Victoria Park Area Partnership
Neighbourhood Infrastructure Improvement Fund
Comments from the Community Councils
9 April 2024

This paper provides an update to the document, below, sent to the chair of the VPAP on 16 February 2024. It incorporates further conversations and thinking.

Context
The Neighbourhood Infrastructure Improvement Fund (NIIF) was announced by GCC in June 2022 with a capital spend of £1,000,000 for each of the Area Partnerships, to be used on a broad range of infrastructure projects.

In parallel, the Centre for Civic Information within GCC is developing a citizen engagement model to support the NIIF decision-making process and future such budget spends.

Following the release of NIIF the four Community Councils (Broomhill, Jordanhill, Thornwood & Whiteinch) which form the Victoria Park Area Partnership (VPAP), drew up a list of suggestions for action covering the VPAP area. This was submitted to the VPAP in April 2023.

Since then, despite three VPAP meetings, several conversations and communications between the Community Councils, elected members and officials it was only on the day of the meeting of 14 February 2024 that a spreadsheet of information on the assessment of items submitted from April 2023 was formally shared with the Community Councils.

Unfortunately, the assessments and costings were partial and sketchy, with little information being revealed of the nature of the assessments made, with only 18 from 28 items addressed/mentioned, just 3 estimated costings within them, some others to follow at the April 2024 VPAP meeting and no opportunity or offer for discussion with the Community Councils.

Comments from VPAP Community Councils

1. Structure, clarity and transparency is needed for this whole process (acknowledging the current and real GCC challenges with resources)
2. Confirmation that is still within the gift of the VPAP to spend the NIIF and the internal process for this, including the role of the Community Councils. *It has now been confirmed that this is a capital fund which can be rolled over*
3. Update and clarity required on position of the £200k sum drawn from the £1,000,000 to fund GCC Glasgow wide road improvements at the Cycling Championships - what has already been allocated – so we are clear on what can be spent, including any spend incurred elsewhere from this fund
4. Which GCC team is the NIIF sitting with?
5. List of projected projects needs updated and defined – now a year old. The condition of roads, footpaths, lighting, drainage requirements and so on have changed since then, some have been repaired, some assessed as not requiring work, some scheduled within existing budgets. The projects requiring work now should go beyond the initial list of 'ideas' presented in April 2023 as they are subject to update and closer scrutiny. This should include the prospective costs of the design project for Thornwood roundabout, we understand to be in the order of £100k
6. The process of developing and analysing needs requires to dovetail with the emerging citizen engagement model – requires careful consideration of how to do this and when and what is the capacity of the Centre for Civic Innovation to deliver/support the model, if necessary. And how it might affect the VPAP.

Suggestions (as of 16 February).

1. Community Councils and officers to go through the proposed projects together for clarity on each item, analyse the needs, priorities, costs, timescales + arising additional items. This may require a walk round the ward to ascertain current conditions and options to propose
2. Community Councils to have conversation with the Centre for Civic Innovation to elicit and understand learnings from pilots and how to balance these outcomes with a 'technical' analysis of needs and priorities. *This has been held – and information provided around rollout and timescales, see 2 below*
3. Revert to VPAP for agreement, timescales, process
4. To maintain progress and cohesion might it be appropriate for process to be guided by a small sub-group of the VPAP?

Recent developments and updated suggestions

1. **Determining the infrastructure priorities – technical analysis**
   In order to ascertain the infrastructure priorities of the ward, it is acknowledged that undertaking a walkabout with key stakeholders and an appointed engineer, via NRS, is a hugely resource intensive task, subject to continuing delays and also potentially affected by individual preferences and bias.

   Alternatively, within an agreed frame of reference agreed between the Community Councils & GCC officers, to commission a consultant engineer to conduct this work throughout the ward. This would be to provide an evidence-led technical report on an analysis of need through gathering existing GCC information on needs, infrastructure delivery plans and projections, carrying out site visits as necessary and updating/refining the current NIIF project spreadsheet (as the initial 28 ideas are now a year out of date). To be funded by allocating a proportion of the NIIF budget to support this technical analysis.

   However, whilst this would be a valuable and necessary technical exercise there is an argument that it should be underpinned by community consultation.

2. **Community Consultation**
   In discussion with the GCC Principal Officer for Community Empowerment it is indicated that it might be some time (two years was mentioned) before that GCC team can support a local consultation based on the Centre for Civic Innovation citizen engagement model. It is understood that further clarity will be provided at the April VPAP.

   Broomhill Community Council has obtained funding, and appointed a consultant (New Practice), to establish a Place Plan for Broomhill. Might the Place Plan consultation be extended to include the wider ward area to identify community views on spend of the NIIF funding? It would be able to use the information being gathered and the funding already spent on the Broomhill Place Plan, the Liveable Neighbourhood work with Whiteinch and any other community consultations in the ward. This idea has been refined and is attached.

3. **Thornwood Roundabout**
   Following the recent GCC officers/councillors/Community Councils meeting at the site, the Community Councils wish updating on the:
   - Detail of the £100,000 design costs from NIIF and the community consultation process
   - Who will carry this out – in-house or contracted out
   - Timescale of design process and work to be undertaken
   - Indicative assurance of Transport Scotland grant funding.

