

Parks and Leisure Committee

Thursday, 13th January, 2011

MEETING OF PARKS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor O'Reilly (Chairman);
the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Humphrey);
the High Sheriff (Councillor Stalford); and
Councillors Adamson, D. Browne, Corr, Ekin, Hartley,
Kyle, Mac Giolla Mhín, Mallon, Maskey, McCabe,
McVeigh, L. Patterson, G. Robinson and J. Rodgers.

In attendance: Mr. A. Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure;
Mrs. R. Crozier, Head of Parks and Leisure;
Miss L. Hillick, Democratic Services Officer; and
Mr. B. Flynn, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillors McCarthy, McKenzie and Stoker.

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 9th and 13th December were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by Council at its meeting on 5th January, subject to the omission of the minute of the meeting of 9th December under the heading "Gate Lodge at City Cemetery" which, at the request of Councillor G. Robinson, was taken back to the Committee for further consideration.

Gate Lodge at City Cemetery

The Committee considered further the minute of the meeting of 9th December. An extract of the minute in that regard is set out hereunder:

"The Committee considered the undernoted report:

'Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to establish a position regarding the future potential development of the Gate Lodge at the City Cemetery.

Relevant Background Information

Committee is being asked to consider the terms of a Development Brief for the rejuvenation of the Council's Gate Lodge which lies at the edge of the City Cemetery and fronts on to the Whiterock Road opposite Britton's Parade. The development of the building has been considered and discussed on several occasions. It had also been previously exposed to the market by way of a Development Brief. One of the key elements of the previous Brief was that the project should focus on the historical significance of the City Cemetery and the genealogy of the area.

The successful proposal at that time was from the Whiterock/Westrock Residents' Association. Unfortunately the Association was unable to finalise the arrangement and the former Head of Parks and Cemeteries Services reported this to the former Community and Recreation (Parks and Cemeteries Services) Sub-Committee on 28 November 2005. The Sub-Committee at that time also agreed the preparation of an amended Development Brief which would have as its principal objective the restoration of the Gate Lodge in a sensitive manner which respected the nature of the immediate surroundings. While this allowed submission of proposals focussing on the historical significance of the City Cemetery and the genealogy of the area, it allowed for consideration of a wider range of proposals and types of appropriate development.

Following a further interim report to Committee a revised Development Brief was brought to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. Following representations from a Member the Committee determined to refer the matter back to the Parks and Leisure Committee for further consideration.

The attached revised draft Development Brief is now being presented to Members for consideration. This seeks to preserve the flexibility incorporated in the 2008 proposal but leaves the way open for interaction (if required) between the proposed development and the Cemetery. This could include uses which focus on historical and genealogical elements.

Key Issues

The issues for Committee to consider are:

- *This issue has been under consideration for a significant period of time without significant progress;*
- *The revised Development Brief aims to address previous concerns regarding restoration of the Gate Lodge (Fox's Lodge) while preserving flexibility of potential use so as to attract maximum interest in the property;*
- *The current difficulties in the property market and a potential squeeze on grant aid make appropriate timing of release of the Development Brief to the market, difficult to judge.*

Options

The Committee has several options:

Option 1 is to issue a revised development brief in line with appendix 3;

Option 2 is to amend the draft brief outlined;

Option 3 is to instruct Officers not to issue a brief at this time owing to market conditions; and

Option 4 is to instruct Officers to have the building de-listed and demolished which would have an associated cost.

Resource Implications

Financial

Disposal of the Gate Lodge, on lease, may raise an annual rent or a capital sum. This could generate possible income which would be set by Estates.

Human Resources

No need for additional human resources has been identified at this time.

Asset and Other Implications

This former dwelling and the immediately adjoining lands are unused by the Council and have fallen into extreme disrepair. The aim of the disposal is to enable the capital investment in the property by outside funders (private and/or public sector.) The investment should in turn have a positive social and economic impact upon the surrounding area.

Equality and Good Relations Implications

None.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee approve the contents of a revised Development Brief and reference to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in accordance with Standing Order 46 for further approval prior to future marketing of the property. Further reference to Parks and Leisure Committee and subsequently Strategic Policy and Resources Committee would follow receipt and evaluation of any proposals submitted in response to the Brief.

Decision Tracking

Director of Parks and Leisure to liaise with the Director of Property and Projects to ensure reference to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee within three months of this Committee.'

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendation."

Councillor G. Robinson referred to the fact that the former Community and Recreational (Parks and Cemeteries Services) Sub-Committee, at its meeting on 28th November, 2005, had agreed inter alia, that, whilst not an obligatory requirement, the Council would welcome proposals that would be cross-community in nature and develop activities which would address anti-social behaviour within the City Cemetery. He pointed out that that decision had not been incorporated within the current development brief and he requested the Committee to consider having that requirement included.

The Committee agreed to affirm its decision of 9th December and agreed also that, for any applications submitted regarding the future use of the Gate Lodge, appropriate weighting would be applied in the assessment process to viable projects which had a cross-community focus.

Revenue Estimates 2011/2012

(Mrs J. Thompson, Director of Finance and Resources, attended in connection to this item.)

The Committee considered a report, which had been prepared by the Director of Finance and Resources, in relation to the establishment of the District Rate and the compilation of the Estimates of Revenue Expenditure for the year 2011/2012. A copy of that section of the report, in so far as it applied specifically to the Parks and Leisure Committee, is set out hereunder:

“C: Set The Cash Limits For Parks & Leisure Committee 2011/12

10. A spending limit of £22,940,266 is recommended for the Parks & Leisure Committee in 2011/12 which represents an increase of £639,392 or 2.8%. The main items of expenditure are outlined at Appendix 1 and a summary of some of the proposed priority actions for the Committee, which will be funded by the 2011/12 estimates, is included in Appendix 2.

Parks & Cemetery Services

11. The department has the responsibility for taking on the management and maintenance of Connswater Community Greenway. In year one of the project Parks & Leisure could face costs of up to £590k depending on the phasing of the project and the timescales associated with when the project goes live. From the ongoing improvement agenda within Parks operational efficiencies and changes to working practices have been identified which will allow approximately £100k of this increased cost to be absorbed by the service.
12. The Zoo shop income is estimated to decrease on last year by £118k this reflects the performance of the shop to date this year more accurately. Supplies for resale have also reduced by £60k to reflect the current turnover. Belfast Castle and Malone House have both reflected a loss of income from internal customers of approximately £30k and from external customers of £70k.
13. The People in the Parks Initiative is a youth participation programme which is being developed as part of the antisocial behaviour pilot in our parks and involves projects in 10 of our parks requiring a £65k investment. This was agreed at the P&L Committee in August 2010.
14. Increases in charges to the public of approximately inflation and 5% have been estimated for both the Zoo and the Cemeteries and Crematorium respectively and are reflected in the increased income figures. These fees and charges will be submitted to the Parks and Leisure Committee in a separate report.

Leisure Services

15. Due to the partial closure of two leisure centres for essential maintenance to be programmed in 2011 there is a loss of income of approx £82k. More detail will be presented to committee on this in due course.
16. Increased rates and water charges have been offset by a reduction in the price of Electricity and Gas and savings generated through Combined Heat and power units.

17. Work is in progress for the development and implementation of a Departmental Improvement Plan. Costs of £130,000 have been included to support the development of the Active Belfast and Open Spaces Strategy and the Parks & Leisure Improvement Plan which was outlined to the Parks and Leisure Committee during this year.
18. Additional costs of £240,297 must be borne by the Department in respect of superannuation increased provision and increases in staff costs due to increments and assumed pay increases which have an estimated increase of £185,120.
19. The Department will make a contribution of £655k to the efficiency programme in 2011/12. Efficiency savings will be made in areas such as reviewing how we procure certain contracts, reviewing overtime and agency costs and fees and charges. Savings have also been achieved through the review of the operating structures of both Parks & Leisure and details of restructuring and VR processes have been presented to committee throughout the year.

