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| ***Reconnecting open spaces project*** | **Belfast CC** |

**TO: PEACE IV Reconnecting Open Spaces – Project Board**

**FROM: Martin Doherty, Project Manager**

**Gerard Kennedy, Assistant Project Manager**

**DATE: 3rd February 2020**

**ISSUE: Project Update Report**

**ACTION:**

1. **Note the contents of this report**
2. **DECISION – BOARD TO AGREE HOW TO PROCEED**
3. **DECISION - Board to confirm ITT documentation can be issued once approved by CPD and SEUPB.**
4. **DECISION – Board to confirm if Section 6 to be included as part of the overall project noting that this is not money that can be claimed from SEUPB and must be funded either by BCC or sought from partners as ICT need to be aware of this for inclusion in ITT scope for contractor.**
5. **NOTE - Meeting now arranged with DfI – Cycling Unit for 18th February to discuss collaboration regarding their plans around Bog Meadows, and ask for contribution to the scheme.**
6. **DECISION – Board to confirm these meetings required as matter of urgency to request contributions to project**
7. **DECISION - SEUPB to confirm if additional money available to be bid for**
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9. **DECISION – Board to agree to proceed with works to Woodvale Gates once planning approved and procurement completed. Costs can be circulated by email if this is before next board meeting.**
10. **DECISION - Board to agree position regarding management, maintenance and liability issues with Ulster Wildlife and deadline for resolution. Delay in submitting planning for this section could jeopardize overall connectivity of the entire project. Needs resolved as soon as possible.**
11. **NOTE - Board to note delays in submission of planning applications and likely impact of lengthy planning process on delivery within programme.**

**PEACE IV Reconnecting Open Spaces – Project Update Report**

**Procurement Update**

**Peace IV Contractor Procurement – Single Party Framework**

McAdam Design Continue to work on the ITT documentation for the Single Party Framework Contractor. It is anticipated this will be issued in March 2020 to the 4No. contractors who advanced from the PQQ process. We have delayed the issue of this ITT so that the proposed designs for Section 2 can be developed and issued as a work package to be priced as part of the ITT. This will allow for prices for Section 2 to be known at award stage and give us the opportunity to see how these fit with the proposed budget given that Section 2 is the section with the most unknowns, risk and highest estimated cost.

CPD have advised that SEUPB may not permit ITT to be issued as Pre-Tender Estimate will be approx. £1.0m over the allocated available funding. SEUPB to confirm their position on this and CPD to provide comment to SEUPB once PTE’s provided. Letter from BCC may be required to commit to cover shortfall.

**DECISION – BOARD TO AGREE HOW TO PROCEED**

**DECISION - Board to confirm ITT documentation can be issued once approved by CPD and SEUPB.**

**Ground Investigation**

Geotechnical Environmental Services Ltd were awarded a contract to undertake ground investigation works across the entire scheme. These investigations have now been completed and 3No. reports were produced – one for each of the sections were investigation was required. These reports are being used by the design team in finalise detailed designs and submission of planning applications for the proposed path network in Sections 2 & 4 in the coming months.

**Topographical Surveys**

Contract for final elements requiring topographical surveys has been awarded to Land Survey Services Ltd following a quotation exercise and approval to award from SEUPB Financial Controller. This was awarded on 27th January 2020 with surveys likely to be complete by end- February 2020 and information provided to the design team.

**Project development**

**Lanark Way and Cupar Way possible linkage**

Concept designs have now been produced by the Design Team for the proposed Lanark Way and Cupar Way linkage. This has been designated as Section 6 of the scheme for ease of reference. A provisional cost estimate has been produced for this section and is £179,730

**DECISION – Board to confirm if Section 6 to be included as part of the overall project noting that this is not money that can be claimed from SEUPB and must be funded either by BCC or sought from partners as ICT need to be aware of this for inclusion in ITT scope for contractor.**

**Dept. for Infrastructure (DfI)**

Following presentation to the DfI Programme Board in April 2019 DfI have confirmed that the Department will be including the crossings and junctions which are part of the scheme in its current works programme. PMU and the Design Team met with DfI on 18th November 2019 to discuss programme and delivery alignment and to move this forward. Further meetings to be arranged once DfI confirm their programme and BCC are further advanced. The work that DfI are proposing to undertake amount to approx. 200k that BCC would have had to pay from the funding amount so this is a major contribution from DfI.

