

West Belfast Area Working Group

Thursday, 25th August, 2017

MEETING OF WEST BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

Members present: Councillor Magennis (Chairperson);
Aldermen Kingston and McCoubrey;
Councillors, Attwood, Austin, Beattie, Bell, Carson,
Collins, Garrett, Hutchinson, McConville,
O'Hara and Walsh.

In attendance: Mr. G. Millar, Director Property and Projects;
Mr. N. Grimshaw, Director of City and
Neighbourhood Services;
Mr. G. Dickson, Policy and Performance Analyst; and
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillors Corr, Heading and McVeigh.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 26th June were agreed as an accurate record of proceedings.

Following a query from a Member, the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services clarified that, as part of the mobilisation plan, officers would continue to monitor the transportation options to assist locals in availing of the alternative leisure offerings whilst the Andersonstown Centre was out of use.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Outstanding Actions – Decision Tracker

The Director of Property and Projects explained that the Decision Tracker document had been emailed to Members before the meeting and provided the Working Group with a brief overview of actions taken since the last meeting held on 26th June.

Noted.

Presentation – Belfast Hills Partnership

The Chairperson welcomed to the meeting, Mr. D. McCallin, Community Director, representing the Belfast Hills Partnership (BHP).

Mr. McCallin advised that the BHP was an independent charity which sought to improve how the hills were managed. He explained that the Partnership worked with its partners which included local councils, government departments, community groups, nature conservation organisations and businesses that were committed to caring for the Belfast Hills and its people.

The representative then provided an update on the Belfast Hills Project regarding accessing and promoting the area further via path networks. With the aid of maps, he provided an overview of the area which included details in respect of possible access routes and paths, signage and viewpoints and the possibility of linking Hatchett Field and Glencairn to the network. It was highlighted that some land included within the proposal was privately owned, therefore, negotiation would be required with the landowner.

He advised that the Belfast Hills Partnership would appreciate the cross-party support of the Council, and urged the Members to contact him if they required any further information on the area.

A Member welcomed the proposal and stated that she felt that Colin Glen should also be considered as part of the overall scheme.

Several Members highlighted the importance of the Belfast Hills as a tourist location. They stated that the area was a 'hidden gem' and that little was being done to promote the hills to the many tourists visiting the City on a daily basis. There was general agreement that the Members were keen to support the project.

After discussion, the Chairperson thanked Mr. McCallin for attending and he left the meeting.

A Member requested that officers investigate the potential of the Council securing two representatives to the Belfast Hills Partnership Board, as it currently only held one position.

Detailed discussion ensued, during which the Director of Property and Projects advised that he, along with the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services, and the Director of Development, were scheduled to meet with the National Trust (who owned much of the land) to discuss the potential revitalisation of the area. He stated that the National Trust had made the approach as many of its tourist attractions on the North Coast were inundated with visitors on a daily basis and they wished to address this by providing a better 'tourist offering' in Belfast.

The Members noted that the Directors were scheduled to meet with the National Trust in the near future and agreed that representatives from the National Trust be invited to a future meeting of the West Area Working Group.

An Cultúrlann

The Area Working Group welcomed Ms. Aisling Ni Labhrai, Director of An Cultúrlann, to the meeting.

Ms Ni Labhrai provided the Members with background information on An Cultúrlann and its work in partnership with all relevant stakeholders from different community backgrounds in delivering quality cultural experiences. She advised that the An Chultúrlann was based in the former Broadway Presbyterian Church which it had leased from the Springfield Charitable Association since 1991.

The representative highlighted the diverse range of opportunities that it made available to the local community, for example, arts programmes, classes and workshops, outreach, facilities hire, the Gaeltacht Experience, a café, bookshop, galleries and a tourist information point.

She reviewed the contribution that An Cultúrlann made to the local economy and proceeded to outline the development plans, as follows:

- Stage 1: to purchase the entire building, including the part not currently rented by the organisation;
- Stage 2: to develop new event space to enhance the existing cultural tourist offering, including the addition of a Folklore, Myths and Legends exhibition; and
- Stage 3: to work with the relevant stakeholders to test the viability of the organisation's aspiration to develop a Cultural/ Educational Tourist Hostel in the heart of West Belfast.

She advised the Working Group that the organisation's business case had been completed and considered by the Department for Communities economists and members of the Strategic Investment Board. It had been agreed that it could be presented to the Minister as a viable option but unfortunately the institutions had collapsed before the case could be signed off.

