

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Girona Energy Project Update</b>
<b>Committee Report Submitted To:</b>	The Leisure & Development Committee
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> August 2019
<b>For Decision or For Information</b>	For Information

<b>Linkage to Council Strategy (2019-23)</b>	
Strategic Theme	Innovation & Transformation
Outcome	The Council will embrace new technologies and processes where they can bring about better experiences for citizens and visitors.
Lead Officer	Strategic Projects Manager

<b>Budgetary Considerations</b>	
Cost of Proposal	Nil Cost
Included in Current Year Estimates	Not applicable
Capital/Revenue	Not applicable
Code	Not applicable
Staffing Costs	Within current years business plan

<b>Screening Requirements</b>	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes	Date: 30 <sup>th</sup> July 2019
	EQIA Required and Completed: Having considered the proposal, it is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations.	Yes	Date: 30 <sup>th</sup> July 2019
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes	Date: 30 <sup>th</sup> July 2019
	RNA Required and Completed: Beneficiaries include urban and rural businesses and residents and the outcome will have a positive impact on improving energy supply across the borough.	Yes	Date: 30 <sup>th</sup> July 2019
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes	Date: 30 <sup>th</sup> July 2019
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes	Date: 30 <sup>th</sup> July 2019

## **1.0 Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to inform members of progress to date in relation to Project Girona (Girona). The overall aim of Girona is to develop and pilot Northern Ireland's first clean and secure energy microgrid in Coleraine to support under-served domestic customers and business customers.

## **2.0 Background**

The Community Plan has identified energy as a key priority issue for attracting investment and increasing employment in the council area. Specifically, Action 32 of the Community Plan identifies the need to *'develop an Energy Strategy within CC&G's area that addresses connectivity, connection cost, unit cost and unit cost certainty'*.

High energy prices are already a barrier to local business investment and this is compounded by the limited energy capacity from the network in the area. This results in additional costs and long lead times for new or expanded network connections. This is particularly acute for the energy intensive users and major employers in the borough.

The Girona project seeks to prove that a combination of targeted grid development, commercial and domestic energy storage, and other innovative methods of energy supply can resolve the issues of growing need and constrained supply as exemplified by the constraint in the Loguestown substation and in the CC&GBC area. If successful, it will offer the opportunity for similar solution(s) to be deployed quickly and more widely across Northern Ireland.

## **3.0 Proposals**

The Girona Collaborative Network and in particular the lead company, PowerOn Technologies, has collaborated successfully with the key stakeholder group (i.e. CC&GBC, Department for Economy, Invest NI, NI Consumer Council, NIE Networks, NI Housing Executive, and the Utility Regulator) since 2017. The Girona group actively engage with the network members on issues and challenges with the development of the new market including electric vehicle uptake, energy storage, grid constraints, increased renewables and how best to share potential benefits.

The targeted benefits of Girona are:

- To alleviate fuel poverty and decarbonise lifestyles;
- Improve network resilience / energy security;
- Support housing build programmes;
- Enable business expansion / economic growth;
- Provide evidence to support / inform decision making in relation to policies; regulations; and business investment;
- Showcase NI skills and expertise;
- Attract inward investment;
- Opportunity for skills building - higher value jobs; and
- Production of exportable products and services.

CC&GBC, along with Invest NI have already committed funds and resources to the project as a 'pump primer' for the potential benefits accruing to the area. In addition, the Housing Executive have included the network in some of their own projects to explore solutions to fuel poverty arising from their Social Housing Policy remit. There is an established working relationship with the stakeholder group which is based on openness and desire to explore

potential solutions for the complex problem of ensuring all stakeholders are prospering from the Energy Revolution which is underway.

The Girona Project has just recently completed Phase One of Invest NI's Collaborative Growth Programme, and if successful, will secure additional funding to develop the project further over the next three years.

In addition, Girona is also currently the subject of an application to Business Energy Industrial Strategy (BEIS) under the Innovate UK 'Prospering from the Energy Revolution' Detailed Design Call.

#### **4.0 Summary**

In summary CC&GBC will continue to be a key stakeholder on the Girona Project; providing ongoing funding and support in line with the Prosperity and Place 2019/20 Business Plan objectives. In addition, Council will continue to support both current and future funding applications in support of the Girona project.