

East Belfast Area Working Group

Thursday, 5th September, 2024

HYBRID MEETING OF EAST BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

- Members present: Alderman Copeland (Chairperson)
Aldermen Lawlor and Rodgers;
Councillors Abernethy, Bell, Bower, de Faoite,
D Douglas, S Douglas, P. Donnelly, Ferguson,
Flynn, Hanvey, Long, McCormick, Maghie and Smyth.
- In attendance: Mr D. Logan, Senior Programme Delivery Manager;
Ms. K. Watters, Neighbourhood Services Integration Manager;
Ms. D. McKinney,
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services and Governance
Coordinator; and
Mr. B. Flynn, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillor R. Brooks and Councillor McAteer.

Minutes

The Working Group agreed to adopt the minutes of the meetings of 28th May and 6th June as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest

In respect of item 3, 'Physical Programmes - Update', Alderman Rodgers declared an interest in that he was a shareholder in Glentoran Football Club. He did not partake in any discussion nor decision-making in respect of the matter.

Presentations

EastSide Partnership

The Chairperson welcomed to the meeting Ms. M. Bryans, Chief Executive, together with Ms. K. Hamilton, Director of Strategic Development, of the EastSide Partnership.

Ms. Bryans delivered a presentation on the work of the partnership and the strategic framework which would oversee its work from 2025 to 2030. She outlined the history, vision and mission statement of the partnership, together with its staffing and board structure which oversaw the delivery of its programmes of work. The Working Group was advised of the key objectives that would oversee the work of the partnership in future years, as set out below:

- to advocate for the regeneration of east Belfast;
- to improve and animate the natural environment of the area;
- to improve the life chances and of those most in need;

- to develop, celebrate and promote the culture, creativity and heritage of the area; and
- to be a sustainable and effective organisation.

Ms. Bryans answered questions posed by Members and clarified several matters. She outlined the feasibility of entering collective discussions on the future development of the former Laburnum Playing Fields site and its linkages to other developments across the area. In this regard, she undertook to liaise with Councillor Maghie the partnership's experience in the development of both the Comber and Connswater greenways and how such experiences might be utilised in any future development.

Further queries were addressed regarding the future management of the Twelfth of July bonfire at Orangefield Park, particularly with regards to community engagement. Other matters were addressed, such as the partnership's engagement with faith groups across the area and the feasibility of marking the 80th birthday of Van Morrison in August 2025.

The Working Group noted the information which had been provided.

PEACEPLUS

(Ms. D McKinney, Programme Manager (PEACE Programmes) attended in connection with this item).

The Programme Manager provided an update on the overall PEACEPLUS Community Action Plan, which sought to deliver over £15 million in funding towards a range of projects across the Council area. The Action Plan, she reported, contained three principal themes, namely:

- Theme 1 – Local Community Regeneration and Transformation;
- Theme 2 – Thriving and Peaceful Communities; and
- Theme 3 – Celebrating Cultures and Diversity.

The Working Group was given an overview of a project which was specific to east Belfast under Theme 1, that being, the establishment of the Sanctuary Theatre, which would be located at Castlereagh Street, adjacent to the Short Strand area. Ms. McKinney outlined the financial considerations and the projected timescales which would oversee the delivery of the Action Plan.

The Programme Manager then provided the Members with a detailed breakdown of each of the overall proposed projects across the city, participant numbers and estimated budget under the three themes, they were, as follows:

THEME	PROJECT NAME	PARTICIPANTS	EST BUDGET
Thriving and Peaceful Communities	Capacity Building - Community Empowerment Programme	1000	£903,578
Thriving and Peaceful Communities	TPC2 Health and Well Being	1620	£853,000
Thriving and Peaceful Communities	TPC3 Youth Inspiring Future Belfast	2106	£970,861

Thriving and Peaceful Communities	TPC4 Sports for Peace	1600	£711,646
Thriving and Peaceful Communities	TPC5 Employability Language Up	816	£447,513
Thriving and Peaceful Communities	TPC6 Arts in Communities	496	£695,744
Celebrating Cultures and Diversity	CCD1 Inter Faith and Belief	870	£304,564
Celebrating Cultures and Diversity	CCD2 Community Connections Ethnic Minority	752	£638,135
Celebrating Cultures and Diversity	CCD3 LGBTQIA + Community Engagement Programme	624	£391,672
Celebrating Cultures and Diversity	CCD4 Community Empowerment Ex-Politically motivated prisoner community	750	£493,006
Celebrating Cultures and Diversity	CCD5 From Multi-culturalism to Inter-culturalism. Culture and Heritage	2565	£949,990

The Programme Manager advised that the PEACEPLUS Programme Board had recommended that the Action Plan be progressed as close to the original timeframe as possible, which might require a condensed delivery to achieve targets by 1-2 months, with the contract being awarded up to December 2027.

