

# South Belfast Area Working Group

Monday, 28th September, 2020

## MEETING OF SOUTH BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

Members present: Councillors Bunting, Gormley, Groogan,  
T. Kelly, Lyons, McAteer, McKeown and Spratt.

In attendance: Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes;  
Mr. S. Leonard, Neighbourhood Services Manager;  
Ms. D. Smith, Neighbourhood Services Integration  
Manager; and  
Mr. G. Graham, Democratic Services Assistant.

### **Election of Chairperson**

It was proposed by Councillor Kelly and seconded by Councillor Spratt that, Councillor Bunting be nominated to fill the position of Chairperson for the period to end on the date of the Annual meeting of the Council in 2021.

It was proposed further by Councillor Gormley and seconded by Councillor Lyons, that Councillor McAteer be nominated to fill the position of Chairperson for the period to end on the date of the Annual meeting of the Council in 2021.

On a vote by a show of hands, two Councillors voted for Councillor Bunting and four Councillors for Councillor McAteer and it was

Resolved - that Councillor McAteer be appointed to the position of Chairperson for the forthcoming year.

(Councillor McAteer in the Chair)

### **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Gormley reported that he was member of the Board of LORAG in respect of the John Murray Lock House development proposal. The Director of Physical Programmes stated that the Member was being provided with an update in respect of that development and that the Area Working Group was being asked merely to note the proposal.

### **Update in respect of the Physical Programme**

The Director provided the Working Group with the undernoted report in respect of the Council's Physical Programme:

**“1. Introduction**

The Council’s Physical Programme covers projects under a range of funding streams including the Capital Programme, the Leisure Transformation Programme, the Local Investment Fund (LIF), the Belfast Investment Fund (BIF), and Social Outcome Fund (SOF); in addition, the programme covers projects that the Council is delivering in behalf of other agencies. This report outlines the status of projects under the Physical Programme.

**2. Recommendations**

Members are asked to note the physical programme update for South Belfast and

- agree the request from LORAG to present the John Murray Lockhouse wider development proposal (BCC LIF and Urban Villages) at a future AWG
- agree that the Council acts as the delivery agent for the Bredagh GAC BIF project
- agree in principle the installation of a ‘green living wall’ as the permanent barrier for the Lagan Gateway BIF project
- note that the BIF Knockbreda Parish Church Hall project is due to commence and agree to move this to Stage 3 – Committed
- note the request from TEO- Urban Villages regarding the Coffee Culture project and agree in principle to fund the project deficit (£421k) from the BIF funding which has been ringfenced for the Sandy Row area (£1.35m) subject to the UV business case sign-off and UV match funding being in place for the overall project
- note the change in Project Promoter for SOF Sandy Row Community Forum from Sandy Row Community Forum to Belfast South Community Resources
- note the briefing document regarding small scale funding options (Appendix 3) which can be shared and explored by community groups

**3. Local Investment Fund (LIF)**

Members are reminded LIF is a £9m fixed programme of capital investment in non-council neighbourhood assets, over two tranches: LIF 1 (2012-2015) - £5m total funding pot, allocated across each AWG areas; and LIF 2 (2015 -2019) - £4m allocation. Each LIF project proposal is taken through a Due Diligence process prior to any funding award. The table below outlines funding spend to date for each tranche, at key stages of the delivery process: 24 projects received ‘In Principle’ letters under LIF1 and LIF2, of which 21 have been completed; 2 are at pre-construction stage and 1 project still at initial stage.

LIF breakdown – South	LIF 1		LIF 2	
Stage/ Description:	No. Projects	Amount (£)	No. Projects	Amount/ (£)
Number of Projects Completed	12 (92%)	£1,053,600	9 (82%)	£676,000
Number of Projects in Delivery				
Number of Projects in Pre-construction			2 (18%)	£120,000
Number of Project in Initial Stage (Due Diligence)	1 (8%)	£30,000		
<b>Total Number of Approved Projects</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>£1,083,600</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>£796,000</b>

**Appendix 1 provides an overview of progress and actions around the remaining 3 live projects – Holylands Area Improvement (£80,000), Finaghy Bridge (£30,000) and John Murray Lockhouse (£40,000). Members are asked to note the status of the current live LIF projects and the ongoing actions.**

