

# South Belfast Area Working Group

Thursday, 25th March, 2021

## MEETING OF SOUTH BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

### HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

- Members present: Councillor McAteer (Chairperson); and Councillors Bunting, Gormley, Groogan, T. Kelly, Lyons, McDonough-Brown, McKeown, Nicholl and Spratt.
- In attendance: Mr. R. Black, Director of City and Neighbourhood Services;  
Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes;  
Ms. A. Allen, Neighbourhood Services Manager (Social and Community Recovery);  
Mr. S. Leonard, Neighbourhood Services Manager (South)  
Ms. D. Smith, Neighbourhood Integration Manager;  
Mr. S. Conlon, Open Spaces and Street Scene Manager;  
Ms. S. Kalke, Project Sponsor; and  
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

No apologies were reported.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 4th January were approved.

### **Declarations of Interest**

The following Members declared an interest in respect of item 4a - Update on Community Provision Summer Micro Grant and Micro Medium Grant Funding, on the basis that the organisation named had received funding under the programme:

- Councillor Bunting - acted as Secretary to the Belvoir Area Residents' Group;
- Councillor Gormley – on the Board of LORAG;
- Councillor T. Kelly - her husband worked for Belfast South Community Resources; and
- Councillor McKeown – a member of Rosario Football Club.

As funding had already been approved, the Members were not required to leave the meeting whilst that item was being discussed.

### **Future Presentations**

The Working Group agreed to receive at future meetings a presentation from the following organisations:

- Atkins Engineering Consultants
  - on the Belfast Tidal Flood Alleviation Scheme;
- the Council's three strategic Covid-19 response partners in South Belfast, namely, Forward South Partnership (South Belfast Area Partnership)/LORAG (Inner South Neighbourhood Renewal Area)/South City Resource and Development Centre (South West Neighbourhood Renewal Area)
  - on their Covid-19 response and associated findings; and
- Forward South Partnership
  - on capacity building and health programmes being delivered in the Belvoir area, in the wider context of a meeting dedicated specifically to health/health outcomes in South Belfast.

### **Presentation - Social and Community Recovery**

The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services informed the Working Group that the Council had, in September 2020, established a Social and Community Recovery Steering Group and two project teams to provide strategic and operational oversight of the delivery of key programmes and services within neighbourhoods and communities. This had provided an opportunity to increase awareness of activity across the Council, identify interdependencies, align and allocate resources, streamline governance and add value and to improve co-ordination and strategic oversight of its engagement with external partners. A programme pack had since been developed to provide an overview of significant activity being undertaken and to help co-ordinate activity.

He explained that the Council, in considering its approach towards social and community recovery, was required to take into consideration factors such as the way in which Covid-19 had changed the way in which citizens and the community/voluntary sector accessed services/facilities and collaborated with Council, with areas having different needs and expectations.

He then provided the Working Group with details of programmes which had been initiated by the Council to stimulate recovery, including, providing grant funding to build community capacity and support vulnerable people and families, the establishment of an £8m Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund and a Revitalisation Fund Business Grants Programme, skills development and re-skilling for employment and addressing health inequalities (mental health and wellbeing, poverty, social isolation, quality of life).

In terms of area recovery planning, he pointed out that the engagement process with communities over the next 8 - 12 months, which would be undertaken in partnership across the four areas of the City must:

- identify short-medium term priorities for Community Recovery to form the basis of four Area Recovery Plans;
- inform, shape and co-design future approaches to area working and inform relevant aspects of service provision and investment;
- inform the Community Planning Partnership's upcoming review of the Community Plan, the Belfast Agenda in 2021, and help to connect this with communities at a local level; and
- provide opportunities for local communities to engage, influence and co-design on key community planning priorities/themes (e.g. health inequalities)

The Director went on to explain that detailed work to plan the design and implementation of the community engagement process would be undertaken by a joint project team, comprising key partners, to be appointed by the Living Here Board. That would help manage resources and minimise engagement fatigue by working together with other partners. The approach would be flexible enough to meet the specific needs of each area, seeking to use existing infrastructure and focussing on adding value where possible. Detailed work to explore and define the engagement methods would be undertaken and could include online virtual discussions, enhanced webinars, surveys, co-design sessions, workshops and interactive discussions/idea generations. Wider community engagement on the process would take place when outline proposals had been drafted by joint project team for further feedback.

He provided the Members with information on key elements included within Area Plans in other local authorities and concluded by pointing out that Area Working Groups, Committees and the Community Planning Partnership would receive regular updates on the area planning process.

