



Belfast City Council response to Ballysillan Upper Ardoyne Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership's Action plan (2007)

Background

The Ballysillan/Upper Ardoyne Neighbourhood Renewal area (NRA) includes approximately 3,000 people and 1,273 households.

The Partnership's Vision statement is:

'Ballysillan Upper Ardoyne Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership will endeavour to work for its residents so that they may live safely in a clean, attractive environment, prosper in health and gain opportunities to fulfil their full potential through education and employment.'

At the core of the Partnership's plan are four strategic objectives:

- Community renewal
- Economic renewal
- Social renewal
- Physical renewal

The council's input

The Council's main resource in the area is Concorde Community Centre, which in 2005/06 employed six Council staff (a full time Community Development Worker, a part time Community Development Assistant, 1.5 Centre Supervisors and 2 part time Assistant Supervisors). Other council resources include Ballysillan Leisure Centre and Playing fields locality, Silverstream playground and Lyons Park.

The Community Development Worker sits on the Neighbourhood Partnership and is a key point of contact with the Council. This role links with other Council initiatives and includes assessment, monitoring and support to community services grant aided groups in North Belfast.

A number of discreet actions in the plan identify Belfast City Council as either a lead or supporting partner in their delivery. As part of their consultation process the NR Partnership have now asked the council to make an official response to the actions.

Detailed below are each of these council-related actions and a combined council response (established after discussions with the council's departments).

Strategic Theme: Social Renewal

Issue: Potential duplication of local services delivered within the NRA

Desired outcome: Enhanced coordination of local services.

(1) Action sought: **Support and input by the NRP towards the audit and mapping of existing service provision currently being commissioned by Belfast City Council.**

Resource implications: None

Lead: **Belfast City Council**

Support: NRP

Council response: The council's new Strategic Neighbourhood Action Programme (SNAP) is putting in place new 'Local Area Working' policies and processes that will allow the council to operate in a much more effective and joined-up manner at neighbourhood level. It will create mechanisms to allow it to engage at a local level in a more joined-up fashion in relation to, for example, the co-ordination of local events.

The SNAP team are currently mapping the provision of local public services across the city and can make the results available to the Partnership when they are published in Spring 2008.

Issue: Existing youth services need enhanced within the NRA. In particular there is a need for additional youth workers and revenue costs to support the work of existing service providers. Finally the role played by the faith sector needs to be recognised.

Desired outcome: New youth worker positions funded; Revenue costs secured for Jolly Rodger

(2) Action sought: **Establishment of a multi-agency Youth Working Group to be tasked with developing / coordinating a local programme which seeks to enhance local youth services.**

Resource implications: To be determined (estimated cost per annum of £100,000).

Lead: BELB, DENI

Support: NRP, Upper Ardoyne Youth Centre, Benview Community Centre, **Concorde Community Centre**, Local Churches

Council response: Noted.

The council's Community Services facilities provide a range of activities for children and young people as part of our general community development programme. This includes seasonal activities, three after school clubs, and two youth clubs per week throughout the year.

Our Community Development Worker who is based at Concorde will support the action sought via representation on the Youth Working Group tasked with overseeing this action.

The Belfast Community Safety Partnership currently works with Belfast Education and Library Board to fund diversionary activities via youth outreach workers.

The council is also keen to see that its Recreation services can make an active contribution to the regeneration of the surrounding neighbourhood and is eager to remove perceived barriers to access. Our Recreation Service can work with the Partnership and others to examine this action.

The extension of out of hours programmes managed by sports bodies should also be considered as contributing to these outcomes.

We would also note that the Partnership consider the potential provided by parks and open space in the area to contribute to work with older people. Our Parks & Cemeteries would welcome discussion with the Partnership on ideas for making such spaces more friendly for older people.

Issue:	Community safety is an issue which is compounded through the existence of interfaces. The lack of local policing presence was identified throughout the consultation exercise as a matter of concern.
Desired outcome:	Enhanced relationship building between the local community and the PSNI
(3) Action sought:	PSNI to be invited to join the NRP or to regularly attend meetings of the NRP to discuss local policing policy as it impacts upon the NRA..
Resource implications:	None.
Lead:	PSNI
Support:	NRP
Council response:	Noted.

