



## **Girdwood Community Hub**

### **Equality Strategy**

**June 2011**

#### **1. Introduction**

1.1 This strategy sets out 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. The Council is committed to the fulfilment of its Section 75 obligations and will commit necessary resources – in terms of people, time and money – to ensure that our statutory duties are complied with, effectively and on time.

1.2 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires the Council, in carrying out all its functions, powers and duties, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group,
- age, marital status or sexual orientation,
- between men and women generally,
- between persons with a disability and persons without,
- between persons with dependants and persons without.

1.3 Without prejudice to its obligations above, the Act also requires the Council to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

1.4 We are committed to effective monitoring at all stages of the implementation of the action plan to allow for measurement and reporting of progress on delivery. We have introduced equality considerations at the earliest stage of the development process. In this strategy, we will outline the key milestones when we will consider the development programme for the Hub and the impacts on equality and good relations.

1.5 In terms of outcomes and impact, we believe the Girdwood Community Hub will:

- transform relationships in interface areas which have been affected by segregation and inter-community conflict
- begin to reanimate and revitalise a key derelict site in North Belfast
- contribute to improved quality of life and address inequalities in the city
- re-engage disconnected communities and heal sectarian divisions
- cement Belfast's local and international image as a safe, clean, environmentally friendly and tolerant city with the highest standards of living
- provide a lasting legacy for north Belfast and the city for generations to come.

Over the development period and during the first 5 years of operation, we are committed to monitoring performance and measuring the impact that the Hub and its programmes have in relation to this vision.

1.6 As the lead partner on the project, Belfast City Council is fully committed to complying with our obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act, which deals with the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations. We will work with all partners on this project to embedding a commitment to equality and good relations in the Hub.

1.7 We have an Equality Scheme (<http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/equality/>) which has been communicated to all our employees and key stakeholders. We have a dedicated Equality Officer who is responsible for offering support and guidance on all equality issues. This officer is located in the Chief Executive's Department and will be closely involved with the development of this project.

## **2. Background**

2.1 As a city, Belfast has been through a period of intensive change and regeneration over the past decade. However not every part of the city has shared in the improvements that the city has experienced. As the economy goes through more difficult times the impetus to connect more parts of the city to improve quality of life are even more important. Although social divisions are prevalent throughout Northern Ireland, they are most evident within Belfast. The city itself has considerable internal inequalities – with some of the region's most affluent wards contrasting with some of the most deprived – in particular these wards are prevalent in North Belfast in the area where this project will be located.

2.2 North Belfast has long been recognised as an area that requires particular focus. The needs of the area are complex, intensive and inter-related. The Girdwood site itself is a 14 acre site located within the Waterworks ward of the city but it is at the interface of 4 other wards including Ardoyne, Crumlin, New Lodge and Shankill. The the wards immediately surrounding the Girdwood site are some of the most deprived in Belfast, and indeed in Northern Ireland. Most of these wards have not benefited from the increasing opportunities or quality of life generated by the city's improved economy and peace dividends over the past decade. They continue to experience hardship caused by poverty and are unable to enjoy a decent standard of living. Key statistics include:

- 42% of households in North Belfast were deemed to be in relative poverty compared to a NI average of 30%
- In terms of multiple deprivation all the wards surrounding the Girdwood site are within the top 10% of the most deprived wards in NI
- 69% of residents in North Belfast have no or low levels of qualifications
- 46% of young people left school with fewer than 5 GCSEs at Grade C or above
- 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
- North Belfast suffers from higher than average crime rates compared to the Northern Ireland average
- 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.

2.3 The proposal to develop a Community Hub facility on the Girdwood site will uniquely promote equality of opportunity to local neighbourhoods and the wider city. The Hub will be open and accessible to everyone in a shared, safe place.