After discussion, the Working Group noted the information which had been provided.

### **Area Working**

#### **Update on Community Provision Summer Micro Grant and Micro Medium Grant Funding**

The Working Group considered the following report:

##### **"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues**

**To update the Working Group on the Summer Micro grant Funding and the Community Recovery Support Micro/Medium Grant Programmes.**

## **2.0 Recommendation**

**2.1** The Working Group is asked to note the contents of the report.

## **3.0 Main Report**

**3.1** Members may recall that, in July 2020, a package of financial investment was agreed to support recovery at a community level, which was in addition to the initial investment in communities as part of the COVID-19 emergency response. This investment took into account the lessons learned from the COVID-19 emergency response, in particular, feedback from community partners about the accessibility of funding.

### **Funding Approach**

**3.2** The Summer Micro grant funding programme was opened by Council at the beginning of July 2020. The final budget was approximately £310,000, with a maximum allocation per organisation of £1,000. Only one application per organisation was considered.

Funding was administered in each geography of the city by the area teams, which had been created to deliver support for the Covid-19 emergency response efforts. In order to qualify for funding, activity delivered through microgrants was required to meet at least one of the following themes:

- **Children and Young People:** Summer activities and programmes to address the negative educational and wellbeing impacts of COVID-19 and support digital connectivity;
- **Civic Pride:** Communities are rightly proud of the huge volunteering effort and sense of neighbourliness and community spirit and want to develop that further;
- **Preventing Isolation:** the impact of COVID-19 on those shielding has been significant and a huge community effort is needed to support those individuals, with digital connectivity being an element of addressing this challenge;
- **Emotional Wellbeing:** There is widespread concern about the emotional wellbeing concerns of vulnerable individuals, families and communities; and
- **Anti-Social Behaviour:** Levels of anti-social behaviour, particularly in parks/open spaces,

increased due to increased use by people not at school/work and periods of good weather over the summer.

### **Funding Impact**

- 3.3** Micro grant funding has enabled 322 organisations across Belfast to deliver an extensive programme of activities with an approximate total allocation of £310,000. In South Belfast 63 applications were approved with a total of £60,485.60 allocated. Over 40 groups were in a position to deliver their planned activity and have returned their monitoring forms.
- 3.4** Programmes delivered in South Belfast focused on all 5 themes; Children and Young People and Emotional Wellbeing were the most common. Activity included:
- Activity Programmes for young people and youth diversionary projects;
  - Drama programmes and folk history and memory workshops with older people;
  - Physical activity and community sports programmes;
  - Literacy/Numeracy/ science workshops and back to school support;
  - Mental health, wellbeing, mindfulness and resilience programmes;
  - Environmental Programmes;
  - Digital inclusion programmes; and
  - Projects to support refugees and asylum seekers.
- 3.5** Further detail on projects supported in South Belfast has been circulated to Members.
- 3.6** Feedback from grant recipients has been extremely positive, those elements that were welcomed include:
- Higher than average turnaround time for the micro grants programme from receipt of application to payment of funds. In most cases, this was completed within 20 working days;
  - More accessible, streamlined process and reductions in unnecessary bureaucracy (in keeping with the Department of Finance Reducing Bureaucracy for the Voluntary and Community Sector Code of Practice 2015); and

- Each grant application had a single point of contact within the area teams. This has enabled more effective communication and resolution of issues when they arise.

This has been particularly important for new applicants or lower capacity groups.

**Community Recovery Support Micro/ Medium Grants**

3.7 Feedback has informed our approach to further resourcing of community provision up to March 21 and beyond. Organisations have highlighted the significant challenges of delivering programmes within the current environment, especially with the tightening and easing of restrictions. Officers are mindful of this and we will seek to retain a flexible approach which supports communities to meet locally identified needs.

3.8 Two further rounds of funding were launched on 25th November.

- COVID-19 Community Recovery Support Fund Microgrant (up to £1,500)
- COVID-19 Community Recovery Support Fund Medium Grant (up to £5,000)

3.9 Funding for both programmes comes from Belfast City Council, Department of Communities, The Executive Office and Belfast District Policing Community Safety Partnerships. In order to qualify for funding, activity delivered through micro and medium grants was required to meet at least one of the following themes:

- Children and young people
- Civic pride
- Preventing isolation
- Emotional wellbeing
- Antisocial behaviour
- Health and wellbeing of staff or volunteers
- Unexpected premises and PPE costs.

