



## Belfast City Council

**Report to:** Strategic Policy & Resources Committee

**Subject:** **Update on Peace III Priority 2.1 Capital bids for Shared Space**

**Date:** 21 January 2011

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### Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to update Members on the status of council led projects under Peace III Priority 2.1 '*Creating Shared Public Spaces*' call for capital projects and to inform Members of a request from the Falls Community Council for the Council to act as the lead partner on its Peace III application to develop a shared space on the site of the former school at St Comgall's.

### Relevant Background Information

2.1 Members will recall that the Strategic P&R committee at its meeting in October 2010 was informed that SEUPB had reopened the call for bids under Priority 2.1 '*Creating Shared Public Spaces*' of the Peace III programme with a closing date for applications being 17<sup>th</sup> January 2011.

As Members are aware, under this priority SEUPB is seeking strategic physical project submissions that can be easily recognised as a Peace III project after the programme completes in 2015. The central issue that projects need to demonstrate is their ability to deliver peace and reconciliation outcomes and to be iconic, transformational projects that would provide a lasting legacy to the PEACE III programme. All monies under this call have to be committed by December 2013 and spent by mid 2015 so the timescales are extremely tight for capital projects.

At the Committee meeting in October a long list of projects were presented for consideration of Members for submission under this priority. It was also agreed that the Council should only submit 1 or 2 very well defined projects under this call in order to maximise its chances of a getting a successful application under this call.

At this meeting the following decisions were therefore agreed in relation to projects -

Project	Recommendation in October 2010
Sports Village at North Foreshore	Further detail to be worked up
Belfast Story at Central Library	Further detail to be explored to assess the suitability and viability of this project as well as ongoing discussions with Libraries NI with an update to be

	taken to Committee
Ulster Sports Museum	Further detail to be explored to assess the suitability and viability of this project as well as ongoing discussions with USMA with an update to be taken to Committee
North Belfast Cultural Corridor	No further action – SEUPB feedback was that this project did not fulfil the aims of Priority 2.1. Elements being progressed under Priority 1.1.
Gasworks Bridge	No further action – SEUPB feedback was that this project did not fulfil the aims of Priority 2.1.
North Foreshore Bridge	No further action – this project has previously been rejected and it is therefore unlikely to be successful.
HMS Caroline	No further action – unlikely that SEUPB will fund two similar projects under this funding programme
Black Mountain Shared Spaces Project	No further action – this project is still in the early stages of development and so will not meet the tight timeframe for the submission of applications.
Interface Areas	No further action – being progressed by the Council in conjunction with the Belfast Interface Trust and the Belfast Interface Project under Priority 1.1.

Members will also be aware that the Council's application for a Community Hub at Girdwood was previously deferred pending further information. An update on the current status of the projects is contained in the section below.

### Key Issues – Update

- 3.1 Following the meeting of the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee in October officers have been progressing work on the projects agreed above – Sports Village at North Foreshore, Belfast Story at Central Library and the Ulster Sports Museum to ascertain their suitability and viability under this call. As well as continuing discussions with the relevant stakeholders on these projects the Council also completed Expressions of Interest on the Sports Village and Belfast Story proposals and met with SEUPB officials to discuss these projects. Officers also held meetings with key Members to discuss the Council's proposed projects under this call in order to make use of existing Member experience with SEUPB.

#### Update on Council-led projects

1. *Sports Village at the North Foreshore* – the development of a cross community facility aimed at promoting good relations via sport, recreational training and education on the North Foreshore site. The Council has led on the development of this bid with the support of Crusaders/ Newington Football Clubs. As Members are aware the original Sports Village bid got through to economic appraisal phase in 2010 but was rejected on grounds of limited peace inputs and gaps in the business plan. These areas were substantially reworked in the new submission.  
*Status – Application for the development of a Community Sports Facility was submitted on 17<sup>th</sup> January. Members will be kept up to date with regards to the progress of this application*
2. *Belfast Story' at Belfast Central Library* – As Members are aware discussions have been ongoing with Libraries NI re potential future collaboration opportunities and that one opportunity which had been identified was the potential for space in the refurbished Belfast Central Library to host a 'Belfast Story'. As directed by Committee in October, council officers progressed discussions with Libraries NI staff re this proposal. However a number of major issues were identified which severely impacted on the potential for

this project to succeed. Libraries NI have prepared an Outline Business Case for the Central Library project however the project is contingent on Libraries NI receiving the go ahead for the overall refurbishment project from DCAL. Planning permission for the project would also need to be obtained and feedback from Libraries NI was that earliest completion dates for their project would have been August 2015. As Members are aware there are very tight timeframes in place for Priority 2.1 projects with all monies having to be committed by December 2013 and spent by mid 2015. This would not have been possible with the current timeframes being advised by Libraries NI for the Central Library project. Members are also asked to note that initial discussions with SEUPB also indicated that this project was unlikely to succeed under this call as it did not sufficiently fulfil the aims of the priority.