- 2.4 The use of the Girdwood site, and the Crumlin Road Gaol, has been the subject of extensive consultation and community engagement including a rigorous Equality Impact Assessment. In 2006 an Advisory Panel was established to develop a Masterplan with recommendations on the future development and use of the Girdwood and Gaol sites. From the beginning it was recognised that there could be no sustainable Masterplan without the full and active involvement of local neighbourhoods and stakeholders. It was also agreed from the outset that the opportunities for the development of the site should embrace the principles of equality – based on an assessment of need and in line with the principles enshrined in the Government's 'A Shared Future' strategy. We are committed to ensuring that these principles, and those contained within the 'Cohesion, Sharing and Integration' draft strategy, are fully embraced in the development of the Hub.
- 2.5 To inform the development of the overall Masterplan a series of consultation sessions was held in June 2006 with local communities at various locations in north Belfast to ascertain views on the development of the site. A second series of public meetings then took place in July 2007. 537 groups representing Section 75 were contacted and 15 focus groups were held including a cross community focus group. A series of consultations also took place with other interested stakeholders including Belfast City Council, Northern Ireland Prison Service, St. Malachy's, Bryson House Charitable Group and Museum of Citizenship/De Bono. These exercises included questions on how the Girdwood site can be developed as shared space. In addition leaflets were also distributed to every house in North Belfast and adverts placed in local community newspapers.
- 2.6 Following these extensive rounds of consultation and engagement, a draft Masterplan for the site was then produced. This draft was presented for public consultation between October 2007 and February 2008. There was massive response to this exercise with 908 responses received from a wide range of stakeholders including political representatives, community and residents groups, public sector agencies, the private sector, the community & voluntary sector and individuals. An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) was then conducted in October 2008 to identify how developments could positively affect the communities and groups experiencing disadvantage.
- 2.7 Proposed changes to the draft Masterplan have been identified from the EQIA consultation. In light of the responses to the EQIA the recommendation is to advance the Masterplan in a phased or incremental manner, using the experience of successful implementation at each stage to help build good relations between communities and address objective, identified needs. The Community Hub could be the catalyst for phase one of this incremental approach and act as the primary catalyst in building support and confidence for the overall development.
- 2.8 A commitment was made by government to require a thorough equality screening process to be carried out on all constituent parts of the redrafted Masterplan. We are fully committed to doing this as part of this process and we will work closely with the Office of First Minister and deputy First Minister and the Department for Social Development to do this integrating those actions identified which will deliver the maximum impact in terms of equality and good relations.

### **3. Girdwood Community Hub**

- 3.1 In 2009, the Council submitted a bid to the Special European Union Programmes Body for funding for an integrated services centre on the Girdwood site. Briefly, the Community Hub is described as a shared, welcome, open, state of the art integrated

services centre which will offer a wide range of services and facilities helping to improve quality of life including leisure and community facilities, health and education outreach services.

- 3.2 The development of the Community Hub will also address the multiple inequalities in the area. It will provide access to a range of services on an equal basis in a shared space which will help to address the considerable needs in the area, improving levels of health and well-being. The project proposes to develop an innovative matrix against which to monitor and review the effectiveness of the Hub as a shared space. This will include monitoring data on users, qualitative analysis of reasons for under-use and bespoke interventions to target participation from under-represented groups. Whilst complying fully with our duties under Section 75, the Council and its partners propose a 'commitment' approach, above and beyond the minimums set by legislative requirements.
- 3.3 Girdwood is located between two key arterial routes for the city, the Crumlin and Antrim Roads. While paying close attention to the user groups within the immediate vicinity of the site, the Council will also monitor access to the Hub and surrounding public realm to users from across the city and beyond. This attention to connectivity will maximise the unique space as welcoming and open to all. This will be at several levels; the site 'brand', targeted programmes for user groups such as those with disabilities and swift remedial action in response to any negative incidents on the site.
- 3.4 The Hub will be fully compliant with all Disability Discrimination Act obligations. With the brown-field site there is enormous opportunity to maximise access beyond minimum requirements, thus enabling a broad cross-section of users.
- 3.5 We will work with our partners to ensure that equality of opportunity and access is achieved at all times. This will be part of the Service Level Agreements drawn up with tenants and partners.
- 3.6 The aims of the project are:
- develop an iconic, state of the art Community Hub on the Girdwood site by December 2014 which will provide space for community, health, leisure, training and education facilities and be a lasting legacy for city
  - design, brand and manage the Girdwood Community Hub as a shared space for all and provide learning for future service provision in the city
  - transform the image of North Belfast by working with Government to deliver a thriving, shared gateway into the north of the city
  - capitalise on using integrated service delivery as a tool to promote tolerance, reconciliation and community cohesion
  - provide safe and equitable access to neighbourhoods within the locality and beyond to high-quality public realm and future additional facilities which will be located on the site as and when the overall Masterplan for the site is implemented
  - animate the site with an annual programme of associated activities, including sports, heritage, environmental and arts activities
  - enable and empower local residents to actively participate, through programmed volunteering opportunities, in the life and development of the Hub facility and ultimately the wider Girdwood site
  - develop a model of best practice in the area of promoting peace and reconciliation through service delivery and dedicated shared space which will act as an exemplar across the region and beyond

