

# West Belfast Area Working Group

Thursday, 24th February, 2022

WEST BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP  
HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Corr (Chairperson),  
Alderman Kingston and McCoubrey; and  
Councillors Baker, Beattie, Black, Canavan,  
Donnelly, Garrett, Hutchinson, McCabe and Verner.

In attendance: Mr. S. Leonard, Neighbourhood Services Manager;  
Mr. D. Logan, Project Manager, Physical Programmes;  
Ms. A. McGlone, Neighbourhood Integration Manager;  
Mrs. G. Boyd, Democratic Services Officer; and  
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

## **Apologies**

Apologies were reported on behalf of Alderman Carson and Councillor Matt Collins.

## **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 25th November were agreed as an accurate record of proceedings.

## **Declarations of Interest**

Alderman Kingston declared an interest in relation to item 2b on the agenda, Shankill Mission Hotel, as a Director of the Argyle Business Centre, and left the meeting whilst the item was being considered.

Councillors Corr and Donnelly declared an interest in item 2c, Belfast Celtic, in so far as they either worked for or were associated with Black Mountain Shared Spaces.

## **Presentations**

### **Proposed approach in regard to requests to address/present to the Working Group**

Following discussion, it was agreed that, where possible, site visits would be convened to view organisations/clubs future proposals as it was felt that such an arrangement would enable the proposal to be considered within the context of the existing facilities.

It was noted that on some occasions it might still be necessary to invite an organisation to present.

## **Presentation by the Shankill Mission**

(Alderman Kingston left the meeting during this part of the meeting)

The Chairperson welcomed to the meeting, Mr. D. McBride, Executive Chairman, representing the Argyle Business Centre (ABC).

Mr. McBride provided the Working Group with a brief background to the ABC and its services. He then drew Members' attention to the ABC's proposal in respect of the Mission Hotel that would be located in the Shankill Road Mission building on the Shankill Road, Belfast.

Mr. McBride took the Members through the details of the presentation. He highlighted his belief that this project was critical to the economic development of the area and that it would help to kickstart regeneration in the area. He also advised that, given the educational underachievement within the area, the Shankill Mission Hotel would promote growth by providing opportunities for skills development through job creation and apprenticeships

He reviewed the original plan for the hotel and advised that the initial budget had been £8M. He advised also that, to date, £40k had been spent on Risk Elimination but unfortunately, due to Covid, all development had been put on hold. Mr. McBride then set out the next steps for the proposed development of the Shankill Mission. He advised that the Heritage Enterprise grant scheme had re-opened and that they had engaged a consultant for the application for a capital grant and a development grant to assist with the initial staffing funding and support. They had also applied for the Urban Development Grant. However, there was currently a debate in regard to 'double funding', therefore, the application was currently being reviewed. However, as areas of Special Economic Deprivation could override this, they were hopeful that the application would be successful. In addition, they had registered their intent for Peace Plus and had also engaged consultants to assist with the application.

Mr. McBride concluded his presentation by thanking the Members for the opportunity to address the Working Group and he asked them to remain committed to the Shankill Mission Hotel project whilst they awaited confirmation of funding in relation to their 'Peace Plus' funding application.

During discussion a number of the Members referred to the Shankill area and the positive regeneration works that had taken place. They stressed that they were keen not to see the area negatively portrayed as it still had much to offer.

Several of the Members referred to the current significant increase in build costs, and the fact that the projected £750k had not been reviewed in several years. Following discussion, the representative agreed to forward updated projected build costs which would be circulated to the Members.

It was also suggested to the representative that the organisation needed to try and identify other private funding options and a Member specifically drew reference to the Financial Capital Transaction Fund and encouraged Mr. McBride to investigate this fund further.

Several Members noted the update and whilst they acknowledged the problems and delays that the Covid Pandemic had created they advised that the proposal needed to be progressed as a matter of urgency.

The Chairperson thanked Mr. McBride for his presentation, and he left the meeting.

Noted.

### **Presentation by Belfast Celtic**

The Chairperson welcomed to the meeting, Mr. J. Gallon, representing Belfast Celtic CIC.

