

Lower Shankill and Brown Square Action Plan

Building Successful Communities

Sept/Oct 2016



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Turley

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1.1 Turley has been appointed by the Department for Communities (DfC) to prepare a housing-led regeneration Action Plan as part of the Building Successful Communities (BSC) programme.

Background

1.2 The context for the BSC programme is set out in the Housing Strategy for Northern Ireland ('Strategy'), which seeks to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to access good quality housing at a reasonable cost and recognises the economic role that housing can play in supporting economic recovery through job creation and regeneration.

1.3 The Strategy identifies that a housing-led approach to regeneration will be advanced to deliver a vision for community based and led regeneration. The BSC programme is the toolkit for delivering regeneration proposals through the formulation of Action Plans. The programme is intended to regenerate communities currently experiencing blight, dereliction and decline.

1.4 In addition to delivering physical changes, the Plans should have a community focus and be owned by the community. The Plans should set out how the area will be regenerated and should ensure that a holistic vision is delivered which secures economic and social benefits for the local people in the area.

1.5 As part of the programme, a Regeneration Forum, referred to as the 'Forum' has been established within the pilot area. The Forum is facilitated by an officer from the Department. Their role is to bring the local community and statutory bodies together to identify the housing and regeneration needs of the area.

1.6 The Forum comprises a mix of community representatives, elected representatives and representatives from the relevant stakeholders, including NIHE, Council, Housing Associations, PSNI and Transport NI.

1.7 The Lower Shankill & Brown Square is one of six communities, which have been taken forward as pilot areas for the BSC programme. The other pilot areas are;

- (i) Doury Road, Ballymena
- (ii) Lenadoon and Glencolin, Belfast
- (iii) Lower Falls, Belfast
- (iv) Lower Oldpark and Hillview, Belfast
- (v) Tigers Bay and Mountcollyer, Belfast

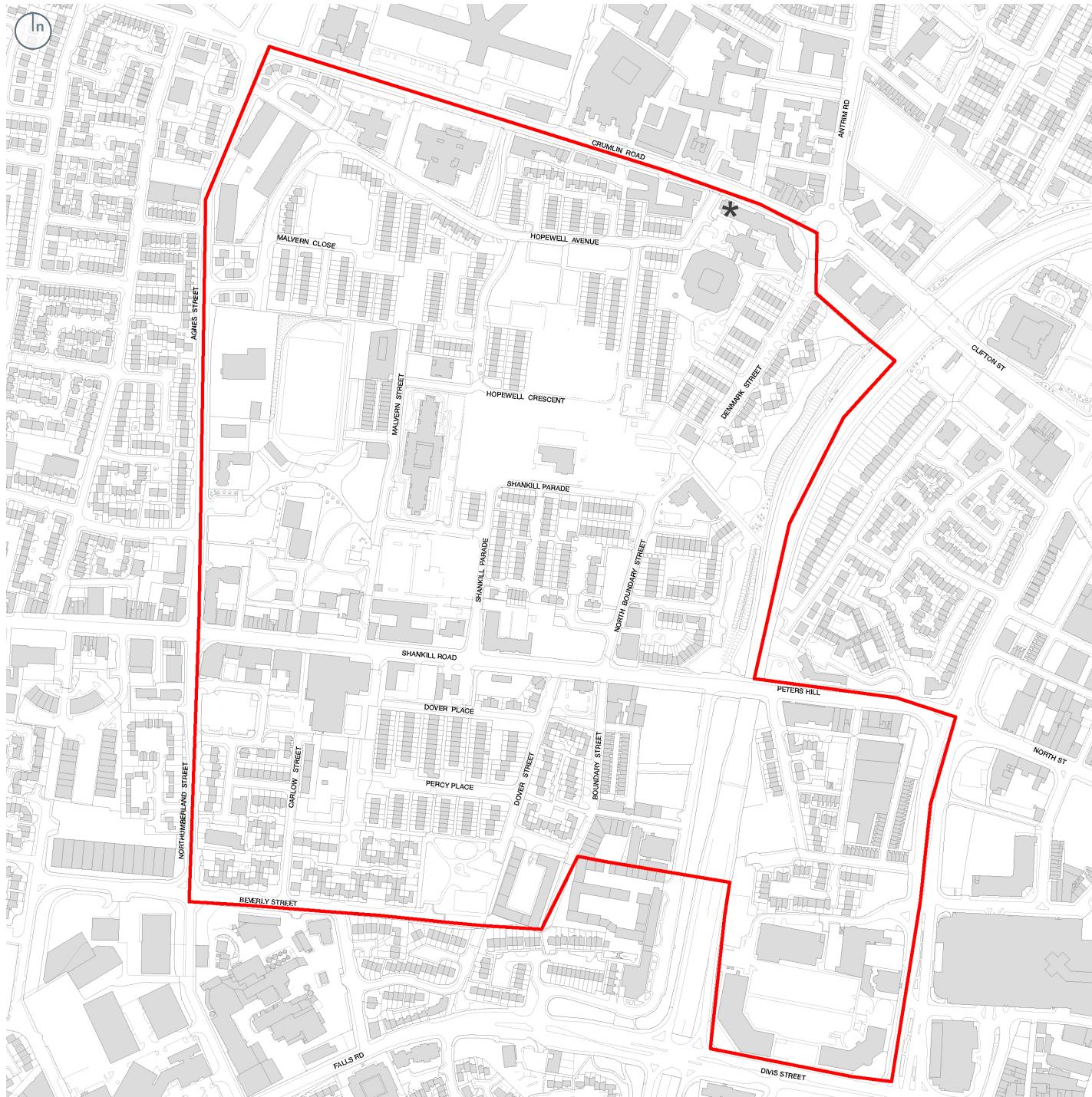


Figure 2.1
 Extent of Pilot Area - Lower Shankill
 and Brown Square
 Source: OSNI

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2.1 The project brief specifies that the Action Plan for the Lower Shankill and Brown Square pilot area should be constructed in four stages:

Stage 1 (Understanding the Place) – An analysis of the economic, social, physical and environmental needs of the area by collating and analysing the baseline and dialogue with key stakeholders

Stage 2 (Setting the Priorities) – This will include a synopsis of the priorities and goals for the Lower Shankill and Brown Square through a facilitated engagement with the Forum and the wider community

Stage 3 (Agreeing the Actions and Formulating the Plan) – Informed by the findings from the baseline analysis and in accordance with the goals identified in consultation with the Forum draft proposals will be prepared to be tested through engagement with the local community

Stage 4 (Next Steps) – Identify resources to deliver the draft proposals, prepare an implementation programme; identify key stakeholder roles and any potential risks in the delivery of the plan

Report Structure

2.2 This report is structured as follows:

- Summarises the conclusions from the Stage 1 analysis and sets out the priorities for the regeneration of the area and provides the rationale for intervention.
- Sets out the objectives (short, medium and long term) for the Action Plan as the regeneration framework.
- Identifies in more detail, catalyst projects that will kick-start the delivery of the regeneration framework in the area.
- Sets out tasks for key stakeholders and details potential future delivery models to ensure continued joint working between stakeholders, to secure the delivery of the long-term regeneration framework.
- Sets out how the implementation of the catalyst projects and other identified interventions will be monitored.



MENTAL HEALTH
IT AFFECTS
US ALL

SUSTAINABLE
EMPLOYMENT
REQUIRED
FOR ALL

EVERYBODY
HAS THE RIGHT
TO
PARTICIPATE

REGENERATION
NOT
GENTRIFICATION

EVERYBODY
TO BE TREATED
WITH THE UTMOST
DIGNITY & RESPECT
AT ALL TIMES

THE RIGHT TO
A PROPER
EDUCATION

WHERE AFTER ALL DO UNIVERSAL
... IN SMALL PLACES, CLOSE TO HOME
... THAT THEY CANNOT BE SEEN ON AN
... SUCH ARE THE PLACES THAT EVERY MAN
... EQUAL JUSTICE, EQUAL OPPORTUNITY
... DISCRIMINATION. ONCE'S THESE
... THERE, THEY HAVE LITTLE MEANING

Community Murals are an important cultural feature in the Lower Shankill and Brown Square (Source: Turley)

Stage 1 - Understanding the Place

03

The Rationale for Intervention

3.1 The key objectives for the BSC initiative are to:

- (i) Improve housing and infrastructure within communities which are experiencing blight, decline or dereliction.
- (ii) Deliver new social and affordable homes where possible, as part of a housing led approach to wider regeneration activities.
- (iii) Unlock wider physical and social regeneration in target areas by providing a focus for environmental upgrading.
- (iv) Improve access to amenities; and
- (v) Improve access to economic activity.

3.2 The pilot area is within close proximity to the City Centre, but the structure and hierarchy of the streets makes it difficult to navigate without having a good local knowledge of the area. This creates a perception that the area is closed to outsiders and serves to exacerbate a negative image of the place.

3.3 There are large tracts of cleared and undeveloped lands which are detracting from the environmental quality of the area, and also provide a gathering point for anti-social behaviour.

