



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Girdwood Community Hub – update
Date:	18 March 2011
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Property and Projects
Contact Officer:	Caroline Wilson, Policy and Business Development Parks and Leisure Sinead Grimes, Corporate and Strategic Planning Unit

Relevant Background Information	
1.1	Members will recall that the Council's bid for a community hub located at Girdwood was deferred in May 2010, under the Peace III Priority 2.1, total value £9.6m. SEUPB has now advised the Council that it requires all outstanding information (see Appendix 2) by 20 April 2011.
1.2	It should be noted that the Community Hub proposal has not yet been formally signed off for an award. It is anticipated that a number of projects will be brought to the June meeting of the SEUPB Priority 2.1 Steering Committee.
1.3	All expenditure for the capital project must be claimed from SEUPB by mid-2015, at the very latest. After this point, any capital expenditure will be carried at risk by the Council. No allocation has been made for this in the Council's capital programme.

2. Key Issues	
2.1	As per Committee's recommendation in June 2010, Council officers have continued to develop the proposal for final submission to SEUPB. This has included a number of community meetings, briefings for the relevant Ministers and meetings with relevant departmental officials. Following a briefing paper (Appendix 1) and subsequent meeting with community representatives (10 March), 4 key issues have emerged:
2.2	Proposal relocation of Hub As landowners for the site, DSD and OFMDFM officials raised that it will be difficult to proceed with the location as previously envisaged. It was suggested that the footprint for the hub should move towards the Cliftonpark Avenue end of the Girdwood site. This revised footprint would encompass some of the land set aside for 'mixed-use' development and a strip of derelict land owned by the NIHE. It was agreed that the appropriate Ministerial approvals be sought, subject to engagement with community representatives and Council agreement. An indicative map is attached. (Appendix 3)

	<p>At the meeting with community representatives (10 March), there was some discussion on the location. It was noted that there is real potential to use the Hub to transform Cliftonpark Avenue from a barren 'no-man's land' into an attractive, vibrant building and public realm on the edge of the Girdwood site. It was generally agreed that there were benefits to this relocation but further engagement needed to happen to address some of the concerns raised regarding access and safety.</p> <p>2.3 Political endorsement Community representatives are keen to secure the potential for a substantial investment into North Belfast. At the meeting, it was highlighted that political leadership was critical to the success of any community engagement process, and the sustainability of the Hub itself. It was suggested that it would build confidence in the project if political representatives publicly endorsed the community engagement process and the Hub concept. Community representatives were also anxious that political representatives would participate in a community engagement process, as a visible demonstration of commitment to the project.</p> <p>2.4 Community engagement process Given the sensitivities in the process, community representatives stressed the need for an inclusive and participative engagement in designing the Hub, its management and the facilities, services and programmes therein. The Director of Property and Projects highlighted that this needed to some degree to be time-bound, in order to meet pressing deadlines, such as planning approvals. It was agreed at the meeting, subject to Committee approval, that the representatives would convene again to design a robust engagement process with support from Council, DSD and OFMDFM.</p> <p>Representatives also raised the real need to maximise local community benefit realised by the Hub. The Director of Property and Projects agreed to draft a Business and Community Opportunity Plan for future discussion.</p> <p>It was proposed that a number of other partners could support the process. This included the Belfast Regeneration Office and the NI Housing Executive. Initial discussions with these agencies have been positive towards the process. Further partners will be identified as the project develops.</p> <p>2.5 Strategic partners When the application was submitted, it was envisaged that the library would be a key anchor tenant. This is no longer possible due to budgetary constraints. There is now scope to identify other strategic partners as tenants or users.</p> <p>2.6 Conclusion This iconic, transformational project will not proceed in the short- or medium-term without Peace III funding. The costs for this capital project are not included in the council's current capital programme priorities and, resources are unlikely to be made available in the next 5 years, given the current economic situation of the Council, its partners and the wider economic environment.</p>
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3.	<p>Resource Implications</p> <p><u>Financial</u> Up to £3,000 towards the costs of the community engagement process. Provision for this been made within revenue budgets. An application will be made to the Community Relations Council for £3,000.</p>
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	<p><u>Human Resources</u> Officer time to participate in engagement process.</p> <p><u>Assets</u> Further updates will be brought to Committee on a timely basis.</p>
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4.	Equality Implications
	An equality consultation document, community engagement/consultation process and equality screening will be submitted as supplementary information to SEUPB.