LIF Ref	PROJECT	LIF FUNDING	STAGE	STATUS	ACTION/RECOMMENDATION
SLIF2-07	Holylands Area Improvement Initiative	£80,000	Tender preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Doran Consulting have been appointed to provide technical input for the specification and tender documents. The tender documents will be released following a review of the pilot area by the consultant (to ensure best suitability).</li> </ul>	Continue engagement with the group and partners
SLIF017	Finaghy Bridge	£30,000	Initial stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work still ongoing to secure sign-off from the group of an initial Dfl funded options study to confirm scope/cost of proposal (delayed as a result of additional loading and health and safety considerations for Dfl/Translink).</li> </ul>	Meeting with Dfl scheduled for end of October to consider and agree final details of preferred option (materials specification). Continued engagement with group to seek feedback on the options within draft report. In absence of feedback - Dfl sign off of existing draft to be progressed. Once project scope and costs are confirmed the LIF process can commence.
SLIF2-13	LORAG - John Murray Lock house	£40,000	Design stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project went through Due Diligence in December 19 and funding agreement is complete.</li> <li>Link to wider Urban Villages project.</li> </ul>	Continued engagement with the group. <b>LORAG have requested an opportunity to present the John Murray Lockhouse wider development proposal at the next SAWG meeting</b>

**Members are also asked to**

- agree the request from LORAG to present the John Murray Lockhouse wider development proposal to the Area Working Group. This project is being considered for**

funding under the Executive Office's Urban Villages Initiative.

#### 4. Belfast Investment Fund (BIF)

Members are reminded BIF is a £28.2m investment fund for regeneration partnership projects, with a minimum £250k investment from Council BIF – South Belfast was allocated £5.5m; with additional £500k ringfenced for new areas (outer South) that had joined the District area under Local Government Reform. In South Belfast, 6 projects received an In-Principle funding commitment, thereby fully allocating its £5.5m, and £500k pot of funding. Each project is taken through a 3 stage approval process, including a rigorous Due Diligence process before any Funding Agreement is approved and put in place.

#### *Summary of BIF allocated projects*

<b>South</b>	Stage 3—Lagan Gateway—£2.1m; Lanyon Tunnels—£1.3m; Bredagh GAC- £700k Stage 2— Sandy Row area projects (formerly Gilpins)— £1.3m Stage 1— <i>Belfast Islamic Centre—no commitment</i>
<b>Balmoral DEA</b>	Stage 2— Linfield FC/ Boys Brigade and Belvoir FC—£250k; Knockbreda Parish Church Hall—£250k

BIF Ref	PROJECT	BIF FUNDING	STAGE	STATUS	ACTION/RECOMMENDATION
BIF04	Lagan Gateway	£2.1m	On ground	<p><u>Further funding opportunities</u> – proactively sought additional funding in order to fully realise the scope of this project. DfI Minister has offered 50% of the costs sought subject to satisfactory business case appraisal process.</p> <p>Council has committed to installing a permanent barrier along the upper path to address privacy concerns raised by residents. Residents have requested a brick wall which is an expensive solution and not in keeping with the natural environs. Officers are proposing the installation of an innovative 'green living wall' that fits within the context of the overall project and the area and which can act as an exemplar project in terms of the Council's environmental ambitions</p>	Agree the proposal for a 'green living wall'
BIF35	Knockbreda Parish Church Hall	£250k	On ground	Pre-commencement and mobilisation works started	Move to Stage 3 Committed

BIF19	Bredagh GAC	£700k	Design stage	Project through Due Diligence - Council delivery proposed. It is envisaged that contractor procurement will start in October 2020 with a view to being on-site in Spring 2021.	Continue engagement with the group. Agree Council to act as delivery agent
BIF08	Sandy Row projects	£1.3m	Stage 2	Members previously agreed that the monies allocated to Gilpins would be ring-fenced for projects in the Sandy Row area. Work is continuing on the development of a pop up park with space for sensory play. Urban Villages are progressing the development of the Coffee Culture project – this is a social enterprise project with a training café and three rental apartments above. Any rental from the apartment will support the social enterprise business –this will be a requirement of any funding agreement. £100k has already been agreed in principle to this project under SOF (see below). The business case process by UV has shown that there is a funding deficit of £421,316. UV have requested that the Council consider this funding shortfall.	Agree in principle the allocation of BIF funding to address the funding deficit
BIF07	Lanyon Tunnels	£1.3m	Stage 3	Project has been impacted by the JR decision on the adjacent site to the tunnels – the adjacent site is a critical access point for the project, enabling range of connectivity outcomes and benefits.	Officer engagement with TEO as key funder, and key stakeholders.