3.4 The housing stock is limited to mostly terraced properties, and parts of the pilot area could benefit from remodelling/improvement works so as to improve the quality of residential properties. Collectively, these aspects are having an adverse impact on the overall perception of the area and the wellbeing of people living in the Lower Shankill and Brown Square.

The Extent of the Area

3.5 Located to the west of the City Centre the pilot area consists of the Lower Shankill and Brown Square and is largely characterised as having four distinct parts defined by the road network in the immediate and surrounding area. The four parts of the pilot area are:

- Lands between Crumlin Road and Hopewell Crescent - lands immediately south of Crumlin Road, bound to the west by Agnes Street, the Westlink to the east and Hopewell Avenue to the south.
- Lands south of Hopewell Crescent to Shankill Road – this portion of the pilot area consists of the Hammer site bound by Agnes Street to the west, Shankill Road to the south and the Westlink to the east.

- Lands between Shankill Road and Beverley Street – the peaceline along Beverley Street defines the southern boundary of this part of the study area as well as the wider pilot area boundary. Agnes Street and the Westlink define the western and eastern boundaries (respectively) with the northern part of the site abutting onto the Shankill Road.
- Lands at Brown Square – this is a small, discrete area situated on the fringe of the city centre. These lands are bound to the east by Millfield, to the south by Divis Street, to the north by Peters Hill and to the west by the Westlink.

Collecting the Data

3.6 Stage 1 comprised a detailed assessment of the Lower Shankill & Brown Square to understand the issues impacting on the communities in this area. The main observations derived from the analysis are presented.

Themes Emerging from Socio-Economic Profile Analysis

3.7 The pilot area has an estimated population of 1,658 persons¹. The area has a higher than average number of residents aged 65 and over when compared to the Northern Ireland average. This is in sharp contrast to the portion of residents aged 25 – 44 years old which is lower than both the Belfast and Northern Ireland average. These trends suggest that there is a requirement to provide suitable accommodation for an ageing community, while also providing a range housing tenures to attract people of all ages to the area.

3.8 Nearly half of the households in the Lower Shankill and Brown Square consist of single person households with just over one third being non-pensioner households, i.e. the residents living on their own under the age of 65.

3.9 Currently, there is a high dependency on social housing, with the majority of residents unable to afford other housing tenure options. Further future demand could arise from:

- Newly forming households (children under the age of 16 currently, who decided that as they grow up they wish to live in the area).
- New households who are priced out of the private rented housing market or not able to afford to buy their own homes.



Figure 3.1
Denmark Street Community Centre
Source: Turley

¹ Using bespoke grid square data provided by DfC sourced from NISRA Census 2011

Theme emerging from Urban Spatial Analysis

Land Use

3.10 The predominant land use within the pilot area is residential, mainly in the form of two storey terraced properties complemented by recent new build semi-detached housing around Hopewell Avenue.

3.11 There are pockets of commercial properties located within the Agnes Street Industrial Estate, off Louden and Boundary Street and pepper potted throughout Brown Square. Collectively, the Shankill and Crumlin Road provide for day to day small local convenience needs.

3.12 Nursery and primary schools are dispersed across the pilot area and easily accessible to residents. Belfast Metropolitan College's Millfield Campus is also located in the south eastern corner of the pilot area. There are three GP surgeries and other health services and facilities in the area including the Lower Shankill Wellbeing and Treatment Centre. The Mater Hospital is also located immediately north of the pilot area.

3.13 There is also a range of community centres and facilities, including the Denmark Community Centre (pictured in Figure 3.1) Shankill Leisure Centre, Brown Square Playground, the Hammer Playing Field and Dover Street Millennium Park which provide opportunities for local residents to engage in a range of outdoor recreation based activities as well as providing a focal point for community groups and other leisure activities.



Figure 3.2
Image of Agnes Close – an example of a closed street/cul de sac development
Source: Turley



Figure 3.3
An example which shows the lack of street pattern and structure within the pilot area
Source: Turley

Legibility and Access

3.14 The Shankill and Crumlin Road together with Agnes Street form the primary street network within the Lower Shankill. There is no clearly defined secondary network of streets within the pilot area which makes navigating difficult, without having local knowledge of the area.

3.15 This is quite noticeable in the area south of the Crumlin Road to Shankill Parade as a result of cul-de-sac developments which have replaced the previous grid iron street pattern (refer to Figure 3.2). Changing the pattern of the streets has meant that direct routes that residents could have previously used no longer exist, and some residents have to take an indirect route to get where they want to be (refer to Figure 3.3).

3.16 There are pockets where the traditional street pattern can be seen and in these locations it is easier to understand how the network of streets flows, this is particularly evident in the streets between the Shankill Road and Beverley Street.

3.17 The Westlink segregates connectivity between Brown Square and the Lower Shankill. Within Brown Square there is a reasonably good level of legibility however, this does encourage 'rat running'. The area is within close proximity to the city centre which has resulted in commuters using the area for short term car parking.

3.18 The majority of the pilot area is within 5 minutes' walk of a bus stop. The minor streets provide cycling and walking routes, although it is accepted that this could be improved.



Figure 3.4
An example new housing in the area at Hopewell Crescent
Source: Turley



Figure 3.5
An example of large, mostly unsupervised spaces within the pilot area. Housing on left hand side looks out onto green space, in comparison to the remainder of the houses which back onto the space
Source: Turley



Figure 3.6
Homes in Boyd Street
Source: Turley

Built Form

3.19 The quality, character and condition of housing and the wider environment varies from traditional narrow fronted terraces to cul-de-sacs and more recent semi-detached and terraced properties (refer to Figure 3.4). Most residential properties are two storey red brick houses, with some bungalows in the lower part of the pilot area between the Shankill Road and Beverley Street.

3.20 The environmental quality of the area is poor in parts due to the layout of houses and the level of blight resulting from the high number of cleared sites. Parts of the pilot area exhibit a good built form with residential properties fronting onto the street, in comparison to areas such as Hopewell Avenue, Percy Place and Beverley Street where the backs of properties front onto the road or large open spaces. The lack of natural surveillance – i.e. people not being able to look out of their properties and see what is happening in the area around their house can be a factor in encouraging anti social behaviour (figure 3.5).

3.21 Within Brown Square the built form and structure of the street is good. Residential properties are mostly two storey brick houses of a reasonably good quality, dating from early 1920s to 1980s. The quality of the houses varies with 5 properties on Brown Street having been refurbished earlier this year, to homes in Boyd Street (refer to Figure 3.6) which on the basis of observation appear to be in need of modernisation.

Green Space

3.22 There are a limited number of quality green spaces within the pilot area. The Hammer site at Malvern Street and surrounding lands of Agnes Street provide the largest outdoor open space area within the pilot area. Other provision is in the form of two equipped children's play areas, Dover Street Park (below) and the other within Brown Square.



Figure 3.7
Dover Street Park
Source: Turley

Community Narrative

3.23 Lower Shankill and Brown Square are two communities separated by the Westlink both located in the Shankill Ward of West Belfast. The character of these communities has been shaped by a rich heritage deeply rooted in the city's industrial past.

3.24 From the linen mills to shipbuilding, generations found in their work a sense of pride and achievement. Then came the First World War which dealt the people of the Shankill a tragic hand with almost a generation wiped out.

3.25 History again was to impact on the very fabric of the community as with the Second World War came not only loss of life but also damage to the streets themselves by the night raids of the Luftwaffe.

3.26 In the succeeding years with a decline in local industry levels of unemployment rose - a challenge that continues to pervade the community today. More recent history is now reflected in the murals that decorate the streets.

3.27 This history of the people is also reflecting in the built heritage itself with some of houses of Brown Square dating back to the 1920s with further additions in the 1980s. In Lower Shankill the main development took place in the 1970s with further work in 1989. The overall area has experienced a decline in population and there are now large areas of vacant land that contribute to an erosion in community and aggravate issues of crime and anti-social behaviour.

3.28 From family and community histories strong with a sense of identity and acknowledgement of the role of generations in building their city many people now find themselves disillusioned, uncertain not only of their futures but of the very land on which they settled with property speculators contributing to instability and insecurity in recent decades.

3.29 With unemployment high and educational attainment low with particular issues of high numbers of adult population with no qualifications, the communities of Lower Shankill and Brown Square are seeking a renewed emphasis on regeneration that can make a real difference in people's lives. Early signs are encouraging as increased engagement between the local communities and statutory bodies has recently seen a fall in crime rates.

3.30 The Shankill area offers amenities including a Wellbeing and Treatment Centre and a local leisure centre. You will also find organisations such as the Beat Carnival strongly committed to the local community. Young people are provided for with local schools and youth clubs but for many despite the dedication of those people working within these services the quality of the facilities are no longer fit for purpose and perpetuates a backward looking approach that lacks relevance to modern needs and fails to support aspiration for the future.

3.31 The challenge is clear but formidable – to create spaces that reflect pride in the locality and optimism for the future. This is critical to sustaining a community that can confidently move through the 21st century acknowledging the achievement of the past whilst shaping new lives.

