



Belfast City Council

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Report to: | Development Committee |
| Subject: | Renewing the Routes Prioritisation Processes, Future Scope of Activity and Implementation options |
| Date: | 9 June 2010 |
| Reporting Officer: | John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470 |
| Contact Officer: | Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, ext 3459 |

Relevant Background Information

The purpose of the report is to outline the: proposed methodology for the longer term prioritisation of future Renewing the Routes local regeneration activity across the City; the suggested approach to the short term continuation of implementation works; and the potential for extending the scope of future local regeneration activity.

The proposals outlined below are required to provide the short, medium and long term structures for the continuation of the successful local regeneration activity carried out under the current Renewing the Routes initiative. The detail of the report and appendices seeks to clarify the suggested approach to the prioritisation of ongoing local regeneration activity and provide a framework to support the ability of the Council to respond to any unique opportunities for collaborative activity that may fall outside of an approved schedule of prioritised areas.

The recommendation has been developed to retain the general principles for the work established during the development of the Brighter Belfast / Integrated Development Fund (IDF) and supported by the external review reported to January Committee. The direct partnership project delivery approach was highlighted as an important element of the continuity and a vital component for the successful implementation of package local regeneration work. The emphasis will remain focused on non-traditional activity whereby the priority will be the potential projects that are not addressed by mainstream of other statutory providers.

~~Members should note that with finite funds available it was evident that some mechanism would be required to prioritise particularly routes and parts of routes for initial action on a multi-agency basis. Approval was sought and given 15th May 2002 on the proposed methodology for the prioritisation of routes and proposals to produce a Masterplan framework which addressed the principles of sustainable development. It was agreed that the following indicators of need be used to guide prioritisation:-~~

~~Physical and Environmental Development —. Provided analysis to identify areas for regeneration was based upon the level of occupancy, the condition and level of vacant and type of land in each area.~~

~~Social exclusion — this data was plotted using the Robson indicators of deprivation at both ward and enumeration levels~~

~~Economic data — provided analysis based upon data supplied by VLA (Valuation Land Agency) which provided an average indication of the anticipated rental value of commercial property in each area.~~

~~Creativity — used as a multiplier against the need indicators this score looked at the strategic location of the area; complementarily with other initiatives and local identity issues such as emotional and historical factors.~~

~~It was agreed at this time that the analysis would be undertaken using the agreed guideline and information collected on the arterial routes (mapped onto Geographic Information Systems (GIS)), and in collaboration with the key partners; Belfast Regeneration Office (BRO), the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) and the Belfast Area Partnership Boards to prioritise areas for development along the arterial routes in the City. Once areas on particular routes were identified as priorities for action the next phase was to produce an integrated development plan for each a~~

Key Issues

Prioritisation process

The report and recommendations have been developed in the context of the potential future resource availability rolling forward the commitments set out in the current estimates (£300,000pa). The proposals also recognise that a mechanism is required to prioritise phased longer term activity based on the development of a local action plan approach that reflects both the need for regeneration and the opportunities to achieve the transformation of local environments.

The pilot local regeneration and prioritisation activity, supported through the Council's previous Brighter Belfast Initiative, provided the context for the review of the approach and the detailed recommendations. The matrix approach, previously endorsed by Committee for the identification of the original target areas, formed the basis for the suggested framework for the prioritisation process.

The approach to the matrix and the information sources incorporated into the evaluation support the previously agreed criteria for area prioritisation: Physical Environment, Social Factors, Economic Circumstances and Strategic Influences as set out in Appendix 1.

The focus for the assessments are the identified nodes (between 0.5 and 1Km) along the main arterial routes within Belfast, as identified in draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (dBMAP). The linear distance covered by the 18 routes identified in dBMAP (Appendix 2) extends to over 60Km within the Belfast administrative boundary.

It is proposed that the evaluation is carried out using the criteria and methodology set out in Appendix 1 as part of a two stage process. The emphasis of the initial activity would be on the evaluation process to support the empirical identification of target areas across the city. The evaluation results would be considered by a future Committee and inform the process of detailed action planning which would be

developed for the agreed target areas in consultation with local members and communities.