APPENDIX 1

PARKS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

MAIN ITEMS OF ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE 2011/12

	Net Expenditure 2010/11 £	Net Expenditure 2011/12 £
<u>Leisure</u>	8,287,520	8,298,191
Leisure Centres	7,622,659	7,651,052
Leisure Development	664,861	647,139
<u>Parks and Cemeteries</u>	11,916,101	12,276,655
Parks and Open Spaces including playgrounds and playing fields	6,281,603	6,902,303
Zoo	953,089	865,622

	Net Expenditure 2010/11	Net Expenditure 2011/12
Landscape Planning &Development	760,616	766,170
Estates Management incl Belfast Castle/Malone House	529,404	600,744
Cemeteries and Crematorium	457,581	349,818
P&C Development	1,336,367	1,303,182
P&C Services	1,021,547	1,035,769
Conservation and Education incl DOE Trees	575,893	453,047
<u>Parks and Leisure Directorate</u>	2,097,253	2,365,420
Directorate (PBDU and all BS)	1,909,760	2,115,436
Anti Social Behaviour	187,493	249,984
TOTAL	22,300,874	22,940,266"

The Director of Finance and Resources outlined the process governing the setting of the District Rate and the agreeing of the revenue estimates for 2011/2012. She reported that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 7th January, had agreed to a 2.5% increase in the District Rate and had agreed also that the cash limit for the Parks and Leisure Committee should be £22,940,266.

The Director of Parks and Leisure outlined the factors which had been taken into account in the preparation of the Departmental revenue estimates and highlighted the costs which had contributed to an increase in net expenditure from the previous year.

After discussion, the Committee agreed that its cash limit for the 2011/2012 financial year be £22,940,266 and approved the allocation of resources as set out within the foregoing appendix.

Parks and Leisure Services - Scale of Charges 2011/2012

(Ms. J. Wilson, Business Support Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Director of Parks and Leisure submitted for the Committee's consideration a report in respect of the Scale of Charges for the use of facilities within the Parks and Leisure Department for the financial year 2011/2012.

After discussion, the Committee approved the scales of charges for 2011/2012, copies of which were available for inspection on the Council's modern.gov website.

Cemeteries and Crematorium Charges

(Ms J. Wilson, Business Support Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1. Relevant Background Information

Members will be aware of the ongoing work to secure adequate burial/cremation provision to meet future needs. A number of decisions have been made by the Committee at its meetings in September and November 2010. The main decisions being:

- the Nutts Corner site is not suitable as a potential site for a new cemetery;
- site visits to the Dundrod sites to be organised for the Committee prior to initiating site investigations ;
- a robust plan to be developed for the provision of additional crematorium facilities;
- further work including a feasibility study be Pundertaken to investigate the provision of facilities for natural burials;
- any land acquisition for burial be on a voluntary basis; and
- burial and cremation charges should be reviewed.

There is a need to review the current charges for Bereavement Services to ensure that the operating costs are covered, provision is made to cover future capital investments and to ensure that charges reflect the market norms.

The charges for burial and cremation services are normally reviewed in January along with the Department’s other fees and charges. A 5% increase has currently been allowed for in the draft 2011/12 estimates.

2. Key Issues

A study was undertaken to:

- identify the true costs of cemetery and crematorium services;
- review the current pricing options;
- benchmark against similar provision within the UK; and
- identify a series of pricing options and their financial implications.

An economic appraisal of a new crematorium facility was also undertaken by BDO to explore the options for the development of a new crematorium facility and to ensure value for money would be achieved in such a new facility. Options will be presented to committee in February 2011 for the provision of additional cremation facilities.

Findings

- In comparison to the rest of the UK, the Council was generally one of the least expensive for burial and cremation charges.
- In the UK the split of cremations verses burials differs from Northern Ireland: 18% cremations in NI ;72% in UK.
- Currently for Council residents burials are 440% more expensive than cremations. This provides an incentive for people to choose cremation over burials.
- Currently 30% of all burials are from non residents of Belfast.
- 59% of cremations are from non residents of Belfast.
- There are different charges for residents and non residents with the latter subsidising the former.
- The crematorium is currently working at a high level of capacity which is 56% greater than the average UK crematorium which is unsustainable.
- BDO recommend that the rates charged for cremations to local ratepayers, to those from other NI Councils and beyond are assessed to ensure that 'market rates' are in place or introduced.
- As the Council's crematorium facility is the second cheapest in the UK an increase in the cremation rates could assist with the private sectors' willingness to engage in the provision of cremation services.

Assessment of the financial pressures on the service has been analysed for both the crematorium and cemeteries as follows:

Capital pressures

Currently legislation is having an impact on the services provided by the crematorium and the cemeteries due to the requirements of the mercury abatement legislation and health and safety legislation regarding headstone safety. A pilot headstone safety project is currently underway in the City Cemetery and it is estimated that the project could cost up to £1m over the next 10 years. The 4 furnaces in the crematorium need re-bricked every 5 years and the

cremators will need replaced in the next 10 years. Given these capital requirements, it is appropriate that users contribute to the future provision of these services and that a process is identified so that such contributions can be factored into the financing of future capital requirements.

Other cities are experiencing similar financial pressures. For example, burials in Scotland have recently seen a 70% price increase with a new burial in Glasgow increasing from £658 to £1079. A cremation in Glasgow has also increased this year from £348 to £521. The explanation given for these increases was that they were needed to provide for an upgraded crematorium for the city.

Revenue pressures

The maintenance of the grounds within cemeteries is being impacted on by the increased costs including supplies and fuel. The crematorium has felt the impact of the increased utility charges and with the 4 cremators working to full capacity pressure is on to ensure that they are adequately maintained to ensure business continuity.

3. Resource implications

Financial

The analysis of the current levels of demand and future projections indicate an increased demand on our burial and cremation services. To meet that demand investment is needed not only to maintain the current service but to address legislative issues such as headstone safety and mercury abatement.

Options to address the financial pressures on the services are as follows:

An assumption has been made that the Council will maintain a pricing structure for residents and non residents and this differential in pricing will be maintained and is reflected in the options.

Options

1. Do nothing - no price increases and continue to subsidise all of the bereavement services increasing costs; currently a net cost to the rate payer of £539,000 (excluding capital costs and internal charges.)

2. Agree that the price must cover the full cost for both services i.e. move to breakeven price (full cost) in a phased approach for residents. An increase of 5% has already been included in the draft revenue estimates for 2011/12.
3. Breakeven price plus a contribution: a) to grounds maintenance for burials and b) capital and grounds costs for burials and capital costs for cremation implemented in a phased approach for residents
4. Comparable market rate for crematorium/burial charges analysis phased for residents *

Proposed new grave minimum charge against each option

~Based on current average charge

Option 1 As is - no price increase	Option 2 Full cost	Option 3 Full cost plus contribution		Option 4 Comparable rate across UK*
		a) grounds maintenance costs	b) capital and grounds costs	
Resident £491	£516 5% increase	£761 55% increase	£1085 120% increase	£818 66% increase
Non Resident £1497	£1548 5% increase	£2283 52% increase	£3255 117% increase	£2454 64% increase

(local government average across UK)*

Proposed cremation minimum charge against each option

Option 1 As is - no price increase	Option 2 Full cost Phased over two years	Option 3 Full cost plus contribution to capital phased	Option 4 Comparable rate across UK*
Resident £198	£208 rising to £297 5% to 50% increase	£297 rising to £397 50% to 100% increase	£402 103% increase
Non Resident £397	£594 50% increase	£594 rising to £794 50% to 100% increase	£804 103% increase

Once an option is agreed the implementation of the new charges would have to be phased in over 2 years depending on the option agreed.

4. **Equality and good relations implications**

An equality impact assessment of the scale of charges within the service was previously carried out and all issues were addressed at that time. No changes have been made to the principles underpinning their rationale.

5. **Recommendations**

It is recommended that option 3a is agreed for the cemetery and option 3 for the crematorium charges for residents as a phased approach over two years. Non Resident charges should be increased automatically from 2011/12.

It is recommended that the Bereavement Service undertakes an analysis of the usage of the complex range of services as set out in the pricing schedule and puts forward a proposal for rationalising the range of services and the associated charges were relevant.

6. **Decision Tracking**

New pricing schedule implemented from 1 April 2011 with an in year uplift for the next 2 years as per the costing option attached and to be carried out by the Business Manager and reflected in the estimates going forward.”