- establish an inter-community trust and statutory forum to design and oversee a shared space action plan and associated training and events.

3.7 Fundamentally the Community Hub presents a one-off opportunity to provide joined up services in a deprived area. It also has the potential to bring added value in terms of physical regeneration and to encourage additional investment in the site and the surrounding area. The Hub will be a true shared facility – in all senses of the word. It will not just create a safe and welcoming physical space; but will also create a safe and welcoming space for dialogue, interactions, relationships and activities.

#### 4. Analysis of Need

4.1 The needs that will be met by the delivery of this Community Hub are numerous and will be experienced not just in the immediate locality but in the wider city. As the capital city of Northern Ireland, Belfast is the regional driver for Northern Ireland. Therefore this project has the potential for impact across Northern Ireland as well as across Belfast. The identified needs and how these will be met are outlined below.

4.2 We have looked closely at the needs of the Waterworks and surrounding wards including the demographics and deprivation statistics as well as the needs that were identified by all communities as part of the consultation exercise including safe and shared space, leisure and community facilities, youth activities, jobs, training and vocational education opportunities.

4.3 For each of these needs we have looked at the key statistics which demonstrate this need and have outlined the key ways in which the development of the Community Hub will address these needs. Where possible this information has been broken down to ward level – if this has not been possible information is given for North Belfast. Detailed profiles of the Waterworks, Crumlin, Ardoyne, New Lodge and Shankill wards are attached at Appendix XX (supplied by NISRA).

<b>Identified Need – Good Relations and Community Cohesion</b>
<i>Key statistics:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Religious breakdown</i> – The Crumlin and Shankill wards are overwhelmingly Protestant (both 94% Protestant and other Christian). The Ardoyne (96%), Waterworks (91%) and New Lodge (97%) wards are overwhelming Catholic</li> <li>▪ <i>Age profile</i> – Ardoyne has a higher than average under 16 population (32%) and a lower than average population of persons aged 60 or over (14%). In contrast 31% of Crumlin’s population is over the age of 60. The nationalist wards have a lower age profile while the unionist wards tend to be older In 2007/08 there were 593 incidents with sectarian motivation in North Belfast compared to 316 in 2005/06</li> <li>▪ 2/3 of all the reported sectarian attacks in 2006/07 in Belfast occurred in North Belfast</li> </ul>
<i>How the development of the Community Hub proposed to address this:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Hub will provide attractive, high quality services in a state of the art, multi agency building. The building will be designed and managed to maximise casual and formal contact between users from different community backgrounds. Alongside this there will be an extensive shared space programme of workshops, events, sporting tournaments and public realm initiatives which will address key issues of space, identity and conflict</li> <li>▪ An integral part of the programmed work at the Hub will be on inter-</li> </ul>

generational work. It is vital that relationships and dialogue are initiated and sustained between the generations in the neighbouring communities. This in turn will lead to increased understanding, increased perceptions of safety and a reduction in anti-social behaviour

- As part of the Shared Space action plan and the regeneration of the overall site steps will be taken with community collaboration on the removal of a number of physical interface barriers in the vicinity which historically have been magnets for sectarian violence and community tension
- The Hub will lead to increased inter community interaction which in turn will lead to a decrease in the levels of sectarian incidents in the area as people grow more comfortable
- The Shared Space Action Plan will address issues of belonging on the site and safe access to the site – this will include work with minority ethnic groups, migrant workers and other Section 75 groups. This work in turn will have positive impacts for the wider North Belfast area promoting it as a safe and welcoming space for all
- The physical design of the Hub will maximise permeability on the site and eradicate the risk of creating a boundary between the two communities. This will be in line with Secure by Design principles
- The Shared Space Annual Review will closely monitor hate crime incidents, sectarian graffiti and other manifestations of prejudice in order to design targeted interventions where necessary

