West Belfast Area Working Group

Thursday, 24th August, 2023

HYBRID MEETING OF THE SPECIAL WEST BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

Members present:	Councillor McCann (Chairperson), Alderman McCoubrey; Councillors Black, Doherty, M. Donnelly, R. M. Donnelly, Duffy, Garrett, McCabe, McDowell, I. McLaughlin, R. McLaughlin, Nic Bhranair, Verner and Walsh.
In attendance:	Mr. M. Doherty, Programme Delivery Manager; Ms. S. Kalke, Client Manager; Ms. A. McGlone, Neighbourhood Integration Manager; and Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

Election of Chairperson

The Area Working Group noted that it was required to elect a Chairperson for the coming year.

Moved by Councillor Garrett, Seconded by Councillor Walsh and

Resolved – that Councillor McCann be elected to serve as Chairperson to the West Belfast Area Working Group until the date of the Annual Meeting.

Apologies

Apologies were recorded on behalf of Councillors Beattie, Carson, Collins and Canavan.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 23rd February were agreed as an accurate record of proceedings.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations were reported.

Update on the Forth Meadow Greenway (verbal update)

The Neighbourhood Integration Manager advised the Members that the entirety of the Forth Meadow Community Greenway was very close to opening, highlighting the following key points:

- a seven-metre-tall aluminium sculpture, called 'Carry Each Other' had been unveiled adjacent to the roundabout beside the Innovation Factory at the southern entrance to section 2 of the Greenway on Springfield Road on 21st August. This was the signature piece of the Forth Meadow Community Greenway art project, which also had five smaller pieces of floor art installed along the route.
- Springvale only Section 2 (through the former Mackies site) which will be known as Springvale, has yet to formally open to the public, this was anticipated to be within the next fortnight. Some additional fencing was required and the final step was the installation of some health and safety signage;
- Community Celebration Event 16th September a day of fun activities for all the family to enjoy, including walks, talks, environmental activities and much more to mark the completion of the 12k Greenway route. This celebration event had been organised to mark the opening of new pathways between Ballygomartin Road and Springfield Road in a new shared space known as Springvale Park. This would link sections of Forth Meadow Community Greenway together, meaning that all 12 kilometres of the route would be open. More information on the route was available via the following link, www.belfastcity.gov.uk/forthmeadow

Following a query from a Member, the Programme Delivery Manager confirmed that additional remedial works regarding the access to Ballygomartin Baptist Church were being addressed.

The Members were asked to note that more details of the event would be confirmed closer to time, via the web page; e-mail to the stakeholder list and through social media.

Noted.

Update on the Expansion of the Belfast Bikes Network

Ms. S. Kalke, Client Manager, provided an update on the Belfast Bikes scheme, reminding the Members that the contract had been operated by NSL continually since its inception in 2015, using bikes and supporting infrastructure from Nextbike by TIER, however, the contract was coming to an end in March 2024.

She advised that the scheme currently operated with 573 bikes, including those in reserve for new stands, and 52 docking stations and proceeded to provide an overview of the proposed expansion of the Belfast Bikes Network for west Belfast, highlighting the following:

 the new station at Olympia in the Kennedy Centre had been installed, this had been funded by the Revitalisation Programme (DfC, Dfl) and had been operational since January 2023. In addition, in June 2021, the Members had agreed to proceed with an additional 15 docking stations and for £980,000 to be invested in the expansion proposal (£480,000 funding for Belfast Bikes expansion and £500,000 reallocated from public space programme);

- expansion in the west area for Phase 4 2022/23 included Coláiste Feirste on the Falls Road, this docking station was scheduled to be installed in September, (currently waiting on some legal documentation) and the entrance of Glencairn Park, it was hoped that construction would commence on in the autumn once land and title issues had been resolved; and
- expansion for Phase 5 2023/24 had included the Springfield Road and the Whiterock Road. Planning for this expansion was currently on hold given that the operator contract was coming to an end in March 2024.

In term of progressing a new contract, the officer reported that NSL continued to operate the Belfast Bikes scheme, with a contract renewal available until 2024. Council staff were currently reviewing the scheme and an Expression of Interest (EOI) had been completed as a market testing exercise. This would be used to inform the next stage of the tendering process.