After a lengthy discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor D. Browne,
Seconded by the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Humphrey),

That the Committee agrees to adopt option 3b in respect of the provision of new graves and option 3 in relation to the proposed cremation minimum charge.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Hartley,
Seconded by Councillor Maskey,

That the Committee agrees to adopt option 1 contained within the report in respect of the Council's cemeteries and crematorium charges.

On a vote by show of hands six members voted for the amendment and nine against and it was accordingly declared lost.

Further Amendment

Moved by Councillor Kyle,
Seconded by Councillor Mallon,

That the Committee agrees to adopt option 2 contained within the report in respect of the Council's cemeteries and crematorium charges.

On a vote by show of hands three Members voted for the amendment and thirteen against and it was accordingly declared lost. The original proposal standing in the name of Councillor D. Browne and seconded by the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Humphrey) was thereupon put to the meeting when nine members voted for and seven against and it was accordingly declared carried.

Parks and Leisure Department Improvement Agenda – Review of Management Arrangements in Leisure Services

The Committee considered the under noted report:

“1. Relevant Background Information

As committee are aware, the Parks and Leisure improvement programme is focused on building capacity and delivering better services and better outcomes for communities in Belfast. This is being achieved through:

- 1. Reviewing management arrangements and operational efficiency**
- 2. Bringing the Parks and Leisure functions of the department together to integrate community development and to work more closely in planning and service delivery.**

The programme has a number of work streams;

- Parks Improvement**
- Leisure Services Improvement**
- Review of Business Support**
- Marketing and Communications Review**
- Business Development Review.**

Given the scale of the reviews a phased approach to streamlining management arrangements and achieving operational efficiency has been adopted. Reports have been brought to committee recommending improvements for Business Support and the Parks improvement work streams including management arrangements, a review of Parks Team Leaders and a Presence in Parks pilot.

This report provides recommendations from the conclusion of the first stage of the Leisure Services improvement work stream. Work has been ongoing for a number of months with the initial focus on the review of management arrangements and operational efficiency in line with the Parks work stream.

As noted in the committee report of the 16 September 2010 the Leisure Improvement programme has been initiated with staff briefing sessions and engagement of Trade Unions to set the context for the review.

A number of staff led task forces have been established to examine the following areas:

People Subgroup

Aim:

To review current working arrangements. Recommending potential areas of development which will enhance the current level and quality of leisure provision across the City. Ensuring Leisure Services deliver on our Departmental vision and Corporate priorities.

Programming Subgroup

Aim:

To develop a city wide participation plan that will increase community engagement and improve the health and well being of its residents within the context of the Council's aims of improving the quality of life, for now and for the generations to come.

Pricing Subgroup:

Aim:

To review and amend the present annual scale of charges and review. The Boost membership scheme in terms of Fit for Purpose and how it aligns with corporate objectives and overall Health & Well being agenda.

Opening Hours Subgroup:

Aim:

To review the current opening hours arrangements and develop quick wins to increase income, reduce expenditure and increase throughput and community engagement.

There are clear dependencies between each of the subgroups and although the outcomes from each one have not yet been finalised, the research emanating from each subgroup has been taken into account when developing the proposals contained within this report.

Staff and trade unions have been widely consulted, the latest staff briefing day being held on the 21 December when each Task Lead explained the progress of each subgroup and the management strand proposal was circulated to staff and the rationale behind it explained.

2. Key Issues

People Subgroup

The People Subgroup have been meeting on a weekly basis since the beginning of October with the aim of recommending a management structure which will enhance the current provision of leisure.

The subgroup membership consists of Leisure Centre Managers, Assistant Managers, Recreation Officers, Receptionists and representatives from the Leisure Development Unit.

The group have reviewed several previous management structures together with the current structure. Best practice information has also been presented to the group to help inform their recommendations from other local authority areas and neighbouring leisure providers.

The group has developed a Leisure Services Management Structure. The proposed structure reduces the number of tiers in Leisure Services management from four to three:

Current structure	Proposed structure
Leisure Operations Manager	City Leisure Manager
Leisure Centre Manager	Area Leisure Manager
Assistant Leisure Centre Manager	Neighbourhood Leisure Officer
Recreation Officer	

In the proposed structure the roles of Area Leisure Manager and Neighbourhood Leisure Officer would be generic to allow for dedicated staff to work across the areas of operations (facilities) and participation (outreach.) This will provide greater flexibility to enable Leisure Services to meet the needs of the community and deliver on the vision of an Active Belfast. The new role of the Neighbourhood Leisure Officer is a hybrid of the current Assistant Leisure Centre Manager and the Recreation Officer, which the group have identified as having very similar type roles in the current operation.

Members should note that as the work on improvement continues it is likely that there will be further refinement of the structure in a number of subsequent phases.

Draft job descriptions have been developed by the group which are still at a high level and the detail of these will be developed in consultation with staff and trade unions in order to ensure there are clear lines of responsibility and accountability.

For the purposes of this report notional grades have been evaluated to allow members to assess the overall financial impact of the new proposed structure. This has shown that the post of City Leisure Manager and Area Leisure Manager would remain at the current level of PO8 and PO3 respectively. The notional grade for the Neighbourhood Leisure Officer is SO1; this shows a differential for the current 20 Recreation Officers who are currently on Scale 6. However the remaining 15 Assistant Leisure Centre Managers are currently SO2 and although it will be the intention to recruit any vacancies in the future at SO1 the current Assistant Leisure Centre Managers would continue to receive their current grade of SO2 as personal to holder. All grades are subject to evaluation against the job descriptions once finalised.

Voluntary Redundancy (VR) Exercise

Parallel to the work of the People Subgroup a VR exercise was conducted with all Leisure Services management. A total of three staff have expressed an interest in availing of the VR exercise and consequently three VR II forms have been submitted. This would result in the deletion of these posts should the proposed structure be agreed. A fourth post, which is currently being covered on a temporary basis, would also be deleted with the postholder returning to their substantive post.

Investigations have ascertained that given the reconfiguration and redefinition of the areas within Leisure Services, these posts could be deleted with no detrimental impact on the management of the service.

Consultation with Stakeholders and Trade Unions

Throughout the Leisure Services Improvement programme extensive consultation has been ongoing with stakeholders and trade unions. A number of stakeholders have been involved in the People Subgroup and wider review group. All stakeholders have also been invited to attend a Leisure Management briefing session held in November and a full Leisure Services staff briefing session held in December.

Consultation with the Trade Unions continues on a bi-weekly basis with engagement from all the main trade unions.

3. Resource Implications

Financial

Cost

VR costs for three members of staff: £244,541

20 Sc 6 posts to 20 SO1 posts: £84,258

Total Cost: £328,799

Savings:

Deletion of three posts (1xPO3 and 2xSO2) : £140,485

Deletion of one temporary Leisure Centre Manager post: £51,664

Overall Cost: £136,649

Payback Period: 1.71years (This is in line with the corporate target of 2.3 years)

Human Resources

Consultation relating to the proposed Phase 1 structure has been undertaken with the postholders, Human Resources and the Trade Unions.

At this time the trade unions have stated that agreement cannot be given on the proposed structure until they have consulted with their Branch and members.

At the last Trade Union meeting it was agreed, that, given the timeframe, a management side position would be taken to committee while further consultation takes place. This will include work on defining the roles and responsibilities for the posts of City Leisure Manager, Area Leisure Manager and Neighbourhood Leisure Officer.

Asset and Other Implications

None.

4. Equality and Good Relations Implications

There are no equality implications.

5. Recommendations

Committee is asked to:

- Note the progress of the improvement programme; and

- **Agree the adoption of the proposed organisation structure for Leisure Services subject to agreement at Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, to approve the recommendation for the deletion of four management posts and to release three staff through voluntary redundancy.**

6. Decision Tracking

Responsible Officer – Head of Parks and Leisure. A report to be brought to February committee with outcomes from the consultation process.”

After discussion, it was

Proposed by Councillor Ekin,
Seconded by the High Sheriff (Councillor Stalford),

That the Committee agrees to adopt the recommendation contained within the report.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Maskey,
Seconded by Councillor McVeigh,

That the Committee agrees to defer consideration of the matter for a period of one month to enable further consultation to be undertaken with the relevant Trades Unions.