Although the council has not been identified under this action we would note our involvement in the Belfast Community Safety Partnership and the fact that there are a number of resources and activities that the area can draw upon to look at Community Safety.

We have a Community Safety Coordinator for North and West Belfast available to work with the partnership on these issues.

Strategic Theme: Community Renewal

Issue: Communication within and between the community sector in the NRA is poor.

Desired outcome: Greater awareness and coordination amongst the community sector.

(4) Action sought: **Development of a range of communication tools to be provided within the NRA, including:**
News sheet
Business & Community Directory
Website
Annual Community Convention

Resource implications: £15,000 Year 1; £7,500 Year 2 & 3

Lead: DSD, **Belfast City Council**

Support: NRP, North Belfast Partnership

Council response: Our Community Services unit has a support role, rather than a lead role, to play in this regard with staff active in the local area and important physical resources in Concorde Community Centre and Ballysillan Leisure Centre.

The council is currently developing a new community support plan. There are therefore likely to be opportunities for our Community Services unit to work with the NRP and other stakeholders on engagement and communications mechanisms.

The council's move towards Local Area Working will encourage the active participation of local communities in shaping the prioritisation and delivery of council services. Such an approach will also seek to establish clearer channels of communication between local communities, the council and other agencies.

Issue: Older people within the NRA have limited organised activity programmes throughout the year (compared to youth).

Desired outcome: Less isolation amongst the older people within the NRA.

(5) Action sought: **A summer / winter scheme for older people provided.**

Resource implications: £14,000 per annum.

Lead: **Belfast City Council**

Support: NRP, Belfast Trust, North Belfast Senior Citizens Forum, VSB, Help the Aged, Good morning Ballysillan

Council response: The council can offer a support role rather than act as lead partner for this action.

We have made a specific commitment to responding to the needs of older people and have a series of facilities and schemes including discount scheme for our leisure centres, community centre activities; Safety of Seniors events and assisted lift bin collections.

We have an Older Persons Working Group which was set up to our services are suitably adapted to meet the specific needs of older people. The group is developing an action plan and will be hosting

a related Older Persons convention in May 2008 at the Grove Wellbeing Centre.

The council's Community Services unit can offer support in developing inclusive activities for older people on the local community. The local Concorde community centre is already a resource for local voluntary activity and the unit would be keen to work with the Partnership on priorities focussing on older people.

Concorde can offer one day per week as part of an in-centre summer scheme for older people during July – August as a pilot in year one. Our Community Development Worker can assist the Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership's working group to develop wider schemes within the area also.

The council is keen to see that its Recreation Service can make an active contribution to the surrounding neighbourhood and is eager to remove perceived barriers to access. Our Recreation Service can work with the Partnership and others to examine this action. They are currently developing Active Living clubs for older people in all council leisure centres. These clubs will assist our centre management to develop programmes for older people linked on demand.

Ballysillan Leisure Centre is an important resource for the area and our Leisure services can work with the Partnership on to determine the contribution of leisure to this action.

Issue: There is an opportunity and need to extend the existing NB advice services to Upper Ardoyne.

Desired outcome: Greater numbers of local residents utilising existing advice services

(6) Action sought: **Provision of outreach advice services provided through the existing Ballysillan Advice service on a 2-day a week basis in Upper Ardoyne.**

Resource implications: £10,000 per annum.

Lead: **Belfast City Council**

Support: NRP, North Belfast Advice Network

Council response: The council offers a number of advice services covering a wide range of issues including consumer advice, cleansing, building control issues and a variety of environmental health matters. The majority of these have developed mechanisms for engagement and support at a local level. Our Community Development Worker based in Concorde can convene workshops to provide such information.

Strategic Theme: Physical Renewal

Issue: Development within the NRA is ad hoc, non strategic and lacks coordination.

