East Belfast Area Working Group

Thursday, 6th June, 2024

HYBRID MEETING OF EAST BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

Members present: Alderman Copeland (Chairperson);

Aldermen Lawlor and Rodgers;

Councillors Abernethy, Bower, R. Brooks, P. Donnelly, Ferguson, Flynn, Long, Maghie,

F. McAteer and Smyth.

In attendance: Mrs. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration

and Development;

Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control

Mr. M. Doherty, Programme Delivery Manager;

Ms. K, Watters, Neighbourhood Services Integration Manager;

Mr. C. McCann, Lead Officer - Community Provision;

Ms. S. Kalke, Client Manager;

Ms. E. Gowdy, Lead Officer, Open Spaces and Streetscene;

Mr. D. O'Kane, Planning Manager, Plan and Policy;

Mr. C. Campfield, Principal Planning Officer;

Mr. C. McCann, Lead Officer Community Provision; and Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services and Governance

Coordinator.

Election of Chairperson

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

Moved by Councillor Ferguson, Seconded by Councillor Smyth and

Resolved – that Alderman Copeland be elected to serve as Chairperson to the East Belfast Area Working Group until the date of the Annual Meeting of the Council.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor McCormick and Councillors D. Douglas and S. Douglas.

<u>Minutes</u>

The Working Group agreed that the minutes of the meeting of 28th February and 8th March were an accurate record of proceedings.

Declarations of Interest

Alderman Rodgers and Councillor Ferguson declared an interest in item 9. Request to Present - Glentoran Football Club, in that they were on the Board of Glentoran Football Club and left the room whilst the item was under consideration.

Presentation - Hanwood Trust

The Chairperson welcomed to the meeting Mr. P. Millar, Chief Executive, Hanwood Trust, and Mr. C. Callacher, Head of Academy from Tullycarnet Community Football Team.

Mr. Millar provided the background of the Hanwood Trust which operated a sports complex, fitness suite, business park and was also landlord for a filling station. He described the usage of the Hanwood 3G Sports pitch and highlighted that Tullycarnet Football Club, the biggest user group, had now outgrown the pitch.

Subsequently, he provided an overview of their proposals for a new pitch on a suitable site in Tullycarnet Park. He advised that a new pitch would provide a positive impact to the area, such as:

- Provide much needed pitch space for other football teams in East Belfast:
- Provide precious time slots for Hanwood to provide to other teams in East Belfast;
- The Pitch would blend into the natural surroundings and would be kept and maintained by TCFC and managed by Hanwood Trust;
- Bring young people of the community together into a Park they never use:
- All current facilities in the Park would complement each other and the green space that was already there;
- Would not disrupt the current users; and
- Would encourage a huge amount of people to visit and use the Park. Players/coaches/supporters.

During discussion, the representatives answered a range of questions in relation to the access to the park, existing facilities, suitable space for a new pitch in the park and pitch provision of the area.

Members recalled that council officers had looked at this space in the past in relation to its suitability for a football pitch and due to the gradient and banks it had been deemed unsuitable. Mr Millar noted that they were looking at 3 options as part of the NIHE Place Sharping Plan and that the park was one of them.

The Programme delivery Manager advised that officers would continue to liaise with the Hanwood Trust to capture its vision and requirements, and highlighted that this would also link into the Pitches Strategy being undertaken by the City and Neighbourhood Services Department.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their presentation and they retired from the meeting.

After discussion, the Working Group noted the information which had been provided.

Physical Programmes Update

The Programme Delivery Manager provided the Working Group with an overview of 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 on 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 including recently completed projects (Appendix 1):
 - Belfast Bikes Expansion Sandown Road Car Park Station – Capital Programme.
 - o Pitt Park Redevelopment Urban Villages Programme.
- SOF Eastside Visitors Centre Note that the Executive Office has completed their business case process and has advised formally that they are unable to provide support to the Eastside Visitors Centre project under the Urban Villages Initiative.

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. The 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 19 have been completed and 1 project is at delivery stage and 1 project is at due diligence stage.

LIF breakdown – East	L	IF 1	LI	F 2
Stage/ Description	Projects	Amount/ Value (£)	Projects	Amount/ Value (£)
Number of Projects Completed	8 (80%)	£931,902	12 (100%)	£1,161,589

Number of Projects in Delivery	1(10%)	£30,000		
Number of Projects in Pre- construction				
Number of Projects at Initial Stage (Due Diligence)	1 (10%)	£70,000		
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 projects.

Ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action / Recommendation
ELIF31	Bloomfield FC, Clonduff FC, East Belfast FC and Glentoran Academy, Tullycarnet, Cregagh Wanderers, Nettlefield Multi-Sports and Bredagh GAC – storage facilities	£65,000 (£30k plus £35k reallocation)	On Ground	Phase 1 – Complete - Bloomfield FC, East Belfast FC, Tullycarnet FC and Cregagh Wanderers projects, including the Cregagh toilet facility has been installed and completed. Phase 2 - Bredagh and Clonduff FC has been signed-off at Due Diligence. Awaiting funding agreement to be signed and likely to be delivered in summer/ autumn respectively. Nettlefield Multi-sports and Glentoran Academy are working to resolve land related issues.	Continue engagement with the groups
ELIF29	Cycling Ireland	£70,000	Due Diligence	Due diligence stage ongoing. Project design and licence arrangements in development. Information awaited from the group.	Continue engagement with the group and key stakeholders.

4. <u>Belfast Investment Fund</u>

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. The 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—£1.5m; Bloomfield—£440k
	Stage 2—Lagan Village Youth & Community—no commitment
	Stage 1—East Belfast Mission; Belmont Bowling Club; Bloomfield Presbyterian Church; St. John's

ı	Orangefield, Church of Ireland, Tullycarnet Community Support Services—no commitment / on long
ŀ	list

Outer	Stage 3 —TAGIT- £434k; Hanwood—£396k; Lisnasharragh Community Schools—£398k; Braniel—
East	£390k; Castlereagh Presbyterian Church—£382k

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	£6,940,069 Comprising: LUF £4m BIF £1,550,000 HF £255,000 (Development Grant), £768,069 (Delivery Grant)	Stage 3 – procurement stage	The application to HF for Delivery funding has been successful. Discussions with DfC on potential funding are also continuing. The project is at RIBA Stage 4. Preparation for contractor procurement is underway with appointment expected by late Summer 2024.	Continue engagement with the group.
BIF13	Bloomfield Community Association	£715,009 Comprising £440,000 plus reallocations of £60,009 and £215,000	Stage 3 - Committed – In Principle	The Group is continuing to actively explore additional funding opportunities to meet the shortfall estimated at approx. £100k. An application to DfC has been submitted but no funds are available at present.	Continue engagement with the group.

Outer East BIF Projects

Ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
BIF38	Castlereagh Presbyterian Church	£382,000	Stage 3 - Committed – In Principle	Project has now been signed off at Due Diligence. Appointment of design team will take place shortly.	Continued engagement with the group.

5. <u>Social Outcomes Fund</u>

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	Action/ Recommendation
Eastside Visitor Centre	£700,000	Business case stage. The project proposal is for the extension of the existing visitor centre at C.S. Lewis Square. This project has been unsuccessful in securing funding from TEO. The Project Promoter is reviewing options including moving forward with	The AWG is asked to note that the Executive Office has completed their business case process and has advised formally that they are unable to provide support to the Eastside

a reduced scale project solely with Council SOF funding or continuing to seek other funding opportunities for the original proposal.	Visitors Centre project under the Urban Villages Initiative.
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6. Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund

The Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (NRF) is a capital fund with a current overall budget of £10,280,000 to help groups deliver capital projects that will make a real, long-term difference in their communities. Each NRF 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.

On 28 May 2024, the East AWG met to consider recommendations on projects to be moved forward to Stage 3 – Delivery. Any recommendations will be subject to SP&R Committee approval in June and full council ratification in July 2024.

7. 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
New Crematorium	Stage 3 – Committed. RIBA Stage 4 Technical Design is complete. Procurement is underway and the tenders are due back in June 2024. Alternative use for existing building is being explored currently.
Alleygating Phase 5 – City wide	Stage 3 – Committed. In January, SP&R Committee agreed terms of reference for a local inquiry in the event that an objection to a proposed Gating Order is received. Members granted approval for the publication of a Gating Order in November 2023 for certain streets and to proceed with a ten-week consultation for the remaining streets. Committee agreed 51 gates in May and works will progress once ratified by full council in June. Approval will be sought to proceed at more locations in June and September 2024.
Cremated Remains Burial Plots	Stage 2- Uncommitted. Business case is being developed with CN&S Department and surveys are being arranged.
Sydenham Greenway	Stage 2- Uncommitted. Business case to be worked up with Dfl who are at design development stage for the greenway. Ongoing discussion with Dfl regarding a partnership approach.
	There is a separate verbal update being presented to Members at this AWG on Sydenham Greenway.