On a vote by show of hands six members voted for the amendment and eleven against and it was accordingly declared lost. The original proposal standing in the name of Councillor Ekin and seconded by the High Sheriff (Councillor Stalford) was thereupon put to the meeting when eleven Members voted for and six voted against and it was accordingly declared carried.

Sport Northern Ireland - Community Capital Programme

(Councillor J. Rodgers declared an interest in this item in that he was a Member of the Board of Sport Northern Ireland.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

The Committee will recall that its meeting in December it received a report regarding a number of applications made in respect of the Sport NI community Capital Programme. At the meeting it was agreed to support the applications in principle, subject to the provision of additional information at a future date.

A decision on the awards is expected by the end of March 2011 at which time the necessary information will be available to inform decision making. In the interim, additional work is being carried out by the applicants to work up their respective applications.

Since the December Committee further information has come to officers via a variety of community groups and partners. There are now 4 applications which officers are aware of which relate to different council-owned sites / locations; North Queen Street; the Hammer Open Space; Barnett's Demesne and Marrowbone Park.

Each of the organisations applications are very different, as are the proposed projects, the levels of finance involved and the potential implications for the Council. Obviously the Parks and Leisure Department has been in discussion with the groups and has been providing assistance where possible in support of the applications.

2 Key Issues

The maximum award available through this programme is £245,000. Our understanding is that 6 grants awarded across the Northern Ireland region and at the minute there are four projects related to the Council's assets. (Members are reminded that the Council cannot be an applicant in respect of this programme..)

The main issues for the Committee relate to the potential implications for the Council should the applications be successful. For all of the applications the Council must be satisfied that the applicants have the capacity to undertake the project management and delivery of a capital project and to ensure its sustainability.

To varying degrees a number of other potential issues affect these applications – these have been summarised below and some additional information is attached;-

BCC SITE / LOCATION	APPLICATION TO SNI FOR	POTENTIAL ISSUES FOR BCC
North Queen Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - construction of a 70m x 30m 3G playing surface (charge to be applied) - plus a 30m x 12m MUGA (free use) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - planning approval would be required - funding: i.e. the level of the award is £245K; shortfall is likely - lease arrangements: applicant must hold a 10 year interest in the land to get the award; this would involve transfer from the Council and appropriate legal arrangement providing the Council was confident the applicant could meet its responsibilities
Hammer Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - replacement of existing grass pitch with a full size 3G soccer pitch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - unlikely to require planning approval (TBC) - estimated costs appear light (capital implications remain unknown) - maintenance and management responsibilities to be clarified
Barnett's Demesne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2nd phase of funding for a Mountain Bike Trail at Barnett's Demesne (by CAAN: Countryside Access and Activities Forum) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Committee has previously agreed to support an application to the Rural Development Programme to provide a mountain bike trail at Barnett's Demesne; - The proposal in respect of the RDP application is in "uncommitted" portion of the Council's Capital Programme, Council contribution agreed at £70K for phase 1 - the application to Sport NI relates to an extension to the proposed trail - There is a funding shortfall of approx. £65K in respect of the application to Sport NI.
Marrowbone Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - refurbishment of the Park to include construction of a 3G soccer pitch and a 2 storey building (to include changing facilities; a large activity area, storage and office accommodation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - economic appraisal required to test robustness of business case and specific proposals within plan - planning application would be required (not yet submitted) - at a meeting on 13 December the group asked that a report be brought to the Parks and Leisure Committee seeking its support for the proposal and a commitment from the Council to provide the facilities; Planning approval is required but no application has yet been submitted; A lease will be required, this is likely to for a 10 year period; The estimated cost of the project is £1.3m, this would mean a short fall of £1.05m.

3 Resource Implications

Financial

It is likely that there will be capital and potentially revenue implications relating to each proposal, however, these are unknown at this time.

Human Resources

There are no additional human resource implications at this time other than officer time.

Asset and Other Implications

If successful these projects would make a positive contribution to the level of sporting and recreational facilities within the local neighbourhood and would support the delivery of improvements in health and well being and community cohesion.

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

There are no equality considerations at this time, however, in the production of any business case / sports development plan it would be expected that equality considerations would be taken into account.

5 Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

- Note the content of the report for information purposes at this time;
- Agree that Officers continue to work with the applicants to clarify the position relating to funding, lease arrangements and organisational capacity to deliver.
- Agree that the Hammer development continue to be considered as part of the prioritisation exercise within the developing Pitches Strategy
- Agree that officers will continue to work with the Marrowbone group in developing their application and to note that the proposal will also be considered as part of the prioritisation process within the Pitches Strategy
- Agree that all relevant legal issues be considered with Legal Services
- Note that a further report be brought to Committee no later than May 2011 at which time a clearer sense of direction can be presented.

6 Decision Tracking

Actions to be completed by the Principal Parks and Cemeteries Development Management by April 2011.”

The Committee agreed to adopt the recommendations.

Active Communities

(Councillor J. Rodgers declared an interest in this item in that he was a Member of the Board of Sport Northern Ireland.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 At its meeting on 12 February 2009 the Committee supported a submission of an application for funding to Sport NI to participate in the Active Communities Programme.**
- 1.2 Active Communities is an investment programme delivered by Sport NI that seeks to employ, deploy and train a network of full time and part time sports coaches and leaders to deliver activities in community and club settings across Northern Ireland, with a view to increasing participation in sport and physical recreation, especially among under represented groups.**
- 1.3 The programme was open to applications from a consortia of 11 district councils, including Belfast City Council. The Council was successful in securing funding to participate in the programme.**
- 1.4 As lead partner Belfast City Council is responsible for:**
 - management of the proposed project;**
 - implementation of the proposed project;**
 - management of the Sport NI investment within the Active Communities Programme;**
 - monitoring and evaluation of the proposed project;**
 - effective communication of information to other delivery partners involved in the project; and**
 - the provision of reports to Sport NI in accordance with agreed procedures**
- 1.5 Reports regarding Active Communities were presented to committee on 12 February 2009 and 11 February 2010 and a further related report on Belfast Community Sports Development Network (BCSDN) was presented on 13 May 2010.**

- 1.6 A package of funding and business a plan was put together to support BCSDN as the lead delivery partner for Sport NI's Active Communities programme under the auspices of the Active Belfast Consortium (ABC.) This was established with the purpose of 'creating a healthy city by ensuring that key stakeholders work in partnership to increase and diversify community participation in physical activity and sport'. The overall business plan will be delivered through a legal agreement with BCSDN. Disability Sport NI is one of the other key delivery partners with the Council for the Active Communities Programme.
- 1.7 The partner's organisations attending the Active Belfast Consortium which provide funding are the Council's Good Relations Unit through the Peace 3 programme 'Cultural Diversity and Sport', Sport NI 'Active Communities', the Public Health Agency (PHA) 'Summer Mobile Sports and Older and Active', the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT) through 'Health Messages'.
- 1.8 DSD have attended consortium meetings and an application for funding through Neighbourhood Renewal continues to be considered. Belfast Education and Library Board have agreed to attend future consortium meetings.
- 1.9 The Committee gave approval for the Director of Parks and Leisure, in consultation with the Chair of Parks and Leisure, to agree the Council's contribution to the overall package of funding for 2010-2011 up to a maximum of £50,000.

2.0 Key Issues

- 2.1 The Council has established two legal agreements with the delivery partners for Active Communities. Disability Sport NI (DSNI) has agreed to appoint two coaches and has specific targets to achieve through the Active Communities coaches. BCSDN has agreed to deliver a range of actions through the ABC Business Plan including the Active Communities programme.

2.2 BCSDN Active Communities programming

The Council's 2011-2011 agreement with Sport NI provides BCSDN with £35,015 for management tasks within the Active Communities programme, this funding covers the from 10 August 2010 to 31 March 2011. The key tasks within this funding are to undertake recruitment, develop operational working groups with sports governing bodies and other stakeholders and to plan, co-ordinate and manage the work programmes of the coaches.

