

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



**WEST BELFAST
PARTNERSHIP**
PÁIRTÍOCHT
FEIRSTE THIAR

Mission Statement

“To involve people who live and work in West Belfast in generating social, economic, physical and cultural development to ensure West Belfast makes a full contribution to and benefits equally from developments in the city as a whole.”



Unit 11 Curran House, Twin Spires Centre,
155 Northumberland Street, Belfast, BT13 2JF

E-mail: info@wbpb.org Tel: 02890809202
[WWW. Westbelfast-partnership.com](http://WWW.Westbelfast-partnership.com)

 [Wbpb Falls Road](#)

 [@WestBelfastPB](#)

Company No. – NI033629

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Health & Wellbeing

West Belfast Population Health Plan

The West Belfast Strategic Health Forum continues to engage on its Resilient West Belfast framework. The engagement process has involved developing several methods of engagement through interviews, questionnaires and focus groups.

The methodology has developed different stages of engagement and outreach. The process is now at the stage where the results and findings are being compiled and will form a large section of the report.

An important component of the framework engagement was to develop a series of information videos that would set the context for future planning arrangements within west Belfast within the area of health and wellbeing. The videos have now been completed and are ready for public viewing



Resilient West Belfast
Building Wellbeing Together



Public Health Agency / Digital Health Hub App

Funding was secured from PHA (£12,500) to develop a Digital Health Hub app specific to west Belfast. Work has completed in meeting with the app developers to code the platform and design the application. The platform has now been developed and data and information has been collated over the past few months. The app will direct people to local services that will benefit their health and wellbeing. The app can be used to self-refer service users to the right services and provide support in health literacy. The app should be ready for launch in early 2024.



Dementia Friendly West Belfast

The West Belfast Health & Wellbeing Forum continues to prioritise dementia awareness and support for those living with dementia and their carers. Funding has been secured from GP federation (£4,000) to raise awareness within west Belfast. A "Dementia Friendly Memory Ball" was held in the Balmoral Hotel. The event raised money towards dementia friendly awareness cafes.



Belfast Healthy Cities

West Belfast Partnership Board continue to be represented on the city-wide Greening the City Advisory Group. The group are developing an action plan for the city of utilising greenspace to improve health and wellbeing outcomes.

Drug & Alcohol Support Services

West Belfast Partnership Board continue to attend the Belfast Drug & Alcohol Coordination team and input to the Substance Misuse Strategy.

Framework Development Group

West Belfast Partnership Board continue to lead the Framework Development Group which meets on a weekly basis to develop short, medium and long term workstreams within the context of health and wellbeing in west Belfast. The group consists of the West Belfast Health Forum chair, the West Belfast Partnership Board Health coordinator, Belfast City Council, Connected Community Care and Multi-Disciplinary Team lead social worker. The group has become a core planning group in planning and assessing need within west Belfast.

West Belfast Partnership Board Strategic Health & Wellbeing Forum

Strategic Health & Wellbeing Forum continues to meet monthly to discuss population health planning within west Belfast. The coordinator continues to provide secretarial support to the group through developing agendas and taking minutes and also actioning workstreams from the group.

Active Belfast / Participatory Budget

West Belfast Partnership Board have taken a leading role within the design of a Belfast City Council participatory budgeting process pilot. West Belfast Partnership Board were part of the design team that developed and designed the process, with the main theme being moving more and eating well to feel better. West Belfast Partnership Board organised several successful engagement sessions on 13, 14 & 15 February in local venues to support groups to become involved in participatory budgeting. West Belfast had the highest number of applicants and awards in the city.



Participatory Budget Market Stall Event

West Belfast Partnership Board organised a market stall event for applicants of the Participatory Board programme. The event was to showcase health and wellbeing ideas and allow local residents to vote on which idea they like best. Over 400 people attended the event, including new-comer families. A total of 18 groups were able to provide health and wellbeing programmes as a result of the funding provided by West Belfast Partnership Board. The event also empowered local residents in decision making.



Belfast Health Development Unit

West Belfast Partnership Board continue to develop a close working relationship with Belfast Health Development Unit staff. This has led to West Belfast Partnership Board securing funding of £3,000 for two local groups in Lenadoon and Upper Andersonstown to build their capacity and deliver two Health & Wellbeing Programmes.

