

# Parks and Leisure Committee

Thursday, 14th April, 2011

## MEETING OF PARKS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

- Members present: Councillor O'Reilly (Chairman);  
the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Humphrey);  
the High Sheriff (Councillor Adamson); and  
Councillors Corr, Hartley, Kyle, Mac Giolla Mhín,  
Mallon, Maskey, McCabe, McCarthy, McKenzie,  
McVeigh, L. Patterson, G. Robinson, J. Rodgers  
and Stoker.
- Also attended: The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor (Councillor Convery).
- In attendance: Mr. A. Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure;  
Mrs. R. Crozier, Head of Parks and Leisure; and  
Miss L. Hillick, Democratic Services Officer.

### Apology

An apology for inability to attend was reported from Councillor Stalford.

### Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 10th and 21st March were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 4th April.

### Appointment of Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 10th February, it had agreed, in the interest of making an early appointment to the post of Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure, that authority be delegated to the selection panel to offer the post to the recommended candidate with the outcome of the process being reported back to the Committee for noting.

Accordingly, the Committee was advised that the post had been advertised publicly on 3rd and 4th March in the Belfast Telegraph, the Irish News and the Newsletter, with a closing date of 18th March. Twenty-seven applications had been received and, following shortlisting, eight applicants had been invited to attend an assessment centre on 6th April. Thereafter, three candidates had been invited to attend for a final interview. Subsequently, the selection panel had recommended unanimously the appointment of Mrs. Rose Crozier on the appropriate point of the salary band. In addition, the panel had recommended a reserve candidate.

Noted.

### Review of Roselawn Crematorium

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1 Relevant Background Information**

Members will be aware that this report was considered by the Parks and Leisure Committee at its meeting on 10th March, 2011 at which time Members agreed to defer it for one month to allow for party group briefings regarding the issues and recommendations contained within the report. Party group briefings were delivered as requested over the previous month.

The City of Belfast Crematorium currently provides cremation services to both residents and non-residents of Belfast and is the only crematorium in operation in Northern Ireland.

The number of cremations has been steadily increasing for the past number of years with cremations in Northern Ireland now accounting for 18% of total deaths (74% in the rest of the UK).

Currently the crematorium is operating at full capacity and it is anticipated that the number of people choosing cremation will continue to rise in the future.

Accordingly, as part of the Parks and Leisure improvement programme, the HR/Organisational Development unit together with staff and management have undertaken an operational review of the crematorium. The Institute of Cemeteries and Crematoria Management (ICCM) has been used during this review to provide technical advice and assurance.

It is evident as the crematorium has now reached maximum capacity that current working arrangements need to be addressed.

#### Current operating arrangements

- The crematorium operates Monday to Friday 9.00 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. and Saturday 9.00 a.m. to 11.30 a.m.
- There can be up to an eight day wait for cremation.

### Current staffing establishment

The operational strand of the crematorium consists of:

- 1 x Crematorium Supervisor, Scale 5 plus contractual overtime and weekend enhancement
- 3 x Crematorium Technicians, Scale 4 plus contractual overtime and weekend enhancement.

In order to meet current operational requirements, staff are required to work regular overtime and agency staff are used to supplement permanent staffing levels (see table below for historical figures).

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11 (projected up to period 12)
Overtime Cost	£20,250	£25,310	£21,135
Agency Cost	£39,725	£32,615	£38,692
Total	£59,975	£57,925	£59,827

In addition, regular operational support is provided by Cemetery Operatives.

## 2 Key Issues

- Staff and management have raised concerns that the current working arrangements are inefficient, impractical and risk impacting negatively upon service delivery.
- Support provided by Cemetery Operatives was initially introduced as a temporary arrangement. However, due to the volume of assistance required, it is now causing a strain on their service delivery and the situation is becoming untenable.
- A major area of concern is the length of waiting time for cremations. This is largely due to insufficient capacity for any additional cremations based on the current staffing levels and the number of slots available per day.
- Consideration must also be given to increasing future demand for cremations including the potential increase in revenue.

