



BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	Land at Clara Street
Date:	24 th September 2010
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar – Director of Property & Projects
Contact Officer:	Cathy Reynolds – Estates Manager

Relevant background information

The Councils Health & Environmental Services Committee at their meeting on 4/11/2009 agreed to the closure of Clara Street Civic Amenity site and subsequently declare it surplus to their operational requirements. The site closed on 31 March 2010. The Strategic Policy & Resources Committee at their meeting on 5/3/2010 noted the appropriation of the land from the Health & Environmental Services Committee to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee to be held as part of the Corporate Landbank.

The site (Location Map enclosed at Appendix 1) which extends to 1.106 acres also contains former public conveniences accessed from Clara Street.

Futures options have been considered for the site and a preliminary planning appraisal has recently been undertaken which indicates its potential suitability for residential uses or possibly some commercial usage. It is understood that a Housing Association has registered an interest in this site with the N. Ireland Housing Executive for the purposes of social housing, and it is further understood that there is a shortage of social housing in this area.

Whilst disposal of this site will result in a capital receipt which could be used in furtherance of the City Investment Fund, capital projects or other corporate objectives, it must be highlighted that the current economic climate has led to significantly reduced open market values as a result of low levels of demand and limited finance for purchasers.

A Site Contamination/Preliminary Risk Assessment is also due to be undertaken in respect of the site in the very near future.

Key Issues

- 1.106 acre former Civic Amenity site located in Clara Street, East Belfast.
- Potential for housing development, subject to planning approval. Interest expressed from a Housing Association who wish to develop for social housing purposes.
- The open market value of the site will reflect the current economic climate with limited demand and finance availability.

- Committee are being requested to agree if they wish to declare the land surplus to Council requirements and offer it for sale on the open market. The interested Housing Association could make a bid for the site accordingly. Proposed disposal terms would be taken back to Committee in due course.
- Site Contamination/Preliminary Risk Assessment to be undertaken to ascertain any environmental issues.

Resources Implications

Financial Implications: The disposal of this site would result in a capital receipt for the Council, which could be used in the furtherance of the City Investment Fund or other corporate priorities. There are some minor ongoing maintenance costs associated with this vacant site.

Human Resources: Staff resource required, primarily in Estates Unit and Legal Services department, to bring forward the proposed disposal.

Asset & Other implications: Disposal of this vacant site and redeployment of capital receipt towards other Council priorities should represent a better use of resources.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to agree if they wish to declare the former Civic Amenity Site at Clara Street surplus to the requirements of the Council and to place it for sale on the open market, subject to a further report being taken to Committee in due course for approval to the terms of any disposal.

Decision Tracking

The Director of Property & Projects to ensure that the marketing process is followed up within three months of the Committee decision.

Documents attached

Appendix 1: Location Map