**Funding Impact**

3.10 The Recovery Support Micro grant had 146 groups approved for funding across Belfast with £202,505 allocated. In South Belfast, 31 applications were approved with a total of £37,498.03 allocated.

3.11 The Recovery Support Medium grant had 132 groups approved for funding across Belfast with £558,735 allocated.

**In South Belfast 27 applications were approved with a total of £109,416.42 allocated. The deadline on project activities for both grants has been extended until September 2021.**

- 3.12 Further detail on the projects supported through the recovery support micro and medium grants in South Belfast has been circulated to Members.**

**Equality, Good Relations and Rural Needs Implications**

- 3.13 This approach proposed seeks to meet the needs of communities through a responsive programme of grants. Future funding approaches from 2021 onwards will be Equality and Rural Needs screened.”**

After discussion, the Working Group noted the contents of the report.

**Introduction to South Belfast Area Multi-Disciplinary Team**

The Working Group was reminded that one of the key priorities of the Belfast Agenda was to deliver better outcomes for neighbourhoods, through developing the emerging area approach and building capacity within communities.

The Neighbourhood Services Manager (South Belfast) explained that the need for the Council and other partners to work together with local communities on an area basis to plan interventions, services and investments had never been greater. This area approach recognised the importance of neighbourhood regeneration and developing a place-shaping approach tailored to meet local priorities and needs.

Over the past two years, the City and Neighbourhood Services Department had developed its approach to integrating service delivery at an area level across neighbourhood services. Specifically, within community provision, the following principles had already received political and corporate endorsement as the agreed direction for service delivery:

- to support local area problem solving;
- to create opportunities for new ways of working;
- to support cultural change in support of area working;
- to create synergies to pool the extensive knowledge and experience acquired by staff; and
- to align to the vision of community provision.

He explained that four Neighbourhood Services Managers had been appointed and that this had been followed by the recruitment of four Neighbourhood Integration Managers to support this area focus. In addition, the work to create the Open Space and Street Scene teams (former parks and cleansing operatives) had created an opportunity to develop links with these staff and those in other area-based services within the City and Neighbourhood Services Department, for the benefit of local communities.

He went on to highlight the fact that the current Covid-19 crisis had created significant economic and social challenges for communities. However, it had also created

opportunities for future working, with the relationships which had developed between Council officers and community, voluntary and social enterprise partners being at the forefront, with multiple examples of effective partnership working to address urgent community needs in localities and across the city.

As part of the Council's Covid-19 response (community hub), the Neighbourhood Integration Managers had established area support teams, which had responded quickly and flexibly to the emergency needs created by the pandemic. Given that the Council was now in recovery phase, and taking account of the Covid-19 collective learning, a decision has been taken to establish a revised Area Team approach across the City, which will seek to work with residents, Elected Members and stakeholders to revitalise neighbourhoods across the City by:

- supporting and working with communities and partners to collectively identify and tackle priority local issues;
- taking innovative approaches;
- being flexible and responsive;
- creating conditions to build capacity;
- empowering communities to build capacity and resilience and creating positive and lasting differences to their quality of life;
- addressing operational challenges in the ever-changing environment of Covid-19, through the lens of council procedures, but taking into account local nuances;
- leading on the integration and mobilisation of staff in local neighbourhoods, maximising opportunities where possible, to improve outcomes for our residents;
- designing how resources can be used in a more flexible way, including staff and funding;
- participating in and facilitating community engagement and communications activities associated with their catchment area;
- working with Elected Members to act as community advocates to identify and address local needs and support effective 'place-shaping';
- promoting local area knowledge and understanding;
- strengthening relationships with external agencies, residents, community representatives, partnerships and the wider communities to deliver improved Council services; and
- identifying area priorities as part of the neighbourhood regeneration approach.

The Neighbourhood Services Manager concluded by drawing the Members' attention to a list which set out the names and roles of those officers making up the South Belfast Area Team and added that they were willing to meet with Members individually to expand upon their role and discuss any issues.

Mr. S. Conlon, Open Spaces and Street Scene Manager (Holylands) and Ms. D. Smith, Neighbourhood Integration Manager, then provided a brief overview of their respective roles within the South Belfast Area Team.

In response to an issue which had been raised by a Member, the Neighbourhood Services Manager confirmed that the Area Team would be working closely with the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the two universities and other relevant agencies to address



any antisocial or other issues in South Belfast following the lifting of certain lockdown restrictions. He undertook, in response to a request from other Members, firstly, to provide in due course examples of how the objectives listed above under the revised Area Team approach were being achieved and, secondly, to provide photographs of each Team member and details of their area of responsibility.