Stage 2 - Setting the Priorities

04

Community Priorities

4.1 Following the completion of Stage 1, a workshop was conducted to present the findings of the baseline assessment to the Forum and to prepare a series of priorities for the Action Plan.

4.2 The following priorities were prepared and agreed by the Forum for the Lower Shankill and Brown Square area:



1. Perception

Need to improve the image, legibility and perception of the pilot area for people living in the area and for people wanting to live and work in the area.



2. Housing

Deliver new housing, improve the quality of existing housing and provide a range of accommodation suited to the needs of families and older people.

- Focus on building on cleared sites and using selective demolition to redevelop the area
- Improving the quality of social housing stock through rebuilding or remodelling of existing properties
- Encourage affordable housing on opportunity sites.



3. Environment Improvements

Improve the quality of the streets and landscape.

- Examine the potential for small scale landscaping, improved street lighting and other enhancements which would improve the appearance of the area.
- Provide safe, secure play facilities and outdoor gym as part of any new housing developments.



4. Access

Improve access within and signpost the Lower Shankill and Brown Square as a neighbourhood on the edge of the City Centre.

- Consider the creation of new streets to improve street pattern and make it easier to move around.
- Tap into tourism potential by introducing signage/way finding strategy or tourist trail.
- Improve opportunity an access to training and education.

Stage 3 - Agreeing the Actions and Formulating the Plan

Housing as a Facilitator for Change – The Action Plan

5.1 This section sets out the detailed Action Plan proposals for the Lower Shankill and Brown Square pilot area. These proposals will form the framework for future regeneration of the area. This section also summarises the consultation that has taken place on the proposals and sets out how proposals have reflected the comments received from the community and key stakeholders.

Best Practice – Informing the Need to Change

5.2 The Action Plan for Lower Shankill and Brown Square sets out a framework to address the variety of issues relating to the urban environment which have contributed to the decline of the area.

5.3 The Action Plan seeks to use urban design principles to establish the foundation for a more appealing living environment. Successfully tackling the issues requires a number of place making-led interventions.

These are identified as:



Restructuring the existing street layout and accommodating new residential development where possible;



Improving the existing residential stock through improvements to their appearance and/or remodelling of their current layout; and



Introducing environmental improvements to the existing street, pathways and public spaces network.

5.4 To help explain how the interventions contribute to shaping a place, case study examples are provided. The case study will provide a brief understanding of an area experiencing similar problems and how, through use of the interventions outlined the place was regenerated. It is intended that the interventions will work in a complementary manner to each other. Whilst any single intervention may prove successful in its own right, each should be applied as much as possible through a combined and balanced approach. The proposals set out in the Action Plan for the Lower Shankill and Brown Square are based on the interventions above.

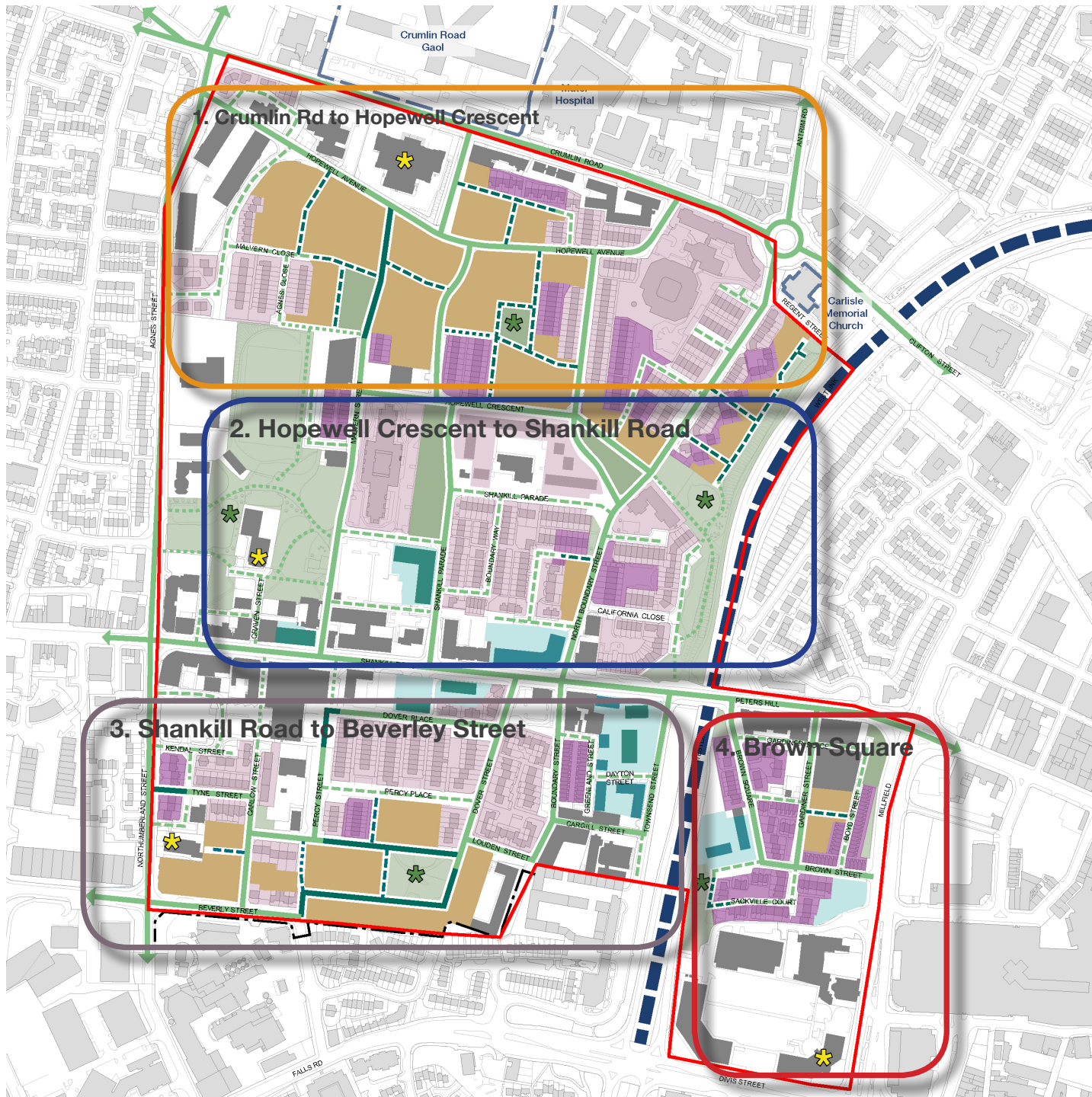




















Figure 5.1:
Lower Shankill and Brown
Square Action Plan
Source: OSNI

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-  Pilot area boundary
-  Buildings in the area not affected by proposals
-  Houses identified for improvement works. In some instances remodelling might occur *
-  Houses identified for upgrading works / remodelling
-  Proposed new residential development on cleared sites and selective demolition
-  Proposals by others and potential redevelopment sites
-  Public open space
-  Play facilities
-  * Open up existing open space and improve visual and pedestrian links and provide new landscaping
-  Existing primary streets with environmental improvements
-  Existing secondary streets with environmental improvements
-  Existing improved pedestrian / cycle paths
-  Proposed new primary streets
-  Proposed new secondary streets
-  Proposed new pedestrian & cycle paths
-  Existing landmarks
-  Peace line
-  West Link

* These are high level proposals and the exact nature of the improvement works will be determined as projects emerge.

1 - Lands between Crumlin Road and Hopewell Crescent

The Action Plan proposes:



Construction of new housing followed by clearance of older stock which is poorly designed and contributes to problems of anti-social behaviour along Hopewell Avenue, Place, Crescent and Square.



New housing and new secondary streets proposed to the rear of Denmark Street to help address problems with the current layout of the properties.



Remodelling to properties along North Boundary Street, Hopewell Crescent and other selected pockets will help improve problems with poor surveillance onto streets.



Improvements to properties along the Crumlin Road and Denmark Street – works will enhance the appearance of the properties and improve the quality of the area.



Enhancements to street lighting, signage, traffic calming measures, street furniture and tree planting to improve the visual appearance of the area creating a more consistent image and assist in defining spaces.



Creation of new streets to improve access within the pilot area to facilities and making it easier to navigate the network of streets.



Creation of a play area within the new housing area between Hopewell Crescent and Hopewell Avenue.



Case Study 1

New development and restructuring

New Islington, East Manchester

The New Islington estate was originally built in the late 1970s. By the 1990s, the estate's community was suffering from the effects of massive depopulation, poor services and high levels of crime. Located in inner city Manchester the estate was one of the most deprived residential areas in the city with over half of the 204 homes occupied when the area was identified for intervention.

The focus of the project was to regenerate the area by reinventing it through a combination of new homes (a mix of new build and remodelled properties) set in an improved environment which has a clearly defined street network, landscaped area and green spaces. While the scheme contains bold architectural styles in parts, it serves as a good example of a holistic approach to estate regeneration which provides for a mix of housing options in an inner city environment.