#### **Identified Need - Deprivation**

##### *Key statistics*

- In terms of multiple deprivation all the wards surrounding the Girdwood site are within the top 10% of the most deprived wards in NI with Shankill being the most deprived overall
- Multiple deprivation ranking (*1 = most deprived and 582 = least deprived*)
  - Ardoyne = 10
  - Crumlin = 4
  - New Lodge = 3
  - Shankill = 4
  - Waterworks = 16
- In 2003-05 42% of households in North Belfast were deemed to be in relative poverty compared to a NI average of 30%

##### *How the development of the Community Hub will meet this need*

- As the first phase of the development of the Girdwood site the Hub will catalyse the overall regeneration of the site which in turn will trigger wider social, environmental and physical improvements in North Belfast, and the city in general, leading to an overall reduction in multiple deprivation. The Hub is central to developing the confidence and goodwill that will unlock the potential of the entire site
- The holistic approach proposed in this application will seek to address the inter-related issues which compound multiple deprivation including educational under attainment, poor levels of health and early death, high levels of unemployment and low levels of social mobility
- In conjunction with the partner agencies, we will ensure that a programme of co-ordinated and inter related activities takes place which will maximise the benefits of offering integrated services in a shared space – e.g. ‘New Year, New You’ programmes focusing on health, education and diet

<b>Identified Need - Employment, Economic activity and social welfare</b>
<i>Key statistics</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In terms of employment deprivation all the wards surrounding the Girdwood site are within the top 10 of the most deprived wards in NI</li> <li>▪ 46% of adults in North Belfast were economically inactive in the last census of which 44% were long term unemployed</li> <li>▪ In 2007 21% of people in north Belfast were in receipt of housing benefit compared to NI average of 10%</li> <li>▪ 20% were in receipt of income support compared to NI average of 10% while 42% of children lived in income support households (double the NI average)</li> <li>▪ The economic disadvantage experienced in many parts of North Belfast has been exacerbated by the physical isolation of the Girdwood site</li> <li>▪ There has been a decline in the manufacturing and traditional industries sector</li> </ul>
<i>How the development of the Community Hub will meet this need:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Job opportunities will be created on the site through the ongoing construction projects and apprenticeships will be offered to local people as part of the development of the site</li> <li>▪ It is envisaged that 25 full time and 50 part time jobs will be created in the Hub when it is operational. We will work to ensure that job opportunities are available for people in the surrounding areas</li> <li>▪ The wider Masterplan seeks to attract a key private sector anchor tenant – the Hub will build confidence for potential investors that the site is a vibrant and viable location for investment and will build confidence in people in the area to apply for jobs</li> <li>▪ The Hub will include a social economy café, which will not just provide employment opportunities, but will also generate a local community initiative fund which will benefit the wider community</li> <li>▪ The development of the Hub will help to reanimate the site and encourage interaction between people and so help reduce the physical isolation of the site</li> <li>▪ People will be able to acquire new skills through the outreach facilities which will enable them to compete for jobs in new and emerging industries such as computing and financial services as well as providing services for the site</li> <li>▪ We will also offer a range of advice services on the site including business start up, working tax credits and essential skills</li> </ul>

<b>Identified Need - Education and Skills</b>
<i>Key statistics</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In terms of education deprivation all the wards surrounding the Girdwood site are within the top 10 of the most deprived wards in NI with the Shankill ward again being the most deprived overall</li> <li>▪ In 2007 46% of young people in North Belfast left school with fewer than 5 GCSEs at Grade C or above compared to the Belfast average of 35%</li> <li>▪ 69% of residents in North Belfast have no or low levels of qualifications</li> <li>▪ Nearly 20% of post primary pupils in North Belfast were categorised as having Special Education Needs</li> <li>▪ In 2007 nearly 10,000 residents in North Belfast entered further or higher education</li> <li>▪ All the surrounding wards have almost twice the average entitlement to</li> </ul>