Shared Youth and Community Facility Inner East	Stage 1- Emerging. Link to Ballymacarrett Area Masterplan. Officers had been liaising with the Education Authority on a potential youth facility at the council owned Ballymacarrett site. Representatives at EA have advised that they are developing a business case for capital funding for youth provision at this site for 2024/25 onwards. Officers are continuing to liaise with EA on the way forward.
Ballymacarrett Area Masterplan	Stage 1- Emerging. Link to the Shared Youth and Community Facility Inner East project.
Belfast Bikes Expansion	Further expansion: Sandown Rd carpark – complete and operational since April 2024.
	The contract with existing operator that came to an end in March 2024, has been extended until the end of the year. The tender for a new provider/ operator will be published in Summer 2024.

Henry Jones Playing Fields - In September 2023 SP&R Committee approved an upgrade to the current CCTV system and also the installation of lighting in the car park at the Henry Jones Playing Fields, subject to realignment of spend. The CCTV upgrade and car park lighting works are being taken forward via the Property & Projects Department. Both elements of the project are progressing. Officers await estimates from the contractor on lighting and CCTV and installation will take place very shortly.

8. Externally funded programmes

The Council is the delivery partner for a number of government departments on significant capital investment programmes, namely 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.

Urban Villages Initiative

Project	Status and update		
Pitt Park redevelopment Council asset	Project completed. Handover held on 31st May 2024.		
Hosford Community Homes Inclusion Hub	Project underway. Council is acting as Delivery Partner. Contractor has been appointed and is currently on site. Estimated completion in Spring 2025.		
Titanic People Exhibition	Project underway. Council is acting as Delivery Partner. Contractor has been appointed and expected on site imminently. Additional planning application has been submitted for gantry structure. Planning approval received for ground works and structure. Project completion anticipated by Spring 2025.		
Portview Exchange Link to NRF 'Portview Exchange'	Business case stage. The Letter of Offer is expected by Autumn 2024 once TEO have completed the business case process.		

Pop EastSide- Landmark East	As above at SOF. Business case stage. The project proposal is for the extension of the existing visitor centre at C.S. Lewis Square. This project has been unsuccessful in
	securing funding from TEO. The Project Promoter is reviewing options including moving forward with a reduced scale project solely with Council SOF funding or continuing to seek other funding opportunities for the original proposal.

DfC and Dfl funded projects

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

Dfl and DfC - East Belfast projects overview

Project	Status and update	
Covered cycle stands Phase 3 – East	Via Dfl Active Travel Enablers Blue and Green Infrastructure Fund	
	The third phase of this programme will see the delivery of covered cycle stands in locations at Connswater Community Greenway, Victoria Park, Orangefield Park, Braniel Community Centre and Tullycarnet Centre (Comber Greenway) in Summer.	

EB Northern Ireland Ltd (Landfill Communities Fund)

One project is receiving capital funding via EBNI in East Belfast:

Project	Status and update	
Cherryvale Playing Fields Improvements Pitch 1	The project involves erection of catch nets, spectator fencing and path on one boundary of Pitch 1 at Cherryvale Playing Fields. One ball stop is installed and the remaining ball stop is expected to be completed this month. "	

During discussion, in relation to the completing of Tullycarnet Outdoor Gym, one Member questioned if trees would be planted around the apparatus. The Neighbourhood Integration Manager advised this could be discussed with the Parks Team.

In relation to the Container Storage Facilities project (ELIF31), the Programme Delivery Manager explained further the land related issues that were still to be resolved with the remaining groups in Phase 2. The Working Group requested that this would be reviewed by the Working Group at its meeting in September and, if the projects had not been progressed, it would consider the reallocation of the storage units.

