



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	Area Working Update – Area planning and physical project prioritisation
Date:	21 st February 2014
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Property & Projects, Ext: 6217
Contact Officers:	Sinead Grimes, Programme Manager, Ext: 6203

1.0	Relevant Background Information
1.1	<p>Members are aware that there are a number of major changes facing both the Council and the wider local government sector currently including -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the reform of local government and the enhanced roles and responsibilities in addition to the extended boundaries including the <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - transfer of regeneration powers and associated assets and projects from DSD - transfer of statutory planning powers from DoE - emerging statutory community planning duty which will be at a city, thematic and area level • the emerging Social Investment Fund (SIF) projects • the emerging Leisure Transformation Programme (LTP) <p>Together with the continued implementation of the Council's Investment Programme, all of the above provide a great opportunity for Members to make a real difference to the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of Belfast, particularly in terms of physical investment decisions. However Members are aware that there are limited financial resources and Members need to properly consider the opportunity costs of approving one project over another project. Members also agreed last month to a continued zero rates increase which will increase pressure on the Council to deliver more with less. The SP&R Committee, as the Council's investment decision maker, has a responsibility to focus on delivering the projects which can have maximum benefits and investment return for the city and local areas. This raises a number of key issues and hard decisions for Members in terms project prioritisation.</p>
1.2	<p>Members are aware that since their inception the AWGs have played an integral role in recommending investment decisions for their areas in terms of LIF and Local Interventions to the SP&R Committee. It was also previously agreed at SP&R in November 2012 that the AWGs would play a central part in recommending decisions related to the Belfast Investment Fund (BIF) given their knowledge of local areas and to date 19 of these have been recommended to progress to Stage 1 - Feasibility. However the final decisions on what projects to invest in under BIF lies with the SP&R Committee.</p>
1.3	<p>However given the challenges and opportunities outlined above Members agreed last month that a detailed report on the current status of BIF projects particularly in regard to match funding be brought back to the February Committee. In order to develop an overall investment picture and to help Members with the emerging community planning process this paper also gives Members an update on the Council's other funding streams including the Capital Programme and the Local Investment Fund together with the emerging Social Investment Fund (SIF) proposals and the assets and projects which are transferring in from DSD/DRD and other areas under the LGR.</p>

2.0	Current status – physical projects
2.2	<p>Members are aware that in addition to BIF there are also a number of other funding streams in terms of physical investment projects within the Council. However due to the LGR the Council can no longer plan in the context of its current funding streams but needs to take into consideration the impact of the transferring DSD projects and the enhanced boundaries of the new Council post 2015. Indeed there is growing political pressure for commitment now to some DSD schemes so that DFP approval for funding is secured. The £37m that is being invested in Belfast under SIF also needs to be considered. It is therefore key that investment decisions are not taken in isolation and it is important the links and inter-dependencies between projects are taken into consideration. An overview of these funding streams/projects is contained in Appendix A</p>
3.0	Emerging issues for Members to note
3.1	<p>In the context of the above and the information in Appendix A there are a number of emerging key issues which Members are asked to note and consider</p> <p>General</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the information presented above and in the appendices primarily relates to physical investment decisions – as Members are aware there are a vast range of revenue programmes taking place across the city which also need to be taken into consideration so that emerging plans deliver the optimum benefits and outcomes for both local areas and at a city level • from 2015 the Council will become the regeneration authority for the city with a transferring regeneration budget as outlined to Committee last month. This presents an opportunity for the Council to look at reconstituting existing funding streams, including BIF, as wider regeneration funds. Members are asked to note however that this budget allocation has not yet been agreed and this is subject to further due-diligence work • The Council will become the planning authority from 2015 and will be required to produce a Local Development Plan providing an additional lever in relation to city development • the Council is already working closely with strategic partners including OFMDFM, DSD, DRD to ensure that there is continuity in terms of projects and projects delivery e.g. on the Rapid Transit • city investment has been primarily funding project and delivery driven which is unsurprising given the numbers of players involved i.e. Council, DSD, DRD, OFMDFM, SIB and the fact that there are no overall coherent plans with identified resources and accountable delivery mechanisms. However there is now an opportunity to pull some of this together <p>BIF projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • under the current criteria BIF projects must secure at least 50% match funding from other sources – the key sources for this for most of the projects are either through DSD funding or SIF. Members are asked also to note that none of the projects currently have full guaranteed match funding in place. Members will be aware that DSD funding will cease to exist in just over a year's time and this will have an impact on the potential match funding requirement. There are a number of projects where DSD/BRO are identified as a potential funder and where funding has in principle been profiled however there are no commitments to these projects yet. Only 2 of the emerging proposals may potentially receive SIF funding (St. Comgall's and the Lanyon Tunnels) although this has still to be confirmed by OFMDFM and there are a number of projects where SIF funding will now not now be forthcoming. <p>Transferring DSD projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information is still being gathered on the transferring DSD projects and this will have to be

