



Glasgow City Council
Environment and Liveable Neighbourhoods City
Policy Committee

Item

29th April 2025

**Report by George Gillespie, Executive Director of Neighbourhoods,
Regeneration and Sustainability**

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Regeneration and Sustainability**

NEIGHBOURHOOD INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT FUND UPDATE

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Neighbourhood Infrastructure Improvement Fund in terms of both process, governance and spend.

Recommendations:

Committee are asked to note the update and the progress that has been made to date.

Ward No(s): N/A

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: N/A

Consulted: N/A

1. Background

- 1.1 The Neighbourhood Infrastructure Improvement Fund provides an opportunity to implement participatory budgeting at scale with an approved budget set in 2021/22 of £23million. The budget assigned the decision making in relation to this fund to Area Partnerships, with £1million allocated to each ward. This report provides an update in relation to the fund.
- 1.2 In parallel, the Council's Centre of Civic Innovation developed a citizen engagement model to support the NIIF decision-making process and following a number of pilots, this approach has been taken forward by further community engagement sessions with the Community Empowerment team to assist with identifying priorities for spend within communities.
- 1.3 This funding is capital expenditure and therefore can be carried forward to be spent in future financial years, though funding should ideally be fully committed by March 2027.
- 1.4 The process has been both challenging and frustrating for both Area Partnerships and officers, due to the volume and diversity of requests, with no additional funding for resources to support the process contributing to some of the delays in progress.

2. Management and Governance of the fund

- 2.1 In September 2024, a report was presented to all Area Partnerships outlining the challenges experienced in implementing the fund and dealing with the volume of requests to date. The report also advised that a new process was being devised to manage this to address the issues experienced to date.
- 2.2 In December 2024, a small team of staff was identified, tasked with reviewing the current process for NIIF and the backlog of requests already received, as well as devising clear guidance and processes to better manage the fund going forward, based on the learning to date from this new way of working.
- 2.3 This has been a significant task to review information held in Area Partnership minutes, within NRS services and across council departments to ensure all information has been captured, as best as possible.

- 2.4 As a result, a full breakdown of current committed spend, new proposals still to be costed and spend to date can now be provided to be presented at the latest round of Area Partnerships in April 2025.
- 2.5 It should be highlighted that due to previous challenges in the management of this information, the information provided may contain some gaps and the team are working with Area Partnerships to bridge these gaps and improve the quality of information provided on an ongoing basis to allow costings to take place more appropriately and deliverability of projects more timeously.
- 2.6 Clear guidance has been created to assist community members and Area Partnership Chairs in identifying proposals for the use of the fund which meet the criteria, a further clarification of which was presented at Area Partnership meetings in September 2024.

3. Criteria for the Fund

- 3.1 Criteria was outlined in the reports presented in both September 2024 and April 2025 and include the following themes:
- Open and green spaces, including specific tree projects
 - Spaces for leisure and play, including community buildings
 - Street furniture
 - Street lighting and CCTV
 - Condition of roads
 - Condition of pavements
 - Road safety and crossings
 - Impact of flooding
 - Murals
 - General improvements to the environment
- 3.2 Because the £1 million is designated for capital expenditure, it must be spent on Council infrastructure - Physical things in Council ownership.
- 3.3 The fund is not intended to be used for “business as usual” council activities such as dealing with individual service requests related to basic maintenance or repair of existing assets – for example: individual broken streetlights, blocked drains, potholes etc
- 3.4 The fund is not intended to be used for consultancy work, for example, the carrying out of community engagement work to find out what projects the community are interested in. It may, in circumstances where Council services require external assistance, be used for technical consultancy

fees which are required to develop and deliver a capital project, such as architects or streetscape designers to help communities redesign civic spaces.

- 3.5 The fund cannot be used to fund revenue costs, such as future or ongoing costs related to maintenance, utilities, repair costs etc. Any revenue costs resulting from NIIF investment will need to be met from other sources.
- 3.6 NIIF proposals should not be costed by external contactors or suppliers before being put forward. All proposals need to be costed within GCC in line with procurement procedures.
- 3.7 Potential ideas for the use of NIIF will only be costed by NRS if these proposals have been discussed and approved at an Area Partnership meeting, then submitted through the process outlined in the attached guidance. Whatever is proposed must be informed by community engagement, even if the Area Partnership is not following a full participatory budgeting process. Consideration should be given to other consultations that have taken place including Liveable Neighbourhoods, Local Place Plans and work undertaken by the Centre of Civic Innovation to inform decisions taken by Area Partnerships aligned to those, where appropriate.
- 3.8 Area Partnerships should explore how the feminist town planning gender lens work can be progressed through utilisation of the fund.

