



Belfast City Council

Report to	Development Committee
Subject:	Renewing the Routes Programme
Date:	20 August 2013
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1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The ongoing Renewing the Routes Programme has delivered local regeneration projects at targeted locations across the arterial routes of Belfast since 2004. The Programme has facilitated the investment of approximately £6.5 million across these key routes and neighbourhoods.
1.2	The Committee agreed a four year rolling programme for the continuation of local regeneration across the target areas of the city in February 2012 (Appendix 1).
1.3	The purpose of this report is to provide updates and seek approval for a number of proposals linked to the ongoing programme. The updates are in respect of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Progress of works under our current agreed programme in Ormeau and Newtownards Roads- Progress on the development of the DSD funded local regeneration programme on Lower Ormeau incorporating Cormac Street and Newtownards Road
1.4	Following on from the programme approved in February 2012, Committee support is sought in relation to the proposed local regeneration action plans for Andersonstown Road and Oldpark Road areas as presented in Appendix 3.
1.5	The support of the committee is also sought in relation to the approval of continued partnership working with Belfast Regeneration Office (BRO) and Department for Social Development on future regeneration projects.

2	Key Issues
2.1	<p><u>Newtownards Road Update</u></p> <p>The commercial improvement programme is the main emphasis of work on the Newtownards Road (from Bridge End to Witham Street). The Newtownards Road scheme is being delivered in two phases, the Council funded programme (£150,000) with over 40 units signed up for cosmetic updates is due for completion in Autumn 2013; and the DSD funded programme (£155,000) covering approximately 30 further businesses carried out in the period up to the end of March 2014. As part of the wider local regeneration activity on the road, a number of vacant sites have been identified and council is working with local stakeholders and statutory partners in developing projects to address the issues presented by the underutilised areas.</p>
2.2	<p><u>Ormeau Road Update</u></p> <p>Work on the commercial improvement programme is underway on Ormeau Road (from Ormeau Embankment to Ravenhill Road Roundabout) with 35 properties participating in the improvement programme. The work to the commercial properties will be supplemented by environmental improvement schemes have been agreed with some of the road's prominent buildings including Ballynafeigh Orange Hall and Ballynafeigh Community Development Association.</p>
2.3	<p><u>Proposed Regeneration Action Plans for 2014/15 Programme</u></p> <p>Since approval in February 2012, work has continued on the development of plans for the agreed target areas. Extensive scoping and engagement work with relevant statutory and community contacts, including elected representatives for the area was carried out as part of the plan development process. This activity has informed the development and prioritisation of the local regeneration work summarised in the regeneration action plans included with this report for endorsement by committee (Appendix 2). The proposed plans also identify a longer list of additional projects that could form the basis for further work should increased resources become available (through external sources currently being actively pursued with potential project partners) or modifications are required for existing plans.</p>
2.4	<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"> - <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; - <i>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; - <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 improving the environment within these areas for residents, businesses and visitors; - <i>Environmental works</i> - Targeted and sustained clean-up and graffiti removal campaigns working with local groups; - <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