**Appendix 1 provides a progress overview and update on all projects. Members are asked to note the status update of these projects.**

**Members are asked to –**

- **Lagan Gateway - note the proposal to install a ‘green living wall’ as the permanent barrier along the upper path**
- **Knockbreda Church Hall – move to Stage 3 – Committed**
- **Bredagh GAC - agree that the Council acts as the delivery agent this project**
- **Sandy Row projects – agree in principle that BIF funding (in principle amount of £421k) is allocated towards the Coffee Culture social enterprise project to address the funding deficit on the basis that the overall project is jointly funded by Urban Villages. This will be subject to all the normal due diligence processes, sign off of business case and further discussions with UV and a requirement that any**

rental from the apartments will support the social enterprise.

- Lanyon Tunnels – note that discussions are ongoing with TEO and DFC and that a further update will be brought back to a future AWG

## 5. Social Outcome Fund

SOF is £4m ringfenced capital investment programme with a focus on local community tourism projects. Three projects in South Belfast received an In-Principle funding commitment. Similar to LIF and BIF, all projects are subject to Due Diligence process prior to any funding award. Members are asked to note the progress update of each project in Table below.

### *SOF – South Belfast projects overview*

Project	SOF Award	Status and update	Recommendation/ Proposed Action
SOF02 Coffee Culture <i>NB - UV partnership project (£402k)</i>	£100,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See above</li> </ul>	See above
SOF04 Sandy Row Community Forum	£80,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of a Tourism Trail to complement the Transport Hub. Due Diligence is underway. The project concept has been developed and costed. There are revenue implications for the council in terms of maintenance and insurance. Belfast South Community Resources have signed off the project concept.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Agree the change in project promoter from SRCF to BSCR.</b></p> <p><b>Continue to engage with the group</b></p>

Members are also asked to -

- SOF Sandy Row Community Forum – note the change in Project Promoter for the Tourism Trail project from Sandy Row Community Forum to Belfast South Community Resources

## 6. Capital Programme

The Capital Programme is a rolling programme to either enhance existing Council assets or, build / buy new assets or facilities. Table below provides an update on current live projects South Belfast area. Members are asked to note current status and update.

### ***South Belfast – Capital programme overview***

<b>Project</b>	<b>Status and update</b>
Alleygating Phase 4 – City wide	Stage 3 – Committed. Project recently completed
Playground Improvement Programme 2019/2020 (City wide)	Stage 3 – Committed. Projects completed - Ormeau Park Lower playground, Geeragh (Finaghy) Community Centre and McClure Street playground
Palm House, Botanic Gardens	Stage 1- Emerging. Link to Tropical Ravine

#### **7. Externally Funded Programmes**

**The Council is the Delivery partner / agent for a number of government department on key capital investment programmes, namely TEO Social Investment Fund (SIF), TEO Urban Villages (UV) Programme, and number of schemes with DfC Regeneration Directorate. The following is an overview of projects within each programme relevant to South Belfast.**

##### **SIF**

**Table below provides a status update on SIF projects in South Belfast. Officers continue to liaise with TEO officials in relations to these projects.**

##### ***SIF – South Belfast projects overview***

<b>Project</b>	<b>Status and update</b>
South City Resource and Dev't Centre (St. Simon's)	Project recently completed
Mornington Community Project	Following structural engineer's survey, costed design risk register being prepared in relation to additional internal works that are being considered as part of the refurbishment. Project proceeding to Stage 3 design.
Lanyon Tunnels	Project has been impacted by the JR decision on the adjacent site to the tunnels – the adjacent site is a critical access point for the project, enabling range of connectivity outcomes and benefits (SIF business case dependent on connectivity). Members are asked to note that discussions are ongoing with the TEO