Officers were currently working on the tender documents for a new Belfast Bikes contract and she highlighted that some of the elements to be considered included the introduction of e-bikes, working with social enterprises and charities, the transition period between existing and new contract to ensure no gap in operation, step by step mobilisation, expansion in the agreed areas and beyond and managed service model i.e. BCC would still control locations and prices. She advised that at this stage this was not a definitive list.

The officer concluded by highlighting that the Expression of Interest exercise had shown strong interest from suitable, experienced bike share companies (including the current supplier/operator). The majority had indicated that they could operate a fully contracted manages service whereby the Council would pay a fixed annual fee for the scheme supply and operation (this was the current model).

Following a query, regarding the location of the proposed Royal location, it was noted that negotiations with the Belfast Trust were ongoing and that this would form part of the new contract. The officer undertook to keep the Members updated regarding any progress.

Following a query from a Member, regarding the Social Value element of contracts, it was agreed that an update on the structure of tender documentation would be submitted to a future meeting.

The Members noted the update and that a further report would be submitted to the Area Working Group in due course.

Physical Programme Update

The Working Group considered the undernoted report:

"1.0

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.

2.0 <u>Recommendations</u>

Members are asked to:

- note the updates on the Physical Programme for West Belfast,
- agree on the change in project scope for Glencairn Community Project (BIF09)
- note the details for the scheduled site visits for NRF Stage 2 Projects.

3.0 Local Investment Fund

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. (LIF 1 – West - £1,127,500 + Shankill £490,000 and LIF 2 - £1,400,000).

Each LIF project proposal is taken through a Due Diligence process prior to any funding award. The table below outlines funding to date for each tranche, at key stages of the delivery process: 50 projects have received In Principle support under LIF1 and LIF2, of which 49 have been completed and 1 project at delivery stage. In total, 98% of all LIF West projects have been completed. Further details of these are outlined below.

LIF breakdown – West	LIF 1		LIF 2	
Stage/ Description	Projects	Amount/ Value (£)	Projects	Amount/ Value (£)
Number of Projects Completed	25 (100%)	£1,617,500	24 (96%)	£1,341,788
Number of Projects On-going Delivery			1 (4%)	£58,212
Number of Projects in Pre- construction				
Number of Projects in Initial Stage (Due Diligence)				
Total Number of Approved Projects	25	£1,617,500	25	£1,400,000

The table below shows an overview of the remaining live project:

LIF Ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action / Recommendation
WLIF2- 08	Berlin Swifts Football Club	LIF £65,085; SOF £113,000	On Ground	Contractor is now on site to carry out trenchwork for utilities connections. Liaison with utilities companies for final connections ongoing. Modular changing building has been installed.	Continue engagement with utility companies and project partners.

4.0 Belfast Investment Fund

Members are reminded BIF is a £28m investment fund for regeneration, partnership projects, with a minimum £250k investment. The West AWG had a total allocation of £9m comprising £5.5m from the original allocation, an additional £1.2m which was ring-fenced for projects in the Shankill area when this became part of the West AWG following the Council elections in 2015 and £2.5m which was ringfenced for projects in the Colin area following LGR.

6 projects have received an In-Principle funding commitment under BIF accounting for the full allocation. 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.

Summary of BIF allocated projects

West Stage 3—Davitts GAC—£1m; Raidío Fáilte—£950k; St Comgall's- £3.5m; Colin Glen Forest Park—£2.5m Stage 2— Glencairn Community Project— £700k; Greater Shankill Community Council - RBL project- £300k, St Mary's CBS— no commitment Stage 1— An Sportslann; Suffolk Community Forum; Belfast Hills- Black Mountain Access—no commitment

BIF Ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
BIF29	Greater Shankill Community Council - RBL	BIF- £300,000; SOF11- £507,000	On Ground	Contractor has been appointed and works are progressing.	Continue engagement with the group.
BIF09	Glencairn Community Project	£700,000	Uncommitted; Due Diligence stage	The proposal is a purpose-built community and youth facility - Glencairn Neighbourhood Centre. Cost estimates are at £1.8m. Contrary to earlier indications and due to cuts in their budget, Education Authority has now advised that they are no longer able to provide funding towards the project. Glencairn Community Project have agreed to progress with a smaller scale modular build on NIHE site (old Spar Hill site). Additional phases could be considered in future should the group wish to expand. They also plan to visit Cregagh PS modular building. A meeting is being arranged with NIHE to discuss land transfer/ sale.	Members are asked to note the update including the outcome of funding discussions with Education Authority and note the subsequent reduction in project scope.