### Key findings

- It is evident that the current staffing establishment of four is totally inadequate to meet the demands of the crematorium

- Analysis of historical information i.e. agency, overtime spend and cemetery operative cover, shows that, if current operating arrangements continue, there is an immediate need to increase staff at technician level.
- Throughout the review, it became apparent that all major stakeholders, including staff agreed that additional cremation slots should be made available providing an improved service / more choice to customers.
- Whilst Saturday is not treated as a full working day, it has been clearly established that there is the demand for additional slots on Saturdays.
- A work study exercise was conducted to assess the impact of extending the opening hours of the crematorium (potential revenue and impact on future staffing levels)
- Based on current capacity and potential increase in demand, it is anticipated that, if opening hours were to be extended to Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5.30pm and Saturday 8.30am to 2.30pm there would be capacity for an additional 1650 cremations per year (an increase of 50%)

Increasing capacity by 50% will bring additional income to the service. There is a need for significant ongoing investment and additional funds will help to offset some of the cost. Prudent estimates anticipate the following increases:

<i>Financial Year</i>	<i>Income</i>
2011/12*	£125,000
2012/13	£300,000
2013/14	£400,000

\*Based on changes being implemented by period 6 of the financial year 2011/12 and assuming growth in demand based on current analysis of market.

### Proposals

#### *Crematorium Supervisor*

- The role of the crematorium supervisor has evolved and should now be revised to fully reflect the day to day operational accountability and responsibility for the crematorium.

- It is the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure the efficient and effective day to day management of the crematorium ensuring that all operational policies and procedures are in place and are adhered to.
- It is therefore proposed that this post be re graded to SO2 to reflect the higher level of duties and responsibilities and is re – titled to crematorium officer.

#### *Crematorium Technician*

- The current job descriptions of the crematorium technicians should also be revised to include additional duties and responsibilities associated with the opening and closing of the building, meeting and dealing with the bereaved and funeral directors and making operational decisions as and when required.
- It is therefore proposed that these posts are re graded to Scale 6 and re – titled to senior crematorium technician to better reflect the duties and responsibilities.

#### *Current Staffing establishment*

- The crematorium currently has a heavy reliance on agency staff, goodwill from permanent staff to work overtime and also the use of cemetery operatives.
- Furthermore, these current arrangements do not provide a consistency in the level of service being provided.
- It is therefore proposed to increase the number of senior crematorium technician by one thereby eliminating the year on year cost of overtime and agency.

#### *Opening Hours*

- Given the bereavement culture in Northern Ireland whereby funerals and cremations generally happen within three days, the current waiting time of up to eight days can cause additional distress to bereaved families.
- It is proposed to extend the opening hours to Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5.30pm and Saturday 8.30am to 2.30 pm to help reduce waiting times and increase choice, resulting in a substantially higher standard of service delivery.
- If Members agree to extending opening hours the lack of external lighting will be an issue at the site. The Property and Projects department has been asked to assess lighting needs and provide recommendations and estimated costs. Recommendations will be brought to committee at a later date.

*Future staffing establishment*

- The extension of the operating hours will have a knock on effect on the staffing numbers.
- A detailed analysis of additional cremation slots has indicated that additional staff will be required to ensure the effective and efficient operation of the crematorium, whilst enhancing the level of customer service to all stakeholders, including bereaved families, members of the public and funeral directors. It is therefore proposed that, if the council decides to proceed with an extension to the current opening hours, an additional four technicians will be required.

These proposals will lead to a considerable enhancement to the important front line service that has been under significant pressure in recent times.

**3 Financial Implications**

*Changes to current staffing establishment*

The financial impact of:

- Re-designation of the crematorium supervisor and the crematorium technicians is £27,000
- One additional post at Scale 6 is £31,000 (this includes on costs and potential costs of staff working on a shift pattern)
- This will be met by the anticipated reduction in overtime and agency (£59,827 for 2010/11 as stated in overtime and agency table)

*Changes to future staffing structures*

The cost of increasing the number of crematorium technicians (Scale 4) by four is £100,000. It is anticipated that in the first year of implementation (the last 6 months of 2011/12) revenue will increase by £125,000. This will cover the full year cost of the additional four posts, plus allow for additional reinvestment into the crematorium to further improve the service.