Rear return of a former terraced block following remodelling works

Relationship to Lower Shankill and Brown Square Pilot Area

The problems currently being experienced in the pilot area are similar to how New Islington was prior to the estate being restructured. Within the pilot area, the quality of residential development and its relationship to the streets and spaces around it needs to be improved through a combination of rebuilding, initially on cleared sites in tandem with the restructuring of the area. The delivery of new social housing by Choice Housing Association along Hopewell Crescent has shown how the quality of the area can be improved through new development.

Alongside new developments, restructuring can improve an area by:

- Changing the image through physical improvements to the appearance of the area;
- Improving the appearance and quality of the streetscape by ensuring that new development addresses the street; and
- Making it easier to move and understand how to navigate through and around the pilot area. This in turn assists in changing perceptions of a place.



Another example of reconfiguring an existing terrace street. Properties were rotated 90 degrees, accommodating the required parking and garden space alongside the house rather than in front or behind.

Images sourced from Manchester City Council

2. Hopewell Crescent to Shankill Road

The Action Plan proposes:



New housing along North Boundary Street.



Improvements to properties located in Shankill Parade, Boundary Way, California Way and North Boundary Street.



Enhancements to street lighting, street furniture and tree planting and creation of green spaces to improve the visual appearance of the area.

3. Shankill Road to Beverley Street

The Action Plan proposes:



New housing and restructuring of houses along Beverley and Carlow Street with new houses positioned that they front onto the street.



A programme of improvements and/or remodelling works to be delivered within this area. Improvement works could include re-cladding properties, refreshing the materials / paint and upgrading property boundary treatments to improve the physical appearance of the place.



A new street is proposed along Cumberland Walk which would connect Beverley Street and Dover Street.



Environmental improvements – new street lighting and furniture, and landscaping works to Tyne Street, Beverley Street, Kendal Street, Dover Street and Townsend Street. These improvements will enhance the quality of the area and help to create a more welcoming physical environment.



Case Study 2

Improvements/remodelling to existing properties and environmental improvements

Plymouth Grove, East Manchester

Plymouth Grove, in south east Manchester, was built in the 1970s and consisted of 1,090 local authority two-storey flats and houses. The original design was based on a Radburn layout which segregated pedestrians and vehicles, confining cars to access roads, cul-de-sacs and parking areas and pedestrians to separate footpaths. The layout was synonymous for rat runs and alleyways, encouraging anti-social behaviour and exacerbating a sense of social exclusion and mistrust.

The layout meant that cars were vulnerable as they were parked far from homes. Cul-de-sacs and poorly overlooked walkways and green spaces discouraged walking through the estate. The proportion of public to private space was high, but the density of housing remained low. These problems meant it was hard for any shops or services to survive within the estate.

A regeneration strategy for the area was undertaken, which included improvements to the levels of street frontage by 'reversing' existing properties so their front doors addressed the street; adding windows to blank gables to increase natural surveillance and creating private outside space with fencing of gardens, car parking courts and bin storage areas.

Manchester City Council set up a steering group of council officers, members, local tenants and residents associations who led consultation with the wider community to identify opportunities and residents' priorities for the area. Having established the overall vision and priorities, they successfully bid for over £15million government funding through the Private Finance Initiative.



Left: Properties prior to improvements



Right: Refurbished & remodelled housing

Images sourced from Plymouth Grove promotion information



Case Study 2

Improvements/remodelling to existing properties and environmental improvements

Relationship to Lower Shankill and Brown Square Pilot Area

Before the improvement works were undertaken Plymouth Grove was based on a similar layout design to the pilot area and experiencing similar problems. The interventions to Plymouth Grove have transformed the place and provided an opportunity to address core design weaknesses while improving the quality of the housing stock.

The quality of the housing stock varies within this pilot area. Improvements to the exterior of the existing housing stock (redcladding, adding porches; new windows) can improve the appearance of a place, creating more welcoming residential environments.

Piecemeal development of the area has resulted in a poor relationship between some existing properties and the street. By reconfiguring properties to ensure it has front door access onto the main street, with its garden and more private areas to the rear of the property encourages people to use the main street. In turn, this helps activate the street and makes it place of activity and interest.

The principles outlined in the example from Plymouth Grove provide an outline of the type of improvement/remodelling works that could be undertaken within the pilot area.

4. Brown Square

The Action Plan proposes:



New housing along Gardiner and Boyd Street.



A programme of remodelling/improvement works to other houses in the area, drawn up in consultation with residents.



Remodelling of properties which currently back onto the small pocket play space will create a more integrated park area, which is overlooked and feels safer to use.



Gardiner Street and Brown Square are the primary streets in the area. Environmental improvements to these streets will help distinguish them as the main streets, improving vehicular and pedestrian movement through the area.



A proposed extension to Sackville Court provides a connection to Brown Street, opening up the area and providing a logical access to the existing public green space and proposed new development.

Stage 4 - Next Steps: Delivering Change

06

6.1 The rationale for the Building Successful Communities (BSC) programme captures a long-term process of investment to ensure the sustainability of the pilot neighbourhoods for future generations.

6.2 The Action Plan for the Lower Shankill and Brown Square reflects this longer-term ambition for investment and change. The Stage 1 report suggests that the area has seen historic and on-going investment, however, engagement with the community and the Forum has highlighted the need to build momentum in delivering projects in order to build confidence and trust within the community that the programme can deliver and meet their needs.

6.3 In order to demonstrate commitment and realise the long-term plan for regeneration a catalyst is required. The catalyst will build on existing investment and contribute to fundamentally changing perceptions of the neighbourhood and engaging and building confidence amongst the community.

6.4 The catalyst will need to demonstrate a level of commitment to the programme from key stakeholders and partners. These projects will therefore need to challenge a number of existing perceptions of the community and stakeholders and contribute towards generating new perspectives of the neighbourhood providing distance from existing stigmas.

6.5 These projects are intended to deliver in the short-term recognising the commitment of DfC to the BSC programme. Delivery responsibilities and risks are identified against each of the projects. It will be critical that progress is monitored for each of the projects. Where there are implementation challenges for the catalyst projects a review of other projects which could play an equally catalytic role should be undertaken to ensure the momentum of regeneration and change in the neighbourhood is sustained.

Introducing the Catalyst Projects

6.6 Four catalyst projects have been identified within the Lower Shankill and Brown Square:

- New housing at the 'heart' of the area.
- Affordable housing on North Boundary Street.
- Redevelopment of Boyd Street Depot.
- The Bullring – creation of a new public realm.

6.7 These projects will require the collective support of key stakeholders with land-holdings and funding resources as well as the community and their representatives to ensure that they present a solid foundation from which to deliver the priorities for the Lower Shankill and Brown Square.

Rationale for the Catalyst Projects

6.8 New housing development in the area has been well received by the community and elevated aspirations for the delivery of further investment in housing. There is strong community desire to see more social housing being built in the area, particularly where in the instance of the recent housing association scheme this is of a high standard of design and more sustainable.

6.9 The review of housing highlights² an ageing population structure with a notably low proportion of working age groups (25 to 44) represented. This highlights the importance of providing housing to meet the needs of a changing population but also to revitalise the vibrancy of the area by attracting and retaining younger households.

6.10 Importantly, the area also shows a comparatively low level of residual existing housing need using the 'need'² definition defined by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE). These factors form an important backdrop to the objectives of the BSC programme for intervention.

6.11 In this context the catalyst projects present an opportunity to deliver new housing investment and improvements in the quality and layout of the pilot area. A core driver behind the catalysts is the principle of creating a 'heart' within the Lower Shankill and Brown Square that provides the right mix of ingredients by which the community can grow.

6.12 Providing improved and new housing stock which delivers choice both in tenure (social, affordable and self-build options) and house type is critical to achieving this ambition and sustaining existing facilities and services.

6.13 The first significant new housing scheme in the area will need to be exemplary in its development form in order to demonstrate to the local community and external stakeholders the quality of new homes which can be provided.

6.14 To achieve this DfC will commission on behalf of the local community a team to work the framework set out in this Action Plan into a design brief that will act as a guide for the comprehensive redevelopment of the land and provide certainty to developers (public and private) of a structured approach to the sustainable development of the land and to ensure that the place is not developed in a piecemeal way.

6.15 The brief should set out a series of design principles to protect the quality of any new development and detail specific contributions (financial and or other physical works or social interventions) that developers could be required to adhere to when developing individual parts of the land.

6.16 It will set out a clear time bound programme for how interventions in both parts of the pilot area could come forward. It will establish where (if any) demolition could be proposed to ensure that the community maintains maximum control and certainty over the project.

6.17 The design principles established at this stage could be used by the community to inform on-going capacity building with Belfast City Council in the form of a community plan and its spatial articulation in a development plan. It can also be used as a tool to build and promote leadership in the community.

