

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Report to: | Strategic Policy and Resources Committee |
| Subject: | Investment Programme Half Year Update |
| Date: | Friday 22 nd November 2013 |
| Reporting Officer: | Peter McNaney, Chief Executive Gerry Millar, Director of Property and Projects Ronan Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources |
| Contact Officer: | Emer Husbands, Strategic Performance Manager Sinead Grimes, Programme Manager |

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present to Committee the half year update report on year 2 of the Investment Programme.

2.0 Background

2.1 At their meeting in June Members approved the year 2 implementation plan for the Investment Programme. This report provided project briefs detailing milestones and actions for all the key projects and it is this document that Chief Officers use to performance manage the delivery of the Investment Programme. A key aspect of the performance management arrangements is regular reporting to Committee and over the past few months members have received updates on a number of individual projects as well as details of spend and approvals within the capital programme. The Committee will receive a further detailed capital programme update and stage approval report at this meeting which should be considered in conjunction with this report.

2.2 This report now sets out the half year update on all the key projects in the Investment Programme.

3.0 Delivery of the Investment Programme Year 2 – Key Highlights

3.1 The Investment Programme has projects and commitments across the four strands of Physical Investment; Economy; People, Communities and Neighbourhoods; and Value for Money. Details on the progress of all the physical projects (capital programme and LIF projects) are contained in Appendix 1 with photographs on the progress at Appendix 2. Updates on the other strands are detailed in Appendix 3. The key highlights are listed below.

3.2 Physical Programme

- 3.2.1 In the Investment Programme we committed to investing £75 million in council facilities for local communities
- £20 million in partnership projects which will contribute to city regeneration
 - £50 million levered from Europe and other sources to provide key economic infrastructure projects; and
 - £5 million in smaller local regeneration projects

To date we have levered in a £29 m with the total due to be levered in above target at nearly £70million. A list of all schemes where funding has been agreed in principle and /or secured is

outlined at Appendix 4.

Capital Programme

3.2.2 Significant progress has been made in the delivery of the physical development element of the Investment Programme since June 2013. This has included completion on a wide range of projects including -

- the opening of the £3m upgrade at Mary Peter's Track which included a new eight-lane track, a revamped field events area and spectators stand. The new track, the same as the one laid in the Olympic stadium in London, now meets the highest international standards for athletic events
- the opening of £4million refurbishments at Dunville and Woodvale Parks, which were match funded by the DSD. The refurbishments included a new 3g pitch and changing accommodation, new play areas, new paths, fencing and artwork
- the installation of the new £200,000 John Luke Bridge in Clement Wilson Park which was officially opened on 15th November
- the development of the £487,000 Mountain Bike Trail at Barnett's Demesne in partnership with SportNI and Lagan Rural Partnership
- the £470,000 new pitch at the Hammer Complex which was developed in partnership with SportNI
- In addition work is nearing completion on the £1.8m relocation of the Belfast Welcome Centre to Donegal Square which was handed over to the Council at the start of November. An official opening, to which all Members will be invited, is taking place on 12th December
- 3 community gardens have been opened across the city at Finlay Park, Knocknagoney Linear Park and Whiterock
- a new £600,000 fuel station at Duncrue for Council vehicles

3.2.3 Work is also underway on -

- the £4million Phase 1 of the Connswater Community Greenway project including the installation of the new £500,000 steel bridge at Victoria Park which has been named after local playwright Sam Thompson
- the new 3G pitch at Marrowbone which went on ground at the start of November
- Phase 3 of the Alleygating Programme with test gates installed and the programme due to roll-out from January

3.2.4 Preparatory work is also continuing on a wide range of projects including -

- Pitches strategy – The development of new 3G pitches and changing accommodation is taking place at 10 sites across the city. Planning permission has been granted for the new pavilions at Waterworks and Dixon, planning permission has been applied for all other sites with the exception of Cherryvale. Tendering is underway for the majority of the sites and the first work is expected to go on ground in the New Year.
- Girdwood Hub – a letter of offer for £9.6m has been received and discussions on terms and conditions are continuing with SEUPB.
- Belfast Zoo – Activity Centre – new £430,000 activity centre at Belfast Zoo part funded through the ERDF. The project is due to commence early next year.
- Public Bike Share Scheme – a bidders day was held on 12th November.
- the Belfast Waterfront Exhibition and Conference Centre, Innovation Centre, Creative Hub and the infrastructure at the North Foreshore – these projects are all subject to ERDF funding

and no letters of offer have been received. However Committee has previously agreed that the Council may continue to work at risk on this project in order to meet the tight programme timescale but that **no** construction contracts will be awarded until LOOs are received and all outstanding issues have been resolved.