*Status– Application not proceeded due to the reasons outlined above. Council officers will continue to progress discussions with officials from Libraries NI re other potential collaboration opportunities.*

3. *Ulster Sports Museum* – The Ulster Sports Museum Association have been working for a number of years towards establishing a permanent museum to celebrate Ulster’s greatest sports men and women. Council officers have met with the USMA on a number of occasions to discuss their proposals and the USMA have highlighted that there are strong arguments for locating the sports museum in Belfast City Centre. It has been stressed to the USMA that the Council will not, given the current economic situation, be able to contribute directly to the financing of this project. Further to these discussions the Council investigated the potential for this project to be included as part of the sports facility proposal at the North Foreshore. However this proved to be unviable due to space and cost reasons as it would have prohibitively raised the costs for facility.

*Status – Not proceeded with under this call due to the reasons outlined above. Council officers will continue to progress discussions with the USMA to identify other funding opportunities and identify alternative potential locations.*

4. *Girdwood Community Hub* – As Members are aware SEUPB have previously deferred consideration of the Council’s application for the development of a Community Hub at Girdwood pending receipt of further information including -
- an implementation timetable for the Hub and the wider site (including housing and infrastructure) within an agreed masterplan
  - further evidence that there is full political and local community support, particularly in the Protestant/ Unionist community, for the project
  - an Equality Impact Assessment incorporating further consultation
  - further details on the programming of the facility by strategic partners and SLAs
- SEUPB have advised that the Priority 2.1 Steering Committee felt that this project has the capacity to be transformational and iconic but that this was caveated by the risks involved in moving forward.

The SP&R Committee agreed in June 2010 that work was progressed on submitting the further information as requested above by SEUPB in relation to this application. As a result the Council has continued to progress work on this application including -

- developing an engagement matrix and continuing the process of engagement with the local political and community representatives re this proposal. These meetings have been very productive and highlighted a general support for the Hub proposal from all participants and a welcoming of the potential to secure a substantial investment in the area
- continuing to work closely with the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) and the Department for Social Development (DSD). Discussions with senior representatives from these Departments have highlighted that work is ongoing in relation to finalising the overall Masterplan for the site and that consideration has been given to the budgetary requirements for funding the infrastructure required to enable development on the site as part of the Budget 2010 process. These discussions are continuing.

As outlined council officers met with SEUPB in December and at this meeting it was highlighted that SEUPB are keen to confirm definitively if the Community Hub proposal is to proceed. It should be noted that the Community Hub proposal has not yet been formally signed off for an award but that it is considered to strongly meet the objectives of the Priority 2.1 programme. However SEUPB have highlighted that they will be unwilling to risk investment in this project without the overall masterplan being agreed.

Members are asked to note that there is a risk to both the Council and SEUPB in terms of the timeframe around this project in that funding needs committed by 2013 and spent by 2015. Working back from 2013 there are considerable pressures to obtain overall agreement, install infrastructure, do detailed design, get planning permission, procure a contract and so on.

Members are asked to consider this tight timeframe and note that the Council has agreed to get back to SEUPB within the coming month with a definitive position in relation to the Girdwood application. Clarification has been sought from DSD regarding the status of the masterplan and the resources necessary to deliver it.

### **Other projects**

5. *St Comgall's* – Officers from the Council met recently with representatives from the Falls Community Council who have submitted an application under the Priority 2.1 call for the development of a shared space centre on the site of the former school at St. Comgall's on the Falls Road. The main objectives of the St. Comgall's projects are to -
- redevelop the St Comgall's School Site as a symbol of and catalyst for regeneration in an area which is suffering the effects of physical dereliction as a consequence of the conflict and anti-social behaviour;
  - promote cross-community engagement in depicting a shared and balanced view of the history of the conflict and its impact on local residents;
  - provide a facility within a recognised interface area in order to contribute towards an increase in inter-community mobility; and
  - provide an iconic, sustainable, mixed-use space for education, training, and exhibition in order to promote awareness and understanding of cross-community perspectives for local, regional and international audiences.

Further detail on the St. Comgall's project is attached at Appendix A.

The Falls Community Council have requested that the Council act as the lead statutory partner in this project and the Committee is asked to consider if it wishes to act as the lead partner on this project. Within this context, Members are asked to note that this project would support the Council to deliver an improved quality of life for now and for future generations and that the development of the site at St. Comgall's has a good strategic fit with the Council's place-shaping agenda for the city, particularly regarding shared space. The site is strategically important in the regeneration of the area as it is a landmark building on a key arterial route linking the west of the city with the city centre.

Should the Committee agree to act as lead partner for this project, officers will proceed to formalise the partnership and draft the appropriate legal agreements with Falls Community Council.

<b>Resource Implications</b>
4.1 Financial None at present.
4.2 Human Resources Additional officer time will be required to progress applications.

<b>Recommendations</b>
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The Committee is asked to–
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>5.1 Note that the Council submitted an application for the development of the Community Sports Facility at the North Foreshore and the reasons why the Belfast Story and Ulster Sports Museum proposals were not pursued</li><li>5.2 Note the update that has been provided in relation to the Girdwood application</li><li>5.3 Agree to grant authority for the Council to act as the lead partner on the St. Comgall's project which has been submitted by the Falls Community Council, subject to appropriate legal agreements being prepared by the Town Solicitor</li></ul> |
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<b>Abbreviations</b>
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DSD – Department for Social Development
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SEUPB – Special European Union Programmes Body
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<b>Documents Attached</b>
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