The Working Group noted the information which had been provided.

### **Community Capacity Building and Community Infrastructure Needs in Balmoral District Electoral Area**

Following on from the previous item, the Chairperson (Councillor McAteer) drew the Members' attention to a paper which had been circulated on her behalf in advance of the meeting.

The paper had reiterated the points which had been made by the Neighbourhood Services Manager around the need for the Council and other partners to work together with local communities on an area basis and she referred specifically to the lack of community infrastructure in the Balmoral District Electoral Area, compared to some other areas of the City. She highlighted issues in that District Electoral Area around, for example, the flooding of homes, gardens and streets, heavy vehicles using side streets, speeding, environmental blights and the impact of Covid-19 on people and businesses and pointed out that a lack of community infrastructure had also limited the opportunity to access Covid Recovery funding.

Accordingly, she requested that the Working Group agree that the South Belfast Area Team draft a report and undertake a mapping exercise on the current provision of community capacity and infrastructure in the Balmoral District Electoral Area, its core functions and gaps in provision. The Team should engage with Elected Members and stakeholders from that District Electoral Area and submit draft findings and recommendations for community capacity to the Area Working Group in the first instance for consideration.

The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services pointed out that work had already commenced on a mapping exercise around community and physical infrastructure provision in South Belfast overall and that Members would be afforded the opportunity to contribute to that process, both at an individual level and through the Area Working Group.

After a lengthy discussion, the Working Group agreed that the Chairperson's proposal be incorporated into the current mapping exercise.

### **Wider University and Lower Ormeau – ILAB Update**

The Working Group considered the following report:

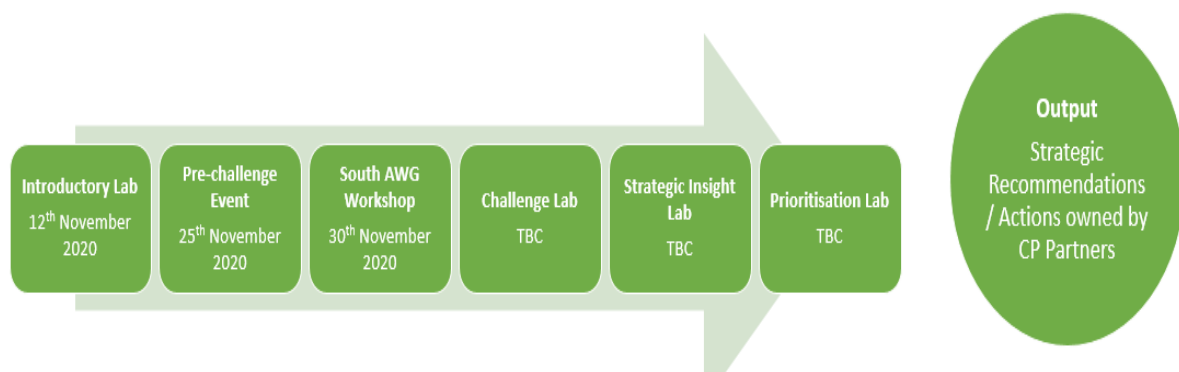
#### **“1.0 Purpose of Report**

**The purpose of this report is to:**

- i. provide the Working Group with a progress update on the Wider University and Lower Ormeau ILAB, which commenced in November 2020; and
- ii. highlight significant issues that have been raised by the Department of Finance Innovation Team who are leading the ILAB process.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 Within the Belfast Agenda, there is a commitment to design an integrated, inter-agency approach to neighbourhood regeneration, which seeks to maximise the potential benefit of existing and/or planned programmes, assets and investments for local neighbourhoods and communities.
- 2.2 In order to inform the approach to this work, the Council undertook some initial mapping to scope potential areas of focus. This resulted in the identification of five 'transformational places' across the city including the South Belfast corridor as well as the Inner East corridor, Lower North corridor, Springfield and Colin areas.
- 2.3 Within this context, in November 2019, the Council and Living Here Board agreed to give special focus to the Wider University and Lower Ormeau, as part of the South Belfast Transformational Place, and agreed to adopt an integrated and sustainable approach to the regeneration of this area through the creation of a long-term vision and development plan. The People and Communities Committee had also recommended that a specific focus is given to this area given the complex challenges at play.
- 2.4 To commence this process, officers secured the commitment from the Department for Communities to provide £15,000 funding which supported the delivery of a Strategic Insights Programme facilitated by the Department of Finance Innovation Team.
- 2.5 The Insights Programme incorporates a series of virtual user engagement and definition events that lead to a two-day Strategic Insights Lab and seeks to gain consensus on a strategic direction to resolve the challenge(s) identified during the course of the programme. It should be noted that for the programme to be successful it requires a willingness from participants to find common ground and behave constructively.
- 2.6 The Insights programme commenced with an introductory lab on the 12th November 2020 and incorporates the following activities that, if successfully delivered, will produce strategic recommendations and actions, which will be owned by community planning partners.



