



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	Area Working Update
Date:	21 November 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	Members are aware that the Area Working Groups (AWGs) were established in 2012 as a means of connecting Members to local areas in preparation for their role in community planning under the Reform of Local Government. In governance terms, the AWGs were established to have an advisory role, informing the implementation of the Investment Programme. Since this time, the AWGs have played an integral role in recommending investment decisions for their areas in terms of the Local Investment Fund (LIF); the Belfast Investment Fund (BIF); the Feasibility Fund and Local Interventions Funds to the SP&R Committee.												
1.2	Members are asked to note that a detailed update on the current status of LIF and BIF projects will be taken to Committee in December as part of a detailed update on the physical programme.												
2.0	Area Working Group updates												
	At the most recent round of meetings the South, North and East Area Working Groups agreed the following recommendations for the consideration of SP&R.												
	South AWG - Local Intervention												
2.1	The South AWG made a recommendation for the consideration of the SP&R Committee in relation to Gilpins project which is an emerging BIF project. Members noted that it was highlighted that there was a need to build capacity in relation to this project – however although this is an emerging BIF proposal there is no funding available under BIF for this type of project development activity. Capacity building would be a matter for the Development Committee to consider as and when it has the budget and resources to do so.												
	North AWG												
2.2	The North AWG made the following recommendations for the consideration of the SP&R Committee in relation to their Local Investment Fund												
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>LIF Ref</th> <th>Project</th> <th>£</th> <th>AWG Comments</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>NLIF051</td> <td>St Marys Nursery School</td> <td>£6,596</td> <td>That an additional £6,596 from unallocated LIF monies is allocated to St Marys Nursery School project Committee is asked to note that this project has previously received £47,000 and this additional money is to make up a shortfall in funding for the project</td> </tr> <tr> <td>NLIF030</td> <td>Deanby Youth Club</td> <td></td> <td>That this project is withdrawn from the process and that the £70,000 which was agreed in principle is decommitted from the project</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	LIF Ref	Project	£	AWG Comments	NLIF051	St Marys Nursery School	£6,596	That an additional £6,596 from unallocated LIF monies is allocated to St Marys Nursery School project Committee is asked to note that this project has previously received £47,000 and this additional money is to make up a shortfall in funding for the project	NLIF030	Deanby Youth Club		That this project is withdrawn from the process and that the £70,000 which was agreed in principle is decommitted from the project
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Following the above decision the North AWG still has approximately £300,000 of unallocated LIF funding. Given realistic concerns that this money could potentially be subsumed into general Council budgets as the new organisation establishes itself amidst very difficult financial circumstances the North AWG held a special meeting to agree allocation of the £300,000.

Officers were not invited to this meeting but have since been provided with a list of 'projects' totalling over £280,000.

The estimates against these 'projects' are entirely notional as officers have had no input as yet and we do not know what or where some of these projects are.

More importantly a number of these ideas do not fit within the eligibility criteria for LIF funding. Even if Committee was minded to change the rules around LIF for some of these ideas this may cause audit, legal and reputational issues for Councillors and the Council and potentially jeopardise future funding of this type.

The list of ideas include straightforward top ups of exiting LIF schemes but then move to feasibility studies, expenditure on Council assets, small revenue amounts and areas outside the vires of Council and potentially illegal.

Rather than debate these individually at Committee it is proposed that:

- (i) A decision is made by Committee and the Shadow SP&R to ring fence the unallocated LIF monies to give the AWG time to think things through.
- (ii) The Committee asks the AWG to meet with the Directors of Legal Services, Finance and Resources and Property and Projects to refine the current ideas into eligible areas of expenditure.

East AWG

2.3 The East AWG made the following recommendations for the consideration of the SP&R Committee in relation to their Local Investment Fund

LIF Ref	Project	£	AWG Comments
ELIF025	Wandsworth Community Association	Additional £8,356	That an additional £8,356 from unallocated LIF monies is allocated to Wandsworth Community Association Committee is asked to note that this project has previously received £25,000 and this additional money is to make up a shortfall in funding for the project
ELIF015	Short Strand Community Association	Additional £6,644	That an additional £6,644 from unallocated LIF monies is allocated to the Short Strand Community Association Committee is asked to note that this project has previously received £94,648 and this additional money is to make up a shortfall in funding for the project
ELIF016	Landmark East – Best of East Centre	-	The current funding agreement for this project is with East Belfast Partnership however the works are being carried out by Landmark East (a wholly owned subsidiary of the EBP) and other funding agreements for the project are with Landmark East. To facilitate this, the East AWG have agreed that the Funding Agreement is assigned to Landmark East – this has been agreed by Legal Services

