

# West Belfast Area Working Group

Thursday, 27th February, 2025

## HYBRID MEETING OF THE WEST BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

Members present: Councillor McCann (Chairperson),  
Councillors Black, M. Donnelly, Carson,  
R-M Donnelly, Duffy, Garrett, McCabe, McCallin,  
I. McLaughlin, R. McLaughlin, Verner and Walsh.

In attendance: Ms. S. Murtagh, Physical Programmes Portfolio Manager; and  
Ms. F. Dennison, Neighbourhood Services Integration  
Manager;  
Ms. E. Sharpe, Regeneration Project Officer;  
Mr. B. Flynn, Committee Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

Apologies for inability to attend were reported for Alderman McCoubrey.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 29th August, 2024 were agreed as an accurate record of proceedings.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were reported.

### **Physical Programme Update**

The Working Group considered the following 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 West Belfast including recently completed project at Appendix 1 - Covered cycle stands; and,
- Note the status and next steps around the additional local capital schemes/ proposals as a consequence of the UKSPF funding.

### 3. Belfast Investment Fund

Members are reminded that 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. The table below provides a summary of BIF allocated projects.

#### *Summary of BIF allocated projects*

<b>West</b>	Stage 3—Davitt's GAC—£1m; Raidió Fáilte—£950k; St Comgall's- £3.5m; Colin Glen Forest Park—£2.5m; Greater Shankill Community Council - RBL project- £300k, Glencairn Community Project— £700k Stage 2— St Mary's CBS— no commitment Stage 1— An Sportslann; Suffolk Community Forum; Belfast Hills- Black Mountain Access—no commitment
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The table below shows an overview of the remaining BIF project -

BIF Ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
BIF09	Glencairn Community Project	£900,000 <i>BIF- £700,000 ; NRF- £200,000</i>	Committed; Due Diligence	The group is continuing to work with NIHE on land arrangements for the project. The Design Team has been appointed and is undertaking initial site investigations.	Continue engagement with the group.

### 4. 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 West was £3,446,654 (West - £2,721,133 and Shankill - £725,521) and 6 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.

### West Belfast – NRF overview

<b>West</b>	<p>Stage 3— Michael Davitt’s Community Heritage Centre- £684,058; Croí na Carraige - ‘The Heart of the Rock’ - Phase 1- £537,058; The Mountainview Hotel- £1,500,000; The ACT Initiative Community Hub &amp; Visitors’ Centre- £295,000; Glencairn Community Project (Hub)- £200,000, The Road- £210,759; <i>Shankill contingency- £19,762.</i></p> <p><i>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 Faiseoige, Conway Mill - redeveloping for the future, Westcourt Uplift Project, Lamh Dhearg Renewable Energy &amp; External Lighting Improvement scheme, St. Gall’s Milltown Community Development, Colin Glen Eco Air-Cruizer, CNP Regeneration of Cloona House</i></p>
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### West Belfast – NRF projects at Stage 3 - Delivery

Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
<b>Michael Davitt’s Community Heritage Centre</b>	£684,058	Stage 3- Committed	Project was signed off at Due Diligence in January. Funding agreement is now being prepared.	Continue engagement with the group.
<b>Croí na Carraige - ‘The Heart of the Rock’ - Phase 1</b>	£787,058 <i>NRF- £537,058 An Ciste- £250,000</i>	Stage 3- Committed	Design team is progressing work. Discussions ongoing with potential funders. Group is planning further fundraising activities following the success with An Ciste.	Continue engagement with the group.
<b>The Mountainview Hotel</b>	£1.5m	Stage 3- Committed	Officer is in contact with the group to discuss next steps. Clarification on the site boundary is necessary to make any further progress with this project.	Continue engagement with the group.
<b>The ACT Initiative Community Hub &amp; Visitors’ Centre</b>	£295,000	Stage 3- Committed	<i>On ground.</i> Contractor appointed for heating element of contract, awaiting contractor start date. The group has recently secured additional funding to enhance the exhibition further.	Continue engagement with the group.
<b>Glencairn Community Project</b>	£900,000 <i>NRF- £200,000 ; BIF- £700,000</i>	Stage 3- Committed	<i>As above at BIF09.</i> The group is continuing to work with NIHE on land arrangements for the project. The Design Team has been appointed and is	Continue engagement with the group.

			undertaking initial site investigations.	
<b>The Road</b>	£210,759	Stage 3- Committed	The group is continuing to work with a consultancy on funding opportunities.	Continue engagement with the group.

## 5. Capital Programmes

The Capital Programme is the rolling programme of enhancing existing Council assets or building/buying new ones. The table below provides an update on current live projects on the Council's Capital Programme in the West Belfast area. Members are asked to note status and update.

### *West Belfast – Capital programme overview*

<b>Project</b>	<b>Status and update</b>
<b>City Cemetery Visitor Centre –Heritage Fund/ DfC</b>	Project complete. <i>Members will continue to receive reports on this project until the other external works are completed.</i> CNS is undertaking a procurement exercise for an operator for the Visitor Centre. Works on the Victorian Fountain and landscaping works are progressing and should be completed by end of March. Railings for central steps are due to be installed by Summer which will enable security fencing to be removed.
<b>Alleygating Phase 5 – City wide</b>	<i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> Works progressing. To be completed by end of March 2025.
<b>Sporting Pitches Investment 24/25</b>	<i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> Agreed at P&C Committee in June 2024. Works at four sites across the city including Falls Park. Falls Park Ballstop nets installed in November 2024; spectator fencing and hard-standing installation is now underway.
<b>Access to Hills - Black Mountain/ Upper Whiterock Pathway</b>	<i>Stage 2- Uncommitted.</i> Design stage. Design team is continuing to develop the project. Ongoing engagement with DfI as key partner. Full Planning application has been lodged. Application to DAERA Challenge Fund is being prepared.
<b>Colin Greenway</b>	Meetings are continuing between the Council and key stakeholders DfI, DfC and NIHE on the Colin Active Travel Plan. Lagmore Avenue cycle scheme works will commence late March for a period of 9 months by DfI.
<b>Access to the Hills - connections from Cavehill to Divis Mountain and Black Mountain</b>	<i>Stage 2- Uncommitted.</i> This is being considered within the wider study as below.