5.0 Social Outcomes Fund

SOF is £4m ringfenced capital investment programme with a focus on local community tourism projects. 5 projects in West 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.

SOF – West Belfast projects overview

WestStage 3— James Connolly Interpretative Centre—£650,000; Rock Centre —£200,000;
Belfast Orange Hall Museum- £80,000; Roddy McCorley Museum - £1,350,000;
Berlin Swifts Football Club - £113,000; Greater Shankill Community Council - £507,000;
Shankill Road Environmental Improvement Project - £50,000
Stage 1—Woodvale Park - £80,000

An overview of the remaining SOF projects is outlined in the table below

SOF Ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action / Recommendation
SOF10	Shankill Road Environmental Improvement Project	£50,000	Complete	Project completed. Final payment to be processed to determine potential underspend which can be considered for reallocation. Awaiting invoice from the group	Continue engagement with the group. Process final payment when documentation is received from group.
SOF05	Roddy McCorley Museum	SOF: £1,350,000 DfC: £250,000	On Ground	Project now complete and premises open to the public. Landscaping works underway. Official opening to be arranged.	Continue engagement with the group.
SOF13	Woodvale Park	£80,000	Initial stage	Proposed MUGA upgrades and development of a sensory garden. Offer of funding received of £120k from IFA/DCMS for MUGA - currently being reviewed. Sensory garden scoping exercise ongoing.	Continue engagement with the group.

6.0 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. The NRF Programme is currently at *Stage 2-Development Stage*. In line with the agreed process, the AWG made recommendations on which projects should move forward to *Stage 2 – Development* Stage and this was agreed by Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. The table below provides an overview of the projects that progressed to *Stage 2-Development*.

West Belfast – NRF overview

West Stage 2— The Mountainview Hotel, Michael Davitt's Community Heritage Centre, Croí na Carraige - 'The Heart of the Rock' - Phase 1, The ACT Initiative Community Hub & Visitors' Centre, The Road, Glencairn Community Project (Hub) Stage 1— Improving the Environment at Patrick Sarsfield's GAC, Corrigan Park Redevelopment Project, WCC New Purpose-Built Childcare and Family Support Centre, Curam Leanaí na Fuiseoige, Conway Mill - redeveloping for the future, Westcourt Uplift Project, Lamh Dhearg Renewable Energy & External Lighting Improvement scheme, St. Gall's Milltown Community Development, Colin Glen Eco Air-Cruizer, CNP Regeneration of Cloona House

Project name	Description	Status
The Mountainview Hotel	Building a socially owned environmentally friendly 65- bedroom hotel located on the new Glenmona development in West Belfast. This is promoted by Fáilte Feirste Thiar.	Business case consultant appointed. Engaging with group.
Michael Davitt's Community Heritage Centre	Transforming a large redundant site adjacent to Páirc Mac Daibhéid located in Beechmount, West Belfast. Creation of a museum/ exhibition space, multipurpose hall and supporting ancillary services.	Business case complete.
Croí na Carraige - 'The Heart of the Rock' - Phase 1	Development of a flagship multi-purpose youth, community, family and heritage hub on the derelict land adjacent to our current community hub Gael-Ionad Mhic Goill in the Upper Springfield Area of West Belfast. It will incorporate their existing building and provide space for Irish language youth provision, a heritage exhibition gallery and office space. This is promoted by Glor na Mona.	Business case complete.
The ACT Initiative Community Hub & Visitors' Centre	Purchase and development of ACT's central office and Community Hub to include a Visitors' Centre that features a historical exhibition.	Business case nearing completion.
The Road	Development of a capital tourism project based around the shared history of the Shankill Road and its contribution to Belfast. This is promoted by Lower Shankill Community Association.	Business case nearing completion.
Glencairn Community Project (Hub)	See BIF project (BIF09) above. Development of a purpose-built community and youth facility within the Glencairn estate to meet both the needs of the community and provide statutory youth provision within the area.	Business case being updated based on reduced scope due to lack of EA funding.