**2.7 The following community stakeholders were invited to participate in the Introductory and Pre-Challenge events:**

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
<b>Forward South Partnership &amp; NICRAS</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>LORAG</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>South Belfast Roundtable</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>HALO</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>LANI</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>UU Student Representative</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>QUB Student Representative</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Holyland Trust</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>University Quarter Business Association</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>City Church</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Belfast Holyland Regeneration Association</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>College Park Avenue Residents Association</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Stranmillis Environmental Action Group</b>	<b>Yes</b>

**2.8 In addition to these events, a workshop was held with the South AWG on 30th November ensuring that that Members' feedback was incorporated within the insights process.**

**3.0 Key Issues**

**3.1 Following the two initial community events, the facilitators from the Innovation Team advised that the personal animosity, aggressiveness and suspicion demonstrated between some participants and the levels of mistrust towards differing viewpoints during the two sessions would not be conducive to a consensus-based process and that these behaviours would need to change to move the process and the wider issues forward.**

**3.2 We had intended to run the Challenge Lab in December 2020, however, following consultation with the Innovation Team and DfC it was agreed to pause the process and hold an**

interim step to try to address the difficulties that have emerged and develop a contract with the participants to ensure behaviours and communication between participants became wholly respectful and positive.

**3.3** This was communicated to the participants in December 2020 and one-to-one sessions were held in January 2021 with representatives from the four primary sectors in the participant group:

- Landlords
- Community Groups
- Residents
- Student Groups

**3.4** Unfortunately, significant issues remain between the stakeholder groups and it was agreed with colleagues from DfC and DoF to pause the process while the respective parties consider options to help address the issues raised, including the possibility of providing dedicated resources.

**3.5** Within the context of the issues outlined within this report a meeting has been requested with Tracy Meharg (Permanent Secretary, Department for Communities) to explore potential options which would support the successful delivery of the ILAB and address wider societal issues in the area.

**3.6** Last week officers from City and Neighbourhood Services attended a multi-agency meeting chaired by the Communities Minister Deirdre Hargey MLA. The Minister will shortly be meeting with the Chief Executive to discuss medium to long-term plans for the Wider University and Lower Botanic area. The Minister acknowledged the significant work of the Council to date and wanting to build on that. She also announced that she was forming a Strategic Partnership group to look at a medium to long-term plan for the area and this would meet in April.

#### **4.0** Recommendations

**4.1** Members are asked to:

- note the content of this report;
- note that a further update will be provided to Members following the meeting to explore potential options with the Department for Communities; and
- note that following further meetings of the ministerial Strategic Partnership group future updates will be provided to members.”

During discussion, several Members highlighted the potential difficulties which residents of the Botanic District Electoral Area would be likely to experience once the Covid-19 night time economy restrictions were lifted and reference was made to the need for the Council to be given additional enforcement powers. The point was made also that the invitation to attend the multi-agency meeting, referred to in paragraph 3.6 of the report, had not been extended to Elected Members from the Botanic District Electoral Area and that this needed to be addressed moving forward.

In response, the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services pointed out that the meeting had been arranged at short notice and undertook to ensure that the views of those Members would be communicated to the Minister for Communities at the forthcoming meeting to discuss the medium to long-term plans for the Wider University and Lower Botanic area and in future meetings.

After further discussion, the Working Group noted the contents of the report and agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that a letter be forwarded to the Minister for Justice requesting that the Council be given additional enforcement powers around the seizure of alcohol and noise control.