6.18 The structure and layout of housing, particularly in the Lower Shankill, is fundamentally flawed and capitalising on recent housing investments by Choice Housing Association (Figure 3.4), the first catalyst project seeks to provide a range of housing options based on new social housing. Dealing with the fundamental problem of poor layout and design is at the core of building a new confidence that this community is being sustained and that the needs of existing residents are being considered by equal opportunity and access to good quality homes and removes the discourse in respect of housing need which has blighted the area for so long.

6.19 A self-build component is also promoted on lands between Hopewell Avenue/Hopewell Crescent as an integral part of the proposal.

6.20 The second project focuses on delivering a small affordable housing project along North Boundary Street. This proposal seeks to provide a link to affordable key worker housing connected with the hospital and could be developed in order to build market confidence following the delivery of new social housing freeing up land to allow for an affordable catalyst to emerge.

6.21 Within Brown Square, the catalyst project centres on the former Boyd Street depot and the opportunity which could be realised through the development of self-build houses which address community needs.

² Outlined in Stage 1 of this report; further information available from Lower Shankill and Brown Square Stage 1 Key Findings Report dated November 2015

6.22 Delivering the catalyst projects will result in the identification of properties which are in poor condition (when compared to the new housing stock), this identification assists in creating further demand for new housing and creates the opportunity for existing residents to decant to new homes enabling poorer quality homes located on the edge/fringes of the neighbourhood to be demolished, cleared and in the longer-term packaged up as developable housing sites.

6.23 Improving the quality and variety of the housing stock, the fourth catalyst focuses on improving the environmental quality of the area; focusing on the Bullring space (lands which abut the Westlink and run from the Regent Street junction to the Shankill Road).

6.24 The identified catalysts have been selected in recognition of the weight afforded to the community's aspirations which is a core aspect of the BSC programme. The selected projects are drawn from and align with the community's priorities as presented by the Forum and outlined during Stage 2 of the project.

6.25 The delivery of these catalyst projects is intended to not only present a physical symbol and foundation of change but also to lift the community's confidence in the process of regeneration and providing them with a sense of empowerment to embrace further change.

Delivering Regeneration

6.26 The catalyst projects identified for the Lower Shankill and Brown Square present a strong foundation upon which to deliver the objectives of the BSC programme and realise the priorities identified by the Forum. Using examples from elsewhere we have identified delivery mechanisms which could be used in order to realise the regeneration potential. A core component to delivering the catalyst projects will focus on partnership working, and may require new joint working groups/partnerships to be established.

Joint Venture Partnerships (JVP)

6.27 It is clear that the public sector has a pivotal role to play in pump-priming the regeneration process and to create confidence for private sector investment. For example the public sector could de-risk sites in terms of readying sites for development or, where the public sector is the landowner, they could improve scheme cash flow and viability by deferring the payment of land receipts.

Case Study 3 Joint Venture Partnership Sheffield Housing Company

Joint Venture Partnerships (JVP) –Represents a JVP between Sheffield City Council, Keapmoat Homes Ltd and Great Places Housing Group, set up to provide a regeneration vehicle in an area of Sheffield where the Council had significant freehold ownership of land.

The Council provides the land to the Company as its equity which is matched by cash from the private sector. As development comes forward the Council receives payments to the agreed residual value and 50% of any profit.

Additional value generated can then be used to deliver additional regeneration benefits.



In the Lower Shankill and Brown Square pilot area it is recognised that the largest landowner is NIHE. It may be possible for NIHE, as the landowner to have a JVP with a Housing Association. NIHE could de-risk the lands by readying them for development (undertake enabling works) with the Housing Association taking on responsibility for the construction of the new homes. In preparing the lands for development, the BSC programme may need to provide funding to support the enabling works. NIHE and the Housing Association would both have an equal share of the profit generated by any residual land value.

6.28 Master Developer – The Local Authority/Landowner becomes the developer, allowing them to retain control of the process and let construction contracts.

Case Study 4

Master Developer Thurrock Gloriana

In 2013 Thurrock Council agreed to establish a 'General Fund Special Purpose Housing Company' with aim being for the Council to deliver new housing.

The Council had significant landholdings and was able to use its capacity for prudential borrowing against the Council's general fund at competitively low rates of interest. In this case the Council retained ownership of its assets and as a public sector owner of the land developer profit can be waived with the value resulting directly from the uplift in land value. This ensures the viability of development. This model also ensures that a range of tenures can be developed with the Council able to retain rental income on properties to service interest payments.

The Council procures contractors using their own framework to construct development with the Housing Department acting as the planning applicant.

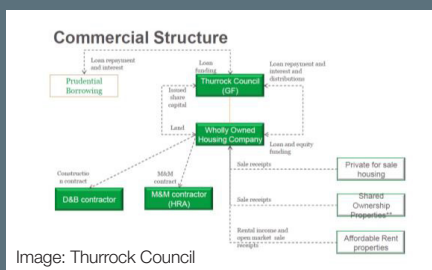


Image: Thurrock Council

In the case of the Lower Shankill and Brown Square pilot area, NIHE could fulfil the 'master developer' role as the as the main landowner. NIHE would be responsible for appointing a developer for the land, whilst also being the applicant for any planning applications. They would then appoint a contractor to build the scheme so that they would be able to retain any uplift in land value achieved as a result of the development, which could be invested back in to the local area for other improvement works.

6.29 Community Land Trust (CLT) – Provide a mechanism for devolving and empowering the community in the regeneration process.

Case Study 5

Community Land Trust, Bristol

CLTs are essentially local organisations set up and run by the community to development and manage homes. It requires the ownership of land by the community, either gifted or purchased. They are defined in law:

- Not for private profit
- Set up to benefit a defined community
- Local people must have opportunity to join

Image: www.bristolclt.org.uk



A CLT can also be responsible for other land uses. For example, a CLT could be created to oversee the day to day management and maintenance of the Bullring, Public Realm area. There is the potential for the NIHE to gift the land to the CLT with funding for the delivery of a recreational scheme on the site funded by BSC. The CLT could then generate an income to manage and maintain the facility by charging for private use of the facilities by groups outside of the pilot area.

Self-Build

6.30 Self-build projects provide an opportunity to create a new level of interest in the area by providing a form of housing which will enable people to 'invest in living' in the pilot area and can create a level of interest of attracting new residents to the area.

Case Study 6 Community Land Trust, Bristol

Stoke on Trent Council acquired a 1 acre site and divided it into 6 individual self-build plots (355 sqm to 955 sqm.). Council undertook all enabling works required to ready the sites for development and secured outline planning permission for 6 residential dwellings.

Having secured planning permission, Stoke-on-Trent Council held a Self Build fair at which they raised awareness of what they had done; provided planning and architectural advice on the next steps in securing a reserved matters permission from which the property could be build; and signposted information to specialist self build mortgages.

The 6 dwellings were sold at auction at a reserve price of £75,000 per plot, raising a total of £591,000.



Enabling building works
Sourced from Stoke-on-Trent City Council

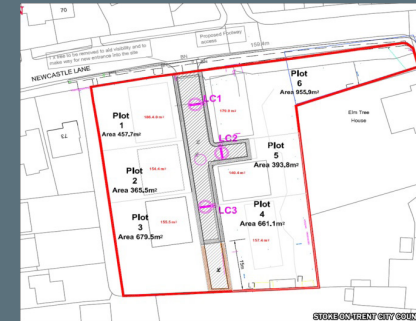


Image of approved plots
Sourced from Stoke-on-Trent City Council

Self build homes could be delivered within the pilot area through a highly collaborative working arrangement as outlined in Case Study 3. A regeneration company could be established to act as the delivery vehicle. This could consist of NIHE and a Housing Association. Ownership of the lands could be transferred to the regeneration company. Enabling works required to pump prime the site could be undertaken by statutory bodies, funded by BSC. Outline planning permission for the dwellings would be obtained from Belfast City Council, with BSC covering the costs of securing planning permission.

The regeneration company could hold a self build fair to explain the approach and outline the mortgage product available. Unlike the previous example, the sites would not be sold on the open market. Using the principles of co-ownership, the regeneration company would provide finance to perspective tenants based on a buy/rent model. The property could be valued based on a new build completion value. The mortgage product would cover the costs associated with building of the new home. BSC would fund the costs of securing reserved matters permission. The regeneration company would own the site and the property until such time as the owner brought the property outright.