4. Process for NIIF requests

- 4.1 As outlined above, all proposals for the use of NIIF must be approved at an Area Partnership meeting before being passed to NRS to be costed.
- 4.2 NRS Neighbourhood Liaison Managers will attend each meeting, present the report produced by NRS and record all approved new proposals on an agreed template to be used internally by NRS. These will be reviewed and costed where possible. They will also provide support and guidance to Area Partnerships on the criteria and information required for NIIF requests.
- 4.3 The officers will also record decisions related to any estimates provided and advise NRS when an estimate has been approved for work to commence. To allow this to be more streamlined, we ask that Area Partnerships discuss and approve a % amount that costs can go over the original estimate without seeking further approval.

- 4.4 This enhanced process will ensure that all proposals and decisions related to NIIF are documented, including all required information, without relying solely on the minutes. We are confident that this process will ensure a sufficient level of information is provided to allow proposals to be costed more timeously.

5. NIIF enquiries and Updates

- 5.1 The new process that has been developed and presented at Area Partnerships will ensure full updates are provided at each Area Partnership meeting on spend and progress. This should negate the need for enquiries out with the meeting cycle to seek information on progress of either work underway or estimates.
- 5.2 However, it is recognised that more general enquiries about the NIIF funding or the process related to this may require a response. For this reason, the Programme Management Office for NIIF have requested a generic mailbox be created which will be monitored by the team. Once this is in place, the contact details will be provided.
- 5.3 This should **not** be used for suggesting NIIF proposals or requesting estimated costs as such requests should go via Area Partnership meetings. However, it will ensure a clear communication channel is in place for any more general queries.

6. Progress to Date

- 6.1 This report highlights and provides some detail regarding the progress that has been made to date in relation to the governance and the development of a process to support the fund, but there is still a considerable amount of the fund that remains to be committed to allow the implementation of the approved priorities to follow. To date a total of £4.3 million has been committed across several Area Partnerships covering a range of criteria. A handful of Area Partnerships have committed more than 75% of the fund, with some having yet to commit any of the funding.

7. Next Steps

- 7.1 There is therefore a considerable amount of work still required to fully deliver on this fund. NRS officers are keen to work together with Area Partnerships to fully understand their priorities and deliver a programme

of committed funding that can be delivered as timeously as possible, within the exigencies of the service, whilst managing expectations of all involved. The new processes and governance from the dedicated support team will assist with this and the Community Empowerment team will continue to support the engagement element of the programme. Update reports, with details of commitments, will be provided at Area Partnership meetings and NRS officers are committed to providing updates in relation to costings requested, as per the new governance arrangements.

8. Policy and resource implications

Resource Implications:

<i>Financial:</i>	None-spend in line with budget
<i>Legal:</i>	Legal involvement is sought, as required.
<i>Personnel:</i>	Additional resources provided.
<i>Procurement:</i>	Procurement resource is sought, as required, as per Council's policies.

Council Strategic Plan:

Grand Challenge1

Mission 3: Improve the health and wellbeing of our local communities

Grand Challenge 3

Missions2: Become a new zero carbon city by 2030

Grand Challenge 4

Mission 1: Create safe, clean and thriving neighbourhoods

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

<i>Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify.</i>	Yes – feminist town planning gender lens to be added to criteria.
<i>What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?</i>	Equality impacts should be considered in relation to any proposals being forward for consideration and approval.

Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage.

The purpose of the fund is to address priorities within communities

Climate Impacts:

Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:

Climate Plan Theme 2: Just and inclusive Place Empower and invigorate our communities, strengthening local economies share the benefits of climate action more widely.

What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?

Investment in environmental improvements will positively contribute towards this.

Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?

Yes

Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:

Are there any potential data protection impacts as a result of this report N

9. Recommendations

Committee are asked to note the update and the progress that has been made to date.