After discussion, the Working Group:

- Noted the physical programme update for East Belfast including recently completed projects (Appendix 1):
 - Belfast Bikes Expansion Sandown Road Car Park Station Capital Programme

- Pitt Park Redevelopment Urban Villages Programme
- In relation to the SOF Eastside Visitors Centre Noted that the Executive Office had completed their business case process and had advised formally that they were unable to provide support to the Eastside Visitors Centre project under the Urban Villages Initiative;
- Noted that the progress of the remaining groups of the Container Storage Facilities project (ELIF31) would be reviewed for potential reallocation at its meeting in September.

Update on Sydenham Greenway (Verbal Update)

The Client Manager provided an update in relation to the Sydenham Greenway and the work being undertaken as part of Phase 1 in delivering the project.

She highlighted that the design had been amended based on the consultation response from the Council, such as the reduction in the pathway width and usage of the existing entrance.

During discussion, the Working Group welcomed the project progression and requested further information in relation to the NI Water Works and the impact on King George V Playing Fields.

Noted.

<u>LDP - Local Policies Plan (Presentation)</u>

The Acting Planning Manager and the Principal Planning Officer provided the Working Group with an overview of the work which was ongoing in respect of the Emerging Local Policies Plan.

The Principal Planning Officer explained that the Plan Strategy was adopted in May 2023 and set out the Council's growth strategy up to 2035. The Working Group was advised that it mirrored the aims of the Belfast Agenda and set out operational policies against which all planning applications would be assessed. The LPP would set out development zonings and Key Site Requirements and other site specific proposals related to sites and allocations.

The Members were advised that a Call for Sites had closed on 1st March, 2024, which provided an early opportunity for engagement to suggest sites, for example, for housing or commercial retail. It was reported that Belfast was the first authority to do this in Northern Ireland and it had provided an opportunity to draw in a variety of stakeholders, mostly targeting private land assets.

The Working Group was provided with an overview of Lands for Protection within East Belfast, including the Settlement Development Limit, Conservation Areas and Areas of Townscape Character.

During discussion, the planning officers answered a range of questions in relation to the historical zoning of employment and retail sites and the consideration of main shopping areas such as Cregagh/Woodstock Road area.

The Members were advised that officers would plan further workshops in September to discuss the Local Policies Plan with Members in more detail.

Noted.

Request to Present - Glentoran Football Club

It was reported that a request had been received by Glentoran Football Club to present its plans for the new oval stadium to the Working Group.

During discussion, it was agreed that, as many of the Members had already received the presentation and were in support of the plans, that the Working Group would write a letter of support to Glentoran Football Club.

Future Use of Orangefield Pavilion

Councillor Ferguson raised the issue of Eastside Partnership's request to explore options for community ownership of Orangefield Pavilion.

The Lead Officer, Open Spaces and Streetscene advised that officers were aware of the request via the Assets Board and that the Eastside Partnership had been consulted with. Officers were currently awaiting a business case which was being prepared by Eastside partnership in relation to their plans.

The Working Group noted that the request was being considered as part of the assets management process.

Lack of Quorum

The Chairperson's attention was drawn to the fact that, due to the number of Members who had left the meeting, the meeting was now inquorate.

The Working Group was advised that the meeting was inquorate. However, those Members in attendance agreed to meet informally, with any urgent matters which required a decision being forwarded to the appropriate Committee for consideration.

Citywide Strategic Site Assessments

The Director of City Regeneration and Development drew the Members' attention to a report which provided an update in terms of the Strategic Site Assessment (SSA) programme across the city. She explained that this followed previous decisions of the Strategic Policy and Resources and City Growth Committees to undertake strategic site assessments of Council owned lands across the city to identify potential for housing led or mixed-use regeneration, either in isolation or in partnership with the private/voluntary sector or other statutory agencies. She referred to the report which had been circulated which highlighted that housing led regeneration had been identified as a corporate priority and a priority within the Belfast Agenda. Following a recommendation of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in September 2023, it was agreed to bring emerging proposals in respect of Council assets city wide to respective Area Working Groups.

The Director provided an update in respect of the Strategic Site Assessments (SSA) Phase 1 which included a number of strategic Council owned city centre lands as well as a partnership approach in respect of adjoining public sector lands. Concept regeneration plans, community and stakeholder engagement and planning Pre-Application Discussions had been undertaken in respect of a number of cluster sites. She advised that following the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee decision of September 2023, the Council were currently undertaking a Competitive Dialogue procurement process for a long-term partner for the delivery of housing led placemaking regeneration across these sites, as part of a multi-site residential-led mixed-use regeneration development opportunity. She advised that

recommendations on the outcome of this would be brought to Elected Members later in the year.