The Members' attention was drawn to an indicative timeframe, and the Working Group was requested to note that there would be pre-market engagement sessions at least a week before each of the tenders opened, that tenders would be open for a minimum of 4 weeks and that they might be subject to change based on any feedback from the market. The Members were encouraged to forward the details of any groups or organisations which they felt should be added to the database for the circulation of relevant tender documentation.

The Working Group was advised that each Project Manager would be responsible for the implementation, delivery and management of each of the projects on a cross-disciplinary approach across all three themes, which would include:

- Pre-Commencement Conditions;
- Capacity Checks;
- Implementation Conditions;
- Letter of Offer and Terms and Conditions of funding;
- Pre-market engagement for each specific project; and
- Procurement.

The Chairperson thanked the Programme Manager for her presentation.

Noted.

Physical Programmes - Update

The Working Group considered the following report which was prepared by the Director of Property and Projects and presented by Mr D. Logan, Senior Programme Delivery Manager:

“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 the recently completed project (Appendix 1):
 - Cherryvale Playing Fields Improvements Pitch 1 – Landfill Communities Fund,
- Note the progress of the remaining groups of the Container Storage Facilities project (ELIF31) and consider any potential reallocation; and,
- Note the updated list of external capital funding opportunities attached at Appendix 2.

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	LIF 1		LIF 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 <i>Phase 1- complete</i> <i>Phase 2- ongoing</i>	<i>Phase 1 – Complete -</i> Bloomfield FC, East Belfast FC, Tullycarnet FC and Cregagh Wanderers projects completed. <i>Phase 2 -</i> Bredagh and Clonduff FC has been signed-off at Due Diligence. Delivery will begin asap after groups have signed funding agreements. Nettlefield Multi-Sports - liaison with landlord EA has now progressed and the Group is engaging. Officers have contacted Glentoran Academy and a response has not yet been received.	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's new contact.	Continue engagement with the group and key stakeholders.

Members will recall that on 6 June 2024, the AWG agreed that it would review the progress of the remaining groups of the Container Storage Facilities project (ELIF31) and review any potential reallocation at the next AWG meeting in September. Members are asked to note the progress of the remaining groups of the Container Storage Facilities project (ELIF31) and consider any potential reallocation.

4. Belfast Investment Fund

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	<p>Stage 3—Willowfield—£560k; H&W Welders—£2.37m; Strand—£1.5m; Bloomfield—£440k</p> <p>Stage 2—Lagan Village Youth & Community—no commitment</p> <p>Stage 1—East Belfast Mission; Belmont Bowling Club; Bloomfield Presbyterian Church; St. John's Orangefield, Church of Ireland, Tullycarnet Community Support Services—no commitment / on long list</p>
Outer East	<p>Stage 3 —TAGIT- £434k; Hanwood—£396k; Lisnasharragh Community Schools—£398k; Braniel—£390k; Castlereagh Presbyterian Church—£382k</p>

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 Technical Design RIBA Stage 4 has been completed and a contractor will be appointed in September 2024. Discussions with DfC on potential funding are continuing.	Continue engagement with the group and funders.
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	Design team has now been appointed. Procurement of a main contractor is now underway.	Continued engagement with the group.

5. Social Outcomes Fund

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	<i>Business case stage.</i> Members were advised at the last AWG meeting that the Executive Office is unable to provide support for this project. The Group is reviewing options including a revised design to incorporate both the SOF and NRF project elements.	Continued engagement with the group.

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. The overall NRF allocation for East was £2,351,551 and 4 projects received an In-Principle funding commitment. 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. Projects remaining at Stage 2 continue to have the support of a Client Manager for their proposals.

East Belfast – NRF overview

East	Stage 3 - Eastside Container Hotel, Portview Exchange, Development of sporting hub at Wilgar Park, Hosford Community Homes: 335 Newtownards Road Stage 2 - Impact Belfast, Nevin Spence Centre Visitor Experience
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East Belfast – NRF projects at Stage 3 - Delivery

Project name	Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
Eastside Container Hotel	£950,000	Stage 3- Committed	Meeting with the Group has been held to discuss taking the project forward and sourcing the remaining funding that is required.	Continue engagement with the group.
Portview Exchange	£600,000	Stage 3- Committed	Link to UV project. The UV Letter of Offer is expected by Autumn 2024 once TEO have completed the business case process.	Continue engagement with the group.
Development of sporting hub at Wilgar Park	£500,000	Stage 3- Committed	Currently gathering due diligence information from the group.	Continue engagement with the group and consultant.
Hosford Community Homes: 335 Newtownards Road	£300,000	Stage 3- Committed	Group is exploring opportunities for additional funding in order to meet a shortfall. Meeting with the Group had been held for an update and next steps were discussed.	Continue engagement with the group and consultant.