Research and evidential sources have been refined since the original Brighter Belfast supported initiative through the local area analysis work developed within the Department. An important element of the data supporting the evaluation process is drawn from the range of indicators established by the SNAP (Strategic Neighbourhood Action Programme) Unit, through their localised socio-economic data resources.

The comprehensive quantitative and qualitative evaluation would provide the basis for the prioritisation of target areas for future consideration by Committee. It should be noted that, on the basis previous experience and projected resources (staff / finance), it estimated that between two and three areas per year would be brought forward for the development of the detailed implementation action plans. The action plans would form the basis for phased project delivery in the target areas over an agreed timescale and reflecting the required scoping/consultation activity with local members, communities and partners.

The detailed survey and evaluation activity, if approved, is projected to be completed in late autumn. It is proposed that the results and any potential recommendations would be brought back to Committee for consideration of the potential prioritisation and approval following this first stage of the developmental activity.

Members may wish to note that the approach to the Renewing the Routes activity and evaluation has been developed on the basis of a securing a long-term rolling programme of local regeneration activity across the city.

The suggestion for consideration is a two stage approach to the prioritisation of future activity based on the criteria and methodology set out in Appendix 1 and covering nodes along the routes identified in Appendix 2. Stage 1 would encompass the detailed survey and assessment of all the identified routes to provide a basis for the comparison of individual areas and potential prioritisation. Stage 2 would comprise the prioritisation which would follow the Committee consideration of the evaluation results; the Strategic Influences and the comparative matrix for the different study areas.

Scope of Future Local Regeneration Activity

The experience from the pilot activity and the IDF has identified the need to consider both the potential to extend the scope of the initiative and introduce a degree of flexibility.

The positive experience of working through the project delivery with the focus on the main arterial routes across the city has highlighted the potential for similar regeneration work to be carried out in other neighbourhood centres. This extension of the potential sphere of operation beyond the existing routes, as identified in Appendix 2, would require further detailed consideration in order to set out the potential parameters for the work.

The recent experience has also demonstrated that it could be beneficial to establish a framework to support the ability of the Council to respond to any individual opportunities for collaborative local regeneration activity that may fall outside of a prioritised implementation programme.

It is suggested that the Committee supports the initiation of work to determine the potential for the establishment of a framework that would enable the consideration of the potential for additional local regeneration activity. This proposed work would

explore the potential for a mechanism to enable the Council to consider targeted Renewing the Routes local regeneration activity outside of a prioritisation process and the factors such as the availability of external funding or formal partnerships.

Short Term Implementation

The uncertainty in relation to the resources available to deliver future programmes and the focus on the completion of the current, IDF, works necessitates the consideration of interim or shorter term options for the prioritisation of implementation activity in the current financial year. The Committee as part of the estimates and budget setting process agreed the provision of core budget funding of £300,000 for the delivery of Renewing the Routes local regeneration activity for this financial year which was intended to provide the capacity to carry out work in the areas identified by the prioritisation process outlined above.

The timescale for the completion of the two stage process, as outlined above, will leave insufficient opportunity for the development and implementation of physical projects, in new areas of the city, within the remaining period to March 2011. Committee may wish to consider the potential to defer the implementation activity and carry forward the agreed resource allocation into the next financial year as a specified reserve. The deferment would enable the resources to be fully targeted on the agreed new priority areas in combination with future resource allocations. This approach would, however, require the approval of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. It may therefore be appropriate to consider additional options in parallel with this approach. The options outlined below seek to identify the potential for continued regeneration activity in the event that the implementation works cannot be deferred.

In the absence of the new priorities being defined and the deferment of the works not being possible, the options for the utilisation of the approved project resources would be restricted to work within the existing target areas. As the IDF works have been moving towards completion the Renewing the Routes team focused on the review of the previous target areas to determine whether incomplete plan elements could be identified. This review detailed the past levels of activity (Appendix 3) and sought to identify whether the circumstances that may have limited the earlier scope for implementation had changed and whether or not potential existed for further implementation works. Three options for the completion of activity in the existing target areas, taking account of the potential to balance the levels of previous intervention activity, are outlined below.