free school meals (33% compared to the NI average of 18%)
<i>How the development of the Community Hub will meet this need</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Coming from areas of long term and generational unemployment, young people in the area need support to help overcome issues of low confidence and self esteem. The Hub will provide multi-media facilities where young people can learn the skills necessary to enter the changing job market and in particular the creative industries sector</li> <li>▪ The Hub will be an educational resource for all ages – offering breakfast clubs, parenting skills classes and homework clubs in an attractive, friendly environment</li> <li>▪ Targeted adult literacy and numeracy classes will be held in the Hub helping to increase the essential skills of adults in the area and in turn building their confidence and supporting them to (re)enter the job market. The Hub will also offer assertiveness and self-confidence classes for those looking to (re)enter the job market</li> <li>▪ The Masterplan has identified the need for small incubation and training units for SMEs – without the Hub as the initial catalyst to unlock the full potential of the site it will be difficult to secure a training provider to run the units and to recruit trainees</li> <li>▪ A range of vocational courses will also be offered on an outreach basis in the Hub including hairdressing, beauty, childcare, maintenance and sports coaching</li> <li>▪ A volunteering programme, linked to the shared space action plan, will be run offering accredited training in community relations, mediation and events management. This will further build confidence and a sense of ownership and civic pride in the Hub and its public realm</li> </ul>

<b>Identified Need - Youth Provision</b>
<i>Key statistics</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 41% of those surveyed in the council’s last survey stated that the thing that would most help improve their quality of life in the city was activities for teenagers. This was closely followed by facilities for young people (25%)</li> <li>▪ An area assessment undertaken by the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB) in 2008 found that youth provision in North Belfast was inadequate</li> <li>▪ There is limited open space and play provision where young people can interact on a cross community basis</li> </ul>
<i>How the development of the Community Hub will meet this need</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Hub will offer dedicated facilities and services for young people including a creative media suite and sports facilities. This will help young people feel ownership of and civic pride in the facility</li> <li>▪ The Hub and its linked public realm will include play provision enabling contact and relationship building</li> <li>▪ The Hub will build close links and complementary programmes with existing youth service providers including the Peace III funded Scout Link, the Prince’s Trust, the North Belfast Play forum and Surestart to ensure that duplication of provision is removed</li> <li>▪ A youth leadership programme, linked to the shared space action plan, will be run offering accredited training in community relations, mediation and events management. This will further build confidence and a sense of ownership and civic pride in the Hub and its public realm</li> <li>▪ The Hub will provide young people with the opportunity for positive multi-</li> </ul>



<p>generational interaction as well as dedicated inter-generational workshops and volunteering opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Hub will also offer facilities and facilitation for the Education for Mutual Understanding programme helping to build understanding and confidence</li> </ul>
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<b>Identified Need - Crime</b>
<i>Key statistics</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Overall crime statistics in North Belfast are significantly higher than the Northern Ireland average</li> <li>▪ In 2007 the burglary rate per 100,000 population was 1221 compared to the NI average of 665 while the violent crime rate per 100,000 was 3516 compared to a Northern Ireland average of 1850</li> </ul>
<i>How the development of the Community Hub will meet this need</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The shared space activities and community volunteering will minimise the need for hard security measures in the area by maximising the animation of the space and users on the site</li> <li>▪ In the Hub's Shared Space Action plan a critical incident strategy will be agreed with PSNI and appropriate training to community stewards, volunteers and staff</li> <li>▪ The Hub will be used as a shared venue to facilitate community policing meetings and other policing services as agreed with PSNI, the inter-community and statutory forum and local residents</li> </ul>

