



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Renewing the Routes Update and Falls Public Art
Date:	13 August 2008
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Relevant Background Information

This report provides an update on the continuing implementation of projects and outlines two issues for the consideration of Committee. The update in relation to Renewing the Routes projects provides information on general progress and separate information in the form of a Bulletin covering four IDF routes (**Appendix 1**).

The two issues for consideration relate to the potential provision of a Public Art piece on Falls Road and ongoing work with Roads Service. Members are asked to note the continued progress made under the Renewing the Routes programme and to consider two issues pertaining to the programme implementation.

Key Issues

Implementation Update

The implementation of IDF projects across the four principal routes covered by the funding will gather pace over the next two years. The production of a bulletin on progress will assist with this ongoing work and communication.

It is proposed that up to six bulletins are produced for the remaining period of the programme and to keep participants and partners informed of progress. The draft bulletin is attached for Consideration.

Antrim Rd and York Rd. Projects on the Antrim and York Road are continuing with additional funding made available from the URBAN II. Decorative hanging baskets and flower trees have been installed on both routes and proposals for lighting enhancements, tree planting and further commercial improvements are being developed. It is anticipated that the additional works made possible by the extra allocation will be completed by December 2008. The York Road Gateway Art Project is progressing with the architectural and engineering details being completed to finalise implementation. Installation will take place on completion of final statutory inspections.

Crumlin Road. Draft proposals have been developed for public realm schemes at Carlisle Circus, Lower Crumlin Road and Ardoyne roundabout. The initial consultations have taken place with statutory agencies and community groups and detailed public consultation is planned to begin towards the end of the summer.

Commercial improvements proposals have been developed with owners for properties at Glenbank and Lower Crumlin Road.

Falls Road 28 properties have been targeted under Phase I of the Commercial Improvement Programme in lower Falls. Construction work for phase 1 is scheduled to commence between Divis Street and Broadway in August 2008 and Phase II (Lower Springfield Road) are at final design and consultation will begin September 2008.

Hanging baskets have also been installed on Broadway as part of a three part environmental project for the route. A public art piece is also being developed with Iveagh Residents Group and the Belfast Health Trust for installation of the project on one of the Royal Victoria Hospital walls. The final element of the project will be carried out with local residents on a "Soffits and Sills" painting scheme where properties will be upgraded to contribute to the reinvigoration of this busy route.

Consultants have been appointed and are currently investigating the potential of feature lighting to popular landmarks on the Falls Road including the International Wall, Carnegie Library and St Mary's University College. Outline designs for Bog Meadows and Glen Road/Falls Road Junction are currently out to consultation and working designs have been agreed for West Circular Roundabout and Willowbank Youth Club with construction work planned to start in September/October 2008. The listed St Comgall's railings and gates have been by specialist consultants drawing up proposals with a view of starting refurbishment works late 2008.

Shankill Road Work on this arterial route is now well underway, with 35 commercial improvements already complete under Brighter Belfast and Integrated Development Fund. A phased programme of delivery for these projects is enabling delivery and improvements to another 100 businesses over the next 12 months. Projects already delivered in partnership with other Council departments include hanging baskets as part of Belfast in Bloom, and the introduction of tourism signage at three key sites: West Kirk Church/Shankill Memorial Garden, Shankill Rest Garden and Woodvale Park. Renewing the Routes Programme has also attracted an additional £200,000 from Belfast Regeneration Office to deliver public realm improvements at two key junctions, Agnes St and Lanark Way.

Upper Springfield Road The launch of a new Panoramic Viewpoint at Monagh Road in May 08 signalled the next phase of regeneration activity in Upper Springfield and the major public realm scheme is now also complete at the Springfield Rd and Whiterock Road. In partnership with the Parks and Leisure Department, Groundwork NI and the local community are working together in this area to develop the next key project at Springhill Park 'funnel' will be developed. A further landscaping project at Whiterock Orange Hall is now at detailed design and research on land ownership and community consultation on other proposed landscaping sites is taking place to assess feasibility.

Implementation Issues

Members are asked to consider two issues pertaining to the continued successful implementation of the renewing the routes programme, including:-

Falls Public Art piece The project was included within the Renewing the Routes Plan for the Falls area as a potential commission for a significant art piece for a gateway location in the Lower Falls area, with a £80,000 budget from the Integrated Development fund.

Following further consultations a formal request to consider utilising this budget as part of a contribution to a larger art piece for west Belfast, has been received from An Nasc, a non-profit Irish language development body. The proposal is to develop a major landmark art piece, Ceiliúradh/Celebration, celebrating the Irish language and welcoming visitors into the west of the city with an overall budget of £200,000.

The group proposes that this sculpture will be the 'jewel in the crown' of West Belfast/Gaeltacht Quarter.

An Nasc has secured funding from the Arts Council's Re-Imaging programme (£50,000) and Foras na Gaeilge (£30,000) and West Belfast and Greater Shankill Enterprise Council has expressed its support for the projects. The group also have applications pending with several other bodies and they wish to avail of the Arts and Business support package. If approved the An Nasc propose to carry out the procurement of the art piece with the participation of the Council on the requisite selection panel and steering groups. The Group have also requested that the Council consider taking responsibility for the ongoing maintenance of the completed piece of public art.

Members are asked to consider this request for the reallocation of this budget. Should Committee wish to consider the reallocation there are number of issues that would need to be addressed or made conditional to any approval:

- (1) That the Department of Social Development accede to reallocation of the Integrated Development Fund budget identified in the renewing the routes programme;
- (2) That the group confirm that the selection and tendering procedures would comply with the draft Council procurement policy;
- (3) That the selection panel includes Council participation comprising officer and member representation;
- (4) Confirmation that the art piece is installed in compliance with all statutory permissions, by March 2010;
- (5) The group provides confirmation of all funding availability to at least match the potential reallocation by October 2008; and
- (6) Confirmation that the site selection will ensure a direct relationship with the Falls Road within the Lower Falls area.

DRD Road Service. Members may wish to note that the successful implementation of a number of projects under the Renewing the Routes programme requires both the permission and assistance of DRD Roads Service. These projects primarily relate to the proposed enhancement of the public realm including lighting enhancement proposals. During the initial phases of the Renewing the Routes activity this permission has been difficult to attain and has been a contributing factor to delayed implementation and abortive work.

These administrative or operational challenges have been further complicated by additional issues in relation to ongoing or perceived maintenance difficulties. The procedural and detailed design approval issues have, despite ongoing work and consultations, proved difficult to overcome. This experience contrasts with the partnership approaches with other agencies and reduces the scope for the delivery of

comprehensive projects.

In the broader context of RPA and the need for coordinated regeneration activity the Committee is asked to consider the merits of requesting a cross-party meeting with the Minister for Regional Development to explore how a commitment to effective partnership could be developed the implementation matters addressed.

Resource Implications

Financial:

Reallocation of an approved £80,000 funded through the Integrated Development Fund.

Recommendations

Members are consider the following recommendations:

- (1) Note the contents of the update within the report and attached bulletin
- (2) Approve the reallocation for the public art funds subject to details in respect of the aforementioned conditions being reported back to Committee and consider the request for Council to maintain the proposed art piece.
- (3) Agree to request a cross-party meeting with the Minister for Regional Development to explore how a commitment to effective partnership could be developed the implementation matters addressed.

Documents Attached

Appendix 1: Renewing the Routes Bulletin