



Belfast City Council

Item No:

Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	Girdwood Community Hub – Update
Date:	19 th October 2012
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Property and Projects
Contact Officer:	Caroline Wilson, Programme Manager, Chief Executive’s Sinead Grimes, Programme Manager, Property and Projects

1.0	Purpose of report
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update Members on the Girdwood Community Hub project.
	Key issues
2.0	Current status of submission with SEUPB
2.1	<p>The Girdwood Hub proposal is in the last stages of assessment by the DSD Economist Team after which it will be passed to the DFP for final approval. Council officers met with SEUPB and the DSD Economist Team on 18th September to go through a number of final outstanding clarification points in relation to the project. A number of issues were raised at this meeting -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SEUPB emphasised the tight timescales for Priority 2.1 capital projects (all contracts need to be ended by March 2015 with final cut-off by June 2015). This leaves very little slack in the timescales for delivery/slippage etc. - in order to meet the tight timescale projects will need be approved by DFP and a Letter of Offer given by end of October - that while there were a number of outstanding issues to be resolved in relation to the Hub project, SEUPB did not believe there are any ‘show stoppers’ - SEUPB have engaged CPD to review the Girdwood Hub project and costs <p>At this meeting SEUPB and the DSD Economists requested further assurance around a number of key issues including usage and costs. The final information provided by the Council is still being economically appraised by the DSD Economist Team. As outlined above in order to meet the tight timescales it is anticipated that the approval process for projects will be concluded by end of October 2012. Members will be updated when a Letter of Offer is received.</p>
	Initial design and Schedule of Accommodation for the Hub
2.2	Although a formal letter of offer has not yet been received, Committee had previously agreed that the Council work ‘at risk’ on the Hub project in order to ensure that the tight timescale would be met. This included appointing a design team and continuing with Phase 2 of engagement around the Hub. Members will be aware that Phase 1 of the engagement was completed in May 2011 and included the distribution of 22,000 newsletters to households; a website questionnaire; an article in City Matters; and a successful community fun day on Clifton Park Avenue with over 400 attendees. From these events, over 110 consultation responses were received, proposing a range of ideas for the Hub.
2.3	Committee Members were updated at their meeting on 7 th September that Capita Symonds have been appointed to lead on design of the Hub. Since appointment Capita Symonds have undertaken a number of meetings with a range of stakeholders to ascertain their requirements and consider these as part of the initial design process. It was stressed at these meetings that these were preliminary discussions and that all ideas were welcome and encouraged at this stage. However it was also made

	clear that budgetary restrictions may constrain the overall scope of the project.
2.4	<p>To date Capita Symonds have met with -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hub Forum (2 meetings - 30th August, 18th September) - Belfast City Council Leisure Services (14th September) - Department for Social Development (DSD) (3rd September) - Youth providers (10th September) - Belfast Metropolitan College (10th September) - 174 Trust – (20th September) <p>The Hub Forum also undertook a best practice visit to Brownlow Community Hub in Craigavon (21st August) to see a community hub in practice and to get an understanding of room sizes etc and what these are used for.</p>
2.5	<p>A number of wishes/issues/suggested uses for the Hub were highlighted during these discussions including -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - dedicated youth space - dedicated crèche/childcare facility - the need to ensure complementarity with other facilities in the surrounding area (including 174 Trust’s new arts centre etc.) - issues with safe-guarding means that there will need to be controlled access to the classroom suite and the childcare provision
2.6	<p>Informed by the consultation feedback received to date under Phase 1 of the engagement process, the stakeholder meetings and the feedback following the best practice visit, Capita Symonds prepared an initial Schedule of Accommodation (SoA) for the Hub based on the ‘wishlists’ expressed as part the initial stakeholder consultation which was presented to the Hub Forum for consideration at its meeting on 18th September. This included provision for all the above and meant that the footprint for the building increased to 5,017m², which is in excess of the footprint available, and increased the project costs beyond the funding requested.</p>
2.7	<p>Following this, the DSD informed the Council (28th September) that they do not consider that the provision of a dedicated crèche/childcare facility to be entirely compatible with the other uses that are planned for the Hub and that they do not agree with this proposal. The Department has highlighted that it would be happy to look at other possibilities for locating a crèche within the area as the wider plans develop. It should also be noted that a dedicated childcare /crèche facility in the Hub was not part of the Council’s original bid submission and so has not been considered in the economic appraisal process to date. At this stage therefore a dedicated childcare facility is not included in the SoA. Members are asked to note that the Hub will still be able to offer a number of crèche sessions or supervised play times as in the Council’s other leisure and community facilities if this is agreed as part of the programming.</p>
2.8	<p>Capita Symonds have now prepared an initial design for the Hub (Attached at Appendix 1). The key elements of the proposed Schedule of Accommodation and design include -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a multi-purpose hall - dedicated youth provision - classroom space for Belfast Metropolitan College (it should be noted that BMC have specific minimum requirements/standards for classroom sizes etc to ensure they meet with