### **Update on Lagan Gateway Project**

The Director of Physical Programmes submitted for the Working Group's consideration the following report:

#### **“1.0 Introduction**

**The Lagan Gateway project proposes a number of structural improvements and development works at Stranmillis including the development of a navigation lock, an iconic foot and cycle bridge, the refurbishment of the existing weir and high quality landscaping with associated path connections. The project will create a connection both on the water and on land by building a navigation lock and a pedestrian/cycle bridge.**

**The key objectives identified for the Lagan Gateway are to:**

- improve the navigation of the Lagan and create a gateway to Lagan Valley Regional Park and beyond**
- improve the access, safety and quality of green and open space around the Lagan**
- increase the pedestrian and cycle facilities and links into Belvoir Forest Park**
- improve health and well-being through providing a better living environment and enhanced exercise and recreation opportunities, accessible by all**
- realise the potential of the Lagan and its surroundings as an asset for current and future generations**

The project will result in improved connectivity and linkages in the area and improved biodiversity and natural habitats. The area is partly a heritage site and the project will aim to educate and inform visitors of its significant economic and environmental history. The proposed Greenway connection will ease the pressure on the existing towpath on the Stranmillis side; the new Greenway connection will take a high number of users from the towpath and bring them onto the other side of the Lagan and into Belvoir Forest Park, which is underused.

The total investment in the project is £4.8m, with £2.15m coming from the Council's Belfast Investment Fund. Other partners are Ulster Garden Villages, Department for Communities, Department for Infrastructure Rivers, the Department for Infrastructure and the Lagan Navigation Trust.

Phase 1 of the project is nearing its completion; the first section of the bridge has been lifted into place in February and the installation of the last bridge sections are planned for April 2021. The navigation lock will be completed in summer this year.

## **2. Recommendations**

The Working Group is requested to:

- i. agree to explore the option of entering a Service Level Agreement or similar with the Lagan Navigation Trust to operate and manage the navigation lock and associated areas after completion of the project;
- ii. note the outlined naming process for the bridge element of the Lagan Gateway project and agree that a naming competition is recommended into the next People and Communities Committee meeting; and
- iii. note the proposal for developing an art piece on the bridge piers as part of the UK Youth for Nature high-profile national campaign (involving more than 10 UK cities) and agree that this approach is recommended at the next People and Communities Committee meeting.

## **3. Operation/maintenance of the Navigation Lock**

Once the navigation lock is completed, it will become a Council asset and need to be operated and maintained. It is part of a wider programme that the Lagan Navigation Trust is pursuing – to open the whole navigation from Belfast to

Lough Neagh and create a working waterway, which serves collaborations and local businesses playing a role in the economic and social regeneration of this heritage asset along 27 miles of the Navigation. It is the first lock re-opened in the Belfast area and will set a precedence for the further development of navigation locks. The Lagan Navigation Trust, as the custodians of the Lagan navigation have expressed an interest in operating and maintaining the lock and surrounding area as they aim at opening all 27 locks along 27 miles in three local government areas (Belfast City Council, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council and Armagh City, Banbridge, Craigavon Borough Council).

The Trust's remit is geographically specific - the Lagan Navigation and its stated purpose is to reopen the Navigation. They have civil engineers and waterways users on their Board with expertise in education, major charitable investment and Local Government expertise at both Director and elected member levels. To support their work, the Trust established a new charity, The Waterways Community, specifically to work with waterways in terms of animation, health and wellbeing, educational and cultural services related to those waterways. This is the driver for delivery of a working waterway on the Lagan. Council officers are currently working with the Chief Officer and Board of the Lagan Navigation Trust on an appropriate agreement (Service Level Agreement or similar) to ensure that the navigation lock of the Lagan Gateway project is being operated and maintained expertly. Specifically the management will be looking at the following:

- how to address security concerns
- how to prevent inundations during surges
- potential role of a lockkeeper in operating and maintaining the lock and carrying out works such as opening and closing the gates, providing assistance with launching /tying up boats at the site, ensuring that there is free-flow of water and removal of debris such as branches, cleaning of the gates and management of stop logs

Currently the Council contributes to the core funding of the LNT – one potential mechanism being considered is 'divert' this into project funding i.e. the operation of the navigation lock on behalf of the Council.

Members are asked to agree to explore the option of entering a Service Level Agreement or similar with the Lagan Navigation Trust to operate and manage the navigation lock and associated areas after completion of the project.

Members are asked if they wish to invite the Lagan Navigation Trust to a future meeting of the Area Working Group.

#### **4. Naming of the Bridge**

As stated above, the new pedestrian and cycle bridge will be fully installed later in spring. The first section of the bridge has been lifted into place with huge interest of media and general public in February. The Council has already received a number of queries regarding the potential naming of the bridge and we would like to give the public an opportunity to suggest a name for this new asset in the area. This report sets out a phased consultative approach and process for naming the new structure in line with the Council's naming policy.