5.	Recommendations
	<p>The Committee is asked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For their feedback on the issues highlighted above; - To publicly endorse the community engagement process and the overall project; and - To agree to participate in the wider community engagement process, including innovative ways of engaging people in design processes and longer term programming of the Hub.

6.	Decision Tracking
	The Director for Property and Projects will complete the submission to SEUPB by 20 April 2011 and report to SP&R Committee in September 2011 on the outcomes of the community engagement process, subject to an award from SEUPB.

7.	Key to Abbreviations
	<p>DSD – Department for Social Development OFMDFM – Office of First Minister and deputy First Minister SEUPB – Special European Union Programmes Body</p>

8.	Documents Attached
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community meeting briefing paper and attendees, including Hub proposal summary 2. Correspondence from SEUPB 3. Indicative revised location for Community Hub

Belfast City Council
Girdwood Community Hub Community Partners meeting – update
10 March 2011
Venue: Crumlin Road Gaol Offices 9 – 11am

Invitees:			
1.	Jackie Johnston	DSD	Y
2.	Liam Barr	OFMDFM	Y
3.	Pauline Morgan	OFMDFM	Y
4.	Danny Byrne	DSD	Y
5.	Philip Magee	DSD	Y
6.	David McWhirter & Janice Beggs	Lower Oldpark CDA	Y
7.	Denis Cunningham & Ian McLaughlin	Lower Shankill CDA	Y
8.	Stephen Reid	The Vine Centre	Y
9.	Paul Little	Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum (Manus Maguire unable to attend)	Y
10.	Liam Maskey	Intercomm (Update meeting organised)	Apologies
11.	Winston Irvine	North and West Parades and Cultural Forum	Y
12.	Paul Roberts	Ashton Centre	Y
13.	Paul O'Neill	Ashton Centre	Y
14.	Tom Scott	Greater Shankill Partnership (Update meeting with Jackie Redpath organised)	Apologies
15.	Gerard O'Reilly	New Lodge Safer Streets	Apologies
16.	Paul Armstrong	North Belfast Partnership (Murdo Murray unable to attend)	Y
17.	Harry Smith	LCAP	Apologies
18.	Rab McCallum	North Belfast Interface Network	Y
19.	John Bunting	North Belfast CDA	Apologies
20.	Billy Hutchinson	Mount Vernon CDF	Apologies

1.	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Further to the capital bid to the Peace III Priority 2.1 (£9.6m), SEUPB has advised the Council that it requires all outstanding information, as outlined in their previous correspondence (see Appendix 1).
1.2	At a meeting with SEUPB on 17 February with DSD and OFMDFM, the last call for funding under Priority 2.1 has just closed and that this is the last opportunity for the Girdwood bid to be assessed. It should be noted that the Community Hub proposal has not yet been formally signed off for an award. It is anticipated that a number of projects will be brought to the June meeting of the SEUPB Priority 2.1 Steering Committee.
1.3	SEUPB have emphasised that it is in the Council's interest to produce as detailed information as possible at this stage to allow for the bid to be determined – any one small thing will undermine the confidence of the Steering Group. It was agreed that the Director of Property and Projects would respond to their final request by 20 April 2011 , if political and community support is forthcoming.