- 2.3 BCSDN undertook a recruitment exercise in November which led to the appointed of a director and filled all but two of the part-time posts. The director has started in post and the coaches will commence employment at the end of January. A second recruitment exercise should see the remaining two posts filled.

The operational working group meetings with sports governing bodies and other stakeholders are still to be organised.

2.4 **BCSDN Public Health Agency programming**

The actions in the ABC Business Plan related to PHA programmes have been delivered.

2.5 **BCSDN Belfast Health and Social Care Trust programming**

The actions in the ABC Business Plan related to BHSCT programmes have been delivered.

2.6 **BCSDN Parks and Leisure programming**

The actions in the ABC Business Plan related to Parks and Leisure programmes have yet to be delivered. Departmental officers have engaged with BCSDN officers to ensure that all tasks within the Business Plan are completed by the end of the business year.

2.7 **BCSDN Financial Position**

- 2.71 BCSDN is an umbrella organisation with a network of sports development officers employed by organisations such as Greater Shankill Partnership, Greater Village Regeneration Trust, Lower Ormeau Resident's Action Group, Upper Springfield Development Trust and Women in Sport and Physical Activity.

- 2.72 BCSDN has continued to indicate that the current funding available from the Active Belfast Consortium is predominantly for programming and offers limited support for management costs or towards continued employment of Community Sports Development Officers. The Council supports the 2010/11ABC business plan with £50,000 funding.

- 2.73 The continued delivery of the Active Communities Programme in the 2011/12 and future financial years using the BCSDN model remains dependant on the Active Belfast Consortium partners continuing to fund the delivery of the agreed business plan.

- 2.74 A number of options are to be examined by the consortium partners and BCSDN during January to ensure that the Council meets its obligations to Sport Northern Ireland for the delivery of the programme and that the needs of the other partners are met regarding programme delivery.

2.8 **Sport NI Funding**

In February 2011 Sport NI will require Belfast City Council to confirm the 2011-2012 management arrangements for the Active Communities programme. Upon satisfactory confirmation of the delivery model, Sport NI will provide Belfast City Council with permission to proceed and release funding for year 2 of the programme.

3.0 **Resource Implications**

BCSDN Support – 2011/2012 and beyond

- 3.1 A Business Planning session for the Active Belfast Consortium will be required in January 2011 to allow Council to fully understand the funding arrangements of BCSDN and the Community Sports Development Officers working for local community organisations in the future. This will enable a clear solution for funding, programming and delivery to be agreed.
- 3.2 An annual contribution of £50,000.00 will be required by the Council for 2011/12 financial year. Provision has been made for this in the draft 2011/12 Departmental estimates.

4.0 **Equality and Good Relations Implications**

- 4.1 There are no equality or good relations issues associated with this issue.

5.0 **Recommendations**

- 5.1 It is recommended that the Committee agree to officers continuing to develop a support arrangement for BCSDN for the 2011/12 years and beyond subject to an appropriate funding mix being developed and a funding and evaluation plan being agreed with BCSDN.
- 5.2 It is further recommended that should it not be possible to develop an appropriate arrangement to sustain BCSDN which is agreed by Sport NI that approval is given for the multi-skills coaches to be managed directly by the Council.

6.0 Decision Tracking

All actions will be completed by the Leisure Development Manager by end of April 2011.

Key to Abbreviations

Sport NI:	Sport Northern Ireland
BCSDN:	Belfast Community Sports Development Network
ABC:	Active Belfast Consortium
DSNI:	Disability Sport Northern Ireland
GAA:	Gaelic Athletic Association
PHA:	Public Health Agency
BHSCT:	Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

After discussion, the Committee agreed to adopt the recommendations.

Cathedral Gardens

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1. Relevant Background Information

The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at their meetings on 20 November 2009 and on 21 May 2010, considered a number of Council owned properties in the context of the City Investment Strategy and potential asset realisation. It was agreed that a cross departmental Assets Realisation Group be established to undertake appraisal and assessment of certain land and property assets and to bring forward options for redevelopment and/or disposal. It was also agreed to undertake planning assessments and title research in respect of a number of properties.

Assets considered included those already declared surplus to requirements; non operational assets not yet declared surplus, and operational assets that may have additional value beyond their current use.

Cathedral Gardens was one of the assets included as part of this asset realisation consideration.

It was agreed that officers would undertake an assessment of options regarding the future use and/or redevelopment of the site taking into account its current use, with a future report to be taken back to Parks and Leisure Committee in the first instance, given that committee’s operational responsibility regarding potential options.

2. Key Issues

Cathedral Gardens occupies a prime location within the city centre, surrounded by new growth areas including Cathedral Quarter; Royal Exchange and the proposed new University of Ulster campus, and the commercial value of these sites is potentially enhanced by this area of open space as is the value of the open space itself.

On the other hand, Cathedral Gardens is also a strategically important area of public open space in Belfast City Centre, which is extremely limited in terms of public open space with the nearest equivalent open space being the grounds of the City Hall. There are a number of smaller and often poorly developed public open spaces such as Writers Square, Bank Square, Blackstaff Square and Cornmarket.

If the potential adjacent developments of the University of Ulster and Royal Exchange take place over the next few years the importance of Cathedral Gardens as an open space will become even more important as the daytime population of their part of City Centre increases.

While it is incumbent upon City Council to seriously look at its assets and ensure they are providing best value, such value is not always in the form of a commercial return.

The Parks and Leisure Committee as custodian of the City's open spaces is well aware of the value of well managed and maintained public spaces in assisting the broader social-economic objectives of a City as well as providing and promoting an attractive environment.

Bearing the above in mind, and in accordance with previous Committee decisions, Council Officers have obtained a Planning Assessment for Cathedral Gardens and looked at potential options for the site. Discussions have also been held with a number of interests who have ideas for the site ranging from private developers to arts groups to the University of Ulster.

The Planning Assessment indicates that Cathedral Gardens is a strategically important area of public open space in the city centre and any development proposals should be consistent with this. In planning terms it falls within the definition of open space, which has a presumption against the loss of open space subject to certain exceptions. The planning consultants are however of the view that sensitively designed smaller scale development as part of a comprehensive landscape/public realm improvement scheme to enhance and enliven the open space and deliver community benefit/planning gain, in keeping with the principle of the policy exceptions, is likely to be acceptable.

They advise that retention of Cathedral Gardens as open space is potentially valuable to adjoining landowners including the University of Ulster and Royal Exchange as it could be used to justify/offset higher density development.

The Planning Assessment makes reference to the Department for Social Development's Belfast City Centre 'People and Places' Public Realm Strategy which identifies the site as a prime location for a public realm regeneration scheme. The Belfast City Centre Public Realm Masterplan envisages a catalytic public realm project for Cathedral Gardens that 'announces' arrival at the City Centre. The draft Cathedral Quarter Vision and Framework for Strategic Development (which was considered at the Development Committee on 6 December 2010) recognises the opportunity that Cathedral Gardens presents and emphasises the importance of enhancing the quality of public space around the Cathedral and connectivity to other spaces throughout the Cathedral Quarter and beyond.

Options

- (i) Retain Cathedral Gardens in council ownership as open space in view of its wider social-economic contribution to this part of the city centre. There are however ongoing maintenance costs and currently no identified funding to improve or upgrade.
- (ii) Given that retention of Cathedral Gardens as open space enhances the adjoining sites and that planning approval for development on such sites may rely upon the retention of this open space, enter into an agreement with adjoining landowners, including the University of Ulster, to upgrade and redevelop as a high quality public realm/city park and potentially maintain and manage.
- (iii) Test the market in terms of development of the site for commercial purposes, although the market may be limited given the planning position.

3. Resource Implications

None identified at this time.

4. Equality and Good Relations Implications

None at this time.

5. Recommendations

Committee is recommended to approve Option 1 as the default position, i.e. retain Cathedral Gardens in Council ownership as open space, but agree that officers explore options with adjoining landowners, including the University of Ulster, regarding the future potential of the site in terms of upgrading, management and future maintenance options.

6. Decision Tracking

The Directors of Parks and Leisure and Property and Projects will jointly explore the potential of the site and report back to the Parks and Leisure Committee.”