Option 1 - implementation projects to be developed with the focus on the areas that only received the original local regeneration seed funding from the Council's Brighter Belfast initiative. This would target activity on Lower Ormeau Road, Mid-Donegall Road and Albertbridge Road.

Option 2 – retain the focus on the three areas identified in Option 1 above and consider the potential for smaller scale interventions on the routes that did not receive the enhanced funding provided by the IDF. This would target activity in the three areas identified in Option 1 and include the potential to carry out more limited works on Antrim Road, York Street/North Queen Street and Lower Newtownards Road.

Option 3 – again retain the focus on the Option 1 area but expand the scope of activity to include all the target areas identified as part of the original prioritisation activity. The scope of activity would be limited to the originally identified nodes and would exclude the additional areas in the Greater West Belfast and Shankill Taskforce area included covered by the IDF funding.

Detail of the package of potential works developed, and/or related Committee decisions under any of the options outlined above, would be brought back to Members with an indication of the proposed budget allocations across any areas agreed by Committee.

~~The importance of understanding the nature and scale of decline is crucial in the designing and placement of regeneration initiatives that will achieve the optimal outcomes. However, given the finite amount of resources, there will always be a need for some form of prioritisation, which reflects both the need for regeneration and the opportunity to achieve this transformation. One of the main contributors to this research will be the SNAP (Strategic Neighbourhood Action Programme) Unit, whose knowledge in localised socio-economic data will assist in the analytical process. Guiding principles in determining which variables to adopt, the following guiding principles has been~~

~~data available in administrative geographies (e.g. electoral ward);
geography to be of appropriate size to allow for variation in areas (e.g. population less than 3,000);
variable measurable over time;
variable to be appropriate to the chosen theme.~~

Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM)

~~One of the main aims of RTR work has been to improve environs in deprived areas. In the case of RTR, this consideration is no exception. Therefore, the fundamental criterion should be the prevalence of deprivation. It is therefore intended to use the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM) as the most comprehensive measure of deprivation, covering a range of economic, social and physical indicators including income; employment; health deprivation & disability; education, skills and training; proximity to services; living environment; and crime and disorder~~

Resource Implications

There are no additional implications, the project funding resources are contained within the Departmental estimates.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Committee:

1. Endorses the suggested two stage approach to prioritisation of future activity based on the criteria and methodology set out in Appendix 1;
2. Supports the evaluation focus on the routes identified in Appendix 2 and the information sources based on the previous prioritisation, as set out within this report and appendices, on the understanding that the results form the basis of a future report to be presented to members for consideration.
3. Consider the options and agree either to defer implementation activity or support an approach for the initiation of short-term implementation activity within the current financial year ; and
4. Agrees the approach to the establishment of a framework to enable the consideration of the potential for additional local regeneration activity and/or the future extension of the scope of activity to additional targeted areas outside of the arterial routes defined in Appendix 2.

Decision Tracking

Following ratification:

Recommendation 2 should be brought back to Committee for further consideration

Time line: October 2010

Reporting Officer: Keith Sutherland

Recommendation 4 should be brought back to Committee for further consideration

Time line: October 2010

Reporting Officer: Keith Sutherland

Key to Abbreviations

RTR - Renewing the Routes

dBMAP- Draft Metropolitan Area Plan

VLA - Valuation Land Agency

GIS - Geographic Information Systems

BRO - Belfast Regeneration Office

NIHE- the Northern Ireland Housing Executive

SNAP Strategic Neighbourhood Action Programme Unit

NIMDM - Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure

IDF – Integrated Development Fund

SOAs – Super Output Areas

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 - [Renewing the Routes: Prioritisation 2010 methodology](#)

Appendix 2 - Draft BMAP Identified Arterial Routes

Appendix 3 - Local Regeneration Activity in Existing Target Areas