

North Belfast Area Working Group

Tuesday, 18th December, 2018

NORTH BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

Members present: Alderman Convery (Chairperson);
Aldermen Browne; and
Councillors Clarke, Campbell, Magee, Murphy, Pankhurst
and Spence.

In attendance: Mr. G Millar, Director of Major Projects;
Mr. G. Dickson, Policy Analyst;
Miss C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillor Corr-Johnston.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 30th October were agreed as an accurate record of proceedings.

Declaration of Interest

Alderman Browne declared an interest in relation to item 3. 'Physical Programme Update', in that he was linked to the the Westland Community Centre.

Councillor Campbell declared an interest in relation to item 3. 'Physical Programme Update', in that she was linked to the the Grace Family Centre.

Councillor Pankhurst declared an interest in relation to item 3. 'Physical Programme Update', in that he was a Board Member to the the Ulster Scots Community Network.

Decision Tracker

The Working Group noted that the Decision Tracker document had been emailed to the Members before the meeting which provided a brief overview of actions since the last meeting held on 30th October.

Physical Programme Update

The Working Group considered the following report:

"1. Introduction

The Council's Physical Programme covers projects under a range of funding streams including the Capital Programme, the

Leisure Transformation Programme, Local Investment Fund, BIF, SOF, Peace IV and the projects that the Council is delivering on behalf of other agencies.

The focus of this report is on the Belfast Investment Fund projects in North but an update on the rest of the Physical Programme is attached at Appendix 2.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to note

- the update on the current status of the North Belfast BIF projects as outlined below. In particular Members are asked to note that work has commenced this week on the Grace Family Centre which is the first BIF project in North to go on ground

In considering the BIF projects there are a number of issues which Members may wish to consider -

- Of the overall £5.5m BIF allocation for North, £5m has been agreed in-principle which leaves a remaining unallocated amount of £500,000
- £2.25m has been ringfenced for projects emerging from Old Grove Masterplan and Ballysillan Masterplan. To date, there has been no agreement on the breakdown of this allocation between the Old Grove and Ballysillan and no specific projects have been agreed out of this ringfenced allocation
- an Economic Appraisal on the Basement Youth Club proposal has been carried out. This is currently a Stage 2 – Uncommitted project. A summary of the EA is attached at Appendix 1

3. Belfast Investment Fund

To date 4 projects have received an in-principle funding commitment under BIF. In addition, 6 projects are on the longer BIF list. A summary of the current position with regard to the north Belfast BIF allocation of £5,500,000 is outlined in the table below –

Project	Stage	BIF Allocation
Grace Family Centre	Stage 3- Committed	£1,600,000
Cancer Lifeline	Stage 3- Committed	£650,000
Old Grove/ Basement	Stage 2- Uncommitted	
Old Grove Masterplan Ballysillan Masterplan	Stage 1- Emerging <i>(Total of 2.25m to be ringfenced)</i>	£2,250,000
Marrowbone Park	Stage 1- Emerging	£500,000

Former LIDL site	Stage 1- Emerging	
Sunningdale Community	Stage 1- Emerging	
Malgrove	Stage 1- Emerging	
Cliftonville Community	Stage 1- Emerging	
	Total BIF allocated in principle to date by North AWG	£5,000,000
	Total remaining BIF allocation	£500,000

As highlighted in the table above the North AWG are asked to note that they have an outstanding unallocated amount under BIF of £500k

Below are the brief updates on the projects that have received in-principle funding.

Project	Status and update
Grace Family Centre	Works have commenced on site this week. It is anticipated that the building works will take approx. 12months with the new centre to open in Spring 2020. This is the first BIF project to go on ground in North. A 'cutting the sod' ceremony and wider PR will take place in January (this has been proposed for January due to the Christmas break). Project has received match funding from DfC/ UV with a total £698k (DfC-£553k and UV-£145k). This has allowed the full scope of the project to be completed.
Cancer Lifeline	Contractor procurement is complete. Final conveyance with the building's vendor for the purchase of the property has been concluded as part of this project. The contractor has been appointed and is scheduled to begin on site week commencing 2 nd January. DfC Letter of Officer on match funding has been received in the amount of £266,367. This has allowed the full scope of the works to be completed.
Old Grove – Basement Youth Club	Economic Appraisal carried out (currently being finalised). A summary of the EA findings are attached at Appendix 1.
Marrowbone Millennium Park	In 22 nd June 2018, SP&R approved for the project to be added as a Stage 1- Emerging Project with a ring-fenced allocation of up to £500k. Urban Villages funding of £2.1m. Consultation has been carried out and feedback is being collated.

Issues for Members' consideration

Unallocated funding – As outlined in the Table above £5,000,000 has been allocated in principle to BIF projects in North Belfast to date. This leaves a remaining allocation of £500,000 out of the £5,500,000 which has been ring-fenced in total for North.

Members may wish to consider the remaining BIF allocation of £500,000 in North.

Old Grove/ Ballysillan Masterplan- On the recommendation of the North AWG the SP&R Committee in September 2016 agreed that a total of £2.25m be ringfenced for projects emerging from the Old Grove Ballysillan Masterplans. To date, there has been no agreement on the breakdown of this allocation between the Old Grove and Ballysillan and no specific projects have been identified for the ringfenced fund. Subsequent to this, the North AWG agreed to consider both the Basement Youth Club (currently Stage 2 – Uncommitted) and the former LIDL premises (currently Stage 1- Emerging projects) which both fall under these masterplan areas. However no financial commitment has been agreed in-principle for either of these projects.