Mr. Gallon commenced by providing the Working Group with a brief background to Belfast Celtic CIC and its services. He then drew Members' attention to the club's vision for the future:

- to bring Irish League Football back to West Belfast;
- for it to become a community club at the heart of the rapidly growing Glen Road and to offer more than football; and
- to unify the wider "Celtic" family in West Belfast and to develop its growing links to Glasgow Celtic FC.

He then outlined the Club's Redevelopment Proposals as follows:

- state of readiness for Sub Regional Stadia Funding;
- initial planning application submitted December 2013;
- revised application submitted September 2020 (approved May 2021);
- Sport NI Facilities Fund- New WC Provisions (£25k) (Committed);
- IFA Grassroots Facilities Funding Application- Upgrade Carpark (£30k) (Committed); and
- Choice Housing collaboration (£5k) (Committed).

He proceeded to present the Working Group with a summary of the reasons of need for the proposed redevelopment, as follows:

- limitations of current grass pitch; restricted use; Summer season repairs;
- difficulties in accessing other suitable playing facilities locally when required- Demand outstrips supply;
- the potential to host additional local football clubs and teams (early discussions with Belfast Swifts);
- facilities upgrade required to aid progression of Belfast Celtic up through the leagues;
- to facilitate wider community participation and address health and well-being challenges of local communities through the power of participation in sport;
- identification of current and forthcoming Council funding opportunities which align with our ambitions;

- support to lobby other government Departments;
- update on the Council's position on Sub Regional Stadia Funding;
- renegotiation of the Lease with the Council (20 years remaining at present); and
- Seek Council Officer Support to further develop "Celtic Cup" summer tournament in partnership with Glasgow Celtic Football Club.

Following the presentation, it was agreed that:

- officers from the Neighbourhood Services Team and Physical Programmes would identify officer support to liaise with Belfast Celtic to assist with the organisation of a Football Tournament Event; and
- a site visit to the facilities would be convened which would enable the Members to relate to the suggested proposals made during the presentation.

The Chairperson thanked Mr. Gallon for his presentation and he left the meeting.

### **Physical Programmes 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, the Local Investment Fund (LIF), the Belfast Investment Fund (BIF), Social Outcomes Fund (SOF) and the new Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (NRF); 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 programmes update for West Belfast;**
- **note the success story on the completed St James Community Forum project and consider the reallocation of underspend LIF monies of up to £16k; and,**
- **note the update on Glencairn Community Project and agree to the proposed approach which involves construction of a new community/neighbourhood centre in the Glencairn Estate with Education Authority ownership and management.**

### 3. Local Investment Fund

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. (LIF 1 – West - £1,127,500 + Shankill £490,000 and LIF 2 - £1,400,000).

Each LIF project proposal is taken through a Due Diligence process prior to any funding award. The table below outlines funding to date for each tranche, at key stages of the delivery process: 49 projects have received In Principle support under LIF1 and LIF2, of which 47 have been completed and 2 projects at delivery stage. In total, 95% of all LIF West projects have now been completed. Further details of these are outlined below.

LIF breakdown – West	LIF 1		LIF 2	
	Projects	Amount/ Value (£)	Projects	Amount/ Value (£)
Number of Projects Completed	25 (100%)	£1,617,500	22 (92%)	£1,301,788
Number of Projects On-going Delivery			2 (8%)	£98,212
Number of Projects in Pre-construction				
Number of Projects in Initial Stage (Due Diligence)				
<b>Total Number of Approved Projects</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>£1,617,500</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>£1,400,000</b>

The below table is a brief overview of the remaining live projects are shown below.

LIF Ref	Project	LIF Funding	Stage	Status	Action / recommendation
WLIF2-08	Berlin Swifts Football Club	£65,085	On Ground	Work underway to ensure connections (sewer and utilities), meetings with Education Authority to confirm preferred option.	Continue engagement with the groups and project partners.

				Additional funding contribution received from Department of Communities to ensure works can complete.	
<b>WLIF2-04</b>	<b>St John Bosco Boxing Club</b>	£40,000	On Ground	Contractor appointed. Works progressing. Estimated project completion date by May 2022.	Ongoing liaison with Sport NI and group.