##### **UV capital programme**

**Table below is the status update on UV projects in South Belfast – note the UV programme has a defined south Belfast geography (Sandy Row; Donegall Pass and Markets). *NB Coffee Culture project is linked to Council's SOF - see Section 4 BIF and Section 5 SOF update.***

## **UV – South Belfast projects overview**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Status and update</b>
Sandy Row Play Park	Project completed and handed over
Rev Robert Bradford Memorial Park	Project completed and handed over
Coffee Culture <i>NB Linked to BCC SOF</i>	Project business case being finalised. Potential funding mix includes; UV contribution £402k and BCC SOF- £100k. UV issued a further correspondence to BCC to request additional funding (£421k) to fully fund the current shortfall, as per BIF update.
John Murray Lock House—wider development	Business case/ design team procurement stage. Business case progressing. Design options prepared and costed. It is anticipated that preferred option will require co-funding which still needs to be explored. Letter of Offer pending
Wee Ruby`s Live, Work Studios	Emerging project. Business case stage. Estimated UV funding contribution £764k. Business case given approval to proceed therefore only at very initial stage.
School of Music Redevelopment	Emerging project

### **DfC programme**

**Below is the status update on DfC funded projects in South Belfast –**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Status and update</b>
Belfast Islamic Centre - <i>Renovations of Aldersgate House, University Rd</i>	BCC is the delivery agent for this project. Working in conjunction with BIC and DfC the project has progressed to tender. Tender evaluation is planned for September. Contractor anticipated start date on site in Oct/Nov 2020.

### **8. Small Scale Funding Options**

**Members will be aware that Physical Programmes delivery has been hampered by Covid-19 pandemic. The situation also provide opportunities for the council and the respective community groups to be imaginative and explore potential funding sources out there. The briefing document (Appendix 3) present some information related to external funding sources which can be shared and explored by our partners to maximise funding on capital projects. Also, Members will note that this is really useful resource which can be disseminated to community groups.”**

The Director stated that should Members wish to attend site visits in respect of any of the projects listed, this could be accommodated, provided that social distancing measures were adhered to. She stated further that, under LIF 1 and LIF 2, twenty-four projects in South Belfast had received support in principle of which, twenty-one projects had been completed. The Members were informed that no additional funds were available under LIF 2 for new emerging projects and stated that, in respect of Finaghy Bridge, she hoped to update the Working Group further, following a meeting to be held with DfI at the end of October, 2020.

The Working Group was provided with an update on the LORAG project, in respect of the development of a community garden, which was subject to a due diligence assessment. She stated that because that project was linked to an Urban Villages development, specifically in relation to the John Murray Lock House, she informed the Working Group that LORAG had requested to meet with the Members to provide an update on their development proposals.

### **Holylands Improvement Project**

A Member raised concerns in respect of the Holylands Improvement project and requested clarification on the scope of the Consultants brief, given that he had identified issues specific to that area including, graffiti and the illegal dumping of waste. In response, the Director confirmed that the brief was limited to the planting of trees in the area and agreed that she would bring a more detailed update, to the next meeting of the Working Group, in respect of the issues raised by the Member.

Noted.

### **Lagan Gateway Project**

The Director provided an update of some development proposals under BIF. In relation to the Lagan Gateway project and stated that a number of concerns had been raised, by a small number of residents, in terms of privacy. To address these concerns, the Director noted that the Council had already erected a temporary barrier and had agreed to the installation of a permanent barrier. It was noted that neither of these formed part of the planning requirements and that the Council was under no obligation to provide these, but was doing so to address the concerns raised. The Director stated also that, as these were not part of the planning requirements, it was noted that the costs for these had not formed part of the project budget. The Director noted that the residents had requested the erection of a brick wall as the permanent barrier. She indicated that the costs of such a permanent structure would be very expensive and not in keeping with the surrounding natural environs. She outlined that the Council was looking instead, at the installation of a 'living wall', along the towpath, which would be in keeping with the natural environment and which would address all the concerns raised, including privacy.

Members expressed support for the 'living wall' proposal and agreed that this should be progressed. A Member requested that Lagan Valley Regional Park be updated and that, opportunities were considered to explore options to improve both increasing capacity in regard to pedestrian and cycle access, to the Lagan towpath. The Director stated that the Council was in consultation with both DfI and DfC to secure additional funding in respect of the development proposal.

Agreed.