Desired outcome: A Shared development blueprint established for the NRA

(7) Action sought: **Ballysillan Upper Ardoyne NRP commission a Physical Master plan for the NRA which takes account of: affordable local housing; social housing; development zones; recreation / leisure space; green space etc.**

Resource implications: £40,000

Lead: DSD, **Belfast City Council**

Support: NRP, North Belfast Partnership

Council response: The council's Renewing the Routes programme has devised a regeneration plan for the Crumlin Road and the Glenbank is identified as a focus area which will benefit from regeneration efforts.

Renewing the Routes is restricted to a focus area imposed by the programme's funding stream which also had an impact on the type and nature of the projects that were identified for action. These include the timeframe for the IDF programme, the range and spatial parameters of eligible activity and the budget available.

The programme has identified a series of projects that will serve to improve and revitalise the Glenbank area within the Partnership boundary and these include commercial improvements, graffiti removal and paint spruce-up, public realm improvements including installation of street furniture and tourism signage, upgrade of street lighting, and tree planting.

Our Parks & Cemeteries section are currently developing management plans for Ballysillan Playing fields which will come into operation in April 2009. The section would be keen to discuss the shape of these plans with the Partnership and look at the potential for future development of the space.

Issue: The existing Arterial Routes programme does not continue through the entire NRA.

Desired outcome: Expansion of the existing Arterial Routes programme.

(8) Action sought: **Belfast City Council to review its existing programme / draw up a revised scheme.**

Resource implications: To be determined after the NRP have considered the existing BCC scheme.

Lead: **Belfast City Council, DSD**

Support: NRP

Council response: The council's Renewing the Routes Crumlin Road node stretches a distance of 3.75km to avoid spreading funding too thinly over the area. Following consultation the funding will be targeted at four main focus areas along the route - Carlisle Circus, Lower Crumlin Road, Ardoyne shops/roundabout and Glenbank, where the most diverse range of activities take place and where concentrated regeneration projects would have the most beneficial impact.

While the physical and environmental regeneration and enhancement projects identified by Renewing the Routes for the Ardoyne and Glenbank areas will feed into wider proposals for physical development in the Crumlin area they will be focus on projects that create a high impact along the main Crumlin road frontage.

An indicative buffer zone radiating 100m either side of the Crumlin road has been zoned within which regeneration activity must be concentrated.

Although projects, such as commercial improvements, are site-specific there may be an opportunity to implement a variety of schemes that are more expansive, for example tree planting, improved street lighting, street furniture etc. that will 'soften' and enhance the streetscape and visual amenity of the area. Ultimately, the aim is that the area will be transformed into a welcoming, vibrant and competitive location where people will want to visit, live and work in and where businesses will be attracted to locate in and grow.

Given the continued success of the Renewing the Routes programme there may be an opportunity to extend activity to the broader neighbourhood areas post March 2009 if a new funding stream is acquired.

Issue:	The physical environment of the NRA can be improved.
Desired outcome:	Environmental improvement scheme provided throughout the NRA.
(9) Action sought:	To support and develop the environmental enhancement programme – this scheme improves the quality of life for local residents and promotes the image of area.
Resource implications:	To be determined after the NRP have considered the existing BRO funded scheme
Lead:	DSD, Belfast City Council
Support:	NRP

Council response: Through our Renewing the Routes programme the council aims to drive physical and environmental improvement activity.

While environmental improvement projects will be targeted at buildings and space fronting onto the Crumlin Road it is envisaged that increased spending in one part of the neighbourhood, i.e. the focus areas of Glenbank and Ardoyne shops, will lead to wider impacts in other parts of the neighbourhood and have a positive cumulative effect on the entire area.

A number of local environmental improvement projects have been identified which will contribute to improving the image of the area and promoting the quality of life of local residents. These include:

- Shop frontage improvement works
- Identification and development of open space
- Development of public art initiatives
- Enhanced cleansing services

- Improved street furniture
- Landscaping and site enclosure works
- Enhanced lighting schemes

The council's pilot Anti-Social Behaviour action plan includes proposals for a series of improvements and actions to the Ballysillan Leisure Centre Playing Fields.