<b>Identified Need - Health and Wellbeing</b>
<i>Key statistics</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ North Belfast suffers from lower life expectancy than the Northern Ireland average (73.3 for males compared to NI average 76.2 and 78.7 for females compared to NI average of 81)</li> <li>▪ Death rates in North Belfast from respiratory disease, circulatory disease and cancer are all higher than the NI average</li> <li>▪ North Belfast has a higher % (at 28%) of people with a limiting long-term illness, health problem or disability</li> <li>▪ Mental health issues in North Belfast are more prevalent than in other areas as these communities attempt to adjust to the legacy of the conflict. The area has high rates of trauma, self-harm and suicide</li> <li>▪ Exposure to conflict and inter-communal tension is a key social determinant of health as described by the World Health Organisation</li> </ul>
<i>How the development of the Community Hub will meet this need</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Hub will provide a range of health facilities and services including offering alternative health, complementary therapies and counselling services for mental health</li> <li>▪ The Hub will also provide a range of health clinics for example heart and dietary advice</li> <li>▪ The sports and changing facilities will provide access for up to 18 hours to promote fitness, healthy lifestyles and overall participation in sport</li> <li>▪ By reducing interface barriers and providing a shared space there will be, over time, a reduction in the stress and mental health issues arising from inter-communal tensions and violence</li> </ul>

4.4 Statistical evidence to support the need for regeneration on the site was gathered from the a number of sources including the Northern Ireland Statistical Research

Agency (NISRA), the Noble Multiple Deprivation Measures, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE), the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Industry (DETI), 2001 Census information, Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) statistics and 2002 The Dunlop Report. Further information was supplied through the Lower Shankill Community Audit (2006) and Changing the Patterns of the Past – Participation and Practice in Human Rights (2008) and the Crumlin Road Gaol and Girdwood Barracks Draft Masterplan and EQIA.

4.5 As new information becomes available through the Council's Strategic Neighbourhood Action Programme (SNAP), we will update this needs analysis.

4.6 We have also considered a range of local, national and international research which supports the development of the Community Hub facility to address the needs identified above. This includes:

- **Equally Spaced? Public space and interaction between diverse communities** (2007) Commission for Racial Equality UK and Demos
- **Towards Sustainable Security: Interface Barriers and the Legacy of Segregation in Belfast** (2009) Community Relations Council
- **Delivering Services in a Divided City** (2008) Belfast City Council & Deloitte MCS Ltd
- **Qualitative Record of Good Practice in Conflict Transformation** (2008) Belfast City Council & MacBride International
- **Good Relations in Local Area Planning** (2008) Belfast City Council & Community Technical Aid
- **Sharing and Interaction in Public Spaces in Belfast** (2008) Belfast City Council & Queen's University Belfast)
- **Improving Connectivity and Mobility in Belfast** (2008) Belfast City Council & Colin Buchanan Partners
- **Demography, Development and Disorder: Changing Patterns of Interface Areas** (2004) Institute for Conflict Research
- **Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies** (1997) JP Lederach
- **A Shared Future: Policy and Strategic Framework for Good Relations in Northern Ireland** (2004) Office of First Minister and Deputy First Minister
- **Belfast: Segregation, Violence and the City** (2006) Shirlow, P. & Murtagh, B.
- **Democracy at the Local Level: the International IDEA Handbook on Participation, Representation, Conflict Management and Governance (2001)** International IDEA Handbook
- **Working Together: Good Relations Strategy** (2003) Belfast City Council
- **Good Relations Plan** (2007) Belfast City Council
- **Community Engagement, Good Relations and Good Practice** (2006) Belfast City Council and Grainne Kelly.

4.7 We will use this analysis as a basis for engagement with residents, community partners and statutory agencies, remaining open to further initiatives and actions which will support the achievement of the overarching aims of the project and maximising a positive impact in terms of equality and good relations.

## 5. Screening process

5.1 As part of the equality impact assessment process, we will consider at a number of stages the impact that this project has in terms of equality and good relations. We will do this by screening component parts of the project to both identify adverse

impact and also to identify how to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations.

5.2 At each stage, we will consider the following questions:

- What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories?
- Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the section 75 categories?
- To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?
- Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

5.3 We will do this with our community and statutory partners, and on their recommendation, with the wider public. We will also use the Council's established Section 75 Consultative Forum.