	<p>Education Training Inspectorate Standards)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a number of smaller flexible multi-purpose meeting rooms - fitness suite and sauna/steam area with changing facilities - a café
2.9	Members are asked to note that the design is not definitive at this stage and will be subject to further refinement over the coming weeks following more detailed community and political engagement.
2.10	Members are further asked to note that the initial designs (without or without dedicated childcare provision) are based on an assumption that the Council will receive the entire funding of £9.6million requested from SEUPB for this project. The final layout and design of the Hub will be influenced by the final level of offer which the Council receives.
2.11	Members are asked to agree the initial design which will be used as a basis for further consultation and engagement purposes with local communities and other stakeholders.
	Community and political engagement
2.12	Members are aware that the Council has stressed from the outset that this is a community-led project to ensure it delivers the facilities and services that the community need and to ensure it is a safe, welcome and useful venue for all. As outlined above the initial design will be the subject of further consultation over the coming weeks which will inform the final design.
2.13	The timeframe for this consultation phase is determined by the planning application deadline which needs to be submitted by 21 December to meet the tight timescales. Therefore, 'design freeze' will be the end of November, to give the design team 1 month to finalise the necessary drawings, plans and infrastructure assessments (such as roads and sewage) for submission to the Planning Service. The community engagement phase will therefore be over the next six weeks up to week commencing 19 November.
2.14	<p>To inform the final design and layout, it is proposed that the Hub Forum consults and engages with the following groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local people living close to the site - Confirmed strategic partners e.g. Belfast Metropolitan College - Potential strategic partners e.g. Police Service NI - Elected representatives - Children and young people - Older people - People from minority backgrounds - People with disabilities
2.15	It should be noted that there will be a statutory period of public consultation, in 2013, as part of the planning application process. However, one of the purposes of a robust community engagement process at the pre-submission stage is to ensure that any objections are identified and mitigating actions are integrated into the final design.
	Overall site and associated infrastructure works
2.16	As Members are aware, in order to obtain planning permission for the Hub, the Council not only requires the building design, but also the site context including access to and from the site. From a

	construction perspective, the Council also needs to ensure that the necessary infrastructure in terms of roads, power and utilities is planned for and developed in line with the Hub building.
2.17	Council officers have been working closely with DSD officials over the past few months to progress this and it has been agreed that the design brief for the Hub be extended to include the preparation of a Site Layout Plan (SLP) for the wider Girdwood site. This SLP will be required for the Hub's planning application. The infrastructure works will be procured and delivered by the Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) which they have agreed to align with the delivery of the Hub. See the attached correspondence in Appendix 2.
Girdwood Community Hub – Proposed Governance Structures	
2.18	The Girdwood Community Hub project is a key project under the Council's Investment Programme. A proposed governance structure is attached at Appendix 3.
2.19	The decision making authority will follow the Council's Scheme of Delegation with strategic direction and decisions being made by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee as the Council's Investment decision maker. Given the strategic importance of this project it is proposed that the Girdwood Project Board comprises senior officers from the Council, DSD, BMC as the strategic partner and two community representatives.
2.20	Members will be aware that a Hub Forum, made up of community and statutory partners, was established in May 2011. This Forum has been the key mechanism for ensuring that stakeholders remain committed to the project and is the key discussion arena for all issues relating to the Hub project. This Forum, which is made up now of over 24 groups, has met on a regular basis and its effectiveness is demonstrated by the fact that the project is still on track and that any issues which have arisen have been successfully resolved. As part of the governance review it is proposed that the Terms of Reference and membership for the Forum are reviewed and refreshed to reflect the next stage of the Hub process as it moves towards a build stage. The Hub Forum will be responsible for overseeing the stakeholder engagement around the Hub and developing the Shared Space Action Plan which is the unique aspect of the Hub proposal and central to delivering the peace and reconciliation outcomes.
2.21	At officer level decisions will be made through the authority delegated to CMT and the Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) the Director of Property and Projects. The senior user for the project is the Director of Parks and Leisure. A Project Delivery Team has also been established with a number of workstreams under this including Capital Works/Design Team and a Management & Maintenance Coordination Team to ensure the successful completion of the Hub project.
Critical Path – Next steps	
2.22	Key milestones for the Hub project over the coming weeks include - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formal Letter of Offer received - End of October - Consultation and engagement on the final layout and design of the Hub – next 6 weeks till week commencing 19 November - Sign-off of final Hub design – 30th November - Submission of planning application – 21st December

3.0	Decisions required
Members are asked to -	

- note the update in relation to the current status of the bid
- agree the initial design which will be used as a basis for further consultation
- note that the initial design is based on an assumption that the Council will receive the entire funding of £9.6m for this project. The final layout and design of the Hub will be influenced by the final level of offer which the Council receives.
- agree the proposals regarding Phase 2 of the engagement to inform the final layout and design of the Hub
- note that discussions are ongoing with the DSD regarding the wider site and the infrastructure
- agree the proposed governance structures for the Hub project
- note the key dates as outlined in 2.22 (up to Christmas) in relation to the Hub

4.0 Resource Implications

Human

Officers from the relevant Council departments will continue to work with the Department for Social Development, the Capita Symonds design team and the Hub Forum on a community engagement process.

Financial

All expenditure for the project, as outlined in the application, must be claimed from SEUPB by mid-2015.

Assets

Property and Projects Department, in liaison with other departments, will oversee the land acquisition issues and construction programme and seek the appropriate approvals from Committee in due course.

5.0 Equality Implications

The Committee previously approved the Equality Strategy for the Girdwood Community Hub. It outlines how the Council will fulfil its equality obligations during the development of the Girdwood Community Hub and the Hub's likely impact and outcomes in terms of equality and good relations.

6.0 Documents Attached

Appendix 1	Initial design for the Girdwood Community Hub
Appendix 2	Letter from DSD re Girdwood Community Hub and associated infrastructure site works
Appendix 3	Proposed governance structure – Girdwood Community Hub project