Belfast Agenda

West Belfast Partnership Board continue to play a leading role in the implementation and delivery of the Belfast Agenda. West Belfast Partnership have also submitted consultation responses on the review of Community Planning. The Health & Wellbeing coordinator continues to attend the Living Here and Resilience and Sustainability boards on behalf of West Belfast Partnership Board. Recently the coordinator has joined the Belfast City Council Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise panel to develop communication and working streams with community infrastructure in west Belfast and the Community Planning Partnership.

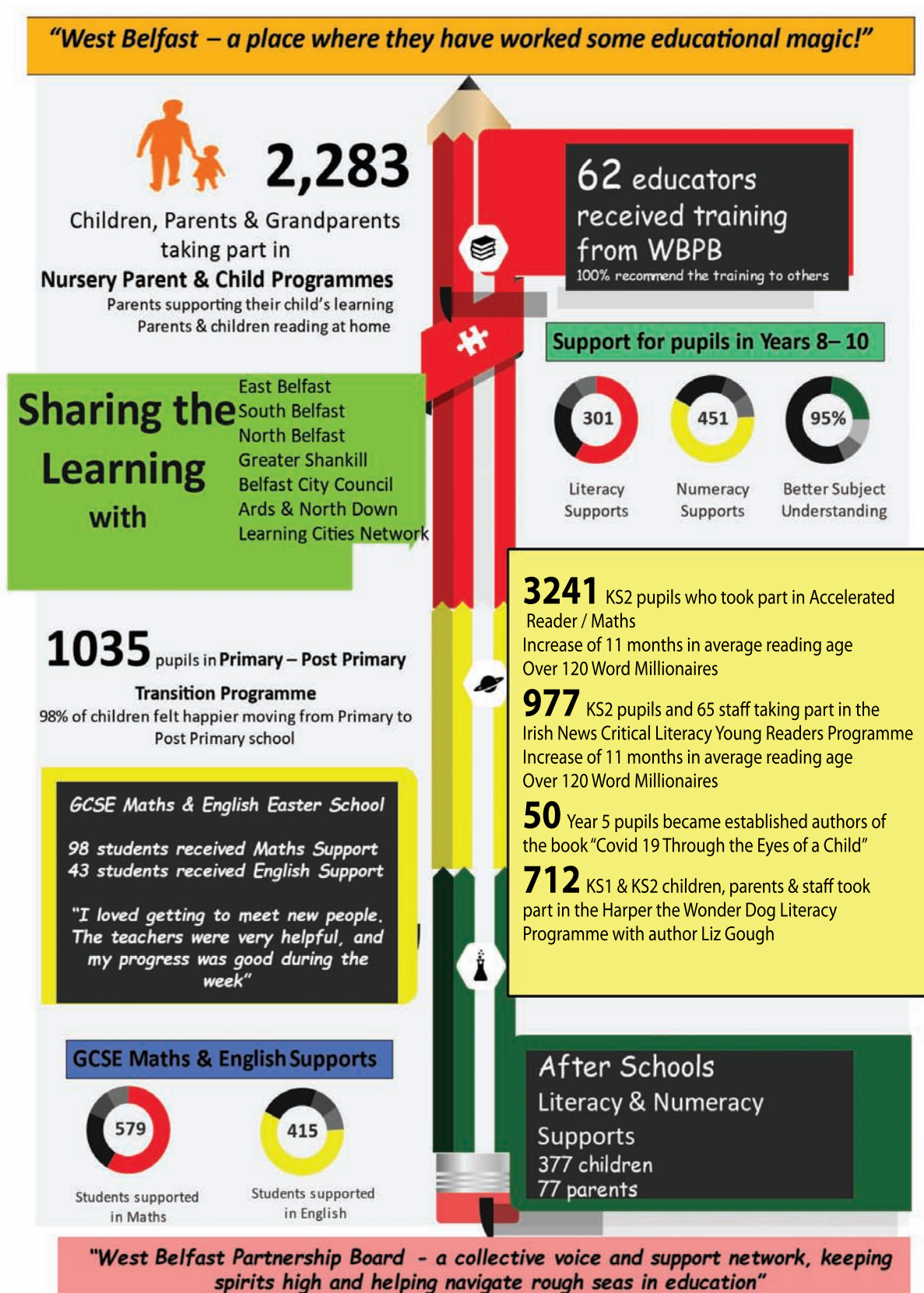
Active Travel / Greenway

The West Belfast Partnership Board continue to lobby for a West Belfast Greenway which will provide safe cycling and walking infrastructure. The West Belfast Partnership Board believe that embedding health and wellbeing within the built environment will develop healthy lifestyles. A feasibility study has been completed by Department for Infrastructure appointed consultants which has divided the works into 4 phases with associated costings. West Belfast Partnership Board continue to lobby for a better active travel network throughout west Belfast.