Proposal

Attached is an outline proposal for a project to synthesise a technical analysis of the ward in relation to the infrastructure priorities with a community consultation throughout the whole ward.

At a meeting on 9 April the four Community Councils met and accepted the proposal in principle, subject to a detailed programme and cost plan being developed prior to commencement of the project.

In addition, the Community Councils agreed a spend in the region of £100,000 on a design exercise in relation to the Thornwood roundabout, subject to the questions posed in this paper.

9.4.2024

New Practice

8 April 2024

To the Victoria Park Area Partnership (VPAP)

New Practice has been approached by members of VPAP to discuss the opportunity to support them in identifying projects for investment to spend the Area Partnership budget assigned to the Neighbourhood Infrastructure Improvement Fund (NIIF).

We understand VPAP is keen to see this money invested in their area on priority infrastructure projects and would propose the following high-level approach to ensure a robust brief is developed working collaboratively with VPAP and the community they represent.

Approach

- **Consultant Team**
  To support the client team in preparing a robust brief, we propose to put together an experienced design team:
  - New Practice: Lead Consultant
    We are an architecture practice with experience in working with communities to connect them to the decision-making processes that underpin their urban experience. We work at the forefront of place-based practice, ensuring that community-led briefs and shared decision-making shape the future of our built environment. We are currently working in Broomhill and in other parts of Scotland to support community groups in preparing Local Place Plans for their area/town which are informed by extensive engagement with the local communities. We recently delivered a complex engagement programme as part of the Glasgow Liveable Neighbourhood project, where we engaged with communities in Whiteinch, Jordanhill, Scotstoun and Yoker, as well as further communities to the East of Glasgow.

With regard to the design team, New Practice would propose to VPAP that we sub-consult the following specialities to undertake technical support and guidance for submission to VPAP and GCC to approve expenditure of NIIF funds.

- **Transport and Civil Engineers** (proposed: Civic Engineers)
  Scope of services to include: technical support and guidance as previously determined by GCC to provide evidence led priorities consistent with the NIIF objectives as well as high-level sketch design outcomes
- **Placemaking Urban Designer** (proposed: Urban Movement, or could be done inhouse by New Practice)

We understand and support VPAP's preference for sub-consultancy to be undertaken by businesses with local workforces, ensuring public funds are spent within Scotland for the benefit of the project. Both suggested sub-consultants are experienced working in Glasgow. Civic Engineers have a Glasgow office which would be our main point of contact. Urban Movement, has extensive experience working in Glasgow on Council-led projects such as the Avenue projects, public space interventions in Garnethill (with New Practice), and Glasgow Liveable Neighbourhoods. Whilst New Practice think Urban Movement provide significant added value to the team, this scope of work could alternatively be undertaken by New Practice.

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- **Deliverables**
  - **Feasibility Report RIBA Stage 1**
    The report will include a series of initiatives which can be implemented via the Area Partnership NIIF budget. The proposed projects will be based on the community needs and aspirations and on their viability. The initiatives will also be accompanied by a high-level cost plan.
  - **Action Plan**
    This will collate wider data for the benefit of the Community Councils. It will include areas of concerns and/or initiatives which may fall outwith the Area Partnership's current scope but that can be implemented in the future via other funding streams. It will provide VPAP with a further understanding of the community they cater for and their wishes and aspirations.

- **Methodology**
  - **Phase 1: Research**
    The consultant team will undertake desk-based research first, and site visits/analysis, to understand work done to date on identifying community needs and wishes and to clarify any gaps around where to focus resources for further analysis and engagement. This first phase will provide the design team with the information required to guide engagement and analysis/surveys.
  - **Phase 2: Engagement**
    During this second phase, New Practice will engage specific and targeted communities, organisations and stakeholders to test findings of the first phase and to collect public consensus on identified initial proposals from both desk top research and from initial technical review, for infrastructure improvements across the Area Partnership. The design team will use this time to identify any further analysis and survey required. Engagement will be designed to mitigate 'being consulted' fatigue and ensure engagement from across representative communities, including a focus on capturing previously missed groups and demographics.
  - **Phase 3: Report**
    Collating of information and delivery of Feasibility Report RIBA Stage 1, to be submitted to VPAP and Glasgow City Council as brief containing initiatives proposed to be implemented via the Area Partnership NIIF budget.

- **Draft Programme and Cost**
  Below, a draft initial programme based around the key quarterly Area Partnership meetings:

  June: Start of Project
  September: Presentation to VPAP (End of Phase 2)
  December: End of Project

  We envisage an approximate cost of **£90,000 + VAT** to appoint a Consultant Team formed by:
  New Practice (Lead Consultant)
  Engineers
  Urban Designer

  Please note that a detailed programme and cost plan will be developed prior to starting the project.

- **Victoria Park Area Partnership**
  - **Steering Group**
    We suggest the VPAP to form a Steering Group, or Working Group, which will represent the client team and first point of contact for consultants. This will facilitate conversations and decision-making sign-offs of material
  - **Commission consultant team** with approval from GCC (similar to process for Broomhill Place Plan).