- Olympia and Andersonstown regenerations – as part of Phase 1 of the Leisure Transformation Programme.

Local Investment Fund Programme

3.2.5 Members will be aware that an integral part of the Investment Programme was the establishment of a £5million Local Investment Fund which was designed to support the delivery of key local regeneration projects in neighbourhoods and as a means for Members to connect with local communities in their area, in preparation for their formal role in community planning under the Reform of Local Government.

3.2.6 To date 67 have been recommended in principle for funding under the Local Investment Fund; of which 65 remain following 2 groups withdrawal from the process. Out of these 33 projects (of the 65 in total) have fully progressed through due diligence process; representing £2,062,502 of committed funding. . Due-diligence work is continuing on the other projects which have been approved in principle and officers are working closely with groups to ensure that all information is being forwarded to the Council. A further update on LIF is contained in the Area Working update report which is also on the agenda for today’s Committee.

Belfast Investment Fund

3.2.7 Members will be aware the Belfast Investment Fund (previously the City Investment Fund) was established to enable the Council to take a lead role and work in partnership to deliver key investment projects across the city.

3.2.8 The Strategic Policy & Resources Committee have already agreed that 13 projects as outlined below are progressed to Stage 1 as potential projects under the Belfast Investment Fund which will test their feasibility in the first instance. Further recommendations from the North Area Working Group are included in the Area Working update report which is also on the agenda for today’s Committee. Further updates on these projects will be brought to Committee as necessary

| | |
|----------|--|
| South | Lagan, Gilpins and Markets Tunnels |
| Shankill | St. Andrew’s Church |
| West | St. Comgall’s, An Sportslann, Corpus Christi – sports pitches, St Mary’s Christian Brothers – sports facilities, Conway Mill, Belfast Hills, Lionra Uladh (Raidio Failte) and Suffolk community forum – integrated pre-school development at Teeling’s Green |
| East | Strand Cinema Community Arts project |

3.2.9 Members are asked to note that Corporate Communications are working on a calendar of events to ensure that the media opportunities around each of these projects is maximised. As highlighted pictures of the above projects are attached at Appendix 2 so Members can see both the completed projects and the work which is underway. The Property & Projects Department is also happy to arrange site visits for Members/Party Groups to be undertaken to any of the projects including capital programme projects, LIF projects or emerging BIF projects which the Council has contributed to.

3.3 Economy

3.3.1 In support of improving the Economy the Council has provided employability and skills training

to 3,278 people significantly exceeding its target of 1,200. Internally work is continuing to increase job opportunities in BCC with 107 work placements created and 76 job opportunities advertised.