### **Knockbreda Parish Church Hall**

The Director reminded the Working Group that the Knockbreda Parish Church Hall project was agreed as part of Outer South BIF allocation. She stated that pre-commencement and mobilisation work had commenced and requested that the Working Group agreed to move the project to Stage 3 - Committed. The Working Group agreed with that proposal.

### **Bredagh GAC Clubhouse**

The Director informed the Working Group that £700,000 had been agreed, in principle, in respect of the development of a new clubhouse at Bredagh GAC. She stated that it was anticipated that work on the site would commence by the Spring of 2021. The Members were informed that Bredagh GAC had requested that the Council act as delivery agent for the project and the Working Group confirmed their agreement to that request.

### **Sandy Row Project**

The Director confirmed that £1.35 million had been ring fenced for projects within the Sandy Row Area including, the construction of a new sensory playground. The Members were informed of the collaborative work with Urban Villages on the Coffee Culture project and that, £100,000 had been committed, by the Council, to that project under the Social Outcomes Fund (SOF) The Director confirmed that there was currently a funding deficit in relation to that development and that Urban Villages had requested that the Council make up the funding shortfall under BIF. The Working Group was informed that any additional funding allocation would be subjected to both Urban Villages financial scrutiny, in addition to completion of the Council's own due diligence process.

A Member stated that she had spoken to BSCR, being the leading community group within the Sandy Row area in regard to their request for funding of an on-line exam centre, as part of a social enterprise development within the area.

Following further discussion on the development proposals, the Area Working Group agreed that both BSCR and Urban Villages be invited to participate in a special remote meeting, in October. The Working Group agreed also that, the special meeting would be used to provide an update on their development proposals for the Sandy Row area, incorporating the Coffee Culture and the Exam Centre development options, in order to allow the Area Working Group to fully consider the proposals.

### **Capital Programme**

The Director provided the Area Working Group with an update on the status of projects being undertaken, in South Belfast, under the Council's capital programme. She referred specifically to the completion of the stage 4 Alleygating scheme, the Playground Improvement Programme and the Palm House at Botanic Gardens. In response to a question from a Member, in respect of the Palm House, the Director confirmed that this development had been agreed as a stage 1 emerging project which required additional match funding to secure its delivery. She stated further that, discussions were ongoing, with external funding bodies, in order to explore the possibility of securing additional capital funding for that project.

Noted.

### **Social Investment Fund Projects**

The Area Working Group noted the information provided in respect of which the Council was the delivery partner, under the Social Investment Fund (S.I.F.), in partnership with Urban Villages, including a number of additional projects, by the Council, on behalf of the DfC Regeneration Directorate.

### **Small Scale Funding Options**

The Director provided the Working Group with a range of additional sources of capital funding which could be utilised by community groups and stated that her department would be happy to provide guidance and expertise to those organisations, and/or community groups, which required additional small-scale capital funding resources.

Noted.

### **Bin Routes/Development and Animation of Green Spaces**

A Member of the Working Group requested that information be provided in regard to the issue of missed bin collections and operational problems identified in connection with the effective operation of that service. The Working Group requested also that this information be provided in respect of all areas of the city for comparative purposes. The Members agreed also that information be provided in relation to expanding the remit of the Area Working Group, to include the development and animation of green spaces.

In response, the Director stated that it was her intention to look at the roles and responsibilities of the various Working Groups and that revised Terms of Reference had been agreed for that purpose, which would be circulated for information purposes. She stated that it was anticipated that the work of the Area Working Groups could be expanded to look at more strategic developmental issues, which would feed into the strategic development plans for the city as a whole. She stated that it was intended to bring an update on those proposals, to the November meeting of the Working Group.

Noted.

### **Update on the Wider University and Lower Ormeau Area**

A Member requested an update in terms of feedback arising from actions agreed at the January meeting of the People and Communities Committee, in respect of the designation of the Holylands, as a Special Action Area. In response, the Neighbourhood Services Manager stated that it was intended to bring an update in the matter to the November meeting of the Working Group. He stated that, a representative from the ILAB group would be invited to hear the views and priorities of the Area Working Group, in relation to the Holylands and wider Lower Ormeau areas.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

The Working Group agreed that its next special meeting would be held on Monday, 26th October at 5.00 p.m.

Chairperson