



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Development Committee
<b>Date:</b>	21 August 2012
<b>Subject:</b>	Renewing the Routes Programme 2012/13
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, ext 3463

<b>1.</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
1.1	The Renewing the Routes Programme is local regeneration initiative that delivers local regeneration projects at targeted locations along the arterial routes within Belfast. Since 2004 the Programme has facilitated the investment of approximately £6.5 million across these key routes and neighbourhoods. This investment has acted as a catalyst for the delivery of a range of projects including: approximately 500 commercial frontage improvements; lighting schemes; environmental improvements; public realm enhancements; public art; community arts initiatives; landscaping; commercial alleygating; strategic tourism signage; facade cleaning and improvements to site boundaries or enclosures.
1.2	Following Committee endorsement in February 2012 a four year rolling programme for local regeneration was agreed across the city. The target areas identified for the current financial year are the Newtownards Road and Ormeau Road (Appendix 1).
1.3	The Renewing the Routes team has also continued to work with strategic partners including the Belfast Regeneration Office (BRO) in a coordinated approach to delivering regeneration works in the identified target areas. There are opportunities to continue with this approach for the new areas, BRO have approached the Council to explore the potential for collaborative work for the areas identified as current programme priorities and in addition have requested consideration for similar environmental works on Cromac Street.

<b>2</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
2.1	Since approval in February 2012, work has continued on the development of plans for the four target areas. Scoping and engagement work has expanded, in conjunction with relevant statutory and community contacts, including elected representatives for the areas. This activity has informed the development of the range of priority local regeneration works and is included with this report for endorsement by committee (Appendix 1) and summarised in the of a form Project Plan Table (Appendix 2).

2.2	<p>The key common themes emerging from the scoping work with local Councillors and stakeholders were identified as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Environmental improvements</i> - major issues facing the routes are dereliction or under used property and often poor general environments; requiring action to ensure improvements that can complement other developments;</li> <li>- <i>Built heritage</i> – the roads contain elements of historical or cultural significance that offer the opportunity to develop these local assets through architectural lighting, interpretive signage and heritage projects;</li> <li>- <i>Commercial improvements</i> – focus areas have been identified along the routes; the areas are hubs of activity with local shops, services and facilities serving the community. The commercial improvements will focus on supporting these;</li> <li>- <i>Environmental works</i>:-Targeted and sustained clean-up and graffiti removal campaigns working with local groups;</li> <li>- <i>Collaborative work</i> essential in maximising finite budgets, particularly with a joined-up approach to external funding opportunities with statutory agencies. The underlying objective is to maximise the impact of the Council’s own contribution through internal joint working i.e. community safety, parks and leisure, economic development, building control, tourism and the arts and SNAP.</li> </ul>
2.3	<p>As part of the ongoing review of delivery the Committee is being requested to endorse the continuation of the current approach to the collection of contribution to commercial improvement works. In light of the streamlined approach to the legal processes, now employed by Renewing the Routes in dealing directly with owners of commercial properties, it has been previously agreed by Council to seek a nominal contribution from owners towards the cost of the project of 10%. It is proposed that the approach of requiring a contribution from owners / occupiers is continued.</p>
2.4	<p>The previously utilised, direct delivery, approach to the procurement of proposed works and implementation is proposed to be continued for this phase of activity. The Renewing the Routes Team will work with Property and Projects in the procurement of architectural services and the proposed measured term contract for the contractors to carry out the works across all the areas. This strategic approach will help ensure efficiencies in project development, delivery timescales and budgets, whilst providing flexibility given the complex nature of some of the schemes.</p>
2.5	<p>Members will note the relevant area and Project Plan tables for each of the Newtownards Road and Ormeau Road are appended for consideration in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2. An additional longer list of projects is also provided should further resources become available (through external sources currently being actively pursued with potential project partners) or modifications to existing plans which will be subject to further Council approval.</p>
2.6	<p>The Belfast Regeneration Office has approached the Council to explore the potential partnership activity in the target areas and at Cromac Street. Following the successful delivery of previous joint initiatives BRO has requested that the Council assist with the development of complementary regeneration works on the two target routes and a commercial improvement programme for properties on Cromac Street.</p>

2.7	The Department has requested initial proposals outlining works and associated costs for additional regeneration works within the Renewing the Routes agreed areas of the Newtownards Road and Ormeau Road in addition to Cromac Street. Approval is therefore being sought from Committee for the Team to provide assistance in the development and delivery of the potential complementary commercial regeneration activity.
-----	---

<b>3.</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
	There are no additional resource implications. The current Departmental budgets for 2012/13 include provision for the proposed £300,000 of local regeneration works in the Newtownards and Ormeau roads.

<b>4.</b>	<b>Equality and Good Relations Considerations</b>
4.1	There are no Equality and Good Relations considerations attached to this report.

<b>5.</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
5.1	Members are requested to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- approve the continuation of the approach to the commercial contributions;</li> <li>- endorse the proposed Renewing the Routes programme for Newtownards Road, Ormeau Road as summarised in Appendix 2; and</li> <li>- approve the proposed partnership working with BRO to secure additional funding to complement the activity outlined in Appendix 2 and additional work at Cromac Street.</li> </ul>

<b>6.</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
Further to approval of the attached programme and recommendations:	
Timeline: November	Reporting Officer: Shirley McCay

<b>8.</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
Appendix 1 – Renewing the Routes Programme 2012/13 Appendix 2 – Action plans for target areas 2012/13.	