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Land at Torrens

The Committee was advised that the Northern Ireland Housing Executive had expressed an interest in acquiring a portion of land which was located adjacent to the Torrens Crescent and Torrens Drive area in North Belfast. The Director reported that the site was currently leased to the Council by the Housing Executive for a 25 year period for the purpose of “informal open space”.

He pointed out that a play area had been constructed on the site but had been subjected to vandalism and had become unused and overgrown. The Parks and Leisure Services Department currently had no plans to develop the site and the Housing Executive had undertaken a preliminary feasibility study, which had indicated that there was a potential for additional residential units to be developed within the area and that the housing scheme could include infrastructure such as car parking, access routes and landscaping.

The Director stated that the key issue for the Committee to consider was whether it wished to surrender the lease back to the Executive and he outlined three options as set out hereunder:

- Option 1 - retain the land and develop it;
- Option 2 - retain the land for informal open space and undertake landscaping works; and
- Option 3 - surrender the lease back to the Housing Executive

The Director reported that options 1 and 2 would have cost implications for the Council and that, owing to the short period of the lease remaining, namely 13 years, any development options would be limited. The cost of construction of a playground or multi-use games area on the site would be in excess of £250,000, plus annual maintenance costs of approximately £12,000. Accordingly, he recommended that, due to the fact that the Parks and Leisure Department had no plans to develop the site, the lease be surrendered back to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, subject to notification, in accordance with Standing Order 60, to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor J. Rodgers
Seconded by the High Sheriff (Councillor Stalford),

That the Committee agrees to adopt option 2, that is, retain the land for informal public space and undertake some landscaping works.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Maskey,
Seconded by Councillor Mallon,

That the Committee agrees to adopt option 3 contained within the report, that is, surrender the lease back to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

On a vote by show of hands eight members voted for the amendment and six against and it was accordingly declared carried.

The amendment was thereupon put to the meeting as the Substantive Motion with eight members voting for and six against.

Licence Agreement for Signage at Botanic Gardens

The Committee was reminded that, during the summer of 2009, the Queen's University of Belfast had carried out resurfacing works at the Stranmillis Gardens entrance to the Botanic Gardens. Those works had been carried out on land within the University's ownership, but had extended to a small portion of the Council's land. Those works, which had been completed in a satisfactory manner, had provided good quality surfacing to the entrance of the site. However, the University had erected signage which had been mistakenly placed on Council-owned land and the University was now seeking permission to retain the signage at that location.

The Director pointed out that the key issue for the Committee to consider was whether it wished to permit the signage to remain in its current location and, should the Committee agree to accede to the request, it would be appropriate for the retention of the signage to be regulated by way of a licence agreement, which would cover responsibility for maintenance and any public liability issues. He stated that the absence of an agreement could enable the University to acquire rights to retain the signage and that any licence agreement should contain provisions for the termination of the arrangement and thus protect the Council's position. An alternative would be to request the University to remove the signage and relocate it to its own adjoining land. However, in the interest of developing a good working relationship with the University, that was not considered to be appropriate at this time.

Accordingly, he recommended that the Committee agree to accede to the request which had been received from Queen's University to permit the retention of its signage on the Council's land, subject to an appropriate licence agreement to be prepared by the Assistant Chief Executive and notification to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, in accordance with Standing Order 60.

The Committee agreed to accede to the request.

Drumglass Gate Lodge

The Director reminded the Committee that, by way of a lease dated 8th September, 1924, the former Belfast Corporation had been gifted the Drumglass Park, which at that time had contained a dwelling known as the Drumglass Gate Lodge. The lease had incorporated a covenant which restricted the use of the site to "a public park or children's playground".

The Director reported that, during 1991, the Council had sold the Gate Lodge to a private individual under a long-term lease which restricted the use of the Gate Lodge for residential purposes only. However, the lease had stipulated such use could be altered with the "prior written consent of the Council" and that such "consent could not be unreasonably withheld". He pointed out that the current owner of the Gate Lodge had applied for planning permission to change the use of the property to a "boutique retail store" and had written also to the Council seeking consent to that change of use. The planning application did not appear to involve any structural alterations to the property other than the creation of a new pedestrian access point in the boundary wall fronting the Lisburn Road. In addition, as the Drumglass Park had been gifted to the former Corporation, it was subject to charity law and any change of use which fell outside the terms of the 1924 lease would require the approval of the Department for Social Development's Charities Branch.

The Director stated that the current owner of the Gate Lodge had stated that, whilst the property was located on the edge of the Park, it fronted onto the Lisburn Road and was situated in an area which had become a commercial location. The owner had indicated also that the commercial activity in an adjoining car park took place on a 24-hour basis and thus made sleep difficult therefore rendering residential occupancy uninviting. The owner rented commercial property currently on the opposite side of the Lisburn Road and would intend to transfer her business to the Gate Lodge.

Accordingly, he recommended that the Committee grant approval for the proposed change of use of the Drumglass Gate Lodge from a residential property to a "retail boutique", subject to the approval of the Charities Branch of the Department for Social Development.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Springfield Avenue Playground - Permission for Mural

The Director reported that a request had been received from the Clonard Residents' Association in relation to the creation of a mural on the wall at the recently constructed play area at Springfield Avenue. He reminded the Committee that the Belfast Regeneration Office had met the construction costs of providing the play area and that the Council had undertaken the design and project management of the scheme and had accepted the transfer of the facility, its management and the maintenance liabilities associated therewith. He pointed out that, during the construction phase, there had been ongoing problems with anti-social behaviour and that local residents were keen to take ownership of the facility in order to discourage such behaviour.

The proposed murals would represent the views of children and young people in respect of the Clonard area and its history and a range of local organisations would be represented. Funding for the project would be sought through the Integrated Services for Children and Young People Scheme. Accordingly, he recommended that the Committee agree to accede to the request.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Use of Containers at Council Parks and Leisure Facilities

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to regularise the availability and use of containers and multi-sectional facilities by external organisations and groups on land managed by the Parks.

Excluded from the report are containers and multi-sectional facilities that are owned and used by Belfast City Council only, or are used by Belfast City Council to provide changing or other accommodation and charged for as part of the service. Sheds erected by allotment holders on their allotments are not included in this report.

2 Relevant Background Information

The Committee is reminded that our Parks and Open Spaces are used to accommodate and support a wide and varied range of recreational and leisure activities; many of these are sporting oriented and require access to equipment. However owing to the lack of internal space for storage of equipment and materials in yards, pavilions and bothies it has been necessary in the past to provide containers and multi-sectional facilities [the containers] to resolve this issue.

In some instances the containers may be provided by and owned by the Council, in others the ownership will rest with an external organisation or group. Appendix 1 provides a list of those containers owned by the Council and which have been provided for storage purposes for all users of the facilities. Appendix 2 relates to those containers owned by the Council but which are used exclusively by a single group or organisation and which require an appropriate legal agreement. Appendix 3 provides a list of all those containers which are currently located on Council land, but which are owned by an external organisation or group for their own storage purposes and for which retrospective approval is required. Appendix 4 provides a list of recent requests for containers for storage purposes which also require Committee approval, 2 of which are to be purchased by the Council, one will be bought by the Club and the fourth will be funded by Peace 111.

3 Key Issues

The key issue for the Committee is to establish a consistent and regulated approach to the provision and use of containers.

It is proposed that for the purposes of this report that a container is defined in terms of its use and in this regard it is suggested that a container be viewed as a storage medium, and that that storage may be for sporting or other authorised equipment and materials , or for merchandise or appropriate food stock as necessary.

It is further suggested that containers are usually inappropriate for use as meeting places, office accommodation, changing facilities etc. In these latter cases, a more appropriate form of accommodation, temporary or permanent, would be considered and where necessary the appropriate statutory approvals sought together with an appropriate legal agreement.

It is also proposed that as a legal agreement is required when the owner is not the Council then Committee approval will be sought.

Committee approval is not required as these are provided and owned by Belfast City Council for storage purposes for all staff and all users.

4 Resource Implications

Financial

The provision of two additional containers at a cost of £2,000 each which will be met from the revenue budget.

Human Resources

There are no additional human resource implications.

Asset and Other Implications

The provision of containers for storage will support the delivery of services on sites. However, given the temporary nature of the containers it will be necessary to keep the situation under review.