Our Parks & Cemeteries section are currently developing management plans for Ballysillan Playing fields which will come into operation in April 2009. The section would be keen to discuss the shape of these plans with the Partnership and to look at the potential for future development of the fields and open space in the Partnership area in general. Ideas could include such projects as local tree planting schemes. Given the area's location, and the lack of open space, it also worth exploring projects which link the area's local space to parks elsewhere, (eg) open space links to Cavehill Country Park.

Issue:	Interfaces continue to blight the physical environment of the NRA.
Desired outcome:	A reduction in the tension which gives cause to the need for peace walls.
(10) Action sought:	Regular meetings between Ballysillan Upper Ardoyne, Ligoniel and Ardoyne/Crumlin NRPs.
Resource implications:	To be determined.
Lead:	CRC
Support:	NRP Interface Reference Group
Council response:	Noted.

While not listed against this action the council wishes to note that its Good Relations unit is involved in an inter-agency initiative led by the Community Relations Council on the issue of interfaces and we will continue to input and be involved in these meetings.

The Good Relations Unit of the Council is working up an application for a significant amount of funding under Peace III Priority 1.1 'Building Positive Relations at the Local Level' which will be available to community organisations to carry out a range of work around this theme and there will be opportunities to develop work around the interfaces.

The Good Relations grant aid programme, with grants up to £10,000 is available to e.g.

- build awareness, dispel myths and stereotypes and address sectarianism and/or racism;
- promote and encourage trust and mutual understanding through dialogue, learning about others and developing meaningful relationships;
- provide space to deal with the past and address issues of mutual interest or concern in relation to the Shared Future document and/or the Race Equality Strategy; and
- improve shared civic life by building sustainable networks to transform contested space and identity and implement collaborative actions.'

The Good Relations Unit has also submitted an application for funding to the Arts Council of N Ireland for funding under its Re-Imaging Communities funding programme to work with communities to reimagine the area in a way that now reflects where communities are at.

The Unit's Conflict Transformation Project is currently producing research that will also pinpoint areas for development and involvement.

Issue: Dog fouling was one of the greatest concerns identified through the community survey. There is a need to redress the issues which give rise to this concern through enhanced dog fouling facilities / local pr campaign.

Desired outcome: Environmental improvement Reduction in the numbers of people complaining about dog fouling.

(11) Action sought: **Belfast City Council to install new dog fouling facilities throughout the NRA, undertake a local pr campaign, promote free health checks and enforce penalties for those dog owners breaking the law.**

Resource implications: To be determined

Lead: **Belfast City Council**

Support: NRP

Council response: The council would be keen to work with local groups on education and awareness programmes to promote responsible dog ownership. Past experience suggests that it can be difficult to get local agreement on the location of dog waste bins so further discussion would be required.

This is also an issue that relates to the management of the local park and is something Parks and Cemeteries Service are available to discuss.

In general representatives from the council's Cleansing Services, Community Awareness, Enforcement and operational teams service are available to meet with the Partnership to provide a full picture of current activities and to discuss support in the future.

The Council's North Belfast Cleansing Forum holds quarterly meetings as a way for community groups and individuals to work with Cleansing Services and we encourage the Partnership to join the forum.

Issue: Ballysillan Park is an under utilised facility which provides a major opportunity for the local community.

Desired outcome: Enhanced usage of the Park, greater community interaction and a more positive promotion of the NRA.

(12) Action sought: **Development of the existing Friends of Ballysillan Park group to develop a plan of action including: physical improvements; festivals; new equipment; signposting; nature trails etc**

Resource implications: £10,000 per annum for events / signposting etc.