Ms Ni Labhrai stated that she was aware that currently no funding was available, however, she detailed how the Council could assist should funding become available and also through other measures, as follows:

- financial support for the initial £800k fiscal investment required to purchase the building; and
- support via Council expertise and contacts as the organization explored its plans to refurbish, renovate and extend.

The Chairperson thanked the representative for attending and for the excellent work that An Cultúrlann undertook with both the local community and for tourism in West Belfast and she retired from the room.

The Working Group noted that no funding was available at present.

Physical Programme Process

The Director of Property and Projects provided the Working Group with a detailed overview on the physical programme process, which included details on:

- how it was funded;
- the stage approval process;

- project delivery; and
- the Council's role.

The Chairman thanked the Director for his informative presentation and it was agreed that a copy would be e-mailed to all the Members of the West Area Working Group.

City Cemetery – Update on Memorial Plot Z

The Working Group considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the consultation process of a permanent memorial at Plot Z1, commonly known as Baby Public, in the City Cemetery.

2.0 Background

Members are reminded that at its meeting in February 2017 the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreed that the City Cemetery – Permanent Memorial to mark Plot Z1 project be moved to Stage 3- Committed on the Capital Programme with a maximum budget of up to £50,000 to be allocated.

A previous consultation took place in December 2015-March 2016 to gather view on a memorial for the site. A summary of the findings from this consultation exercise were used to shape the artist's brief that was used for the procurement process.

Following the procurement exercise the Council appointed Chris Wilson as the artist to design, make and install the memorial. As part of the tender process Chris produced a concept design of what the memorial might look like. The design concept plan and visuals formed the basis for discussion in the recent consultation.

As part of the engagement process an information session was held in City Hall on 30th May, this was a public session and advertised through all the Council's usual communication channels. The purpose of this session was to present the artist's concept design and to get initial views on this. At this meeting there was also a reconfirmation of the key aims of the projects; as part of this discussion it became apparent that there was a view that whilst there is a recognition of the urgency given the age and health of some of the relatives, it is also important that all views are considered and that if necessary the timeline for the project should be extended to allow this to happen.

To ensure we get as widespread as possible range of views we undertook a consultation exercise on the Council's consultation hub Citizen Space. The closing date for this stage of consultation was 30th June 2017. Around 90 responses have been received through this portal.

As part of the process a further information session on 4th July 2017 was held. At this meeting we presented a summary of the initial views on the design and proposed wording and asked for further comments. Around 40 participants attended this event; the artist presented his amended design proposal based on the discussion in the previous event that was also reflected in the comments of a majority of people who submitted their views on the consultation hub i.e. the memorial should include a baby.

A discussion followed around the design and the majority of those present found that the changes (inclusion of a plaque with a baby) didn't go far enough. In general it was articulated that the voices of the involved families haven't been heard and that the process should be reviewed. It was agreed by the Assistant Director that the Council will restart the project realising the desire of those present to have a memorial rather than an artwork using the services of a stonemason.

It was recommended and agreed in the Strategic Cemetery & Crematorium Working Group on 3 August to follow the next steps:

- Review of the artist's contract
- Confirmation and agreement of the changed brief for the memorial (based on the most recent consultation and not as previously based on the CAP report)
- Changes to the original business case
- Start of new procurement process to appoint a stonemason
- Set up of focus group consisting of up to 10 representatives from families to inform the decision making
- Design proposal for memorial
- Consultation process (Citizen Space and consultation event)
- Agreement around the design of a headstone
- Installation of memorial

4 Recommendation

- 4.1 Members are asked to note the update of the consultation process for the design and installation of a permanent memorial for Plot Z in the City Cemetery."**

The Working Group noted the update provided.

Future Agenda Items

The Working Group was reminded that St Joseph's Centre for the Deaf had previously presented to the West Area Working Group meeting in November 2014 seeking BIF Support. A Member suggested that a site visit could be organised to enable the Working Group to acquaint itself with the organisation and the proposal at first hand.

At the request of a Member, it was agreed that the Executive Chairman of Argyle Business Centre would be invited to the September meeting to make a presentation on its plans for the Shankill Mission Hotel.

Date of Next Meeting

The Working Group noted that the next meeting would take place on Thursday, 28th September at 4.30 p.m.

Chairperson

North Belfast Area Working Group

Tuesday, 29th August, 2017

NORTH BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

Members present: Councillor McCabe (Chairperson);
Aldermen Convery, Patterson and Spence;
Councillors Clarke and Magee.

In attendance: Mr. G. Millar, Director of Property and Projects;
Ms. R. Crozier, Assistant Director;
Mr. G. Dickson, Policy Analyst; and
Ms E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of the Lord Mayor, Councillor McAllister, Aldermen Browne and McKee and Councillor Corr-Johnston.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 29th June were agreed as an accurate record of proceedings.