Education

Sharing the Learning Programme



Easter School 2022 - Face to Face again!

2022 saw our first face to face Maths and English GCSE Easter School since Covid and it was fantastic to see our students in St Mary's University once again.

109 students attended, receiving support in Maths and/or English. 107 students achieved Grade C or above in Maths and/or English, and there were 114 increases in the grade achieved against the predicted grade. As an addition, West Belfast Partnership Board provided extra supports on Saturdays to 62 students who were unable to attend the Easter School due to supports offered in School over the same period through funding provided by Department of Education to Schools.



18 St Mary's University College student teachers worked on the Easter School as support staff, giving them valuable work experience.

You can view our Easter School 2022 media coverage via the links below:

BBC Website Article: BBC Newslane

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-61156942?ns_mchannel=social&ns_source=twitter&ns_campaign=bbc_live&ns_linkname=61156942%26Putting%20in%20revision%20hours%20during%20the%20Easter%20break%262022-04-9b6adbe88276&pinned_post_asset_id=61156942&pinned_post_type=share

Belfast Live Article

<https://www.belfastlive.co.uk/news/belfast-news/west-belfast-programme-celebrates-25-23787202>

Irish News Article

[Easter School aimed at addressing underachievement and raising educational attainment levels starts in Belfast next week](#)

A hugely successful Easter School 2023!

Our annual Maths and English GCSE Easter School 2023, in partnership with St Mary's University College, the Department of Education and Full Service Community Network was a resounding success.

This year a total of 236 students availed of supports, with 73 students in St Mary's University College and an additional 163 students who could not attend the Easter School coming along to bolt-on classes in the evenings and on Saturdays.

As well as face to face delivery, videos for the English and Maths curriculum remain live via the links below:

Maths Support:

<https://www.facebook.com/West-Belfast-Partnership-Maths-Support-108108034160705/>

English Support:

<https://m.facebook.com/pages/category/Education/West-Belfast-Partnership-English-Support-121841999454983/>

Thanks to Professor Peter Finn, Ellis McAteer, Gerd Curley, Gareth Connolly and John Brolly from St Mary's University for their hard work and support in helping make the Easter School possible. Most of all thank you to all the students who continued to work on their Maths and English during their Easter holidays – you should all be very proud! #FabKids #KeepLearning



Aisling Education Bursaries 2022

Congratulations to our Recipients and Thanks to our Sponsors

On Thursday 8 September 2022 we were delighted to hold our 23rd Annual Aisling Education Bursaries Presentation Ceremony in St Mary's University College. This year we were delighted to welcome Cllr Christine Black, Lord Mayor of Belfast and past recipients Carrie McDonnell and Domhnall Herdman as keynote speakers.

Speaking at the event, Jim Donnelly, Chair, West Belfast Partnership Board thanked new and existing sponsors, our independent scoring panel, Monica Culbert and Eilis Rooney, and recipients of this year's Aisling Education Bursaries.

We are delighted that in 2022, a year which saw an unprecedented amount of applications, 144 students received an Aisling Bursary from wonderful sponsors who donated a total of £81,000.

Since the Aisling Bursaries were launched in 2000, 1074 students of all ages from west Belfast have benefitted from donations amounting to £819,500, which really is exceptional and a credit to all involved.

To view the photo gallery from the Aisling Education Bursaries 2022 Award Ceremony please follow the link below.

[Aisling Bursaries 2022 \(belfastmedia.com\)](https://www.belfastmedia.com)



The donations are not only an incredible gesture of generosity, of “giving back” and sharing from businesses and local people, but also a vote of confidence in the recipients of the Aisling Education Bursaries and a real investment in our community, one family, one person at a time. The Bursaries in west Belfast bring a sense of connectivity and belonging to our community here in west Belfast and Shankill, embracing diversity and highlighting what is best about a community which always looks after each other.