1.4	All expenditure for the capital project must be claimed from SEUPB by mid-2015, at the very latest. After this point, any capital expenditure will be carried at risk by the Council. No allocation has been made for this in the Council's capital programme.
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2.	Key Issues
2.1	<p>Master plan and location of Hub</p> <p>It is the view of DSD and OFMDFM that following extensive consultation, there is broad political and community agreement on the regeneration proposals set out in the revised Crumlin Road Gaol/Girdwood draft Masterplan. The delay in finalising the Masterplan concerns the approach to implementation, with differing views on the provision of social housing on the site.</p>
2.2	<p>We have emphasised to SEUPB that the revised Crumlin Road Gaol/Girdwood Masterplan is an advisory document with no statutory obligations. Whilst the Masterplan was drawn up in a different economic environment, much of the vision remains. It should be noted that the development of the Hub is contingent on DSD/OFMDFM funding for infrastructure, as the Council's bid to SEUPB was solely for the building itself.</p>
2.3	<p>When the footprint for the hub in the revised site plan was first raised, there was an assumption made that an underground car park would be constructed under the adjacent 'Crumlin Green' playing fields/common use area to relocate the Mater Hospital car park. DSD and OFMDFM have advised that it would be difficult to facilitate any protracted consultation on re-locating the Mater Hospital car park, who currently lease lands within the Gaol, within the tight SEUPB timetable. Also, the cost of an underground car park would be prohibitive in the current funding climate.</p>
2.4	<p>It has been suggested that the footprint for the hub should therefore move towards the Cliftonpark Avenue end of the Girdwood site leaving the car park where it is for the medium term. This revised footprint would encompass some of the land set aside for 'mixed-use' development and a strip of derelict land owned by the NIHE. This would provide a total footprint of approximately 6,000 sq metres which would deliver the size of hub required by the Council to include additional car park spaces. The footprint for the housing is located behind/alongside this.</p>
2.5	<p>There are a number of benefits to the re-location. The infrastructural costs in relation to services and road access would be considerably reduced. This is a prime location and will be an attractive, highly visible building on the edge of the Girdwood site. Some design work could facilitate entrances from both ends of the building, enabling access from the Cliftonville Road side as well as easy access from Lower Oldpark. It is also opposite Council-owned land at Lower Oldpark and there may be opportunity to do something wider to connect the two sites.</p>
2.6	<p>DSD and OFMDFM need to finalise approval by their respective Ministers by 10 March on the revised hub footprint for the Council's committee paper to issue on 11 March. DSD/OFMDFM would also need to decide by 18 April, on whether to allocate indicative infrastructure funding for the hub which could be up to £1m.</p>
2.7	<p>Strategic Partners</p> <p>SEUPB has asked that firm Service Level Agreements are secured from strategic partners, as evidence of commitment to the project and its sustainability. Libraries NI has indicated that they are not able to consider any re-location to the Girdwood site in light of current budgetary constraints. This means there is a small window of opportunity to re-</p>

visit the original outline use of the Hub. A number of options are now being investigated:

Strategic Partner	Outline use
Belfast Metropolitan College	Hire of flexible rooms for community education outreach purposes
Belfast Health & Social Services Trust	Hire of flexible rooms for community health or hospital administration purposes
Invest NI	Flexible small enterprise units
Police Service NI	Community policing 'shop' facility
Other BCC services/units	Potential location for city centre-based units
Social economy/Private retail	Nursery, cafe or post office

A series of meetings with strategic partners are underway to determine commitment.

2.8 Political and community support

All political parties and community representatives acknowledge the need for an iconic investment in the north of the city and agree that there is significant reputational risk if it proves impossible to meet the SEUPB deadline.

2.9 Pre-consultation meetings have happened with various community representatives, who gave their broad, overarching support for the Hub. Subject to their agreement, a community engagement/design process will be collaboratively designed for submission to SEUPB.

2.10 It is proposed to take a report to the Council's Strategic and Policy Resources (SP&R) Committee to demonstrate political support from the Council.