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	<i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> RIBA Stage 4 Technical Design is complete. Procurement exercise for the main contractor nearing completion. A review of the business case is almost completed. Alternative use for existing building is being explored currently.
Alleygating Phase 5 – City wide	<i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> Committee agreed a number of gates in May which was ratified by full council in June. Approval will be sought to proceed at more locations in September and October 2024. 61 gates across all four areas of the city will be programmed to start within this financial year. Programme of delivery to be confirmed by the contractor.
Playground Improvement Programme 2024/25	<i>Stage 3 - Committed.</i> The Programme for 2024/25 is in place and will include improvement works at Grampian Avenue playground.
Cremated Remains Burial Plots	<i>Stage 2- Uncommitted.</i> Business case is being developed with CN&S Department and surveys are continuing.
Sydenham Greenway	<i>Stage 2- Uncommitted.</i> Business case to be worked up with DfI who are at design development stage for the greenway. Ongoing discussion with DfI regarding a partnership approach.
Shared Youth and Community Facility Inner East	<i>Stage 1- Emerging.</i> Link to Ballymacarrett Area Masterplan. Education Authority are continuing to develop a business case for capital funding for youth provision at the council owned Ballymacarrett site for 2024/25 onwards. Officers are continuing to liaise with EA on the way forward.
Ballymacarrett Area Masterplan	<i>Stage 1- Emerging.</i> Link to the Shared Youth and Community Facility Inner East project.
Belfast Bikes Expansion	The contract with existing operator has been extended until the end of the year. The tender for a new provider/ operator is anticipated to go out in late Summer/ early Autumn 2024.

Henry Jones Playing Fields – Project will upgrade the current CCTV system and install lighting in the car park. The procurement exercise has been carried out and the appointment of the contractor is imminent. The contractor is expected to start works on site in September.

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
Hosford Community Homes Inclusion Hub	<i>Project underway.</i> Council is acting as Delivery Partner. Works progressing very well on site. Estimated completion in Spring 2025.
Titanic People Exhibition	<i>Project underway.</i> Council is acting as Delivery Partner. Contractor works progressing on site. Project completion anticipated by Spring 2025.
Portview Exchange <i>Link to NRF 'Portview Exchange'</i>	<i>Business case stage.</i> The Letter of Offer is expected by Autumn 2024 once TEO have completed the business case process. NRF funding secured.

PEACEPLUS – Capital Project

Members are asked to note updates on the capital project under the PEACEPLUS Programme.

East Belfast – PeacePlus LAP Capital Project overview

Project	Status and update
Sanctuary Theatre	PeacePlus funding has been announced by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) for the PeacePlus Local Community Action Plan to promote stronger community relations in Belfast. The funding package involves five capital projects across the city, including the refurbishment of the Sanctuary Theatre at Castlereagh Street. The Council awaits the formal Letter of Offer from SEUPB.

DfC and DfI funded projects

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

DfI and DfC – East Belfast projects overview

Project	Status and update
Covered cycle stands Phase 3 – East	<i>Via DfI Active Travel Enablers Blue and Green Infrastructure Fund</i> 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 late Summer / early Autumn.

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	Project completed.

9. Capital funding opportunities

Members are asked to note the updated version of the list of external capital funding opportunities attached at Appendix 2 which may be of assistance to groups and clubs.”

The Senior Programme Delivery Manager outlined the principal aspects of the report.

He reported that, in the absence of engagement between Glentoran Academy and Council officials, the project for the provision of a container for the use by Glentoran Youth had not progressed to due diligence stage.

Accordingly, it was,

Moved by Councillor Ferguson,
Seconded by Councillor Flynn and

Resolved - That the Container Storage Facility previously agreed for the use of Glentoran Academy be reprofiled and allocated for use by Dundela Football Club.

After discussion, the Working Group:

- agreed that the Container Storage Facility (ELIF31), previously agreed for the use of Glentoran Youth Football Club, be reprofiled and allocated for use by Dundela Football Club;
- noted the physical programme update including the Cherryvale Playing Fields Improvements the Pitch 1 – Landfill Communities Fund; and
- noted the updated list of external capital funding opportunities.

Chairperson