Cllr Christine Black, Lord Mayor of Belfast

The kindness of my sponsors gave me more of a push to achieve a 1st class Degree so that I could make my community proud and bring my skills and knowledge back to help our local people.

Carrie McDonnell, past recipient

My Bursary enabled me to study a BA Honours in Acting at the Academy of Dramatic Art, Trinity College, Dublin. My Aisling Bursary helped make my childhood dream of becoming an actor come true.

Domhnall Herdman, past recipient



Aisling Education Bursaries 2023

Another fantastic Aisling Education Bursary Award Ceremony took place in St Mary's University College tonight, Monday 11 September 2023.

We are absolutely delighted that this year, which marks the 24th anniversary of the Bursaries, has been the biggest year yet, with our fantastic sponsors donating an incredible £87,500 to help 175 students to fulfil their dreams of beginning or continuing their studies.

In the last 24 years, a total of £907,000 has been awarded to 1249 students.

View this year's speeches and gallery can via the link below:

<https://westbelfast-partnership.com/aisling-bursaries-2023-gallery/>



“West Belfast is a unique community and one to be proud of and our children, young people and their families continue to make us proud. The Aisling Bursaries have reflected the best values of the people of West Belfast — both sponsors and recipients alike. Thanks as always to the sponsors and congratulations and well done to each recipient.”

Paul Maskey MP, West Belfast

“To the recipients here tonight, I just want to say how immensely proud you should all be of your journey and paths to this point! Today I am speaking to you all as a Senior Highways Engineer - my path was not a straight one - there were twists and turns and we all face our own unique challenges to get to the point where you sit tonight.”

Carly Wade, past recipient

Let's try to reach the £1m mark for next year to celebrate 25 years!

Neighbourhood Renewal

West Belfast Partnership Board have been instrumental in co-ordinating the 36 Neighbourhood Partnerships across the North, in the review of the “The People & Place Strategy”, the cost of living crisis as well as the emerging Anti-Poverty Strategy along with the review of terms and conditions for Neighbourhood Renewal workers.



The Forum also includes two members of the West Belfast Partnership Board, and two seats are reserved for wider thematic interest groups in the west of the city.

The Forum provides practical support and assistance to those working on Neighbourhood Renewal in west Belfast and has been at the forefront of the “People & Place review as well as the campaign to “Stop the Cuts” within the sector.

In response to the various reviews, the **“Stop the cuts Campaign”** as well as the campaign to review the terms and conditions of workers, the Forum, led by West Belfast Partnership Board which represents the collective voice for West Belfast Neighbourhood Partnerships regarding issues of Neighbourhood Renewal and Regeneration has been instrumental in speaking up for those working in the sector and those availing of its services. West Belfast Partnership Board have also lobbied for funding and arranged high level meetings with the Permanent Secretary for the Department for Communities and the head of the Civil Service.



<https://twitter.com/StopTheCuts10/status/1663474986953089029?s=20>

<https://twitter.com/StopTheCuts10/status/1663515572665999367?s=20>

<https://twitter.com/StopTheCuts10/status/1663581190119366658?s=20>

<https://twitter.com/StopTheCuts10/status/1663632065923784705?s=20>

Community Planning

West Belfast Partnership Board are an active member and contributor to Belfast Community Planning Partnership alongside our Belfast Area Partnership's (BAP's) and cross sectoral colleagues and are active advocates for promoting good relations and shared space.

In the reporting period, staff have continued working towards the delivery of the Belfast Agenda through the thematic Living Here, Working and Learning Boards as well as the Jobs, Skills and Education task and finish group

thereby developing community capacity to deliver the Belfast Agenda while promoting the effective use of shared space, and play a key role in advocating on behalf of west Belfast residents.

West Belfast Partnership Board have continued to develop community capacity and cohesion by: driving the development of a new and exciting west Belfast Greenway to advance derelict land, creating access to open and green spaces, while providing safe active travel routes for commuting and leisure activities and as a healthy alternative to tradition forms of travel.