2.11 Next steps

It is proposed that the next steps are:

What	By when
Community partners meeting to secure commitment to Hub project	10 March
Ministerial approval from OFMDFM and DSD on the revised Hub footprint	10 March
SP&R Committee report to finalise Council's commitment to the Hub	18 March
Equality consultation document drafted	31 March
Community engagement process designed by community representatives, Council, DSD and OFMDFM	8 April
Programme for Hub drafted for consultation	8 April
Construction timeline and costs completed	8 April
Strategic partners (e.g. Belfast Metropolitan College) signed up to Hub	8 April
Ministerial approval to allocate infrastructure funding for the Hub	18 April
Community engagement process initiated	3 May

2.12	Conclusion This iconic, transformational project will not proceed in the short- or medium-term without Peace III funding. The costs for this capital project are not included in the council's current capital programme priorities and, resources are unlikely to be made available in the next 5 years, given the current economic situation of the Council, its partners and the wider economic environment.
2.13	This is an urgent opportunity for a highly visible, sustainable and inspiring investment in North Belfast. We are committed to working with all stakeholders, local neighbourhoods in particular, to ensure that the Hub is a place where everyone is welcome and will be the catalyst in regenerating a derelict, physically isolated site, creating a new city quarter and heart in North Belfast.

3.	Decisions required
	Meeting attendees are asked: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For their feedback on the issues highlighted above; and - To agree to participate in the design and implementation of a wider community engagement process, including innovative ways of engaging people in design and build processes and longer term animation.

Proposal for Girdwood Community Hub – Summary

1. Background

The Crumlin Road Gaol/Girdwood site is in a key strategic location for the city and for North Belfast. It is only a 15 minute walk away from Belfast city centre – about the same distance as it is to Queen’s University in the south of the city. However unlike Queen’s, the Girdwood site in particular is seen as remote and physically isolated. Psychologically it is seen as being a bigger distance away – you have to cross a number of unfamiliar, desolate and barren spaces which compound feelings of unease and insecurity. The development of the site therefore presents a unique opportunity to help challenge and transform the negative opinions of the area and ultimately stretch the shared space of Belfast city centre northwards.

As part of the Council's commitment to delivering development and regeneration across the city, it submitted an application for funding to the Peace III Programme in November 09.

2. Girdwood Masterplan

The use of the Girdwood site, and the Crumlin Road Gaol beside it, have already been the subject of extensive consultation and community engagement. A draft Masterplan has been developed which outlines that the overall aspiration for the development of the site is:

“to create a regeneration project of international significance which brings maximum economic, social and environmental benefits to the local and wider community and in so doing creates a vibrant, inclusive and diverse environment which attracts present and future generations of people to live, work and visit.”

Arising out of this process a number of consistent issues have been identified by all communities as needed in the area including -

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| - shared space | - youth activities |
| - safe space | - jobs |
| - accessible services | - training |
| - leisure facilities | - vocational education. |

We believe that the Community Hub has the potential to deliver across a number of these needs.

3. Community Hub – proposal

The development of a Community Hub on the Girdwood site is an exciting opportunity to create a unique shared space, transforming the lives of those living in the surrounding neighbourhoods, as well as providing a world-class, state of the art, community facility for all.

In a new approach to service delivery and shared space, the Community Hub will offer a wide range of integrated services and facilities towards a common end of helping to improve quality of life including leisure and community facilities, health and education outreach services. The development of this Hub will help address local needs by offering access to:

- *community and leisure facilities* – the Hub will provide a suite of community and leisure facilities including multi-purpose rooms, sport hall facilities, changing facilities for pitches, opportunities for sports coaching.
- *educational outreach facilities* – 69% of residents in North Belfast have no or low levels of qualifications. In 2007 46% of young people left school with fewer than 5 GCSEs at Grade C or above. The Hub will provide a range of outreach education and vocational courses
- *jobs and training facilities* – People in North Belfast are more likely to be economically inactive and the area suffers from high numbers of people who are long term unemployed. The development of the Hub will help to provide immediate construction jobs and there will be longer term job opportunities available in the Hub and the wider site
- *community policing* – North Belfast suffers from higher than average crime rates compared to the Northern Ireland average. A new generation of community policing is planned as the final stages of the implementation of the Patten Review. Community policing will be an essential element of the overall development of the site
- *health facilities* – North Belfast suffers from lower life expectancy than the Northern Ireland average and has a higher % of people with a limiting long-term illness, health problem or disability. The Hub will provide a range of health facilities including yoga, complementary therapy and alternative health facilities, counselling services for trauma and mental health, suicide awareness programmes
- *shared space programme* - a programme of at least 20 events including training and inter-generational activities, including sports, heritage, environmental and arts during the construction and year 1 of operation, with targeted outreach to local schools, older people's residential centres, minority ethnic and women's groups with over 600 participants.

Building on these exciting services and to ensure that the centre becomes a full one stop shop for local neighbourhoods, and the wider city, the Community Hub will also offer –

- a social economy café
- associated public realm with community garden and public art
- wireless internet facilities – a wireless hub
- an educational resource for sustainable living.

Reflecting the wishes of the community that the space is safe and shared, a critical component of this proposal is the establishment of a shared space management team whose role will be to design, promote and manage the Hub as welcoming, open, shared and safe.

4. Securing access for everyone

The Hub will be a demonstration project of working, vibrant, living shared space – a new model of space which proactively transforms the relationships and interactions within it, and ultimately beyond it. A draft shared space action plan was included in the application to SEUPB to give them an indication about how this would work in practice.

Fundamental to the success of the Hub as a shared space is community involvement in this goal. It is the Council's intention to re-visit this action plan as part of the community engagement process, but some actions might include:

Planning, location, design and connectivity	
Headline	Suggested actions
Concept planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inclusive public and local neighbourhood consultation using new 3-d technology on physical design, programming and management of the Community Hub and surrounding public realm - Ongoing public consultations on the overall Masterplan implementation
Community Hub branding and symbols	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - City and schools' competition for logo concept - Strong 'shared' theme in logos and branding of Community Hub - Strong reinforcement of logos in public realm – street furniture - Artwork to celebrate diversity of North Belfast heritage
Physical design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maximum points of entry to Community Hub and public realm for local neighbourhoods - Iconic design with strong 'shared' symbolism - Heritage of local area celebrated in the public realm (potential to involve local young people) - Ample seating and picnic tables in the public realm and reception areas - Secure by design principles implemented e.g. lighting, sight lines - 'Green building' design
Well-served by public transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Travel plans for a cross-section of neighbourhoods and diversity of user groups accessing Community Hub - Travel plan information provided on website
Well-served by pedestrian and cycle links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lobbying for physical upgrade to access routes as pedestrian-friendly - Lobbying for physical improvements to access routes as cycle-friendly
Programming and promotion	
Headline	Suggested actions
Promotion and publicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong 'shared' theme in all promotional products including website - Targeted mailings to non-traditional groups - Promotion of workshop facilities to private sector as a corporate social responsibility option - Linked events with other Council facilities (parks and leisure centres) to promote access by users from other areas of city, e.g. cycle Tour de Belfast or Art in the Park
Annual 'city of neighbourhoods' public realm programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Year-long programme of cultural events across all venues in Community Hub and surrounding public realm - Annual parade with children's carnival (Christmas/ Diwali/ Hannukah) - Annual street art competition - Light projection shows at Community Hub and public realm - Programme of inter-generational events for open space aimed at older people and young people
Community multi-purpose rooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual effectiveness review of shared space meeting - Town Hall meetings – regular discussion fora on local issues with local elected representatives - Community dialogue sessions on contested issues - EMU schools activity programme - DPP meetings
Service provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mental health clinics on an inter-community basis - Joint victims and survivors' workshops and events - Library outreach book clubs with relevant themes - Older persons' day care/arts workshops
Sports and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inter-mural competitions