Addressing the Priorities

6.31 Table 6.1 demonstrates how the catalyst projects address the four priorities identified by the community.

Table 6.1: Addressing the Priorities

Catalyst	Proposals	Community Priorities Met
New housing at the 'heart' of the area	Provision of new housing stock	Changing perceptions through physical change
	Improvements to streets: landscaping, street lighting and creation of new streets	Delivering new housing; different tenures and house types
		Improving access within and through the area
Housing on North Boundary Street	New housing stock	Delivering new housing
	Improvements to street and new landscaping	Improving access within and through the area
Redevelopment of Boyd Street Depot	Provision of new housing stock	Changing perceptions through physical change
	Improvements to streets: landscaping, street lighting and creation of new streets	Delivering new housing; different tenures and house types
		Improving access within and through the area
The Bullring Project	Creation of public realm area	Changing perceptions of a place associated with negativity and social problems
		Improving access within and through the area



Figure 6.1: Example of cleared site with the pilot area where new housing would be targeted

Source: Turley



Figure 6.2: Pedestrian pathway which forms part of the wider Bullring project – this area would be improved and enhanced

Source: Turley

1. New Housing at the 'Heart' of the Area

Project Rationale



Figure 6.3: Location Plan of Catalyst Project 1

Source: Turley, 2016

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6.32 The project seeks to provide new housing stock in the form of social housing and self-build opportunities on cleared sites located between Hopewell Avenue and Hopewell Crescent (lands identified as site 2 in Figure 6.3). Following on from the investment in the area by Choice Housing Association these lands are considered to be central to rebuilding the heart of the neighbourhood given their close proximity to the primary and nursery school as well as other key local facilities.

6.33 It is proposed that the mix of housing developed would better align with the existing needs of families living in existing poorer quality housing within the neighbourhood. Strategically, identifying properties which are in poorer condition as part of a process of 'building' further development sites will enable existing families to be decanted, whilst also allowing older, poorer quality homes located on the edge/fringes of the neighbourhood to be demolished, cleared and in the longer-term packaged up as developable housing sites (as referenced on the plan – sites labelled 1 on Figure 6.3 are to be sold).

6.34 It is recommended that a small project comprising of 10 dwellings could be promoted as a self build scheme to promote leadership and additional skills that would be required to deliver the wider ambition.

6.35 Development on these lands could also assist in changing the physical characteristics of the area and enable core structural weaknesses within the urban fabric of this part of the neighbourhood to be addressed. This includes the opportunity to address poor design and access arrangements and create a more outward looking development.

6.36 The use of this mechanism for delivery is intended to generate greater involvement from the community and increase community capacity to appraise and understand new development. The introduction of self-build plots presents the opportunity for bespoke housing designed to directly meet the needs of households in the area whilst continuing to elevate the benchmark around the quality of housing being delivered.

6.37 The aspiration is that this will increase the confidence of people currently living in the area that they would choose to invest in staying and heighten interest from outside of the area for people to move into the Lower Shankill.

6.38 The development of new high quality housing on the proposed catalyst site would assist in providing a clear message to the community and external stakeholders that the Lower Shankill is entering the next phase of regeneration and development. The catalyst could be instrumental to this process. It could also provide an important foundation for justifying the need and demand for new housing in the area which would reinforce the case for sustained development of further new housing on the fringes of the neighbourhood through later phases of development.

Form of Intervention

6.39 Hopewell Avenue/Hopewell Crescent bound a large parcel of land which consists of existing housing, cleared sites and properties identified for demolition³ - lands identified as Site 2 on Figure 6.3. It is estimated that between the cleared sites and properties identified for demolition 56 units could be put back.

6.40 The site earmarked for demolition has been identified by Helm HA for new social housing and could yield 16 units which consists of 10 three bedroom properties and 6 two bedroom houses. The balance of the lands could be developed as self-build opportunities. The relocation of residents to this core site in the heart of the pilot area would release lands from elsewhere, in particular fringe locations of sale.

Resource Plan

6.41 Further engagement will be required in order to ensure the community are fully briefed on the aim of the catalyst project, and further, more detailed work undertaken to identify specific phases of the project.

6.42 It is anticipated that proposals for the site being pursued by Helm HA and NIHE will be used to inform a planning application for the scheme. The total cost to acquire the associated land and construct the 16 dwellings is estimated to generate a funding shortfall of £1,440,000.

6.43 An assessment of unsuitable / unsustainable housing will be required in order to identify the number of affected properties and households (with social housing needs) from within the area wishing to relocate to these properties.

6.44 A feasibility study will also be required to market test the appetite for self-build and appraise the level of upfront investment required before ownership of these lands are transferred to a regeneration company.

6.45 It is recommended that a development brief for an initial pilot phase be prepared to establish design / build principles. This will be required to ensure that self-build proposals respect the existing context of the area and match the expectations of quality new housing. The brief should set out principles of development for the whole site identifying future phases of development.

6.46 Marketing materials could also be prepared, articulating the opportunity presented by self-build and the plots offered through this project. Information could also be provided on the mortgage available to support this opportunity as outlined in Case Study 6.

6.47 Given the potential funding requirements associated with both projects it is anticipated that DfC/NIHE will need to pump-prime both schemes, either through upfront capital investment or by NIHE relinquishing its land receipt.

6.48 The sale of sites on the fringe of the area offers the potential to recover funds. In order to maximise value from the sale of these sites it is recommended that the sale of these sites only takes place when perceptions, market conditions and levels of demand for residential property in the area have improved.

6.49 The disposal route for subsequent phases of development could then follow a review of the interest in the self-build plots and an agreement of the marketing and disposal strategy with NIHE.

³ Housing south of Hopewell Square, fronting onto Hopewell Crescent.

Delivery Partners / Stakeholders

6.50 NIHE working in partnership with Helm HA will lead the delivery of new social housing on Hopewell Crescent site. It is proposed that NIHE will lead the evaluation of the proposed scheme and the requirement for and availability of funding. The stock transfer model may emerge as a delivery mechanism and should not be ruled out.

6.51 For the self-build proposals, the starting point in delivering this aspect of the catalyst rests in the formulation of a delivery vehicle consisting of NIHE and a Housing Association. DfC should take the lead in brokering this relationship and advising other statutory bodies including Belfast City Council of its role in the project.

6.52 It is envisaged that the enabling works required to prepare the site would be undertaken by statutory bodies, funded by BSC. Outline planning permission for the dwellings would need to be obtained from Belfast City Council.

6.53 DfC would also be required to work closely with the assigned Housing Association to understand the mortgage product that would be made available to prospective tenants and then working in partnership with the regeneration company market the project.

6.54 Following successful delivery of the initial phases, it is envisaged that NIHE would be responsible for releasing subsequent phases of land either through an extension of the self-build offer or through more traditional means of disposal to a Housing Association / Developer Partner. The market potential of additional sites available for sale in the area could be considered at this point and where development briefs are required, DfC could provide supportive expertise.

6.55 It is envisaged that DfC would lead on working with the community forum and/or the wider community in contributing to the development brief. It is also recommended that DfC undertakes a headline development viability study for the site in advance of briefs being issued. The extent to which additional monies can be leveraged from the sale of the lands to recover upfront costs and/or fund wider environmental improvements in the area will need to be assessed.

6.56 Belfast City Council could provide expertise and support with regards to

obtaining planning permission for the site and in partnership with the NIHE it could set the brief and subsequently work in partnership with the appointed Housing Association.

6.57 On award the Developer / Housing Association will need to continue to engage with the local community in refining the design for the scheme and the proposed housing mix prior to the submission of a planning application.

Risks

6.58 The concept of self-build is new to the BSC communities of Belfast. It will be important to start to generate capacity within the community to understand the concept and the opportunity presented. This will be important in soft-market testing interest for the plots early in the process.

6.59 The proposed disposal route adds an element of uncertainty as to the values which will be achieved for the plots and therefore the extent to which they will offset initial investment in infrastructure by DfC. The intention is, however, for the project to build confidence in the market for new housing and subsequent phases of development should benefit from appreciation in values achieved with developer contributions invested in the area.

Benefits

6.60 The development could provide circa 56 new homes on currently cleared lands, providing a range of housing tenure and type for the local community and may also serve to attract new residents to the area.

6.61 This proposal could bring significant change in the environmental quality of the area both in terms of the physical layout and quality of buildings.

6.62 The development of new homes could also provide employment opportunities resulting from their construction. Local labour / supplier agreements should be utilised where appropriate to ensure the maximum impact of employment opportunities generated.

6.63 The re-growth of the population initiated through the catalyst project will increase the neighbourhood's household spending capacity. This will benefit local shops and services. This will be further elevated through the longer-term plan to introduce a range of tenures of housing through the longer-term re-development programme on other vacant lands envisaged.

Timetable and Next Steps

6.64 Scheme proposals should be progressed by the NIHE in collaboration with Helm Housing Association, with a planning application submitted during 2016/17.

6.65 The feasibility study should be progressed within a 6 month timetable. In parallel, material supporting self-build development should be prepared and published to raise awareness of the project and explain what it entails.

6.66 The required permissions to construct infrastructure on the site to facilitate the self-build plots will need to be obtained following confirmation of their feasibility. This infrastructure should be progressed in parallel to the marketing of the self-build plots.

Year	Task/s	Stakeholder	Time
Year 1	Helm Housing site submission of planning application	NIHE / Helm Housing / Belfast City Council	6 - 9 months
	Development Brief prepared for remaining land areas (self-build plots identified)	DfC	9 - 12 months
	Self-build materials prepared and shared with the community	DfC	6 months
Year 2	Planning approval granted for Helm Housing site	Belfast City Council / Helm Housing	6 months
	Prospective tenants to secure mortgage approval	DfC	6 - 9 months
Year 3	Self-build plots under development	Community	12 months
	Development route for remaining sites agreed	DfC / NIHE	6 months

Table 6.1: Estimated project schedule for Catalyst Project 1

2. Affordable Housing – North Boundary Street

Project Rationale



Figure 6.4: Location Plan of Catalyst Project 2

Source: Extract from Helm Proposals

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6.67 The project seeks to provide new affordable housing on a current vacant site on North Boundary Street. NIHE has been working collaboratively with Helm Housing Association to design a scheme and consider a potential marketing strategy for the site.