**St James Community Forum (WLIF2-10)**

Members will note that on September 2015, the AWG agreed to allocate to the St James Community Forum urban farm/allotment project an initial LIF budget of £82,000. On September 2020, the LIF budget was further increased with the additional funding of £50,000, which brought the overall LIF budget to £132,000. During that time, Officers have been engaging with DfC, Groundwork NI and other partners for possible match funding, which was successfully secured. On March 2021, the AWG agreed to reallocate £17,000 of St James Community Forum monies to St John GAC. Both the St James' Community Forum and St John GAC projects have now been completed. The St James' project success story has received extremely positive media and local support. Following the conclusion of the project's final account, there is a LIF amount remaining of £16,191 that is now available for reallocation, leaving a final LIF budget at St James' of £99,000, reduced from £132,000.

Members are asked to note the success story of St James' Community Forum project and consider the reallocation of up to £16,000 monies from the underspend at St James' CF.

**4. Belfast Investment Fund**

Members are reminded BIF is a £28m investment fund for regeneration, partnership projects, with a minimum £250k investment. The West AWG had a total allocation of £9m comprising £5.5m from the original allocation, an additional £1.2m which was ring-fenced for projects in the Shankill area when this became part of the West AWG following the Council elections in 2015 and £2.5m which was ringfenced for projects in the Colin area following LGR.

6 projects have received an In-Principle funding commitment under BIF accounting for the full allocation. Each of the 'In Principle' projects are taken through a 3-stage approval process, including a rigorous Due Diligence process before any Funding Agreement is approved and put in place. Table below provides a summary of BIF allocated projects.

***Summary of BIF allocated projects***

<b>West</b>	<p>Stage 3—Davitts GAC—£1m; Raidió Fáilte—£950k; St Comgall's- £3.5m; Colin Glen Forest Park—£2.5m</p> <p>Stage 2—Glencairn Community Project— £700k; St Mary's CBS— no commitment</p> <p>Stage 1— Royal British Legion—£300k; An Sportslann; Suffolk Community Forum; Belfast Hills- Black Mountain Access—no commitment</p>
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***Glencairn Community Project (BIF09)***

In 2016, £700,000 was allocated towards construction of a new multi-functional facility/ neighbourhood centre in Glencairn. The purpose of the centre is to provide a hub for a range of community, sport, health and leisure-based activities to meet the needs of the growing population, improve economic and social prospects and enhance the quality of life for residents of the Glencairn area.

Glencairn Community Project formed as a representative group of the Glencairn community with responsibility for progressing the project. It was the intention that GCP would own and manage the building however without having an existing facility, it has been difficult for the group to demonstrate experience and capability in this regard. The council's Due Diligence panel has recognised the efforts of Glencairn Community Project to seek governance support and undertake training but still have concerns regarding the sustainability of the group to own and manage the building.

While numerous economic appraisals have been prepared which have considered proposals of varying scale and cost, affordability and funding have been recurrent issues which have hindered progress. Subsequent discussions with the Education Authority (EA) have however contributed to securing additional funding (£500,000) and an agreement in principle that EA would partner BCC in a new build facility with space for EA managed activities. Consequently, updated plans for the scheme were produced and costed in 2020.

Work has subsequently been carried out to develop options with the aim of moving the project forward. The following options have been considered:

- Option 1: Shared facility owned and managed by Glencairn Community Project at a capital cost of £1,079,500;

- **Option 2: Shared facility owned and managed by Education Authority with Glencairn Community Project becoming anchor tenant for their portion of the building; and**
- **Option 3: A scaled back version of the facility, potentially a modular build, with the Glencairn Community Project operating the facility.**

Officers have engaged with Education Authority, Elected Members and Glencairn Community Project to discuss the opportunities and implications of each option. Based on these discussions, Option 2 emerged as the preferred option. It is considered that Option 2 presents an opportunity to deliver a project of an appropriate scale to meet the needs of both Glencairn Community Project and Education Authority youth provision. Option 2 would also build the leadership and capacity of GCP and allow them to work in partnership to deliver community and youth-based activities. The partnership agreement could make provision for the facility to transfer to community ownership and management after a determined period of time should the capacity be there and conditions right. In addition, the group could become registered with EA and avail of future funding opportunities. The project has been discussed at Due Diligence and subsequently referred to the AWG for further consideration.

Members are asked to note the update on Glencairn Community Project and, following its consideration at Due Diligence, agree to the proposed approach of construction of a new community/neighbourhood centre in the Glencairn Estate with Education Authority ownership and management as outlined in Option 2.