analysed in more detail for their implications to the Council

- The STC have agreed a set of **guiding principles to support collaborative working** between both parties
- There are potentially over 250 projects/assets/initiatives transferring to the Council from DSD. Under each of the categories above there are essentially 4 stages of projects (similar to the Council's stage approval process)
 1. Projects currently underway which will be complete by 31 March 15 (*Committed*)
 2. Projects currently underway which *may* extend beyond 31 March 15 (*Committed*)
 3. Projects which *may* commence before 31 March 15 and will extend beyond transfer (*Uncommitted*)
 4. Preparation for projects which will commence after 31 March 2015 (*Emerging*)
- Projects which fall into the **third and fourth categories above will require the agreement of the STC or Shadow Council before preparatory and/or contractual work can proceed** prior to 1 April 2015. It is unlikely that DFP will allow DSD to commence preparatory or construction works on these projects without a clear commitment from the STC/Shadow Council to deliver the projects post the transfer of the regeneration functions
- Projects which are already underway (category 2) will need to be considered in the context of the rates setting process for the new Council. It is also recommended that these are considered at a programme level rather than an on individual basis. The Council already has as agreed policy on progression and delivery of capital projects and the STC/Shadow Council will need to integrate DSD's current and proposed work programme into the Council's Capital Programme Framework.
- **DSD funding has implications across the Council's physical funding streams** including the capital programme, emerging BIF and LIF. However as Members are aware it also has **implications in terms of revenue funding for community groups across the city through Neighbourhood Renewal** etc – this will need to be taken into consideration in considering projects/groups which receive future funding etc. Members are asked to note that DSD

SIF projects

- it is likely that the Council will become the **delivery agent for a number of the SIF capital projects** in the Belfast area – the resource implications for this have still to be quantified. There are also still a number of unknowns in relation to these projects in terms of the **ongoing sustainability of both projects and groups**. Again many of the groups that are receiving funding are dependent on DSD funding and this will have implications for the Council post 2015.
- SIF is funding projects at both a **capital and revenue level** which could allow Members the opportunity to **cluster investment decisions which will have a greater strategic impact** in local areas by **looking at both revenue and assets together**. The Council has previously highlighted that there is still no overall co-ordination of SIF projects across the city and has highlighted a potential a future role for the Council in developing synergies and connectivity between the plans, as per our original consultation response. It is therefore recommended that discussions regarding this co-ordination role are progressed with OFMDFM.

4.0 Area planning and project prioritisation – links to community planning and regeneration

- 4.1 Members will be aware that they have previously agreed to look at the development of area plans within the context of the emerging community planning framework. A report on the next steps in relation to community planning is also on the agenda for discussion by Committee today. Members have also previously agreed to commission a detailed piece of work in relation to regeneration focusing