West Belfast – NRF projects at Stage 2 – Development

In June SP&R Committee received an update regarding NRF including the allocation model, outcome of *Stage 1- Application Stage*, updates on *Stage 2- Development Stage* which is underway and the updated programme timeline for delivery. Members also agreed to arrange site visits to Stage 2 projects for September. Site visits have now been arranged in conjunction with the groups and are detailed below. The AWG is asked to note the arrangements for the NRF site visits.

NRF Site visits arrangements:

Members are encouraged to attend any and all of these arranged visits and all of the Area Working Groups will also be provided with these details. The meeting point for all visits is City Hall and transport will be provided, returning to City Hall afterwards. Members are asked to RSVP as soon as possible when contacted.

Date	Time	Sites
Tues 5 Sept 2023	9:30am – 12:30pm	South Site visits to three projects – Sólás New Build Project, Lagan Water Access Activity Hub, and the Redevelopment of Riddel's Warehouse project
Wed 6 Sept 2023	1:30pm – 4:30pm	South Site visits to three projects – GVRT- Branching Out, Redevelopment of Former School of Music, and Market Heritage Hub project.
Wed 13 Sept 2023	9:30am – 12:30pm	North Site visits to three projects – AYE Youth and Community Hub, USEL- Green Growth & The Circular Economy, and Belfast Orange Hall Refurbishment project
Thurs 14 Sept 2023	1.30pm – 3.30pm	North Site visits to two projects – CCRF- Cliftonville Community Enterprise and SRG- St Joseph's Restoration project.
Wed 20 Sept 2023	9:30am - 12:30pm	West Site visits to three projects – The Mountainview Hotel, Croí na Carraige and Michael Davitt's Community Heritage Centre
Thurs 21 Sept 2023	9:30am - 12:30pm	West (Shankill) Site visits to three projects – Glencairn Community Project, The ACT Initiative Community Hub & Visitor Centre, and The Road
Tues 26 Sept 2023	9.30am – 1.30pm	East Site visits to four projects – EastSide Container Hotel, Portview Exchange, Impact Belfast and Nevin Spence Centre (NSC) Visitor Experience

Members will also note that the outcome of the Stage 2 - development phase, preparations of business cases along with the detailed designs and projects costings are nearing completion. There will be a special AWG meeting to be held in October/ November to consider the outcome of Stage 2- Development and recommend to SP&R Committee which projects are progressing to next stage.

7.0 Capital Programme

The Capital Programme is the rolling programme of enhancing existing Council assets or building/ buying new ones. 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 on the Council's Capital Programme in the West Belfast area.

West Belfast – Capital programme overview

Project	Status and update
City Cemetery Visitor Centre– Heritage Fund/ DfC	Project complete. The new centre is now open and includes an interpretive exhibition, digital touchscreens, interactive features for children, genealogy workstations and educational space. Final restoration works to be completed at Victorian Fountain and Central Steps. Dual language signage works and designs are ongoing.
Playground Programme – Sally Gardens, Areema, Northlink	Stage 3 – Committed. Sally Gardens and Areema playgrounds refurbishment complete. Northlink playground works programmed to start in early 2024.
Alleygating Phase 5 – City wide	Stage 3 – Committed. The consultation period was extended due to a low response rate and has now closed. The output is being reviewed prior to submission to Legal Services. If clearance is given to proceed, then Committee approval will be sought to advertise the notice of intention to install gates. If it is found that that there is not enough support or evidence via this consultation then further consultation may be necessary.
Access to the Hills	Stage 2- Uncommitted. Connections from Cavehill to Divis Mountain and Black Mountain. Considered within the wider study as below.
Black Mountain/Upper Whiterock Greenway	Stage 2- Uncommitted. Design stage. Design team is continuing to develop the project to prepare for planning application. Project outline details submitted to Dfl as part of the Greenway Development priority projects.
Colin Greenway	Stage 2- Uncommitted. Business case related to the development of the Colin Active Travel Routes prepared. In contact with funding partners requesting support to deliver the project.
Connectivity - Access to Hills Programme (city wide)	Stage 1- Emerging. The Access to the Belfast Hills Feasibility Study and delivery plan have now been completed, funded via DAERA. Consultation is continuing with stakeholders. Presentation of the outcomes of the study will be made to Elected Members in autumn 2023.
Belfast Bikes Expansion	Further expansion – there is a separate update report being presented to Members at this AWG on Belfast Bikes Scheme.