- 3.3.2 We continued to invest in the city through our events by hosting a very successful World Police and Fire Games with 7,000 participants attending from over 60 different countries. Preparations have begun for the Giro D'Italia in 2014 and the return of the Tall Ships in 2015.
- 3.3.3 In support of the tourism sector the roll out of World Host training has begun, with a target to accredit 400 businesses by Spring 2014. Octobers Restaurant Week received positive feedback with final outcomes currently being evaluated. Additionally, 70 people attended the launch of the Creative and Cultural Belfast Fund in October.
- 3.3.4 We continue to expand the international profile and economic relationships of the City. India week, held in June, attracted over 300 businesses and facilitated new export links. In the autumn the Lord Mayor spearheaded several trade missions to New York and Silicon Valley. These initiatives were extremely well received, and additional investment into Belfast is anticipated. We are also strengthening our links with China. The Mayor of Shenyang will be visiting the City in November where he will meet the Lord Mayor and sign a letter of intent to strengthen city to city relationships.
- 3.3.5 The three strands of the £16.7 Super-Connected Belfast project have been agreed – voucher scheme, wireless and Wi-Fi. The Belfast Voucher scheme received more applications than any other city and puts us on course to be the most successful of all the cities. The success of the Belfast Voucher scheme has led to the Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) using our scheme design and administration processes as the template for all other cities. It is anticipated that the Secretary of State for DCMS will announce the decision on the full rollout of the voucher scheme early in November. If the scheme is approved it will see us opening up the full scheme across the whole of Belfast. DCMS have agreed that the vouchers can be applied to businesses in the areas transferring from Lisburn and Castlereagh.
- 3.3.6 Increasing local procurement has been prioritised with Belfast spend at 43% in 2013-14. N independent study was carried out by CLES which showed that every £1 of council expenditure generates; 76 pence is spent or re-spent in the Belfast economy and 80 pence spent or re-spent in the post LGR boundary. A final report on the study will be presented to the Development Committee in November. A toolkit has been produced to increase business ability to build consortiums or joint ventures. This will open up more public tenders to smaller companies, and has been supported with capacity building workshops. The Council's website has also been refreshed to make it easier for businesses to locate tender opportunities and an internal 'buy local first' campaign has commenced asking departments to consider local suppliers in the first instance.

3.4 People Communities and Neighbourhoods

- 3.4.1 Project activity continues on Peace III funded projects including Youth Engagement and Tension Monitoring. The Youth Engagement project has allocated £345,546 for service delivery in local communities to engage with young people and their families to address issues at identified interface areas across the city. Through this project over 200 young people and their families are receiving intensive support from various agencies. A total of 319,536 has been allocated to deliver Tension Monitoring services in local neighbourhoods through Neighbourhood Plans with delivery happening via local community groups

- 3.4.2 The IBM Smarter Cities challenge took place in September. An international team of six IBM senior officers provided £400,000 worth of professional expertise through a 3 week period to study deprivation within the context of segregation in two pilot areas. The team attended 47 meetings, met with approx 150 people from over 60 stakeholders including community and voluntary sector government departments, GPs and health professionals, schools and representatives from the private sectors. The final report is due by the end of November.
- 3.4.3 Through Belfast's Police and Community Safety Partnerships we have allocated a total of £620,000 towards projects and initiatives in local communities which will help to tackle issues such as alcohol, drugs and anti-social behaviour. This has included awarding more than £194,000 in PCSP Small Grants across Belfast enabling 48 groups to deliver projects that tackle crime and antisocial behaviour in their local area.
- 3.4.4 The area intervention pilot in Lower Falls / Divis continues with the delivery of an action plan consisting of over 20 additional projects. This intervention has also secured an additional £150,000 for services to be delivered in the local community as well as significant increased service deliver through current service providers. This includes the installation of an outdoor learning classroom at the local primary school, delivery of educational and training programmes aimed to increase job opportunities in the local area and the implementation of intensive youth and family support programmes to tackle health issues and reduce antisocial behaviour. Statistics show that levels of ASB in the area have been reduced by 25% since the intervention started.
- 3.4.5 The Council continues to work in partnership with a range of agencies to tackle health inequalities and with the Belfast Strategic Partnership facilitated a mindfulness conference with 350 people in attendance. A Kids Space event was delivered in the City attracting 1,000 children and we also facilitated two Age Friendly workshops. Through the Active Belfast Partnership we have supported more than 1,500 people with physical activity programmes following their referral from the health sector and allocated £200k to local organisations through the Active Belfast grant scheme.
- 3.4.6 The Council continues to take a lead role in developing its work on Age Friendly Belfast, over the past six months some of the work we have delivered on includes engaging over 700 older people from local communities to help develop a draft 3 year Age-Friendly action plan. We have also engaged with 518 older people through our winter warmth clinics, resulting in 200 additional referrals for the home safety check scheme.
- 3.4.7 As part of our ongoing work to regenerate local neighbourhoods we continue with our Dilapidated Buildings project. Since April 2013 we have successfully completed our DOE funded project and which carried out £486,000 worth of refurbishment work on dilapidated properties across the city. A further 12 properties have had significant remedial work carried out and BCC are working with 34 owners who are in the process of refurbishing dilapidated properties in local communities.
- 3.4.8 The Council continues to improve its open space with two further parks, Lagan Meadows and Grove Playing Fields, being awarded Green Flag and ten other sites retaining their Green Flag Status.
- 3.4.9 In terms of Renewing the Routes, work on the Ormeau Road and Newtownards Road is progressing. Additional DSD funding has been secured, and designs are being developed.