**5. Social Outcomes Fund**

SOF is £4m ringfenced capital investment programme with a focus on local community tourism projects. 5 projects in West 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.

***SOF – West Belfast projects overview***

<b>West</b>	Stage 3— James Connolly Interpretative centre— £650,000; Rock Centre —£200,000; Belfast Orange Hall Museum- £80,000; Roddy McCorley Museum - £1,350,000 Stage 1— Shankill Mission - £750,000
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An overview of the remaining SOF projects is outlined in the table below -

SOF ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action /recommendation
SOF05	Roddy McCorley Museum	£1,350,000	On Ground	Development of a modern interpretative museum and existing grounds. Project progressing well. Estimated completion June 2022.	Continue engagement with the group
SOF07	Shankill Mission	£750,000	Initial stage	Development of a social economy training hotel. Initial stage. Overall scheme approx. cost at £7m. Funding is the major issue—no other funding has yet been secured. Group is still working to secure match funding—exploring the Heritage Enterprise Fund (HLF), bank loans and private investments - likely to be a long-term process. Note the current position with the project and continued significant funding gap. <b>Representatives from Argyle Business Centre are in attendance at this AWG meeting to provide a full update on this project.</b>	Note the current position with the project and continued significant funding gap.

## 6. Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund

Members are reminded that the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund has recently been launched and is a new £8m capital programme to support capital projects across the city. The fund is now open for Stage 1 applications via an open call process and will close on 12 May 2022. Communications activity is already underway via a variety of tools to promote the fund to as wide an audience as possible.

## 7. Capital Programme

The Capital Programme is the rolling programme of enhancing existing Council assets or building / buying new ones. Members are reminded of the 3-stage approval process in place for every project on council's Capital Programme, as agreed by SP&R Committee. Table below provides an update on current live projects West Belfast area. Members are asked to note the status and updates provided.

### *West Belfast – Capital programme overview*

Project	Status and update
<b>City Cemetery – National Lottery Heritage Fund</b>	Stage 3 – Committed, on the ground. Contractor works are progressing well. The new service yard was completed Dec 2020. Work commenced on the visitor centre in January 2021 and is due to be completed in April 2022. With the interpretive fitout of the exhibition and site wide information panels/signs due to be completed in May 2022. In tandem with this the restoration works on several of the site's key assets such as the Centre Steps and Victorian Fountains is well underway. The restoration of the and Mortuary Tower & exterior of Foxes Lodge is completed.
<b>Access to the Hills – connections from Cavehill to Divis Mountain and Black Mountain</b>	Stage 2- Uncommitted. OBC to be worked up.
<b>Black Mountain/ Upper Whiterock Greenway</b>	Stage 2- Uncommitted. OBC to be worked up.
<b>Colin Greenway</b>	Stage 2- Uncommitted. OBC to be worked up.

Members are asked to note the updates provided.

## 8. Externally funded programmes

The Council is the delivery partner for several government department on key capital investment programmes, namely Social Investment Fund (SIF) and Urban Villages (UV) from the Executive Office as well as a number of schemes with DfC. The following is

an overview of projects within each programme relevant to West Belfast.

### Urban Villages Initiative

The table below shows the status on UV projects in West Belfast – note the UV programme has a defined West Belfast geography (Colin area).

Project	Status and update
<b>Páirc Nua Chollann (New Park in Colin)</b>	Council is acting as Delivery Partner. The contractor is on site and construction works are progressing however ongoing issues with the contractor have impacted project delivery dates. Discussions ongoing with Legal Services and UV
<b>Colin Valley Football Club</b>	Council is acting as Delivery Partner. A Letter of Offer was agreed in February 2022. Contractor is appointed and is at mobilisation stage. Planning approval has been granted.
<b>Healthy Living Centre (Sport in the Community (PCA))</b>	Council is acting as Delivery Partner. The Design Team has been appointed and a planning application was presented to Planning Committee in February 2022. The Business Case has been approved and a Letter of Offer is anticipated imminently.
<b>Colin Glen Trust</b>	Letter of Offer not received. Council is acting as Delivery Partner. The project has been moved to emerging / feasibility stage as the Group is exploring options in relation to a funding gap. Given that the draft Business Case has identified a significant funding deficit, the Letter of Offer is dependent upon confirmation of funding and Business Case approval.