	on the city centre. All these pieces of work are inter-linked																
4.2	As can be seen from the information in Appendix A there is a lot of work taking place across the city in terms of physical development. As highlighted the focus of this report has been in relation to physical projects however the impact of ongoing revenue programmes also needs to be taken into consideration as a physical project can be a catalyst for an area but it needs associated programming to make it work.																
5.0	Next steps – BIF																
5.1	Officers are aware that this is a lot of information for Members to absorb at this stage. Members are also asked to note that further detail is still to be confirmed in relation to the emerging DSD projects. Further due-diligence is being carried out on the transferring Lisburn/Castlereagh assets and final confirmation is awaited regarding the projects receiving SIF funding and so this information will continue to evolve over the coming months.																
5.2	It is recognised that there is pressure to progress some BIF projects. After an initial analysis of the emerging projects there are a number of projects which officers would suggest Members could prioritise in the short-term due to their state of readiness, potential funding being available etc. These are outlined below for Members consideration. Members are asked to note that this does not constitute a final decision to invest in any BIF project and that officers will continue to work with groups to progress the development of the remaining BIF projects to help bring these up to a state of readiness where Members can take informed investment decisions to a later stage																
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Project</th> <th>Rationale for progressing now</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Stranmillis Gateway (Part of the Lagan Corridor)</td> <td>Part of the wider Lagan Corridor Part funding secured from Ulster Garden Village Opportunity to work with DRD to capitalise on the proposed plans for the Gasworks Bridge</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Lanyon Tunnels</td> <td>Part of the wider Lagan Corridor Project fully worked up Match funding potentially available via SIF</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Lionra Uladh (Raidio Failte)</td> <td>DCAL/Ciste/DSD match funding potentially available</td> </tr> <tr> <td>St. Comgall's</td> <td>Match funding potentially available via SIF</td> </tr> <tr> <td>St. Mary's pitches</td> <td>Match funding potentially available via DSD and own funds available</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Corpus Chrisiti (Davitts)</td> <td>Match funding potentially available via DSD and own funds available</td> </tr> <tr> <td>St. Andrew's</td> <td>Match funding potentially available via DSD Economic appraisal underway</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Project	Rationale for progressing now	Stranmillis Gateway (Part of the Lagan Corridor)	Part of the wider Lagan Corridor Part funding secured from Ulster Garden Village Opportunity to work with DRD to capitalise on the proposed plans for the Gasworks Bridge	Lanyon Tunnels	Part of the wider Lagan Corridor Project fully worked up Match funding potentially available via SIF	Lionra Uladh (Raidio Failte)	DCAL/Ciste/DSD match funding potentially available	St. Comgall's	Match funding potentially available via SIF	St. Mary's pitches	Match funding potentially available via DSD and own funds available	Corpus Chrisiti (Davitts)	Match funding potentially available via DSD and own funds available	St. Andrew's	Match funding potentially available via DSD Economic appraisal underway
Project	Rationale for progressing now																
Stranmillis Gateway (Part of the Lagan Corridor)	Part of the wider Lagan Corridor Part funding secured from Ulster Garden Village Opportunity to work with DRD to capitalise on the proposed plans for the Gasworks Bridge																
Lanyon Tunnels	Part of the wider Lagan Corridor Project fully worked up Match funding potentially available via SIF																
Lionra Uladh (Raidio Failte)	DCAL/Ciste/DSD match funding potentially available																
St. Comgall's	Match funding potentially available via SIF																
St. Mary's pitches	Match funding potentially available via DSD and own funds available																
Corpus Chrisiti (Davitts)	Match funding potentially available via DSD and own funds available																
St. Andrew's	Match funding potentially available via DSD Economic appraisal underway																
5.3	As outlined above DSD funding will cease to exist in just over a year's time and this will have an impact on the potential match funding requirement. There are a number of projects where DSD/BRO is identified as a potential funder and where funding has in principle been profiled however there are no commitments to these projects yet.																
	Next steps – Area planning																
5.4	In advance of the community planning workshop, Members are asked to note that there are a number of significant strategic projects (both planned and underway) across the city which provide a timely opportunity for Members to consider the development of local regeneration frameworks around these. These include – Lower Falls; Andersonstown/Casement; Lagan Corridor; Olympia/ Windsor; Inner East and Inner North . Further details of these are contained in Appendix B.																
5.5	Members are asked to consider if these areas should be progressed as pilot local regeneration																

	frameworks. These are only examples of potential pilots and can be considered further as part of the emerging community planning process and can be discussed in greater detail in the Area Working Groups in the months ahead.
5.6	Members should also note that DSD are also progressing a number of Masterplans across the city (Ballysillan; Glen Road; Crumlin Road Courthouse; Shaftesbury Square etc). Together with the emerging plans above these masterplans could form the nucleus of wider area plans. A number of other groups are also looking at area based issues across the city e.g. Members may be aware that a new Group– FIN – the Forum for Inner-city Neighbourhoods who are being facilitated by Forum for an Alternative Belfast (FAB) has been established. This Forum is also considering a range of issues relating to inner-city areas. It is important however that all of these, including any pilot local regeneration frameworks, which are developed are placed in the context of an overall city plan.
5.7	Members are asked to note that if they wish to progress with the development of strategic regeneration plans in local areas that there will be associated resource implications and officers will have to be refocused from other work to help deliver these.
6.0	Equality Implications
	Emerging equality implications to be considered as further details emerge of projects
7.0	Recommendations
	Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and - Area planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ consider the suggested BIF project as outlined in 5.2 above which could be progressed in the short term due to their state of readiness, potential of match funding etc. Members are asked to note that this does not constitute a final decision to invest in any BIF project and that officers will continue to work with groups to progress the development of the remaining BIF projects to help bring these up to a state of readiness where Members can take informed investment decisions ▪ consider the creation of a number of local regeneration frameworks (as outlined in 5.3 above with further detail in Appendix B) – the resource implications of this will need to be considered
8.0	Appendices
	Appendix A – Overview of funding and programming links Appendix B – Proposed pilot local regeneration frameworks Appendix C – Map of proposed pilot local regeneration frameworks (illustrative purposes only)