At its meeting in August 2008, the Parks and Leisure Committee agreed a policy framework for managing requests to (re) name parks and leisure facilities. The proposed consultation process will be carried out in line with this policy, with the intention that the name proposed for the bridge will be assessed against the agreed criteria set out within it. This is in line with how new structures at Connswater Community Greenway were taken forward (new bridges and play parks).

The naming process follows a three stage process is outlined below:

- 2 week consultation period during which the public will have the opportunity to submit ideas for the name of the bridge
- Following this, a panel of judges will meet to consider the submissions and shortlist a number of potential names against the criteria in the naming policy. It is proposed that the Panel is made up of Council officers again with Project Board members which will include funding partners
- Public will then have an opportunity to vote on the shortlisted options. The final bridge name will be determined by the majority vote and will brought back to Committee to be considered for agreement within context of BCC's naming policy.

As with previous naming processes, communication and advertising will be used to engage and inform the public about the naming process and to ensure that people are aware of the opportunity to submit naming ideas etc. The South AWG will also be updated on proposals. If agreed officers will look at the timeframe for the naming process.



Members are asked to note the proposal to undertake a naming process for the Bridge and the key steps as outlined above and agree that a naming competition is recommended at the next People and Communities Committee meeting.

5. **Art piece on bridge piers as part of UK Youth for Nature**

The piers of the bridge at Stranmillis have been covered in graffiti a number of times. Though anti-graffiti paint has been applied to the piers, it is a laborious (and costly) task to remove the graffiti by the contractor. A number of longer-term solutions have been explored and a number of options have been assessed. A number of options have been ruled out including planting and the installation of panels as the bridge will require regular inspection. It is therefore recommended that artwork/murals are progressed and a number of ideas where proposed including nature murals reflecting the natural surroundings or maritime theme reflecting the river or a combination.

At the same time, UK Youth for Nature, the UK's leading youth-led network calling on the politicians and governments of the UK to take urgent action and tackle the loss of nature, has approached the Council with a proposal on an artwork project for the city. To draw a link between COP15 and COP26, they are aiming to create a connected pathway of wildlife murals from London to Glasgow (2+ per city) that highlight biodiversity decline and the impacts of climate change on nature. Priority locations (at this time) are: London, Exeter, Bristol/Bath, Cardiff, Birmingham, Norwich, Nottingham, Liverpool, Belfast, Manchester, Edinburgh, and Glasgow. The UK Youth for Nature team will work with local partners to identify appropriate locations and contact and secure local artists. The topic of the design will be on biodiversity - any key habitats or species that are iconic that are disappearing from the area, to evoke people's imaginations with the

It has approached the Council about the potential of using the bridge piers for the Belfast part of the campaign. The work will be carried out by a local Belfast artist/collective of young artists. Members are asked to agree that the Council works with UK Youth for Nature Team on taking forward this proposal. In agreeing this Members are asked to note that the Council will have the opportunity to agree the artists involved and so quality assure this aspect of the work. Officers from the PP Department have recently taken forward the delivery of the Entries projects in the city centre which have included a number of high quality murals and a similar approach to choosing the artist(s) will be undertaken for this project.

In addition if the proposal is agreed then Members are asked to note that the Council will need to make a financial contribution towards the costs of the project to cover the

**costs of paint/materials and artists costs. These costs would be taken from the existing project budget.**

**Benefits for the project and city as a whole:**

- **Reputation as supporting a green youth movement**
- **Environmental credentials**
- **Community involvement**
- **Quality art piece**
- **Positive media attention**
- **Potential to cooperate with other biodiversity groups/organisations**
- **Be part of a wider UK network**
- **International recognition (UN climate conference in Glasgow in 2021)**

**Members are asked to note the proposal of developing an art piece on the bridge piers as part of the UK Youth for Nature high-profile national campaign (involving more than 10 UK cities) and agreed that this approach is recommended at the next People and Communities Committee meeting.**

#### **6. Other**

**Members are asked to note that other issues have been raised in relation to ASB in the area. Members are asked to note that the Council's community safety team are aware of this and additional patrols are being carried out on the area. In addition we have installed mobile CCTV to monitor the bridge which will alert the contractor if there are any issues.**

**We are also looking at longer term mitigation measures including the installation of permanent CCTV and are working with DFI on this. We have also had a request in terms of looking at the installation of night time gates on the Bridge. Members are asked to note that gates on the bridge were not part of the original design/scope and would not be in keeping with the ethos of the Bridge which was to open up access to the area. Given this at this stage we are not looking at the installation of these as there is no evidence that these are required as the Bridge has not yet opened. This will be kept under review."**

After discussion, the Working Group adopted the recommendations, noted that it would be provided with examples of UK for Nature's work at other locations and commended the Director of Physical Programmes, the Project Sponsor and the other officers who had contributed to the success of the project.