<b>Connectivity - Access to Hills Programme</b> (city wide)	<i>Stage 1 - Emerging.</i> Feasibility study presented to Members in Autumn 2023. Ongoing engagement with other stakeholders such as the National Trust and Belfast Hills Partnership.
<b>Belfast Bikes Expansion</b>	The tender for a new provider/ operator has concluded and the contract will be signed in February.
<b>Lidl, Stewartstown Road</b> Suffolk 3G Pitch and Lenadoon Park Pitch Improvements	This work is under S76 Developer Contributions for Open Space. <i>Suffolk pitch</i> - Planning application submitted and awaiting decision. Likely to require additional funding. <i>Lenadoon Park</i> – Grass soccer pitch improvement works complete; includes spectator hard-standing, extension to height of boundary fence, including extended dugout areas; land drainage, new pedestrian access gate and path connections. MUGA improvements programmed for Spring.

### **Additional small scale local capital schemes**

Due to securing UKSPF monies for a range of existing capital schemes, this has allowed the Council to free up resources for other activity. Council capital funds are therefore being redirected towards a range of additional small scale local capital schemes that still align with the prioritised objectives of the UKSPF as expected by the funder. In January, Members at SP&R Committee noted this update and that a further update will be brought to the AWGs for consideration. This activity can begin in this financial year and extend into 2025/26 to allow for development and completion of the projects. The proposal for these recouped capital monies is to target a range of small scale capital schemes focusing on sporting provision and access and inclusion. Projects within West area are shown below along with the projects that have a citywide focus:

<b><i>Additional local capital schemes - West</i></b>	
<b>Mobile Changing Places modular facility</b>	This facility can be used across the city. Specification developed and initial quotation received - next step is procurement.
<b>Inclusive Makaton communications boards in playgrounds</b>	Installation of communication boards in council playgrounds.
<b>Basketball provision</b>	Blacks Road and Páirc Nua Chollan – designs being prepared.
<b>Woodvale Park Sensory Garden</b>	Next step is to appoint the design team to take the scheme forward.

Members will also be aware that party briefings were held late last year on the Capital Programme and that a number of further Capital Thematic workshops/briefings are to be arranged with Members to inform the longer term Capital Programme. As part of this exercise, a series of further improvement projects will come forward in conjunction with City & Neighbourhoods Services Department. Further, the Property & Projects Department

continues to actively scan for potential additional sources of external funding that can be secured for capital proposals.

**6. Externally funded programmes**

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

**Urban Villages Initiative**

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 – UV overview***

Project	Status and update
Colin Community Health and Wellbeing Hub	Council is acting as Delivery Partner. This is a developing project from Colin Neighbourhood Partnership at Business Case stage.

**PEACEIV/ PEACEPLUS – Capital Projects**

Members are asked to note updates on the capital projects that are related to the PEACE Programmes.

***West Belfast – Capital Projects overview***

Project	Status and update
Forth Meadow Community Greenway	<b>Project completed.</b> Signage package subject to agreement.
Distillery Street Redevelopment Project	Funding confirmed from SEUPB PeacePLUS. The project includes creation of a cross-community Peace and Reconciliation Park providing sustainable drainage and flood risk management as an integral part of urban renewal. Meeting SEUPB in March to move forward to procurement of Design Team. Ongoing meeting with key stakeholders, work in progress.

**Other externally funded projects**

Below is the status update on capital projects funded by other partners in West Belfast.

***Other external funders – West Belfast projects overview***

Project	Status and update
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<b>Covered cycle stands</b>	Via DfI Active Travel Enablers Blue and Green Infrastructure Fund Funding has been received for Phase 3 of this programme. <b>Cycle stands in locations at Falls Park, Bog Meadows and Whiterock Leisure Centre have been completed.</b>
<b>Black Mountain Shared Space Project – Phase 2</b>	Via IFI, DoJ, DfC <b>On Ground.</b> Contractor works progressing on site. Estimated completion in Summer 2025.

The Physical Programmes Portfolio Manager outlined the principal aspects of the report and the Working Group noted the information which had been provided.

### **Sustainable Food Project - Update**

(Ms. M. Quigley, Adaptation and Resilience Advisor, and Ms. M. Turley, Community Garden Support NI, attended in connection with this item.)

The Working Group was provided with an overview of the work which was ongoing in developing a Sustainable Food Strategy for Belfast. It was reported that the Belfast Sustainable Food Partnership had been established in 2023, and that it acted as a collective voice for the city on key challenges for the food system around climate change, biodiversity, food justice, a circular economy, urban farming, community growing, food waste and more. Ms. Turley outlined the extensive work which been undertaken in conjunction with several stakeholders in advancing the project on behalf of the Council.

Noted.

Chairperson