recreation provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Targeted introductory and training programme for young people with disabilities and young girls - Promoting accredited training for women as coaches and referees - Midnight soccer provision - Sports club activities - Children's playground and other public realm facilities
Multi-media suite and creative arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Programme of training including accreditation and development in use of multi-media suite - Annual animation 'Oscars' event - Local DJ competitions
Inter-community café	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social economy café staffed by inter-community network of local volunteers - World café events to look at world cultures and issues of difference
Inter-community Initiatives Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Joint fund from profit of café for events administered by inter-community steering group
Communications Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reinforcement of the 'shared' nature of the Hub and surrounding public realm through media articles - Journal articles on best practice by shared space management team
Management and Governance	
Headline	Suggested actions
Management and governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shared Space strategy and annual action plan - Representative inter-community and statutory forum for Community Hub and public realm - Standard item on committee agenda regarding effectiveness of sharing and measuring progress - Mandatory and regular good relations/shared space training for governing body and staff - Commitment to regular monitoring and review of 'shared-ness' of site - Use of local suppliers for catering, transport, etc. - Development of a youth leadership programme to ensure that young people can get fully involved in volunteering opportunities
Recruitment and progression of locally recruited volunteers and staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Up to 25 local construction apprenticeships - Profile monitoring of diversity of workforce and volunteers - Good Relations training for all staff and volunteers re: safeguarding shared space - Good practice visits including cross-border - Agreed mediation process for complaints
Maintenance programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Removal of graffiti - Agreed protocol on illegal flag-flying (lampposts, railings, etc.) - Community Hub and public realm maintained as well-lit and graffiti-free
Stewarding and managing critical incidents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inter-agency protocol on managing and policing shared spaces - Stewards trained for managing a shared space and public events - Critical incident training - Agreement with PSNI and other authorities on managing shared space

5. Conclusion

This iconic, transformational project will not proceed in the foreseeable future without ERDF Peace III funding. The costs for this capital project are not included in the council's current capital programme priorities and, resources are unlikely to be made available in the next 3-5 years, given the current economic situation of the Council, its partners and the wider economic environment.



*Special EU Programmes Body
Foras Um Chláir Speisialta An AE
Boord O Owre Ocht UE Projecks*

Mr Peter McNaney
Chief Executive
Belfast City Council
Adelaide Exchange
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3rd June 2010

Girdwood Community Hub - Belfast City Council

Dear Mr Millar,

The PEACE III Priority 2.1 Steering Committee considered the above application at its meeting on 27th May 2010.

The Committee decided to defer a decision pending receipt of the following:-

1. Implementation timetable for the community hub and the wider site (including housing and infrastructure) within an agreed masterplan;
2. Programming of the facility by strategic partners as part of the Shared Space Annual Plan (with full detail of existing gaps); and
3. Further evidence from the Project Applicant that there is full political and local PUL community support for the proposed project.
4. Lack of Service Level Agreements for the relationship between the Council and the strategic partners
5. Limited information on the proposed resource costs to inform the assessment of costs for reasonableness
6. An Equality Impact Assessment for this element of the proposal in incorporating further consultation as it was noted that the previous consultation was outdated.

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SEUPB is a North South Implementation Body sponsored by the Department of Finance and Personnel in Northern Ireland and the Department of Finance in Ireland. Its principal functions are to manage certain European Union Structural Funds and to support a range of development and regeneration programmes in the North and South of Ireland.

I attach for your information the Economic Appraisal and would welcome on opportunity to meet with you to discuss the above.

However, in the meantime if you wish to discuss the above please do not hesitate to contact Brenda Hegarty.

Yours sincerely


Howard Keery
Programme Director