In the reporting period West Belfast Partnership Board have commissioned and completed a feasibility study and in the absence of the local Executive at Stormont have been lobbying civil servants from various government departments, developers and the Catholic Church to adopt land and ensure cycling and walking infrastructure is put in place across west Belfast in an attempt to create modal shift, change attitudes and ensure west Belfast residents have equity in terms of safe cycling, walking and wheeling infrastructure.

As mentioned above West Belfast Partnership Board are formal members of Belfast City Council Community Planning Partnership which has a remit to deliver the Belfast Agenda – Belfast's Community Plan. West Belfast Partnership Board have helped shape this new structure and from October 2021 have been active contributors to work streams including the Living Here Board, Working and Learning Board and the Resilience and Sustainability Board as well as the task and finish groups, most notably the Jobs, Education and Skills working group alongside statutory partners, with whom West Belfast Partnership Board collectively work together to help translate the Belfast Agenda into real targets and goals that will have an impact on communities and people's lives. In doing so West Belfast Partnership Board work to ensure the needs and opportunities of west Belfast residents are reflected therein.



Belfast City Council City Wide Maths / English GCSE Support Programme

West Belfast Partnership Board has once again led a successful consortium of community partners across the city to provide GCSE revision classes in Belfast on a cross community basis. The programme has built on the successes of previous years by recruiting in 434 eligible pupils. The programme aims to build capacity and tackles educational inequality by providing city-wide support classes to pupils on free school meals and those struggling to achieve Grades A-C in Maths & English. City Wide partners include EastSide Learning, Belfast South Community Resources, Forward South and Greater Shankill Partnerships with West Belfast Partnership Board having responsibility for delivery in west and north Belfast. Currently there are 5 West Belfast Partnership Board staff and 10 colleagues from across Belfast Area Partnerships working on this cross community, city wide project.

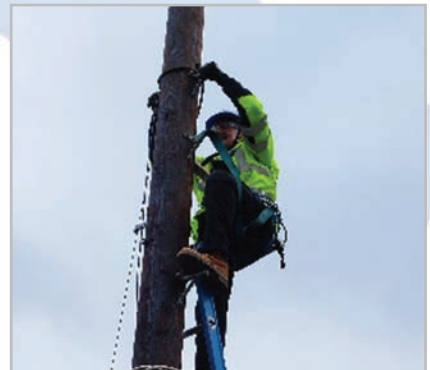
Area	Target Nos.	No. of English Completed	No. of Maths Completed	No. of students receiving support
South BSCR	100	77	80	157
East	100	28	54	82
North / Shankill	100	41	74	115
West	50	16	64	80
Total		162	272	434

Economic Development

West Belfast Partnership Board have worked very closely with Belfast City Council in promoting the Employment Academies. These academies include the Care Academy, Transport Academy and the Fibre Academy, in which West Belfast Partnership Board are a named delivery partner, providing employment support to participants.

In relation to the Fibre Academy over the past year West Belfast Partnership Board have helped upskill 62 participants with an into employment rate of 72.5%. West Belfast Partnership Board also partnered with Belfast City Council and local training providers to help local residents secure a place on the Belfast City Council Employment Academies and have been directly involved in providing training to over 50 local residents for transport specific training within the Taxi and Bus industry via PSV and PCV Theory training to tackle the high levels of economically inactivity by providing the necessary skills and support for local residents to move into self-employment.

West Belfast Partnership Board also worked collaboratively with Belfast City Council and partnering organisations to train 100, 18-20 year olds in Learner Driver Theory to assist the young people into employment pathways.



Housing, Environment & Planning

Environment Awards 2022

Every year the West Belfast Partnership celebrates the work of local communities who have strived to improve, protect and enhance the environment in the west of the city. We believe our much coveted Environmental Awards encourage the community and public agencies to take ownership and responsibility for protecting the environment and making west Belfast a better place to live, work and play.



This was the 20th year of the West Belfast Community Environment Awards. The awards are held each year to celebrate those who have worked to improve, protect and enhance the environment in west Belfast.



We are very grateful to our sponsors for their contribution to the Awards and it is only through your support that this event is possible.