Capital project update

2.4 The East AWG also received an update in relation to the Tamar Street proposal which Members are aware is currently a Stage 2 – Uncommitted project on the Capital Programme. This proposal was to

	refurbish an unused port-a-cabin for community use. This project was originally brought forward at the request of the East AWG. It should be noted that the SOC had previously identified a number of issues including that it went against a previous SP&R Committee decision (April 2012) to demolish the building due to its bad state of repair; none of the groups needed the premises 24/7 and that there were alternative facilities available in the neighbouring area and that the land is designated as 'white-land' and is therefore free from development constraints. The Council also owns the adjoining land and this may facilitate the wider development of the site.
2.5	On the basis of the OBC that has been worked up the East AWG was advised that - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a due diligence exercise has failed to identify any potentially suitable tenants from the pool of groups who had previously expressed interest in leasing the port-a-cabin - there are ongoing concerns regarding displacement and duplication - that further enquiries had been received since the due diligence exercise was carried out in September – this has included a proposal for using the site on an interim basis for storage. - BMAP now designates the council owned land at Ballymacarrett as Community Greenway which allows for the Tamar St site's potential incorporation into any planning exercise for this part of the Comber Greenway
2.6	In light of the information presented the East AWG has recommended that this project is rescoped as a wider masterplan for the Ballymacarrett area and is dropped back down to Stage 1- Emerging Project on the Capital Programme. This will help maximise the links with the Community Greenway project and the emerging urban village proposal led by OFMDFM for the lower Newtownards Road area. This proposal also fits with the emerging development proposals by the East Belfast Partnership under the Hollywood Arches Development Strategy. Master-planning would also provide an opportunity for any future development plans for the site to reflect wider community need and compliment the adjacent CCG Phase 2 works at C.S Lewis Square.
2.7	As outlined above there is also the potential that the site could be used on an interim basis for storage and Committee is asked to note that a short-term (1 year) lease would temporarily generate income and would not interfere with any planning of the wider site. Members are asked to note that further investigation is required is to whether such a proposal would require the use of the existing port-a-cabin or if a cleared site would facilitate extra interest on an interim basis.
2.8	Members are therefore asked to agree that this project is rescoped as a wider masterplan for the Ballymacarrett area and is dropped back down to an emerging project on the Capital Programme. Members are further asked to agree to the demolition of the port-a-cabin as previously agreed by Committee in April 2012 if this will help to facilitate an interim use of the site.

3.0	Resource Implications
Financial: As outlined above.	
Human: Officer time in working with groups on developing their project proposals	
Assets: none at present	

4.0	Equality Implications
As part of the Stage approval process, a screening will be carried out on each project to indicate potential equality and good relations impacts and any mitigating actions needed.	

5.0	Recommendations
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Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and

South AWG

- note the recommendation from the South AWG as laid out in 2.1 in relation to Gilpin’s project regarding the potential establishment of a trust to oversee the project. Members are asked to note that there is no budget available under BIF for this type of project development activity and that **if agreed this recommendation will need to be referred to the Development Committee for consideration**

North AWG

- **agree that an additional £6,596 of LIF funding** is allocated to the **St Marys Nursery School project (NLIF051)** from unallocated North LIF monies
- **note the Deanby Youth Club project (NLIF030) has been withdrawn from the process** and the £70,000 which had been agreed in principle has now been decommitted
- **agree to ring fence unallocated LIF monies and ask the North AWG to meet with Directors as suggested in the report.**

East AWG

- **agree the additional amounts of LIF funding of £8,356 to Wandsworth Community Association (ELIF025) and £6,644 to the Short Strand Community Centre (ELIF015)** from unallocated East LIF monies
- note the **change in the funding agreement for the Best of East Centre project (ELIF016)** and that this is assigned to Landmark East
- agree that the **Tamar Street proposed capital programme project (currently a Stage 2 – Uncommitted project) is rescoped to become a wider masterplan for the Ballymacarrett area and is dropped down to a Stage 1 – Emerging Project on the Capital Programme** to maximise the potential of the site. If agreed this will be included in the next Capital Programme update report

6.0	Appendix
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N/A	
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