5 Equality and Good Relations Implications

There are no identified equality or good relations matters associated with this issue.

6 Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. The Committee adopt the working definition of a container as outlined in the report above;
2. Agree to Officers undertaking a review of storage and other facilities within the Parks estate;
3. The Committee conveys retrospective approvals in respect to the sites listed in Appendix 2 and 3 and authorise Officers to prepare an appropriate legal agreement in conjunction with Legal Services;
4. A policy is developed regarding the regulation, provision and usage of containers to include:
 - (i) delegated authority for the Director of Parks and Leisure to permit installation, purchase and usage of containers on Parks and Leisure lands.
 - (ii) consideration of cost recovery/funding regarding containers where appropriate.
 - (iii) supply of containers.
5. The Committee conveys consent to the provision of containers as listed in Appendix 4 and to enter into an appropriate legal agreement in conjunction with Legal Services;
6. The Committee agree that requests relating to the provision of accommodation other than for storage, such as for changing facilities or the provision of hospitality be brought as separate issues for consideration by Committee as appropriate.

7 Decision Tracking

Officer responsible: Principal Parks and Cemeteries Services Manager.

Access to new containers to be arranged by the end of March. Legal agreements to be put in place by April 2011. A facility review to be undertaken by July 2011, and a policy review by August 2011.

Appendix 1 Containers owned and used by Belfast City Council for Storage

Site	Owner	User	Use
Ald Tommy Patton	BCC	BCC	Machinery
Ald Tommy Patton	BCC	BCC	Petrol etc
Andersonstown Leisure Centre	BCC	BCC	Equipment.
Ballysillan	BCC	BCC	Store
Ballysillan Leisure Centre	BCC	BCC	Grassroots soccer prog. Equip
Barnetts Demense	BCC	BCC	Machinery
Barnetts Demense	BCC	BCC	Machinery
Beechvale	BCC	BCC	Store
Beechvale	BCC	BCC	Store
Beechvale	BCC	BCC	Store
Belfast Castle	BCC	BCC	Equipment
Belfast Castle	BCC	BCC	Equipment
Belfast Castle	BCC	BCC	Tools
Blanchflower	BCC	BCC	Store
Blanchflower	BCC	BCC	Store
Botanic Gardens	BCC	BCC	Store
City Cemetery	BCC	BCC	Equipment store
City Cemetery	BCC	BCC	Equipment store
City Cemetery	BCC	BCC	Equipment store
City Cemetery	BCC	BCC	Chemical Store
City Cemetery	BCC	BCC	Machinery Store

Site	Owner	User	Use
City Cemetery	BCC	BCC	Store
City Cemetery	BCC	BCC	Parts store
City of Belfast Playing Fields	BCC	BCC	Store
City of Belfast Playing Fields	BCC	BCC	Store
Cherryvale Playing Fields	BCC	BCC	Store
Crematorium	BCC	BCC	Store
Crematorium	BCC	BCC	Non-perishable items
Duncrue	BCC	BCC	Store
Duncrue	BCC	BCC	Store
Duncrue	BCC	BCC	Store
Duncrue	BCC	BCC	Store
Dundonald Cemetery	BCC	BCC	General storage
Dundonald Cemetery	BCC	BCC	Small - Cement store
Falls Park	BCC	BCC	Equipment
Falls Park	BCC	BCC	Equipment
Gasworks	BCC	BCC	Store
Grovelands	BCC	BCC	Store
Musgrave	BCC	BCC	Store
Musgrave	BCC	BCC	Store
Musgrave	BCC	BCC	Store
Musgrave	BCC	BCC	Store
Musgrave	BCC	BCC	Store
Musgrave	BCC	BCC	Storage equipment sensory

Site	Owner	User	Use
Musgrave Allotments	BCC	Allotment users	Store
Olympia Leisure Centre	BCC	BCC	Store
Ormeau	BCC	BCC	Store
Ormeau	BCC	BCC	Machinery
Ormeau	BCC	BCC	Equipment
Ormeau	BCC	BCC	Equipment
Ormeau	BCC	BCC	Equipment
Ormeau	BCC	BCC	Store
Ormeau	BCC	BCC	Chemicals
Ormeau	BCC	BCC	Machinery
Ormeau	BCC	BCC	Machinery
Ormeau	BCC	BCC	Storage ,chairs
Victoria	BCC	BCC	Lockers
Victoria	BCC	BCC	Playground teams
Victoria	BCC	BCC	Store
Victoria	BCC	BCC	Store
Waterworks	BCC	BCC	Storage
Waterworks	BCC	BCC	Storage

Appendix 2 Containers for storage owned by Belfast City Council, used exclusively by a groups or organisation requiring a legal agreement

Site	Owner	User	Use
Ald Tommy Patton	BCC	East Belfast FC	Storage
Mary Peters' Track	BCC	Athletics NI	Track & sport equipment
Mary Peters' Track	BCC	Athletics NI	Track & sport equipment
Mary Peters' Track	BCC	Athletics NI	Track & sport equipment
Mary Peters' Track	BCC	Athletics NI	Track & sport equipment
Blythfield	BCC	Allotment holders	Store
Cherryvale Playing Fields	BCC	Bredagh GAC	Store

Appendix 3 Containers for storage owned and used by clubs and organisations, requiring retrospective approval.

Site	Owner	User	Use
Ald Tommy Patton	East Belfast FC	East Belfast FC	Storage
Ald Tommy Patton	East Belfast Junior FC	East Belfast Junior FC	Storage
City of Belfast Golf Course	City of Belfast Golf Club	City of Belfast Golf Club	Storage
Clarendon Playing Fields	Clarendon Development Association	Clarendon Development Association	Storage
Hammer	Lower Shankill FC	Lower Shankill FC	Storage
Loughside Playing Fields	Loughside FC	Loughside FC	Storage
Orangefield Playing Fields	Bloomfield FC	Bloomfield FC	Storage
Ulidia Playing Fields	Rosario FC	Rosario FC	Storage
Waterworks	North Belfast play forum	North Belfast play forum	Storage
Waterworks	Friends of the W	Fishing Club	Storage
Willowbank	Willowbank Multisports Facility	Willowbank Multisports Facility	Equipment
Woodlands	The Gaelic Athletic Association	The Gaelic Athletic Association	Equipment

Site	Owner	User	Use
Woodlands	The Gaelic Athletic Association	The Gaelic Athletic Association	Equipment
Woodlands	The Gaelic Athletic Association	The Gaelic Athletic Association	Equipment
Boucher Road **	The City of Belfast Archery Club	The City of Belfast Archery Club	Store
City of Belfast Playing Fields	Cliftonville Cricket Club	Cliftonville	Store
Olympia Leisure Centre	South City	South City	Bike storage
Orangefield Playing Fields	Cycling Ulster	Cycling Ulster	Bikes & kit
Orangefield Playing Fields**	BCC	Water Service/BCC	Sand Bags
Waterworks **	BCC	GROW	Store

Appendix 4 Current requests for further containers for storage for exclusive use by a group or organisation, requiring Committee approval

Site	Owner	User	Use
Ald Tommy Patton	BCC	NI Aeromodelling	Store
Cherryvale	BCC	Bredagh GAC	Store
City of Belfast Playing Fields	Mallusk Archery Club	Mallusk Archery Club	Store
Glenbank Community Garden	BCC	Glenbank Community Garden Committee	Store"

** These Containers have already been granted Committee Approval

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Shore Road Playing Fields - Request for Hospitality Facilities

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1. Relevant Background Information

In June 2010 a letter was received on behalf of Grove United requesting permission to install an anti vandal proof cabin at Shore Road Playing Facilities. Grove United have a facility management agreement for the playing and changing facilities, and have established a close relationship with Malachions who are the other main user of the playing fields.

The request for the cabin is to provide hospitality for visiting teams, many of which come from elsewhere in the province. It is proposed by the Club that the cabin would provide a social area for tea and sandwiches after matches.

The application was originally to be considered in the container report however as the use of the facility is for hospitality and not storage it has been submitted separately.