The Members were also reminded that it had previously been reported to both the City Growth and Regeneration and Strategic Policy and Resources Committees in September 2023, that a Development Brief for lands in the ownership of the Department for Communities (DfC) and Belfast City Council at Little Donegall St/Library St /Kent St (the Inner North West Development Brief) had been reissued following input from DfC (as the land owner of part of the lands) and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE). The Members were reminded that this Development Brief process had previously been paused at the request of Members. In line with the Committee decision, the reframed brief had been issued to all 15 developing Housing Associations, with a deadline for return of 28th June, 2024.

The Director also referred to the Housing Led Regeneration Group which had been established under the Belfast Agenda Community Planning structures, chaired by NIHE CX and included senior officers from BCC, NIHE, DFC, LPS and SIB. She reported that a key task of this group had been to identify and map public lands across the city with potential for housing led regeneration as well as identifying strategic private sector land opportunities and exploring partnership opportunities and identifying barriers to delivery and potential solutions.

As a second phase of the Strategic Site Assessments programme, and as agreed by Council, a comprehensive assessment had been undertaken in respect of Council lands across the city to ascertain the potential for housing led and /or mixed-use regeneration. This had also included working in partnership with other public sector bodies as part of the Housing Led Regeneration Group and including wider public land review and where appropriate to also include private sector land.

With the aid of PowerPoint, the Director updated the Working Group with further information in respect of the ongoing SSA work. She advised that the policy context across the various policies and plans included:

- By 2035 to deliver to 31,600 new homes, with 8,000 units within city centre and to increase population by 66,000 people;
- To increase city centre living across all tenure types;
- To identify publicly owned land for housing and mixed use developments;
- To see Belfast transition to an inclusive, low carbon climate resilient economy; and
- To recognise that housing was an equivocal lever for economic development.

She referred to various barriers and challenges associated with demand and housing supply and the potential role for Council. It was highlighted that the potential assessments/options for housing led/mixed use regeneration for various Council owned lands identified through this SSA process in the East of the city were intended to be initial high level options for consideration by the Members to help inform next steps.

The Director advised that officers had been working with Mr K. Carlin, Carlin Planning Ltd to consider potential options for the various lands. Mr. Carlin was welcomed to the meeting. The Director and Mr. Carlin presented the Working Group with further information in respect of the ongoing SSA work.

Given the finite suitability of public lands across the city, the Members were encouraged to advise officers of any lands they considered might potentially have housing led regeneration potential and which could be assessed through the work of the Housing Led Regeneration Group referenced above.

The Members in attendance noted the information provided and that all decisions and proposals would be brought back to the relevant Committee as appropriate.

Summer Scheme Funding (Additional Needs)

The Members were made aware of the report which detailed the proposals received from potential providers to deliver summer scheme activities for children with additional needs in East Belfast.

The Members in attendance noted that they were content with the proposals and that the following recommendations would be submitted to the relevant Committee for approval:

Provider	Extent of Support	Age group	
Mencap	Children and young people with a range of moderate learning difficulties.	10-14; 14-18	Detailed proposal provided. £10,000 For daily sessions on six days over 2 weeks,15 young people per day. First week being for ages 10-14 and the second week being for 14-18. Places offered to east belfast residents on waiting lists not currently in provision
Ledley Hall Boys and Girls Club Trust Ltd	engage non-verbal young people, we cater to a range of complex needs both medical and those who are specifically neurodivergent	5-11;12- 15;16-18;	Detailed proposal provided. £8,538 for 63 days, 15 participants per day. Places offered to waiting list of young people not in other provision.

Request to Present - Eastside Partnership

The Members present agreed to receive a presentation from the Eastside Partnership at a future meeting.

<u>Additional Item – Pollution Incident</u>

Councillor Smyth requested that, following the pollution incident at a section of the Loop River, a tributary to the Connswater River, in the Montgomery Road/Ladas Drive area, any findings from the DAERA investigation would be shared with the Working Group.

Chairperson