



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Development Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Development Committee Report 2012</b> Draft terms of reference for the feasibility study of Gilpins site, Sandy Row
<b>Date:</b>	22 May 2012
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, ext 3459

<b>1.</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
1.1	Members will be aware that an approach was made by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) to Council to co-fund a feasibility study looking at the potential for redevelopment at the former Gilpins site in Sandy Row following an initial request from Belfast South Community Resources.
1.2	Following Development Committee consideration of this it was agreed to contribute £10,000 to provide match funding with the NIHE to conduct this feasibility study.
1.3	It is proposed that a steering group made up of officers from Belfast City Council, the Department of Social Development, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, the Belfast South Community Resources and Sandy Row Community Forum has been established to oversee the study. Members may also wish to consider the South Belfast Partnership Board and the Inner South Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership as potential members of the steering group.
1.4	The purpose of this report is to provide members an opportunity to consider the details of the terms of reference for the feasibility study ( <b>Appendix 1</b> ).

<b>2.</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
2.1	The purpose of the feasibility report is to review the viability of any future

	redevelopment, technical constraints and potential options for the Gilpins site, Sandy Row. Initially the key component will be to identify the needs and aspirations for the site through a comprehensive and inclusive consultation process to include (but is not restricted to) elected members; local community associations; statutory providers and central government.
2.2	And following this, to objectively and rationally uncover the strengths and weaknesses of the identified options (whilst considering the site itself), the resources required to carry through and ultimately the prospects for success.
2.3	Following consideration of Appendix 1 by members, it would be the intention to procure the services of a qualified consultant and deliver a draft for member's consideration within a twelve week process.
2.4	It is the intention that the view of members are central in the development of the feasibility study and a final draft report be brought back for member consideration

<b>3.</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
3.1	£20,000 in total, £10,000 from Belfast City Council.

<b>4.</b>	<b>Equality and Good Relations Considerations</b>
4.1	No specific equality and good relations considerations at this stage – strategy will be equality-proofed.

<b>5.</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
5.1	Members are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Note the attached draft terms of reference and provide approval to proceed to the procurement of a qualified consultant for delivery.</li> <li>– Agree the make up of the proposed steering group as outlined in point I.3</li> <li>– Agree the extent and method of consultation with relevant elected members.</li> </ul>

<b>6.</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
	No specific decision tracking required.

<b>7.</b>	<b>Key to Abbreviations</b>
	NIHE – Northern Ireland Housing Executive

<b>8.</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	Appendix 1 – Draft terms of reference

## **APPENDIX 1 – DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**PURPOSE:** To undertake an options appraisal to determine potential future uses of the Gilpins site in Sandy Row with a view to maximising regeneration and local economic and social impact.

### **Strategic context**

Sandy Row is a vital part of the fabric of Belfast city. The “Revitalise – a neighbourhood sustainability plan - Sandy Row”, compiled on behalf of the Sandy Row Forum, “defined Sandy Row from the Boyne Bridge to the Lisburn Road and from Shaftsbury Square to Donegall Road Bridge. It is predominately a protestant inner-city housing area located in the Shaftsbury ward of Belfast. According to 2010 population estimates around 15.3% of the population are under 16 years of age and 16.8% aged between 60 years or above. Figures taken from the Northern Ireland Deprivation measure 2010 indicate the ward has an overall deprivation ranking of 22 out of 582, placing it in the top 10% of the most deprived wards in Northern Ireland. Furthermore that “historically Sandy Row was an area rich in industry and manufacturing with linen mills and Whitehall tobacco factory providing employment for the local community and others from diverse areas in Belfast” however “in recent times, especially during the duration of the “troubles”, Sandy Row was particularly affected in the variety of its retail trade and general physical appearance”.

Currently the Council is carrying out a Renewing the Routes programme in the neighbourhood as part of City wide initiative. The Renewing the Routes Programme is an innovative regeneration intervention that targets arterial routes and surrounding communities within Belfast. Since 2004 the Programme has facilitated the investment of approximately £6 million across the key routes. This investment has acted as a catalyst for the delivery of a range of projects which were implemented over the programme period including: over 400 commercial frontage improvements; lighting schemes; environmental improvements; public realm work; public art projects; community arts projects; landscaping; alleygating schemes; installation of tourism blades; facade cleaning and improvements to existing railings.