2. Key Issues

To date the Council has not granted permission for Clubs or groups to install facilities to provide hospitality on site for visiting sports teams or their members. Approval for this facility will create a precedent and more such structures may be requested across all sites.

Shore Road Playing Fields has already a pavilion and additional changing facility structure, which has temporary planning permission to May 2012. This structure would be a third building unit on this small site. In November 2010 Grove United and Malachions were given approval to submit within 6 months a detailed proposal for the development of Shore Road Playing Fields.

The existing facility management agreement with the Club ends in July 2012. The pitches strategy currently being developed should address the future of facility management arrangements and facility provision.

The site proposed for the installation of this cabin, is adjacent to the car park of the Metropolitan Church which is owned by the City Council and is part of the Corporate land bank.

The anti vandal proof cabin will require the installation of electricity, hot and cold running water. Planning permission and other necessary approvals will need to be sought by the Club. Access to the facility for utilities, users and service purposes must avoid the car park area and be along the back of the pitches via the main entrance to the playing fields and the old pavilion.

The Council will need to supervise the use of such facilities during and after hours to ensure that no inappropriate use is taking place.

3. Resource Implications

The Club are proposing to hire and install the cabin at their own expense, paying for the cabin to be linked to utilities and for any required statutory and legal approvals.

There will be some additional resources needed to monitor the use of the facility and in drawing up the necessary licence agreement.

4. Equality Implications

There are no adverse equality or good relations issues.

5. Recommendations

Committee is asked to consider 2 options.

Option 1: To refuse permission for the installation of an anti-vandal cabin at Shore Road Playing Fields for hospitality purposes. The reasons are –

- it will create a precedent across all sites to approve accommodation for hospitality reasons.
- Planning and necessary statutory permissions will be needed.
- the existing facilities management agreement ends in July 2012 and the pitches strategy which is being developed will review their future direction.
- provision of facilities on the site as a whole needs to be reviewed and must take account of the possible approval of the development the Clubs are proposing to bring back to Committee in approximately 6 months.

Option 2; To grant permission for the installation of an anti-vandal proof cabin for hospitality purposes by Grove United at Shore Road Playing Fields. Subject to the Club –

- paying for all the associated installation, management and maintenance costs.
- applying for and abiding by all planning and statutory approvals
- the drawing up of an appropriate legal agreement to the satisfaction of the Assistant Chief Executive and Town Solicitor.

Approval of the proposal to grant a license to install this cabin will also need to be referred for authorisation to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee under standing orders 46 and 60.

6. Decision Tracking

The Principal Parks and Cemeteries Service Manager will draw up a licence agreement with the Club, if required. This will be undertaken once the necessary approvals have been received.”

After discussion, the Committee agreed to adopt option 2 contained within the report.

Tropical Ravine Heritage Lottery Fund Application

The Committee agreed to note the contents of a report in relation to the progress which has been achieved in respect of the completion and submission of the proposed first round heritage grant application in relation to the Tropical Ravine at Botanic Gardens.

Andersonstown Leisure Centre - Request for Use

The Director, with the consent of the Committee, withdrew the above-mentioned item from the agenda.

Digitisation of Cemeteries Records

The Committee agreed to note the contents of a report in relation to the progress which had been achieved in respect of the digitisation of the Council's cemeteries records.

River Rock Signs Sponsorship at Belfast Zoological Garden

The Committee agreed to note the contents of a report in relation to the sponsorship by Deep River Rock of new signage at the Belfast Zoo.

Dunville and Woodvale Parks Update

The Committee agreed to note the contents of a report in relation to the progress which had been achieved in respect of the refurbishment of the Dunville and Woodvale Parks.

Ardoyne Pitch and Mitch

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

The Committee is reminded that at its meeting in August 2010 it received an update report on the Playground Improvement Programme. Within the report reference was made to the Pitch and Mitch Playground, located in the former bus depot close to the Ardoyne shops.

The Pitch and Mitch was constructed in 1998 and externally funded. It has been the focus of ongoing antisocial behaviour and high levels of vandalism over the past 9 years. Members will recall that an annual independent survey of the condition of playgrounds is carried out and that each facility is given a rating of 1 – 10, where (1) indicates that the facility is in a good condition and fit for purpose and is not in need of any works however a (10) would indicate that the Council should consider reviewing its use, close it, re-site it, or change its purpose. The development ratings were first incorporated into the independent playground inspection reports in 2005 and on that occasion the Pitch and Mitch facility received a rating of (6) which was described then as being a site particularly vulnerable to vandalism, in a poor condition and was recommended for capital works.

This play facility has continued to slide into disrepair through heavy vandalism and it was in 2009 that it received the most severe rating of (10).

In the 2010 playground inspection report, the playground inspector retained the development rating of (10) for Pitch and Mitch and also included an additional recommendation that if the Council decided on any future redevelopment, that the community should be directly involved in the process, both children and adults.

At the August meeting the report highlighted a number of options:

1. Construct a new playground;
2. Construct a Multi User Games Area;
3. Create amenity open space (a landscaped area);
4. Consider alternative use;
5. Dispose of the site

At the request of one of the local Councillors a meeting with residents was held. Those residents present accepted that there was little merit in undertaking to re-invest in the play area without a degree of confidence that the facility would be used positively for the benefit of the area. For this reason, in the interim, a number of actions were put forward:

- That the Council undertake some minor revenue works to repair the existing bitmac surface to enable football to be played using the frames which remain;
- To re-open the facility;
- That local school children undertake an arts based project to develop a sign for the park incorporating its name as a symbol of the communities commitment to reclaiming the facility;

- That residents would work with Council Officers to prepare a revised design for the Pitch and Mitch to incorporate different elements of play for a wide range of age groups and which would be presented to the Committee for consideration later in 2011;
- That Council Officers would monitor levels of anti social behaviour in the playground.

The first three of these interim measures have been completed and have resulted in positive community involvement, improved ownership and increased use of the facility

2 Key Issues

The key issue for the Committee is how to determine the future of this facility. In reaching its decision the following points should be taken into account:

1. The site has been badly vandalised over the years;
2. The area itself has few facilities for children and young people;
3. There is a willingness and a determination within the community to reclaim the facility for positive use;
4. The residents have put forward a series of short term proposals with minimal spend implications to test the viability of the playground;

3 Resource Implications

Financial Implications

The cost of resurfacing the facility was £11,000 and has been funded from the playground improvement budget.

Human Resource Implications

There are no additional human resource implications

Other asset implications

The facility is in a poor condition and has a negative impact on its surrounding environment. The neighbourhood is densely populated and there are few facilities in the area for children and young people.

4. Equality and Good Relations Implications

There are no equality implications.

5 Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee agree to work with the residents to reclaim the Pitch and Mitch facility and to receive a proposal from the residents regarding the future development of the site at a later date.

6. Decision Tracking

An update report will be submitted by the Principal and Cemeteries Development Manager in June 2011.”

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Translink Ulster in Bloom Awards

The Head of Parks and Leisure reported that a request had been received from Translink inviting the Lord Mayor (or his nominee) to attend the Translink Ulster in Bloom Awards which would be held during March 2011. She pointed out that the venue for the Awards had yet to be confirmed. However, the Ulster in Bloom Awards were Northern Ireland's longest standing community competition which was organised by the Northern Ireland Local Government Association and sponsored by Translink and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board. In addition, the Council had participated at the event for the past twenty years and had donated a trophy annually. Accordingly, the Head of Parks and Leisure recommended that the Lord Mayor (or his nominee) and one officer be authorised to attend the above-mentioned event.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Support for Sport - Small Development and Hospitality Grants

The Committee noted a schedule of Support for Sport applications in relation to Small Development in Hospitality Grants which had been approved by the Director of Parks and Leisure in accordance with the authority delegated to him. A copy of the Schedule was available on the Council's Modern.gov website.

Damage to Parks Pavilions and Changing Rooms

The Committee noted that a report in relation to the damage caused to the Council's pavilions and changing rooms, as a result of the recent severe weather, would be submitted for its consideration at a future meeting.

Belfast Zoo Workshop

The Committee agreed that a workshop be held at 12.30 p.m. on Wednesday, 2nd February in order to enable Members to inform the review that had been commissioned of the business model at Belfast Zoo.

Chairman