#### **Update on Physical Programme**

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, 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 on behalf of other agencies. This report outlines the status of projects under the Physical Programme.

**2. Recommendations**

The Working Group is asked to note the physical programme update for South Belfast and:

- i. note the update on the Holylands Area Improvement Initiative LIF project;
- ii. note the update on the Sandy Row area proposed BIF projects;
- iii. note the update on the Lagan Gateway BIF project (separate detailed report); and
- iv. agree that the Council acts as the delivery agent for the Belfast South Community Resources – Sandy Row Tourism signage SOF project.

**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: LIF1 (2012-2015) - £5m total funding pot, allocated across each AWG areas; and LIF2 (2015 -2019) - £4m allocation. Each LIF project proposal is taken through a Due Diligence process prior to any funding award.

Members will recall that the AWG requested an update on the Holylands Area Improvement Initiative. The project brief remains limited to the planting of trees in the area. The latest position on the project is below.

LIF Ref	Project	LIF Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
SLIF2-07	Holylands Area Improvement Initiative	£80,000	On Ground	A contractor has been appointed to undertake these works but was unable to source trees to plant within the growing season	Continue engagement with the group and partners

				due to BREXIT. The trees will be planted in late October 2021. Community group (QUBA) is aware of the project status and proposed way forward.	
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Members are asked to note the update of Holylands Area Improvement Initiative LIF project.

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

Members are reminded BIF is a £28m 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 area under Local Government Reform. In South Belfast, 6 projects received an In-Principle funding commitment, thereby fully allocating its BIF allocation.

*Sandy Row area projects*

Members will recall that, at its special meeting in October 2020, the AWG recommended the following project proposals, namely: Coffee Culture project in partnership with Urban Villages, Sandy Row Open Space project and BSCR IT Exam Centre project. These proposals will be funded under the ring-fenced Sandy Row area BIF funding of £1.35m. This recommendation was approved by SP&R in November 2020 and these projects have been added to the BIF programme as *Stage 1- Emerging* projects, which will go through the three-stage approval process and due diligence.

Members are asked to note that the vacant units identified for the expansion of the IT Exam Centre have since been let. A vacant corner site has now been identified that can accommodate both the IT Exam Centre BIF proposal as well as the Arts & Digital Hub project being developed by BSCR with the Urban Villages Initiative (project originally ‘Wee Ruby’s Live, Work Studios’). The project promoter, BSCR, now proposes to take forward these projects jointly on this site in one development. Further updates will be brought to Members as this proposal is further developed.

Members are asked to note the update on the Sandy Row area projects and further asked to consider the separate detailed report update on Lagan Gateway BIF project.

**5. Social Outcome Fund**

SOF is £4m ringfenced capital investment programme with a focus on local community tourism projects. 3 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.

In September 2020, the AWG agreed to the change in promoter for Sandy Row Tourism signage SOF project from Sandy Row Community Forum to Belfast South Community Resources. This project is now progressing through Due Diligence and the procurement process.

Project	SOF Award	Status and update	Recommendation
SOF04  Sandy Row Community Forum	£80,000	Development of a Tourism Trail to complement the Transport Hub. Due Diligence complete. The project concept has been developed and costed. Belfast South Community Resources have signed off the project concept. Council will act as delivery agent for the project and will assist in the maintenance of signage as part of the council-wide upkeep of tourism signage.	Recommend that the Council acts as the delivery agent for this project

**Members are also asked to note the project update and agree that the Council acts as the delivery agent for the Belfast South Community Resources - Sandy Row Tourism signage SOF project.”**

After discussion, during which the Director of Physical Programmes undertook, at the request of a Member, to ensure that all community groups in the Holylands area were briefed on the current status of the Holylands Area Improvement Initiative, the Committee adopted the recommendations set out within the report.

#### **Date of Next Meeting**

The Working Group noted that details of its next meeting would be circulated in due course.

Chairperson