### Social Investment Fund

Members are asked to note the update on the SIF funded project in West.

Project	Status and update
<b>St. Comgall's (link to BIF programme)</b>	The contractor is on site and works are progressing well. Supply chain issues remain ongoing however are being managed. Completion date Spring 2022.

### PEACEIV – Capital Projects

Members are asked to note updates on the capital projects that are related to the PEACEIV Programme;

Project	Status and update
<b>Forth Meadow Community Greenway</b>	<p>On Ground. The project is split into five distinct sections:</p> <p><i>Section 1 – Glencairn</i> - Works are well underway at Section 1 with a planned completion of Spring 2022.</p> <p><i>Section 2 – Forth River/ Springfield Road</i> – works scheduled to start this month.</p> <p><i>Section 3- Falls Park/Whiterock</i> - works are scheduled to start in the next month.</p> <p><i>Section 4 – Bog Meadows</i> - Planning permission has been secured for Section 4 with works due to commence next month.</p> <p><i>Section 5 – Westlink to City Centre</i> - currently at detailed design stage.</p> <p>Members will be aware that the Council has recently been advised that an application for leave to apply for a judicial review in respect of the planning approval for Section 2 of the works has been lodged with the Courts. Business case submitted to DfI for further funding - decision pending. Estimated completion of SEUPB programme December 2023. Reported to SP&amp;R Committee in February 2022 on the potential negative impact of any delay on the project.</p>
<b>Black Mountain Shared Space Project</b>	<p>Design stage. Application submitted to SEUPB for additional funds. Costs continue to be reviewed as the design develops. Full planning application submitted in December 2021. SEUPB have granted the project an extension to September 2023 and the construction programme is still in line with this timeframe.</p>
<b>Shankill Women's Centre</b>	<p>Application submitted to SEUPB for additional funds. ITT returned and tender report prepared, and letter of intent issued to preferred contractor. The Council in February 2022 agreed to cashflow additional funding while application for additional funds from SEUPB are pending enabling Council to proceed with award of contract.</p>

### **DfC funded projects**

**Members are asked to note on projects match funded by Department for Communities which include Páirc Nua Chollann, Berlin Swifts Football Club, Forth Meadow Community Greenway, Black Mountain Shared Space and Whiterock 3G pitch carpet replacement.”**

The Working Group noted the report and agreed:

- to reallocate the underspend from the St James Community Forum project to Davitt's GAC to fund the school link pathways project ; and

- to the proposed approach of construction of a new community /neighbourhood centre in the Glencairn Estate with Education Authority ownership and management (Option 2) as detailed in the report.

### **Alleygates Scheme 5 (verbal Update)**

The Neighbourhood Services Manager provided the Members with an update in respect of the Alleygates Scheme. He advised the Members that the 12-month plan had been presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and it was due to be ratified at the March Council meeting.

The officer undertook to provide a further update at the next meeting of the Area Working Group.

Noted.

### **Alleygate Transformation**

The Members were reminded that, at its last meeting in November, the Working Group had agreed the proposed areas that would benefit from the transformation scheme along with the proposed scoring and ranking matrix for the applications. He reported that the demand for the scheme had been huge with over 80 sites listed and highlighted that the scheme would need considerable resources. He updated that, to date, officers had not been able to assess all the sites as there was not sufficient staffing resources available to do so. In addition, the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) was not contributing any revenue funding towards the scheme, only capital funding. He advised that the Council proposed to allocate a dedicated resource to assess the applications, align the workplan and draw down the money from the DfI. The Working Group was advised that Council officers were scheduled to meet with the DfI the following day to confirm finances for the scheme and he advised that any available funding would be carried forward to the next financial year. The Members were also advised that there had also been discussion regarding progressing the top priority applications, however, it was difficult to move forward on any of the applications without applying the criteria to all of the applications to ensure every application was considered fairly.

Following discussion, a number of the Members raised concerns around unadopted Alleyways and it was subsequently agreed that officers would:

- circulate to the Members of the Working Group the current list of proposed alleygate sites;
- compile a list of the 'unadopted' alleyways that needed to be brought up to standard;
- proceed to gather more information in relation to the alleyway at Beechview; and
- provide further information on how the PSNI categorised ASB for crime statistics (how this information had been gathered and registered for the purposes of the alleygate transformation scheme).

Chairperson