## **6. Consultation and engagement**

6.1 It is our intention to develop, manage and programme the Community Hub with people rather than delivering to them. Where services and activities are created together, there are mutual benefits for the user, for the neighbourhood and for the Council. We are committed to creating change in local neighbourhoods and in the city, together with local people – rather than for them. This approach is centred on people's assets – skills, experiences, professional expertise, networks, time – and built on the fundamental principle that:

*"People's needs are better met when they are involved in an equal and reciprocal relationships with professionals and others, working together to get things done."*<sup>1</sup>

6.2 We have been in consultation with affected individuals and representative groups as early as possible, using existing consultation feedback and through a series of regular partner meetings. With this group of community and statutory representatives, we have drafted a community engagement strategy. Its purpose is to fulfil our equality consultation obligations but more broadly than that we proactively engage with people to develop a Hub that is welcoming, safe and attractive. In it, we outline that we want to:

- develop and build a Community Hub informed by what people want;
- ensure the Hub is a safe, welcome and useful venue for all;
- improve our neighbourhoods in collaboration with local people; and,
- shape and create a better Belfast based on what people need.

6.3 We propose to use a range of face-to-face meetings, focus groups, written documents, questionnaires, information/notification by email, internet discussions or informal events as appropriate methods. This list is not exhaustive and we will develop additional methods as appropriate.

6.4 We will ensure that the language is accessible and alternative formats are made available to ensure that there are no barriers to the consultation process. We are also keen to engage with children and young people, and will work with local youth providers to design events for their input.

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<sup>1</sup> D. Boyle et al; (July 2010) *Right Here, Right Now: Taking co-production into the mainstream*; NEF/NESTA  
Equality Strategy – Girdwood Community Hub – final draft for SP&R Committee consideration 17 June 11  
Prepared by: Belfast City Council 13/06/11

## 7. Programme of work

7.1 The Council is committed to integrating equality considerations throughout the development of the Girdwood Community Hub. In order to do this, a series of equality actions have been described which will enable the Council to meet its obligations but, most importantly, ensures that the Hub truly delivers in a positive way with regard to equality and good relations.

7.2 In developing the proposal we have ensured that we have taken into consideration the views expressed by all groups and stakeholders on the development of the Hub and the wider development of the site. We will continue to engage with a wide range of groups to ensure that we maximise the positive benefits of the Hub.

7.3 As detailed in the Council's Gates Review process for capital programme management, there are 6 key phases to the Girdwood Community Hub programme of work. Each of these phases will be screened for equality considerations at the appropriate time so that mitigating actions can be integrated into the programme on an ongoing basis, in order to remove or reduce any identified adverse impacts.

7.4 The following phases are outlined with corresponding equality actions:

Phase	Description	Equality Action	Completed by end:
Phase 1	Project concept design	– Equality considerations integrated into need for project and SEUPB application	November 09
Phase 2	Pre-consultation process	– Screen engagement strategy	June 11
Phase 3	Community engagement	– Screen final location and building design (including Disability Discrimination Act obligations) – Screen Community Opportunities and Benefits Plan – Screen 'shared space' programme	December 11
Phase 4	Construction	– Monitor implementation of Community Opportunities and Benefits Plan	June 14
Phase 5	Implementation of 'shared space' programme	– Appoint evaluator for baseline study for 'shared space' review – Monitor implementation of 'shared space' programme – Screen opening programme, services and facilities	June 14
Phase 6	Operational	– Annual 'shared space' review monitoring access by S75 groups – Actions identified to address	June 15 onwards

		under-representation/under-use	
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7.5 One screening exercise has been undertaken to date, on the engagement strategy. This is included in the appendix.

## 8. Conclusion

8.1 This is a dynamic process and the Council is working with a number of partners in both the community and statutory sectors to deliver the Girdwood Community Hub. We will remain alert to emerging opportunities and regularly monitor our performance in relation to equality and good relations and review progress.

8.2 There is an urgency to delivering shared space at Girdwood; its regeneration has been the subject of much discussion and dispute over the past 8 years. There is a political and community consensus emerging which it is imperative to which the public sector must respond swiftly and demonstrably.

8.3 The Council, as city leaders, is committed to recognising the importance of equality of opportunity and good relations. We want to help shape Belfast so that its infrastructure, spaces and services meet the needs and ambitions of all people who live in, work in, invest in, study in and visit the city. By so doing, we will help improve the quality of life now and for future generations for the people of Belfast.