Members may wish to consider both the projects to be supported which fall under these agreed areas (Old

Grover and Ballysillan) together with the breakdown of funding.

Basement Youth Club – On 21 October 2016 SP&R, on the recommendation of the North AWG, approved the movement of ‘Old Grove Masterplan - Shared Community Hub between Basement Youth Club and Midland Boxing Club’ to Stage 1 – Emerging under BIF with a feasibility study to be worked up and brought back to a future North Area Working Group (AWG).

On 31 October 2017 the AWG was briefed on the outcome of the feasibility study (funded by DfC Building Successful Communities), including the fact that Midland Boxing Club did not want to proceed with a shared facility. After discussion, the AWG agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that the Old Grove Masterplan be progressed to Stage 2 – Uncommitted. In with the Council’s three stage approval process an economic appraisal has now been completed for Basement. An overview of the outcome of the EA is attached at Appendix 1 for Member’s consideration.

The appraisal considered in detail both capital costs for building the new facility and the revenue costs for sustaining the scheme independently of Belfast City Council commitments. At an early stage it was clear that Basement Youth Club may need support in terms of taking on the operation and management of a new youth and community facility. In order to deal with this issue and on the back of relationships they had built at their previous location at Gainsborough Drive (which closed due to issues with contamination) they approached Elim Christian Ireland - ECI (off Alexandra Park Avenue). Members are therefore asked to note that the proposed project going forward will be a partnership between Elim and Basement.

Members will note from the summary of the EA provided that the options identified under the EA range from

£3,510,132 up to the £3,677,143 with the preferred option (Option 2 – New build) being £3,608,107 capital cost. Members will be aware from the above that £2.25m has been ring-fenced for projects emerging from the Old Grove Masterplan and Ballysillan Masterplan. The final funding allocation between these has not yet been agreed nor have the individual projects however if Basement was agreed and a level of funding was agreed then it is likely that there will be a significant funding shortfall and if progressed the project will require an application(s) to other funding organisations to address this. Members are also asked to note that the figures in an Economic Appraisal are indicative only and are based on estimates. The final figures will only be known once tenders are returned.

The Group are aware that there is a significant funding shortfall – Basement have applied to the Department of Education's Voluntary Youth Capital Scheme and the project is one of ten capital projects being progressed through the business case, design and planning stages; it is understood that the Basement Youth Club project is at the top of the list of ten projects. At a meeting with Department officials in March 2018 a sum of £500k was confirmed as the indicative award to the Basement Youth Club project.

Members are also asked to note that the EA has highlighted the proposed new facility will face challenges from an ongoing revenue perspective with the figures noting that the facility will incur a loss each year. The assumptions made in the EA in terms of income are however prudent and this area would be subject to further discussion with the Education Authority (who are currently reviewing how they fund youth groups). In addition there are a number of governance issues to be worked through including the establishment of a new governance structure to reflect the inclusion of the ECI.

Officers have worked closely with the Group and had asked the Group if they would consider a scaled back scheme which would be better from both a capital and ongoing revenue perspective. However the preferred option from the Group is still Option 2.

- Members are asked to note the project is now a partnership between the Elim Church Ireland and

Basement Youth Club

- Members may wish to consider the next steps in respect of the proposed project. Given the significant funding shortfall that exists it may be prudent, if Members agreed that this project should be progressed, to consider time bounding any BIF allocation as match funding will be required (i.e. subject to securing match funding within XX months). Members are

asked to note that a range of other BIF projects across the other AWGs have had significant issues in secure the match funding required for projects - Members are asked to note that if a BIF project is moved to Stage 3 – Committed it is recommended that a maximum BIF allocation and that any project will be subject to a satisfactory tender being returned within budgetary limits. Any project moved to Stage 3 will also be subject to a number of caveats (confirmation of other funding etc.) and will be subject to the going through the Council’s due-diligence process.”

After discussion, the Working Group noted the report and agreed that, of the £2.25m of the Belfast Investment Fund (BIF) which had been ring-fenced for projects emerging from Old Grove Masterplan and Ballysillan Masterplan:

- i. £1.5m be allocated to the Basement Youth Club proposal emerging from the Old Grove Masterplan; and
- ii. £750k be allocated to the Ulster Scots Hub (Braeheid project) as part of the Ballysillan Masterplan.

It was further agreed that the unallocated amount of £500k be allocated to the Malgrove Project.

The Director of Major Projects informed the Working Group that due diligence would be undertaken in relation to the recommendations and the subsequent running costs and management responsibilities.

Future Agenda Items

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

- Information sessions on Inner North Belfast Projects;
- Zoo Update;
- Quarterly updates from the Ulster University regarding its community engagement and programme of building work;
- Special Meeting – Mountain Biking on Cavehill Country Park; and.
- North City Business Centre.

The Working Group noted that the Harbour Commissioners (City Quays Development) and Urban Villages would attend the January meeting of the Working Group.

After discussion, it was agreed that the Working Group would receive a deputation at its meeting in February from the North Belfast Heritage Cluster, but that the request from its Chairperson, Ms. Paula Reynolds, that the invite be extended to the North Belfast MLAs be refused.

It was also agreed that the Department for Infrastructure’s deputations regarding the York Street Interchange and the Living with Water Programme would attend the February Meeting of the group.

The Working Group also noted that representatives from Our Lady's Nursery School had deferred its request to attend pending a funding application it was pursuing in the New Year.

Chairperson