Design Teams have been appointed for Oldpark / Stewartstown Road and, following completion of stakeholder consultation, contact with individual owners has commenced

3.4.10 Our playground improvement programme continues with refurbishment work currently underway at Dover Street, Taughmonagh and Michelle Baird Memorial Park. Work on these is due to be completed by the end of December. Work will commence in the New Year on a further three playgrounds at Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park; New Lodge and Clara Street which will be due for completion by the end of March.

3.5 Value for Money

3.5.1 The Council is continuing to work through this year's estimating process to achieve its £2m efficiency savings target. Future efficiency savings are also being targeted through the Procurement and Fleet Improvement Programmes.

3.5.2 The implementation of the Financial Improvement Programme to increase the number of creditors paid within 28 days is progressing and we have exceeded our half year target of suppliers paid within this time frame with 78.3 % paid against the target of 70%.

3.5.3 The agreed programme of work on rate setting is progressing with options to be considered by Members in November. The Council continues to work with LPS on vacancy inspections to help maximise the rate base. The IRRV have been commissioned to support the Council in identifying and resolving issues relating to the new rate base in line with Local Government Reform.

3.5.4. Through the Investment Programme we have a commitment to maximise the social and community benefits of our physical investment programme to date social clauses have been included in a number of our contracts including; Connswater professional services contract phase 1; Connswater work contract phase 1; Belfast Waterfront professional services contract; Waste contract for kerbside collection; Integrated Design Framework and Girdwood Hub. In addition the Council has commissioned the development of a social clause policy and guidance notes.

4.0 Supporting the Delivery of the Investment Programme Year 2

4.1 Programme and performance management arrangements are in place to support the delivery of the Investment Programme. Project managers are responsible for delivery of all key projects with Programme managers providing additional support and assurance on their delivery. In the case of large or complex projects project boards have been established with a Chief Officer assigned as Senior Responsible Officer. An Oversight Board chaired by the Chief Executive meets monthly to receive updates on projects and resolve any issues. Committee will continue to receive update reports on various aspects of the programme including the stage movements in the capital programme. A full year end update on all year 2 projects will be presented to committee as part of the Council's annual report.

4.2 Work has also continued in the delivery of the agreed communications plan for the Investment Programme which included a significant amount of media relations, web and social media and branding activities. A summary of activity from June to October is included in Appendix 5 together with an outline of potential communication opportunities for the next three months and below are some major milestones during which the profile of the Investment Programme can be raised:

- The opening of the Belfast Welcome Centre on 12 December to highlight the achievements

of the Investment Programme during the past calendar year;

- The announcement of the Waterfront Hall funding – used to highlight our commitment and funding secured from other sources for major projects, including Girdwood and Superconnected;
- The announcement of the rates in January/February – ‘what your money is doing for the city’
- Launching the second phase of the Investment Programme in February/March and outlining projects that will be delivered up until April 2015, including the Leisure Transformation Programme

5.0 Resource Implications

5.1 The resources for the delivery of the plan are included in the Investment Programme budget.

6.0 Equality and Good Relations Implications

6.1 There are no equality and good relations implications arising from this report.

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 Members are asked to note the year 2 half year report for the Investment Programme

7.2 Members are asked to note the communication activity set out at Appendix 5 and provide direction on how they wish to take advantage of the communication opportunities for the period November 2013 to January 2014.

8.0 Documents attached

Appendix 1 – Investment Programme Projects half year updates (Physical Programme – Capital Programme and LIF)

Appendix 2 – Photos of completed/underway or planned physical projects

Appendix 3 – Investment Programme Revenue Streams half year updates

Appendix 4 – Schemes with funding agreed

Appendix 5 – Communication Activity Update