Congratulations to our Community Environment Award Winners 2022 and Thanks to our Sponsors:

Ark Education Award:

St Cathedral Nursery School – Sensory Garden

<https://vimeo.com/774131628/25a4ce2422>

Bryson Recycling Award:

Focus Club – Flower Hub

<https://vimeo.com/775717862/c2d2a56bae>

Translink Belfast Transport Hub Environment Award:

Black Mountain Wildlife & Rewilding Project (Aaron Kelly)

<https://vimeo.com/774149067/a5ed6137f4>

Translink Belfast Transport Hub Community Award:

All Saints College – Care Don't Share

<https://vimeo.com/778540078/05b58ffe86>

West Belfast Partnership Public Art Award:

All Saints College – Anime Mural

<https://vimeo.com/778827490>

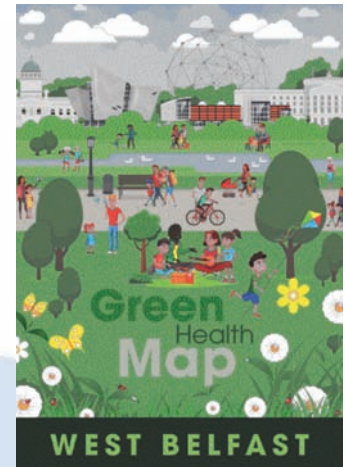


Renee Crawford, Chair of the West Belfast Partnership Environment Sub Group, said of the Awards:

“ I would like to thank the community groups and organisations who submitted an application for this year's Community Environment Awards. I congratulate all of them for their enthusiasm, invention and dedication to improve the West Belfast environment, and in turn to help educate the younger generations on the importance of physical development, restoration, and regeneration of West Belfast. ”

West Belfast Health Walking Map

In partnership with Healthy Cities and Belfast City Council, West Belfast Partnership Board have developed a Green Health map, which focuses on the Take 5 talking benches. The map will act as a tool for health and social professionals to support opportunities for residents of all abilities to become more physical active. A consultation event was organised by West Belfast Partnership Board on 21 March 2023 in St Comgalls, with groups from across west Belfast to develop ideas for the map and design. The map will be launched on 17 October 2023 in Falls Bowling Pavilion at the West Belfast Partnership Community Environment Awards Launch.



West Belfast Safe Cycling

The West Belfast Partnership Board continue to lobby for a West Belfast Greenway to provide safe cycling and walking infrastructure. The West Belfast Partnership Board believe that embedding health and wellbeing within the built environment will develop healthy lifestyles. A feasibility study has been completed by Department for Infrastructure appointed consultants which has divided the works into 4 phases with associated costings.



Andersonstown Road Site Visit

On 10 October 2022 a site visit was organised by West Belfast Partnership Board with DfI officials, Paul Maskey MP and local traders on concerns over infrastructure issues.



Beauty on our Doorstep Launch

West Belfast Partnership Board were one of the sponsors of the Beauty on our Doorstep calendar, with proceeds from the sale of the calendar going to local charities. Members of West Belfast Partnership Board attended the launch along with John Mallon and Belfast Mayor Tina Black.



Glen Ten Site

The Housing, Environment and Planning sub-group organised a site visit on 27 October 2022 with Braidwater Developments. Progress on the site development was outlined and a number of concerns were raised by those present on plans to change the usage of commercial site to single unit apartments.



Local Development Plan

Following concerns raised with Braidwater Developments on change of usage of land at the Glenamona site, a meeting was held on 3 November 2022 with Belfast City Council Planners and local political representatives. A number of issues with the proposals were raised at the meeting and a planning application challenge to the proposals to change the land usage from commercial to single unit apartments was submitted.

Resilience and Sustainability Board Community Planning

The Housing, Environment and Planning sub-group continue to attend and influence Community Planning and the Belfast Agenda through the Resilience and Sustainability Board meetings.

Greening the City Advisory Group

The Housing, Environment and Planning sub-group are represented on the Belfast Wide Greening the City Advisory Group. The group feeds into the Greening the City Action Plan to bring positive health messaging and local green space together.

Colin Greenway Presentation

As part of the ongoing campaign by the Housing, Environment and Planning sub-group to develop safe cycle and greenway network within west Belfast, members of the sub-group attended a presentation on plans for the Colin Greenway project at Colin Allotments in January 2023.

Weavers Cross Site Visit

The Housing, Environment and Planning sub-group organised a site visit of the major transport development at Weavers Cross. Members were met by representatives of Translink and the site developers and were shown plans and a detailed design phase of works.



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