### Human Resources

Consultation will continue with all relevant stakeholders including HR, trade unions and staff to develop an implementation plan which is fully in accordance with all HR policies and procedures. *However Committee should note that all parties have been consulted throughout this process to date and are in agreement with the recommendations contained in the review thus presenting a joint agreed position.*

Further work will continue with staff and management to develop appropriate job descriptions and shift patterns. It is acknowledged that all affected post holders will be required to sign and agree amended job descriptions to take account of changes in reporting lines and agree to the a working rota that meets the proposed business needs.

### Asset and Other Implications

The proposals outlined present an opportunity to contribute to future capital investment in crematoria and cemetery facilities.

#### 4 Equality and Good Relations Implications

There are no equality or good relations implications.

#### 5. Recommendations

Committee is asked to approve the following proposals as outlined within the report:

- Re-designate the posts of crematorium supervisor to Crematorium Officer (SO 2) and crematorium technicians to Senior Crematorium Technicians (scale 6) to better reflect the additional duties and responsibilities
- Increase the establishment of senior crematorium technicians by one to cope with current demand
- Extend the hours of opening for the crematorium to 8.30am – 17.30pm Monday to Friday, and Saturday 8.30am to 14.30pm
- As a result of the extended opening hours increase the number of crematorium technicians by four.

6. **Decision Tracking**

The Head of Parks and Leisure will be responsible for implementation of structural and operational changes by end of September, 2011.”

The Committee granted the approvals sought.

**Draft Parks and Leisure Departmental Plan 2011/2012**

The Committee agreed to defer until its meeting scheduled to be held on 9th June consideration of the draft Parks and Leisure Departmental Plan 2011/2012.

**Playing Pitches Strategy**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 **Relevant Background Information**

Members are aware of the ongoing process to develop a playing pitches strategy and as part of this a number of reports have been considered by committee. The latest of these was the special meeting of the committee on 21 March 2011. An extract from the minutes is set out below:

*‘Arising from discussion, Members expressed the following concerns:*

- *the Cliftonville playing fields and other facilities located in the North of the City had not been included within the list of viable sites for the delivery of phase 1; and*
- *that it appeared that adequate provision had not be made for the future development of cricket and junior and ladies football provision.*

*In addition, several Members sought further information in relation to the matrix which had been utilised to score each viable site for development.*

*After discussion, the Committee:*

- (i) noted that action plans would be developed for the delivery of objectives 1 and 2 contained within the report;*
- (ii) agreed that the weightings associated with the prioritisation matrix be amended as follows:*



- *Need 30%*
- *Proximity 10%*
- *External Funding 20%*
- *Partnership 10%*
- *Intensification of use 20%*
- *Reputational Risk 10%; and*

*(iii) agreed to defer consideration of the prioritised lists for pitches and training facilities to enable further information to be obtained.'*

Since the special Committee officers have been working to address these concerns and the information requested is detailed in the following sections.

## **2 Key Issues**

### **2.1 Juvenile provision**

Members queried the provision that is currently being made for juveniles, in particular junior soccer, and whether it was meeting the need across the city.

An analysis of current usage shows that 6 youth soccer leagues are allocated a total of 66 pitches across the city on Saturday mornings for their matches. A total of 5 pitches are used on Sundays for junior soccer. The teams that make up the junior soccer leagues range in age from under 10s up to under 18s. Five GAA clubs book pitches at Cherryvale, Boucher and Cliftonville for juvenile matches and one rugby club use a pitch at Cherryvale for its junior team. These pitches are not allocated and are booked on a first come basis.