**NOTE - Meeting now arranged with DfI – Cycling Unit for 18th February to discuss collaboration regarding their plans around Bog Meadows, and ask for contribution to the scheme.**

**Other Statutory Partners**

Further meetings now needed with DoJ & DfC to discuss contributions to the scheme in line with below:

DfC – Landowner of Section 2 – Contamination, knotweed, unsafe ravine and slope stabilisation issues. Significant contribution required from DfC to assist project budget in dealing with all these issues.

DoJ – Fence to Springfield Road needs to be removed at cost of approx. £20,000 (include fence costs in finance report for decision), Contribution to Woodvale Avenue gates – estimated 52k at present. Estimate for Cupar Way works 180k – council have no budget for this currently. Could this be considered as part of the SEUPB rebid for any additional funding that may be available?

**DECISION – Board to confirm these meetings required as matter of urgency to request contributions to project**

**DECISION - SEUPB to confirm if additional money available to be bid for**

**Invasive Species and Slope Stabilisation**

Preliminary Ecological Surveys have indicated an extremely high level of invasive species present throughout section 2. DfC have confirmed these areas are currently not part of any treatment programme. The Japanese knotweed poses a significant risk to the current path layout. Greentown Invasive Weed Consultant visited site on 7th January 2020 and have produced 2 sets of cost estimates for Section 2.

1. Removal of Japanese Knotweed into a bund to proceed with path network. This area (bund) will be treated with herbicide application over a number of years.
2. Treating the Japanese Knotweed in the ravine plus any other knotweed on site over a longer term (7 years approx. required)

The cost for the above options are: 1) £4,850 + VAT,

2) 22,500 + VAT

This is a significant reduction from the risk amount of £250,000 previously allocated as a risk allowance.

Slope stabilization issues still exist within the ravine and a report produced several years ago estimated the works to be approx. £360,000 – **a new report would be needed and these costs would need revised to more accurately reflect the current economic climate**. The transfer of this land to council comes with liability issues in terms of this ravine and associated remedial works and needs to be factored in to any transfer agreement with DfC.

**DECISION - Board to decide on whether to procure a new Slope Stability Report as ravine will become BCC liability following land transfer. It may therefore be best to have a more up to date report.**

**Planning Update**

PAN process for Section 2 and Section 4 have now completed. This was required as these both require major planning applications. There is a risk associated with Council submitting planning applications on land which is does not currently own given that the land transfer with DfC has not completed and the risks associated with that site which have been previously outlined in this report and also the issue of management, maintenance and liability raised by Ulster Wildlife at Bog Meadows.

The current programme allow for planning for Sections 2 & 4 to be submitted in Feb 2020 and April 2020 respectively. An agreement on management, maintenance and liability would be needed with UW prior to this date.

Planning Service confirmed that a planning application was required for the works proposed to the Invest NI gate at Woodvale Aveune. This was submitted on 6th December 2019 and is now live on the Planning Portal. Alison Allen has liaised with the Director of Planning and Place to discuss the sensitivity associated with this application and it is expected to be recommended for approval at February planning committee. INI currently undertaking procurement for a joint up approach to delivery – Debbie McKinney has requested procurement information regarding the framework they are using for SEUPB. It is a CPD framework so does not present a major risk.

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**DECISION - Board to agree position regarding management, maintenance and liability issues with Ulster Wildlife and deadline for resolution. Delay in submitting planning for this section could jeopardize overall connectivity of the entire project. Needs resolved as soon as possible.**

**Programme Update**

Key dates from the current programme have been reviewed and a brief overview is provided below. These dates are subject to change and will be refined once planning submitted and contractor ITT issued. Project Board will continue to be updated on progress.

**Key Indicative Dates for Peace IV Capital Elements**

|  |  |
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| **Item** | **Date** |
| Commence procurement of Main Contractor | July 2019 |
| Contractor Appointment | June 2020 |
| Section 1 (Glencairn) - Commence works on site | July 2020 |
| Section 2 (DfC/INI Site) – Submit Major Planning Application | Feb 2020 |
| Section 2 (DfC/INI Site) - Commence works on site | September 2020 – January 2021 start date dependent on planning approval |
| Section 3 (Springfield/ Falls Park) – Commence works on site | Sept 2020 - February 2021 (may be started earlier while planning for other sections awaited) |
| Section 4 (Bog Meadows) – Major Planning Application | April 2020 |
| Section 4 (Bog Meadows) - Commence works on site | November 2020 – March 2021 start date dependent on planning approval |
| Section 5 (Broadway/ Westlink) – Commence works on site | November- April 2020 |

**NOTE - Board to note delays in submission of planning applications and likely impact of lengthy planning process on delivery within programme.**

**DECISION REQUIRED:**

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