



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Girdwood Community Hub</b>
<b>Date:</b>	18 November 2011
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Gerry Millar, Director of Property and Projects
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Caroline Wilson, Project Officer, Chief Executive's Sinead Grimes, Strategic Planning and Policy Officer, Chief Executive's

<b>1.0</b>	<b><u>Relevant Background Information</u></b>
1.1	Members will recall that the Council's bid for a community hub located at Girdwood was deferred in May 2010, under the European Union Peace III Priority 2.1, total value £9.6m. The Special European Union Programmes Body (SEUPB) undertook an economic appraisal of the project in mid-2010 and deferred their decision to allow the Council to address a number of issues related to the implementation of the project.

<b>2.0</b>	<b><u>Key Issues</u></b>
2.1	As per Committee's recommendations in June 2010 and in June 2011, Council officers continued to develop the proposal for final submission to SEUPB. This included a series of community meetings, briefings for the relevant Ministers and meetings with relevant departmental officials. It also included the distribution of a news letter to households in North and parts of West Belfast in September (attached as appendix) and a number of other community engagement activities.
2.2	At a meeting at the end of October, SEUPB's Priority 2.1 Committee considered the additional information that the Council had submitted in relation to the Girdwood Community Hub. The Committee commended the Council and its partners for the significant work which had been undertaken to address the issues highlighted in the economic appraisal.
2.3	The Council has now received a letter from SEUPB (attached as appendix) stating that the Steering Committee has recommended the project for funding and they have forwarded it to the two governments' accountable departments for approval.  Only once this process has been satisfactorily completed, which can take a couple of months, will a letter of offer be issued outlining the conditions.
2.4	SEUPB in their letter highlight 2 key issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Until the formal letter of offer is issued, the Council and its partners incur any expenditure at risk;</li><li>• They also ask we refrain from making any public announcements or communications with the press about the project without the prior approval of SEUPB.</li></ul>
2.5	The Director of Property and Projects is seeking an urgent meeting with SEUPB to determine the likely nature of the conditions of the offer. He will give a verbal update to Committee on discussions with

	SEUPB and what the likely implications of the conditions of offer might be for the Council.
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<b>3.0</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
<p><b>Human</b></p> <p>Officers from the relevant Council departments will work with the Department for Social Development to implement a realistic project plan and community engagement process.</p> <p><b>Financial</b></p> <p>All expenditure for the project, as outlined in the application, must be claimed from SEUPB by mid-2015.</p> <p><b>Asset</b></p> <p>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.</p>	

<b>4.0</b>	<b>Equality Implications</b>
<p>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. This details the points at which the programme of work will be screened for equality impacts.</p> <p>Phase III of the equality screening is timetabled to complete by end December 11, although this is dependent on the issue of a letter of offer from SEUPB. In this phase, we will screen the final location and building design (including Disability Discrimination Act obligations), the Community Opportunities and Benefits Plan and the ‘shared space’ programme.</p>	

<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.</p>	

<b>6.0 Documents Attached</b>	
<b>Appendix 1</b>	Correspondence from Special European Union Programmes Body (02 Nov 11)
<b>Appendix 2</b>	Girdwood Community Hub newsletter (September 11)

<b>7.0 Abbreviations</b>	
SEUPB – Special European Union Programmes Body	