In the Integrated Strategic Tourism Framework 2011-2014, Sandy Row has been designated as one of ten Tourism Place Destinations. These represent areas within the city where there is, or there is planned to be, a concentration of tourist related activity e.g. attractions or services. Sandy Row will be part of the wider Department of Social Development’s masterplan for the Shaftsbury area potentially to be commissioned later in 2012 and is currently part of the South West Belfast neighbourhood renewal partnership.

## **Background to feasibility study**

Belfast South Community Resource have indicated initially to Belfast City Council that the current owners of the site have now abandoned their original plans for residential development and would be willing to dispose of part or the entire site if a suitable plans could be developed. It was on this basis that an approach, by the group, was made to Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Belfast City Council to finance a feasibility study for the redevelopment of the site.

A steering group with a proposed membership of Belfast South Resource Centre, Sandy Row Community Forum, Belfast City Council, Northern Ireland Housing Executive and the Department of Social Development is currently being established to oversee this report.

## **Background and history to site**

Gilpins formerly the “Brewery buildings” were a landmark in Sandy Row. They were erected in 1869 by the Belfast and Ulster Brewing Company. Early in the 1890’s the brewery ceased operations and from then on until redevelopment, the premises were occupied by many trades.

Gilpins Store was for many years a major retail outlet on Sandy Row trading in furniture and a wide range of household goods and services prior to its closure in 2007.

The site, which extends to 2/3 acres and 45,000 square feet of retail space, has a substantial frontage onto Sandy Row. It currently lies vacant and is frequently the target of vandalism and a location for anti-social behaviour.

In 2008 the site was acquired by a private sector developer and plans were drawn up for residential development. These plans were the subject of significant objections from within the local community and with the onset of the recession the proposed development has never taken place.

## **Terms of reference - specification**

### **Aims of the options appraisal**

- 1 To extract, and articulate, the different aspirations for the use of Gilpins site through a consultation process;
- 2 Review, within the context of the building/site condition, if these aspirations are of viable nature;

- 3 To review the strategic arena and best practice (locally and nationally) and how lessons learnt can be incorporated into any potential development;
- 4 To present a clear, agreed vision for the Gilpins site;
- 5 Provide outline costs for the development and explore potential for funding opportunities;
- 6 Identify how the site can be used to address wider social issues, based on need.
- 7 Provide a clear way forward in terms of developing the project including potential delivery mechanisms.

### **Objectives of the feasibility study:**

There are two elements of the study; namely an option appraisal and supported by a technical appraisal on the existing building fabric and any physical constraints of the site.

#### **(1) Technical appraisal**

- 1 Review previous planning history and heritage aspects of the site;
- 2 To establish the physical parameters within which the feasibility of a range of usages for the Gilpins site may be assessed;
- 3 Provide a greater understanding of the ground / building condition on the Gilpins site and consequent implications;
- 4 Provide an understanding of the building structure so all development options are considered;
- 5 Establish any issues relating to the title of the site or any existing encumbrances;
- 6 Identify and make recommendations for a series of early actions including specialist surveys, investigations and advance works.

#### **(2) Option appraisal**

1. To review the development potential, through a strategic review (including market analysis) and in-depth consultations, of the former Gilpins site;
2. Review, consult and report on the various aspirations (indicating the needs and wants of the local community) for the site and their inherent viability including sustainable development.
3. To objectively uncover the strengths and weaknesses of the identified options for redevelopment of the Gilpins site, the resources required to carry through, and ultimately the prospects for success.
4. Look at potential delivery mechanisms, (including exploring local community management themes) including options for future development and provide a cost profile of each of the options reviewed;
5. Highlight and explore the potential sources of capital and revenue funding for the development of the site;
6. Make recommendations for a series of early actions including business plans, economic appraisal and advanced works;
7. Provide a critical path for the proposed development of the site

8. Identify other community managed strategic development projects and ensure best practise.
9. Advise and guide on the governance and management arrangements required.

(3) Proposed options appraisal consultation:

1. To identify needs and aspirations for the site through a comprehensive and inclusive consultation process to include group and one to one sessions and comprises (but is not restricted to) of elected members; local community and resident groups; statutory providers and central government.
2. Prepare a series of recommendations, based upon strategic reviews and consultations on the preferred future, and sustainability of the proposed options

Successful bidder should have knowledge of the following:

- The community Development Infrastructure of Sandy Row
- Neighbourhood Renewal in the area.