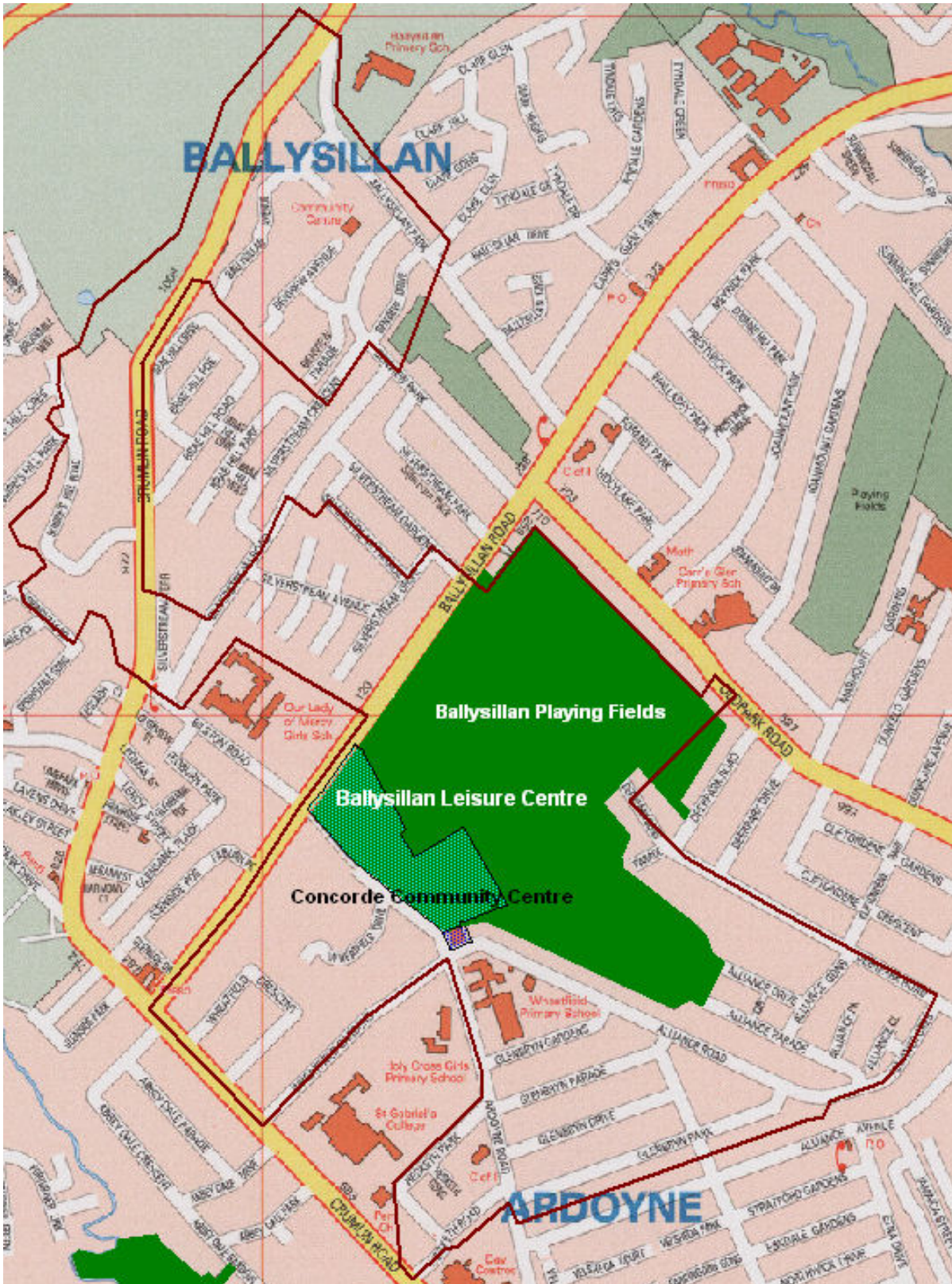
Lead: **Belfast City Council**

Support: NRP

Council response: As previously noted our Parks & Cemeteries section are currently developing management plans for Ballysillan Playing fields which will come into operation in April 2009. The section would be keen to discuss the shape of these plans with the Partnership – and with ‘Friends’ groups to look at the potential for future development of the fields and open space in the Partnership area in general. We have an outreach worker available who can work with the group on developing open space plans.

The council's pilot Anti-Social Behaviour action plan includes proposals for a series of improvements and actions to the Ballysillan Playing Fields.

Appendix 1: Boundary of Ballysillan Ardoyne Neighbourhood Renewal Area



Belfast Mapping Data
Prepared by SNAP
Based upon the
Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland map
with the permission of the Director & Chief Executive
© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2008
NIMA No. CS & LA 156