Declaration of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Decision Tracker

The Group noted that the Decision Tracker document had been emailed to Members before the meeting and provided the Working Group with a brief overview of actions since the last meeting held on 29th June.

Presentation – Belfast Hills Partnership

The Chairperson welcomed to the meeting, Mr. D. McCallin, Community Director, representing the Belfast Hills Partnership (BHP).

Mr. McCallin advised that the BHP was an independent charity which sought to improve how the hills were managed. He explained that the Partnership worked with its partners which included local councils, government departments, community groups, nature conservation organisations and businesses that were committed to caring for the Belfast Hills and its people.

The representative then provided an update on the Belfast Hills Project regarding accessing and promoting the area further via path networks and walking routes. With the aid of maps, he provided an overview of the area which included details in respect of possible access routes and paths, signage and viewpoints and the possibility of linking the two critical access points at Hatchett Field and Glencairn. It was highlighted that some land included within the proposal was privately owned, therefore, negotiation would be required with the landowner.

He advised that the Belfast Hills Partnership would appreciate the cross-party support of the Council to progress the walking routes and access, and advised that it would be helpful to receive a letter of intent from the Council for the Belfast Hills Annual Meeting in October.

Several Members highlighted the importance of access points for the project and promoting the Belfast Hills as a tourist location.

After discussion, the Chairperson thanked Mr. McCallin for attending and he left the meeting.

The Director of Property and Projects advised that he, along with the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services and the Director of Development, had scheduled a meeting with the National Trust (who owned much of the land) to discuss the potential revitalisation of the area.

The Members noted that the Directors were scheduled to meet with the National Trust in the near future and that an update would be provided to the Group at its meeting in September.

Local Investment Fund Update

The Director provided an overview of the report which included an update on the progress of those projects which had yet to be completed under the Local Investment Funds (LIF phase 1 and LIF phase 2).

He indicated that there were two projects still under consideration by the Working Group:

- Ardoyne Shankill Health Partnership; and
- North Belfast Alternatives and Good Morning North Belfast.

During discussion, it was noted that there had been a request from Jennymount Church which required an additional £12,000 of funding to complete its project which had already received funding from both LIF 1 and LIF 2.

After discussion, the Working Group noted the progress of the committed projects and agreed that there was no further funding available to accede to the request from Jennymount Church.

Future Agenda Items

The Working Group also noted the following future deputations and agenda items:

- Information sessions on Inner North Belfast Projects;
- Zoo Update;
- Harbour Commissioner Update;
- York Street Interchange Update;
- Update on the work of the support services/youth workers implemented by the DPCSP; and
- Unitorah Charity - information on their Centre for Tolerance development.

Chairperson

East Belfast Area Working Group

Tuesday, 5th September, 2017

MEETING OF EAST BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

Members present: The High Sheriff of Belfast, Alderman Haire (Chairperson); The Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor Copeland; Aldermen McGimpsey, Rodgers and Sandford; and Councillors Armitage, Dorrian, Graham, Johnston, Milne, Mullan and O'Donnell.

In attendance: Mr. G. Millar, Director of Property and Projects; Mrs. R. Crozier, Assistant Director; Mrs. A. McGlone, Regeneration Project Officer; and Mrs L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillors Howard, Long, McReynolds, Newton and O'Neill.

Minutes

The Working Group agreed that the minutes of the meeting of 3rd August were an accurate record of proceedings.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were recorded.

Presentation – East Belfast Football Club

The Chairperson advised the Members that Mr. R. Crowe and Mr. I. Magill, East Belfast F.C., were in attendance and they were welcomed to the meeting.

Mr. Magill presented to the Members the capital development plans for the sports development facilities at the Tommy Patton Playing Fields at Inverary Avenue. He outlined that the plans included new floodlit training pitches, new changing and function rooms, a main floodlit grass pitch, small-sided floodlit 3G pitches, a floodlit 3G training facility and a full-size floodlit grass pitch with associated changing and an indoor hall. The Working Group was advised that the total cost for the proposals was approximately £2.2million.

Mr. Crowe explained that the Club had developed and increased in size over the past four years. He advised the Working Group that the club had over 450 members, including a significant number of female and youth teams. The Working Group was advised that the club was now struggling to meet the demand for participation both in terms of football and through wider community engagement across the east of the city.

Mr. Magill advised the Members that the Club had undertaken widespread consultation events to help inform their plans and had also carried out a business planning exercise. He confirmed that the architect's plans included what was required if the club was to be promoted to intermediate level.