6.68 The site's location, in close proximity to the Shankill Road, makes it potentially more suitable and marketable for affordable housing. Helm Housing Association's current proposals would see the development of 7 units which would offer the potential to diversify the tenure and elevate perceptions of the neighbourhood.

6.69 Providing new affordable housing would also help to attract lower income households that are keen to live in the area but are not eligible for social housing.

6.70 The development of new high quality affordable housing on the proposed catalyst site would assist in providing a clear message to the community and external stakeholders that the Lower Shankill is entering the next phase of regeneration and development. The catalyst could provide an important foundation for justifying the need and demand for new housing in the area which will reinforce the case for sustained development of further new housing.

Form of Intervention

6.71 The sites will bring forward 7 new affordable family houses. The current proposals include the provision of 7 units/ 5 person 3 bed homes which will be aimed at accommodating new families in the area. The total area of the re-development site is 0.12 ha.

Resource Plan

6.72 No direct studies are required with Helm HA having already prepared information to support the submission of planning applications for both sites.

Delivery Partners / Stakeholders

6.73 It is recommended that NIHE will assume a lead role in progressing the project in collaboration with Helm HA. NIHE should also lead the evaluation of the proposed scheme and the requirement for and availability of funding. DfC may be required to provide gap funding to the schemes to support delivery.

Risks

6.74 The scheme is subject to planning approval with support required from Belfast City Council.

6.75 The full extent of the funding gap needs to be validated to ensure best value of public sector funding intervention.

Benefits

6.76 The schemes will bring forward 7 new affordable homes in the area. This would have a wider positive benefit on demonstrating a further commitment to new housing development in the area setting a strong precedent for releasing future available development sites into the market.

6.77 The development of new homes would also provide employment opportunities resulting from their construction. Local labour / supplier agreements should be utilised where appropriate to ensure the maximum impact of employment opportunities generated.

6.78 The re-growth of the population initiated through the catalyst project could increase the neighbourhood's household spending capacity. This will benefit local shops and services. This could be further elevated through the longer-term plan to introduce a range of housing tenures in the longer term on vacant lands.

6.79 Timetable and Next Steps

6.80 Scheme proposals should be progressed by NIHE in collaboration with Helm Housing Association with a planning application submitted during 2016/17.

Year	Task/s	Stakeholder	Time
Year 1	Submission of planning application	Helm HA/ NIHE	6 - 12 months
Year 2	Planning application approved		6 Months
	Development on-site		12 Months
Year 3	Development complete		

Table 6.2: Estimated project schedule for Catalyst Project 2

3. Boyd Street Depot Re-Development: Brown Square

Project Rationale



Figure 6.5: Location Plan of Catalyst Project 3

Source: Turley, 2016

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6.81 The project involves a self-build scheme on the former NIHE depot site bound to the east by Boyd Street and to the west by Gardiner Street.

6.82 The depot, now surplus to requirements, has the potential to make a positive contribution to new housing supply on lands which are publicly owned, suitable and available for residential development.

6.83 The project seeks to present the community with an opportunity to be fully involved in the creation of new homes through the proactive marketing of parts of the site as self-build plots.

6.84 The use of this mechanism for delivery is intended to generate greater involvement from the community and increase community capacity to appraise and understand new development. The introduction of self-build plots presents the opportunity for bespoke housing designed to directly meet the needs of households in the area continuing to elevate the benchmark around the quality of housing being delivered. The aspiration is that this will increase confidence of people in the area to choose to invest in staying in the area within a new property as well as heightening interest from outside of the area for people to move into Brown Square area.

Form of Intervention

6.85 The site could support the development of an estimated 10 dwellings including 6 x 2 bed and 4 x 3 bed self-build units.

6.86 In order to ensure a strong design of the site creating safe spaces around the houses it is recommended that a new road is proposed through the site.

Resource Plan

6.87 Further engagement with the community will be required in order to ensure they are fully briefed on the catalyst project.

6.88 A feasibility study is recommended to market test the appetite for self-build and appraise the level of upfront investment required before ownership of these lands are transferred to a regeneration company.

6.89 A development brief for an initial pilot phase should be prepared to establish design and build principles. This is required to ensure that self-build proposals respect the existing context of the area and match the expectations of quality new housing. The brief should set out principles of development for the whole site identifying future phases of development.

6.90 Marketing materials could be prepared, articulating the opportunity presented by self-build and the plots offered through this project. Information should also be provided on the mortgage available to support this opportunity as outlined in Case Study 6.

Delivery Partners / Stakeholders

6.91 The starting point in delivering this aspect of the catalyst rests in the formulation of a delivery vehicle consisting of NIHE and a Housing Association. DfC should take the lead in brokering this relationship and advising other statutory bodies including Belfast City Council of their role in the project.

6.92 It is envisaged that the enabling works will be required to prepare the site. Outline planning permission for the dwellings would be obtained from Belfast City Council.

6.93 A development brief for an initial pilot phase should be prepared to establish design and build principles. This will assist in ensuring that self-build proposals respect existing housing in the area. The brief should set out principles of development for the whole site identifying future phases of development.

6.94 DfC would also be required to work closely with the assigned Housing Association to understand the mortgage product that would be made available to prospective tenants and then working in partnership with the regeneration company market the project

Risks

6.95 The concept of self-build is new to the BSC communities of Belfast. It will be important to start to generate capacity within the community to understand the concept and the opportunity presented. This will be important in soft-market testing interest for the plots early in the process.

6.96 The proposed disposal route adds an element of uncertainty as to the values which could be achieved for the plots and therefore the extent to which they would offset initial investment in infrastructure by DfC. The intention is, however, for the project to build confidence in the market for new housing and subsequent phases of development should benefit from appreciation in values achieved with developer contributions invested in the area.

Benefits

6.97 The schemes could bring forward 10 new homes in the area. This will have a wider positive benefit on demonstrating a further commitment to new housing development in the area setting a strong precedent for reaching agreement on further housing interventions within the Boyd Street area.

6.98 The development of new homes could also provide employment opportunities resulting from their construction. Local labour / supplier agreements should be utilised where appropriate to ensure the maximum impact of employment opportunities generated.

6.99 The re-growth of the population initiated through the catalyst project could increase the pilot area's household spending capacity. This would benefit local shops and services. This could be further elevated through the longer-term plan to introduce a range of tenures of housing through the longer-term redevelopment programme on other vacant lands envisaged.

Timetable and Next Steps

6.100 The feasibility study should be progressed within a 6 month timetable. In parallel material supporting self-build development will be prepared and published to raise awareness of the project and explain what it entails.

6.101 The required permissions to construct infrastructure on the site to facilitate the self-build plots will need to be obtained following confirmation of their feasibility. This infrastructure should be progressed in parallel to the marketing of the self-build plots.

Table 6.3: Estimated project schedule for Catalyst Project 3

Year	Task/s	Stakeholder	Time
Year 1	Development Brief prepared for site	DfC	9 - 12 Months
	Self-build materials prepared and shared with the community	DfC	
Year 2	Prospective tenants to secure mortgage approval	DfC	6 - 9 Months
Year 3	Self-build plots under development	Community	12 Months

4. Bullring – A New Public Realm

Project Rationale



Figure 6.6: Bullring Area of Intervention

Source: Turley, 2016

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6.102 The lands running parallel to the Westlink – known as the Bullring - provide an important pedestrian connection between Peter's Hill and Carlisle Memorial Church to the north. The direct adjacency to sites suitable for new residential development elevates the importance of this area in providing a strong initial perception of the area.

6.103 The area is associated with anti-social behaviour and a number of deaths as a result of suicide have been reported. As a consequence the area has become stigmatised and contributes to negative perceptions of the area both internally and externally.

6.104 A public realm improvement scheme has previously been designed by URS on behalf of BRO. Implementation stalled due to land ownership/liability issues and some previously allocated funding was lost as a consequence of the delays. Notwithstanding this, there remains strong public support for the proposals, with the local community viewing this as a priority project for the area.

6.105 As set out at Stage 3 there are aspirations to bring forward a comparatively high level of new housing within the area to ensure its future sustainability and to regenerate existing cleared sites.

6.106 Improving the internal and external perception of the area could be critical in attracting investment and building confidence within the community. The significant improvements to this prominent site within the area could provide an important opportunity to set an important precedent for early proposed interventions of new housing development identified in the other catalyst projects.

Form of Intervention

6.107 The intervention could take the form of high quality environmental improvements providing a safer and more attractive pedestrian connection on the edge of the pilot area. It also offers the potential to enhance and improve access to play and recreation facilities for existing and future residents.