	<p>maximise the impact of the Council's own contribution through internal joint working and external partnership opportunities alongside community safety, parks and leisure, economic development, building control, tourism and the arts and cleansing services.</p>
2.5	<p>Members will note the relevant area and Regeneration Action Plans for the Andersonstown Road (Stewartstown Road) and Oldpark Road are appended for consideration (Appendix 2). The additional longer list of projects is also provided for information and as a guide to the potential for further activity should additional resources become available.</p>
2.6	<p>The approved Oldpark node runs from Torrens Avenue to Clifftodene Crescent. However, feedback from our consultations highlighted the potential for collaboration between the council's programme and the proposed BRO Public Realm Environmental Improvement scheme scheduled for 2015. Scoping work and consultations have identified units outside the approved node that could be improved under the 2014/15 programme which would not be part of the DSD PREI scheme.</p>
2.7	<p>On the basis of the further consultations with BRO the scoping activity was reviewed to explore the potential to take forward both commercial and environmental improvements between Oldpark Ave and Clifftodene Crescent. Whilst this approach would slightly extend the node and require the council to work on up to 5 additional units, it was considered that if approved the package of works could be successfully completed for the expanded node area. The project estimates indicate that the additional work would be accommodated within the current budget of £150,000 and if included would ensure that the whole route from Crumlin Road would benefit from environmental improvements on completion of the council and BRO initiatives.</p>
2.8	<p><u>Ongoing collaboration with DSD: Update on Cromac Street/Lower Ormeau Road and Newtownards Road</u> Construction work is due to commence in the Autumn for the DSD funded units on the Newtownards Rd (Bridge End to Albertbridge Road). The initial condition survey for the Newtownards Rd is complete and proposed designs have been agreed. Consultation with shop owners will be undertaken over the next few months. The council team will continue to work with owners/tenants to agree final designs for the properties.</p>
2.9	<p>The design team is currently being commissioned for the Cromac Street/Lower Ormeau Road programme (from Cromac Street to Stranmillis Embankment). The traders have responded positively to the proposed commercial improvement programme and it is anticipated works will commence in early 2014.</p>
2.10	<p><u>Joint working with DSD</u> On 21st May 2013, the committee supported a proposal for partnership working with DSD's Belfast Regeneration Office (BRO) for Newtownards Road and Lower Ormeau incorporating Cromac Street on the basis of a funding offer from BRO of an additional £310,000. The Department for Social Development has recently approached the Council to explore the potential of partnership activity at Woodstock Road.</p>
2.11	<p>The request from BRO is that the Council assist with the development of a commercial improvement programme covering properties on Woodstock Road</p>

	(Beersbridge Road up to Loopland). Members will be aware that the council recently completed a partnership project with the DSD for the Woodstock Link, which is a section of Node 1.
2.12	The Department has requested initial development proposals outlining works and associated costs for additional regeneration works beyond the scope of the council's current Renewing the Routes programme. The Department has confirmed that all costs associated with the commercial improvement programme will be covered by their BRO budgets. Approval is therefore sought from Committee for staff assistance in the development and delivery of the potential complementary commercial regeneration projects.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	There are no additional resource implications arising from the proposed assistance to the joint working projects with DSD in the development and implementation of an environmental/commercial improvement projects for Woodstock Road.
3.2	The Department has confirmed that all capital costs associated with the commercial improvement programme will be covered by BRO's budgets and permission is being sought from Committee for staff assistance in the development and delivery of the commercial regeneration projects.

4	Equality and Good Relations Implications
4.1	There are no relevant equality and good relations implications attached to this report.

5	Recommendations
5.1	<p>Committee are requested to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To note the ongoing work in relation to the current programme on Ormeau Road (Ormeau Embankment to Ravenhill Road roundabout) and Newtownards road (Bridge End to Witham Street); - Endorse the proposed Renewing the Routes Regeneration Action Plans for the 2013/14 programme on Andersonstown Road (Hillhead Crescent to Suffolk Road) and Oldpark Road (extended area from Oldpark Ave to Cliftondene Crescent) as summarised in Appendix 3 - To note the progress with the DSD funded local regeneration programme on Lower Ormeau Road incorporating Cromac Street and on Newtownards Road - To approve staff assistance in the development and delivery of a DSD funded environmental/commercial regeneration improvement programme for Woodstock Road as detailed in paragraph 2.11

6	Decision Tracking
There is no decision tracking attached to this report.	

7	Key to Abbreviations
BRO – Belfast Regeneration Office DSD – Department for Social Development	

PREI – Public Realm Environmental Improvement

8	Documents Attached
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Appendix 1 - Renewing the Routes Programme Programme Areas 2012-2016 Appendix 2 - Regeneration Action Plans for the target areas 2013/14 Appendix 3 - Renewing the Routes Programme 2013/14 Proposed Regeneration Action Plans
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