Partnership project with UV. The Letter of Offer is expected imminently. Due Diligence process complete. Design Team tender process complete.	Continue engagement with the group.
BIF47	Sandy Row Open	£479,314*	Stage 1- Emerging	Work is progressing, location being	Continue engagement with the group.

	Space project		Part of Sandy Row Area projects	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>	
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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 <i>(SRCF)</i>	£80,000	Project completed. Tourism signages are now installed (see Appendix 1).	Continue engagement with the group on post monitoring
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 complete. Property purchase complete. Design Team tender process complete. Planning application to be submitted by March 2023.	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 3 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 have been ratified by the Council (December 2022).

The table below provides an overview of the projects that have progressed to **Stage 2- Development** and the projects that are on the reserve list at Stage 1.

South Belfast – NRF overview

South	Stage 2 - Sólás New Build project, Branching Out project, Lagan Water Access Activity Hub, Redevelopment of Riddel’s Warehouse, Redevelopment of former School of Music, Market Heritage Hub Stage 1 (Reserve) - The Avenue Arts Centre, An Droichead Annex, Lagan Legacy
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South Belfast – NRF projects at Stage 2 - Development

Project name	Description	Status
Sólás New Build project	Development of three-storey building and outdoor space for the special needs’ charity.	Business Case stage.
Branching Out project	Refurbishment and extension of existing GVRT premises.	Business Case stage.
Lagan Water Access Activity Hub	Water activity hub on the River Lagan including floating pontoon and footbridge.	Business Case being reviewed.
Redevelopment of Riddel’s Warehouse	Improvements to disused listed building including creation of an arts centre, co-working space and visitor attraction.	Business Case stage.
Redevelopment of former School of Music	Transformation of a derelict listed building into artist studios, a gallery, a rehearsal, dance and event space.	Business Case stage.
Market Heritage Hub	Regeneration of the former St Malachy’s Convent School and warehouse at Sussex Place into a vibrant new community heritage hub and visitor attraction.	Business Case being reviewed. Initially discussed at Due Diligence on 20 Feb 2023.

Members will note that activity at **Stage 2 – Development** (the equivalent to **Stage 2-Uncommitted** on the Capital Programme) will include development of a business case/ economic appraisal (commensurate with the scale of the project) along with detailed designs and project costings. If a business case or economic appraisal has already been undertaken, then the findings will be tested. Due-diligence checks will be carried out in line with arrangements under LIF, BIF and SOF programmes. It is proposed that this stage will be timebound to 6 months to allow decisions on projects to be taken at the same time.

The outcome of this development phase will then be reported to the relevant Area Working Group (AWG), along with a presentation on the project. The AWG will put forward recommendations to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, with a detailed update on each project, seeking approval for funding. Projects that receive committee approval will be issued with a Letter of Offer in principle and will move to *Stage 3- Committed*.

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> Consultation process and costs being prepared for each area. Engagement underway with Members to confirm locations. Order placed with Contractor and gates currently being manufactured.
Palm House, Botanic Gardens	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Link to Tropical Ravine

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 complete. Property purchase complete. Design Team tender process complete. Planning application to be submitted by March 2023.

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 progressing. MTC works have commenced and it is anticipated that main contractor will be appointed and on site by Summer 2023, pending planning approval.
Sandy Row Arts & Digital Hub <i>BIF (formerly IT Exam Centre)</i>	Partnership project with UV. In August 2022, SAWG agreed to increase the total funding allocation to £584,167 draft UV Letter of Offer has been released with final LoO expected imminently. Due Diligence process is now complete for this stage. Design Team tender process complete.
Accidental Theatre (Shaftesbury Square)	Business Case at preliminary stage and progressing. No change from previous update.

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 continues on site.
Holylands Alleygating and Cleansing Project	Project progressing. Link to the citywide Alleygating Phase 5 project.
Southwest Quarter Revitalisation Scheme	The Council is asked to be the delivery agent for this project. Contract for funding/ Letter of Offer received.
Strangford Avenue Playing Fields	Feasibility study completed. Currently exploring funding opportunities for delivery.

DfI funded projects

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

DfI – 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 2	<i>Via DfI 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, DfI)</i> The new station at Olympia in South has been installed. Further stations are also under development via the Council funded scheme.

EU funded project

Project	Status and update
UPSURGE Project	City-centred approach to catalyse nature-based solutions through the EU Regenerative Urban Lighthouse for pollution alleviation and regenerative development. Additional funding has been secured from UKSPF to enable the first phase of the works (research plots and community garden) to be delivered in part. Design team appointed and planning to carry out first phase of works before end of March 2023.

The Project Manager updated the Members in relation to projects currently underway under the Physical Programme. A Member sought clarity on the status of the Finaghy Bridge project. The Project Manager highlighted that Council officers were continuing to engage closely with DfI which was considering the options in the feasibility study. He highlighted that this would be followed up and an update provided at the next meeting.

A Member raised the proposed works under Phase 2 of the Lagan Gateway and the need to ensure engagement with and buy-in by the local community. She recommended that consideration be given to holding a workshop on the proposed designs. The Project Manager noted that officers would consider the engagement options with an update to be brought back.

It was highlighted that Members had received a letter of invitation from a heritage group inviting them to have a tour of Riddel's warehouse. The Project Manager noted that this was one of a number of projects currently being considered under the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund. Given this, it was agreed that direction would be sought from the City Solicitor and Director of Legal Services to ascertain if a visit could be undertaken.

The Working Group noted the contents of the report.

Chairperson