6.108 Specific proposals could include:

- Retention, widening and resurfacing of pathways;
- Creation of new pathways;
- Re-profiling of ground to facilitate views across the lands;
- New retaining walls to enable re-profiling of levels;
- Creation of a Lower Shankill Community Garden;
- Creation of a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) and grass area incorporating a Play Area; and
- Tree planting.

Resource Plan

6.109 The estimated cost of the project has previously been identified as in the region of £1.7m. This is based on the proposals previously drawn up by URS on behalf of BRO. As the URS proposals only provide a public realm framework further detailed design and due diligence would be required to confirm costs and resolve land ownership/liability issues.

6.110 In order to take this project forward it is proposed that a procurement exercise is held, funded by DfC, to appoint an appropriately qualified landscape architect to prepare detailed designs and costings for the scheme. This process would be used to confirm total scheme costs to facilitate discussions with other statutory agencies including Belfast City Council and Sport NI.

6.111 Background material will be required to be prepared by DfC to be issued to a shortlist of companies invited to tender for the works.

Delivery Partners / Stakeholders

6.112 It is recommended that DfC leads the preparation of the background material and manage the procurement process. It is also recommended that inputs from Belfast City Council and Sport NI are sought in order to ensure buy-in and to assist with future funding negotiations.

6.113 Owing to the level of interest in the proposals it is critical that the local community is strongly engaged in the project with this forming a key component of the tender brief.

Risks

6.114 Delivery is contingent on securing funding and planning approval, with financial support required from a number of statutory agencies including BCC and Sport NI.

6.115 The previous study by URS identified a potential land ownership issue. It is understood that Belfast City Council is broadly agreeable to adopting and maintaining the land going forward. This position would need to be confirmed between the stakeholders responsible for delivering the project.

6.116 It is understood that whilst through the BSC programme contributory funding could be made available (subject to Business Care Approvals) by DfC for the project the project which would also require confirmed funding contributions from other statutory organisations. Confirmation as to the availability of required match funding should be agreed in order to scope the design brief appropriately and reflect any potential phased stages to the interventions.

Year	Task/s	Stakeholder	Time
Year 1	Preparation of background material Mini-competition and selection of preferred contractor	DfC / Selected contractor	6 Months
Year 2	Works on site	Selected Contractor	12 Months
Year 3	Project opened by the community		

Table 6.3: Estimated project schedule for Catalyst Project 3

6.117 The original scheme, which has the support of the community, includes lands to the north which have subsequently been identified for residential development in the concept masterplan. Whilst new residential development has the potential to provide surveillance and support the longer term sustainability of the area, consideration should be given to how this would integrate and align with the landscape proposals as they evolve.

Benefits

6.118 Improvements to the lands offer the potential to reduce anti-social behaviour, address negative perceptions and provide a strong positive context for future investment in the neighbourhood.

6.119 The potential exists through the active engagement of the community to utilise voluntary labour to assist in the delivery of the scheme. This could generate a greater ownership of the project and ensure its legacy within the community.

Timetable and Next Steps

6.120 Background material to be issued to bidders should be prepared and issued within a 6 month window. Longer term delivery would need to be subject to approval of funding, although it is anticipated that delivery could be phased with initial capital investment taking place in 2017/18 subject to funding.

Stage 4 Next Steps - Monitoring the Impact of Intervention

07

7.1 A baseline has been prepared for each area and provides an objective assessment against which change can be measured and tracked over time.

7.2 Each of the catalyst projects has been designed to initiate the regeneration process. Observable change in the pilot area baseline conditions may take time to occur due to project lead in times associated with feasibility, design, development consenting, construction and implementation. Noting the longer term process of regeneration underway in the neighbourhoods, monitoring of the short to medium term outputs and outcomes of each intervention is required in order to assess their impacts and effectiveness.

7.3 It is therefore recommended that a two stage monitoring process is implemented:

- **Stage 1: Catalyst project monitoring** – collection of output/outcome measures relating to specific projects and interventions.
- **Stage 2: Periodic neighbourhood monitoring** – updating the baseline at predetermined intervals in order to test the wider impacts of the regeneration process on neighbourhood baseline conditions over time. This will allow the scale, scope and persistence of impacts to be measured over time.

7.4 Catalyst project monitoring should be undertaken with greater frequency and it is recommended that this is programmed to occur on an annual basis. Periodic neighbourhood monitoring can be undertaken less frequently, enabling the regeneration process to take effect and discernible impacts to be recorded. It is recommended that a fuller neighbourhood monitoring exercise and update to the baseline occurs at three yearly intervals.

Catalyst Project Monitoring Indicators

7.5 The selection of monitoring indicators needs to reflect not only the nature of planned catalyst projects but also the feasibility of collecting project data on an ongoing basis. Given the breadth of the Building Successful Communities programme, the catalyst projects are likely to generate a wider range of impacts.

7.6 Consideration has therefore been given to a full range of social, economic and environmental indicators and measures which could be monitored. These relate to both outputs and outcomes and are detailed in the tables 7.1 and 7.2.

Table 7.1: Regeneration Outputs

Indicator	Measure
Area of land remediated	Hectares of land
Area of brownfield land developed	Hectares of land
Area of land improved and made ready for development	Hectares of land
Public sector land made available for development	Hectares of land
New build homes	Net number of new build properties consented, under construction and completed
Existing homes improved	Number of properties improved or refurbished
Tenure choice	Percentage of new homes provided by tenure
Affordable housing	Net number of affordable homes consented, under construction and completed
Social housing	Net number of social homes consented, under construction and completed
Self-build housing	Net number of self-build homes consented, under construction and completed
Community and social infrastructure	New community and social infrastructure provided (floorspace square metres)
Sports and leisure provision	Number of sports/ play (eg. MUGAs)/ leisure facilities delivered or improved
Open space created/ improved	Hectares of land improved
Public realm	Hectares of land and/ or linear meters of public realm created or improved
Trees planted	Count
Transport infrastructure created / improved	Linear meters of new/ improved road space and pedestrian routes. Public transport services operating (count)

Table 7.2: Regeneration Outputs

Indicator	Measure
Investment Value	Total private investment in construction/ refurbishment activity (£)
	Total public investment in construction/ refurbishment activity (£)
	Leverage (ratio of public: private investment £)
Direct employment safeguarded	Full Time Equivalent (FTE) count of jobs safeguarded as a result of investment in catalyst projects
Direct employment created	FTE count associated with construction activities
Local employment created	Number of local people involved in construction process (temporary/ permanent)
Local skills and training	Number of local people involved in skills, training and capacity building activities as part of the physical regeneration process
	Hours of training/ capacity building delivered
Volunteering and participation	Number of volunteers participating in neighbourhood catalyst regeneration projects
Households accommodated	Count of households accommodated in completed dwellings
Affordable housing needs met	Households in need of affordable housing accommodated in new homes
Economic activity	Count of economically active people residing in completed dwellings
Household spending power	Estimate of combined spending power of all households accommodated in completed dwellings

7.7 Information should be compiled and analysed on at least an annual basis in order to track the effectiveness of the programme and progress against the programmed catalyst projects.

7.8 Delivery partners should be provided with a project monitoring form in order to ensure common recording of outputs and outcomes.

Periodic Neighbourhood Monitoring

7.9 A comprehensive baseline report has been prepared for each neighbourhood which covers thematic indicators such as:

- Socio-economic context;
- Residential market performance;
- Accessibility;
- Public services; and
- Planned investments

7.10 The baseline reports contain numerous indicators of neighbourhood health and wellbeing. It will not be possible to replicate the scope of the baseline by way of periodic neighbourhood monitoring every three years. Rather, a shortlist of key indicators should be agreed and these should form the basis of periodic monitoring.

7.11 A sample shortlist of baseline monitoring indicators is suggested at Table 7.3. It should be possible in all cases to show change based on intervention from the baseline position.

7.12 The above are only a sample of the type of indicators which could be monitored periodically and informed by published data sources as well as the catalyst project monitoring data.

7.13 In addition to the above, further insight to perceptions of the area and the effectiveness of the regeneration process could be gathered via resident surveys.

Table 7.3: Baseline Monitoring Indicators

Theme	Key Indicator
Residential	Change to dwelling stock
	Change to tenure of dwelling stock
	Change in choice of dwellings (as measured by size of property/ number of bedrooms)
	Change in lettings (source: NIHE)
	Change in stock vacancy levels (source: NIHE)
	Average private residential values
	Average private sector rental levels
	NIHE waiting list (count)
Socio-economic	Change to observed levels of multiple deprivation (subject to updates to 2010 NI Multiple Deprivation dataset)
	Economic activity (as measured by employment and unemployment levels)
Accessibility	Public transport services serving neighbourhood (count)
Social Infrastructure	Change in number of community facilities
	Change in number of sports, recreation and leisure facilities
	Change in pupil roll and unfilled places for neighbourhood schools
Environment	Change in quantum of open space and greenspace within neighbourhoods

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