8.0 Externally funded programmes

The Council is the delivery partner for several government department on key capital investment programmes, namely Urban Villages (UV) from the Executive Office, Peace IV, Dfl as well as schemes with DfC. The following is an overview of projects within each programme relevant to West Belfast.

<u>Urban Villages Initiative</u> The table below shows the status on UV projects in West Belfast – note the UV programme has a defined West Belfast geography (Colin area).

West Belfast - L	JV overview
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Project	Status and update
Colin Valley Football Club	Project completed 23 March 2023.

Healthy Living Centre (Sport in the Community PCA)	Council is acting as Delivery Partner. Project handover complete. Lease has been prepared and is awaiting signature by the group.
Colin Community Health and Wellbeing Hub	Emerging project. Business Case progressing however a significant funding shortfall has been identified. Project not yet in UV Capital Plan. UV progressing with a Planning application. Potential for PeacePLUS bid under Theme 1.4 by CNP.

PEACEIV – Capital Projects

Members are asked to note updates on the capital projects that are related to the PEACEIV Programme.

West Belfast – Peace IV Capital Projects overview

Project	Status and update
Forth Meadow Community Greenway	 On ground. Section 1 – Glencairn – Works complete and handed over to C&N Services; Section 2 – Forth River/ Springfield Road – Works complete; Section 3 – Falls Park/Whiterock – Works complete; Section 4 – Bog Meadows – Works complete; and Section 5 – Westlink to City Centre – works to commence once signage package agreed. Signage package to be installed to include to all sections feature panels, narrative panels and beacon lights – subject to language proposals and agreement via Committee and Council. Artwork public unveiling held on 17 August 2023.
Black Mountain Shared Space Project	On ground. Phase 1. Works progressing. Currently liaising with funders regarding reducing the deficit. Project completion will be outside the PIV funding programme. Meetings with SEUPB on the funding that can be claimed before PEACE IV programme completion of December 2023. All options are being considered. <i>Phase 2.</i> Design Team appointed. Planning application submitted. Procurement of works contractor underway.
Shankill Shared Women's Centre	On ground. Contractor works ongoing. Project completion end of December 2023.

Dfl funded projects

Below is the status update on projects funded by Department for Infrastructure in West Belfast.

Dfl – West Belfast	projects overview
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Project	Status and update
Covered cycle stands Phase 2	Via Dfl Active Travel Enablers Blue and Green Infrastructure Fund Andersonstown Leisure Centre – complete. Páirc Nua Chollann – will be installed in September. Brook Leisure Centre – will be installed in September.

Funding has been received for Phase 3; potential locations are Musgrave Park and Falls Park (suggested by CNS or Councillors).

DfC funded projects

Members are asked to note that the projects currently match funded by Department for Communities have been covered elsewhere and include Berlin Swifts Football Club, Forth Meadow Community Greenway, Black Mountain Shared Space Project and Paisley Park Sportsplex refurbishment (see below). Projects are progressing well.

Project	Status and update
Paisley Park Sportsplex refurbishment	On ground. Refurbishment of the existing 3G pitch, provision of floodlighting, changing facilities and associated amenities. 3G pitch complete and operational. Works to changing facilities currently underway.

9.0 Appendices – none."

Following an issue raised by a Member, the Programme Delivery Manager undertook to investigate the maintenance schedule at Paisley Park.

The Working Group noted the update provided.

Request to Present – Alderman McCoubrey

The Working Group agreed to receive a presentation at its next meeting from BUILD Shankill, a community-led partnership addressing issues around vacant and derelict land in the Greater Shankill areas of Belfast.

Chairperson