A number of Members congratulated the Club for the hard work which had been carried out over the past four years to increase the membership and the community use of the facilities.

In relation to a Member's question regarding whether the Club had approached the Department for Communities, Sport NI or the private sector about possible funding for the project, the representatives confirmed that they had been exploring a number of different funding options and they explained that they would take a phased approach towards implementing the changes.

In response to a further Member's question, the representatives advised that they would liaise with the George Best Belfast City Airport in relation to installing the appropriate floodlighting at the pitches, due to the Club's proximity to the airport.

The representatives also confirmed to the Working Group that the improvements to the club would allow other teams in the area to use the gym and pitches.

In relation to the redevelopment of the Avoniel Leisure Centre, the representatives confirmed that there was a shortage of pitches in the east of the city but that capacity would be taken into account.

The Chairperson reminded the representatives that all the Working Group's funding had currently been allocated but that the project looked promising for the east of the City. He thanked them for their presentation and they retired from the meeting.

Noted.

East Bank Development Strategy – Consultation Update

The Regeneration Project Officer provided the Members with an update on the Council's East Bank Development Strategy consultation which was currently ongoing. She explained that the twelve week consultation period commenced in July and would finish at the end of September. The Working Group was advised that the plans were available for public viewing in the Cecil Ward building during office hours and that a number of advertised drop-in sessions had been held to date in EBCDA and the Lagan Lookout, with a number planned over the next few weeks, including two in the Short Strand Community Centre. She advised that she was happy to arrange additional drop-in events in other areas, at the request of Members.

She advised the Members that twelve responses to the Strategy had been completed through the Council's online Consultation Hub and that it was not unusual to receive a number of responses during the last few days of a consultation period.

In relation to the responses which had been received so far, she highlighted that the majority had been very supportive of the proposals. She advised that a small number of respondents had expressed concerns with the possible impact on traffic in the area, particularly with regards to private car users.

The Working Group thanked her for the update and she retired from the meeting.

Belfast Investment Fund

Lagan Village Youth and Community Group

The Director of Property and Projects provided the Working Group with an update on the Lagan Village Youth and Community Group project. He reminded the Group that, at its meeting on 8th December, 2016, it had agreed that the project would move to Stage 2 under the Belfast Investment Fund. He advised the Members that officers had continued to engage with the group and that consultants had been appointed to undertake an economic appraisal, with a pre-meeting taking place next week.

The Committee noted the update provided.

Correspondence from Bloomfield Presbyterian Church

The Working Group was advised that correspondence from Bloomfield Presbyterian Church had been received, which was requesting partnership funding of £450,000 towards the development of a community hub, where the total project costs were approximately £1.65million.

A number of Members outlined that they were aware that the Church was doing a lot of fundraising themselves and that they were impressed with the proposals.

The Working Group noted that the Belfast Investment Fund (BIF) for the east of the city was fully allocated.

After discussion, the Working Group agreed that the officers should engage with Bloomfield Presbyterian Church regarding their proposal and that a report be submitted to the Working Group in due course.

Strand Arts Centre

The Director of Property and Projects reminded the Members that the Working Group had previously agreed to ring-fence £1.8million for the Strand Arts Centre project, for a period of two years, with an option to extend by a further year, on the basis that it would receive funding from other sources.

The Working Group also agreed that representatives from the Strand Arts Centre should be invited to present to the Group at its meeting in January, 2018, to discuss any progress which had been made in securing other funding.

Local Investment Fund

The Director of Property and Projects provided the Working Group with an overview of the money which had been allocated to various projects through the Local Investment Fund.

He reminded the Working Group that it had committed its initial LIF1 allocation of £1,127,500 to 8 projects and its LIF2 allocation of £1,200,000 to a further 12 projects. The Members noted that, in the initial allocation, 7 of the 8 projects were now complete, with

the exception of the Westbourne Presbyterian Community Church (Titanic People) project. He outlined that it had received partnership funding from The Executive Office through the Social Investment Fund (SIF) and was in the second stage of design team procurement.

In the LIF2 allocation, he advised the Members that all projects had now passed through the due diligence stage, with three projects at stage 3 (pre-construction) and the remaining eight projects at stage 4 (delivery).

The Members noted that there was a total of £54,009 of LIF funding to be re-allocated, consisting of £15,498 from LIF1 and £38,411 from LIF2.

The Working Group noted the update.

Date of Next Meeting

The Working Group noted that the next meeting would take place on Thursday, 5th October at 5.00p.m.

Chairperson