Currently juvenile games for all sports are played on the full size pitches and the leagues/clubs mark out smaller areas with cones if this is required. The leagues have not requested that the council mark out pitches for junior games. The council currently provide smaller portable posts at Cherryvale; and a request has also been made for smaller portable posts at Boucher Road and this is currently being considered.

Consideration could be given to converting several full size pitches into junior soccer pitches; there are several pitches that are not currently used by senior leagues (one at Boucher Road and one at Strangford Avenue) or only on an occasional basis (four at Victoria Park). If this option was considered the impact on older teams would need to be considered further.

There would also be a financial impact if this option was chosen as it is unlikely that senior leagues would chose to play on junior pitches resulting in a lose of income.

It is recommended that further work be carried out in relation to this issue including an examination of best practice from elsewhere.

## **2.2 Cliftonville Playing Fields**

At the special meeting on 21st March, 2011 Members expressed concerns that the Cliftonville Playing Fields and other facilities located in the north of the city had not been included within the list of viable sites for delivery in phase 1 of the strategy.

Members will be aware that the Council's agreed position regarding the development of Bunscoil Bhean Mhadagain at the Cliftonville Playing Fields was decided by the Community and Recreation (Parks and Cemeteries Sub-Committee) on 6 February 2007. The Sub-Committee agreed to proceed with the sale of the land to the Bunscoil, a site of some 1.3 acres and agreed to proceed with a grant of rights to the Bunscoil in respect of just over half an acre to facilitate the development of shared car-parking. The funding for the sale of the site was to be provided by the Department of Education for Northern Ireland. The Sub-Committee also agreed to the development of a new GAA pitch on the remaining land behind the school which would be part-funded by the sale of the site.

The Department of Education informed the Bunscoil in 2010 that the economic appraisal had been approved and that the preferred option is for a replacement school on the basis outlined above. However the Department have not to date given an indication as to when it would be in a position to fund the school development.

Following the discussion at the special meeting on 21 March 2011, the Director contacted the Deputy Secretary in the Department of Education and has subsequently written to the Department to seek clarification of the current position. To date no response has been received from the Department.

The Director has also met with representatives of the Bunscoil and the two GAA clubs that currently use the playing fields to explore the options regarding the site. They have undertaken to write to the Council outlining their joint position.

Officers have also identified a range of possible scenarios regarding pitch development on the site and have been assessing them against the prioritisation matrix. Until clarification is received from the Department of Education, the Bunscoil and the GAA clubs it is not possible to provide Members with sufficient information to review the position regarding the Cliftonville Playing Fields.

### **2.3 Partnership Opportunities**

Members will be aware that in the second phase of the implementation of the strategy the council wishes to work in partnership with other organisations in the provision of playing pitches. The council is currently exploring the possibility of developing Memoranda of Understandings with both BELB and CCMC which would include a requirement for consultation between all partners on any capital expenditure on new facilities including playing pitches or leisure facilities. Work will continue on this in conjunction with the Director of Property and Projects and a report will be brought forward in due course.

### **2.4 Prioritisation – pitches**

At the special committee meeting in March 2011, Members requested the detail behind the scores that each site was given following the application of the prioritisation matrix; this has now being circulated to all Members of the Parks and Leisure Committee.

It was proposed that any capital development of pitches would follow the priority list, in priority order (and would involve not less than 5 sites) subject to consideration of “deliverability” issues or obstacles which could potentially hinder development of the site.

The sites which are chosen for a new or upgraded 3G pitch development will also have provision made for the necessary ancillary features such as sufficient changing facilities, flood lighting and fencing.

Members should note that the GAA have confirmed that they allow 3G pitches to be used for both training and competitive matches.

Members are also advised that the council has been holding ongoing discussions with the GAA re potential partnerships, including funding for the development of pitches and the GAA have provided the council with outline proposals for developments at Woodlands and Cherryvale Playing Fields. These will have to be assessed in some detail. If as a result of partnership funding additional money becomes available from the £10 million allocation in the capital programme, it is the intention that this money would be used to develop sites additional to the five that have been initially prioritised.

## **2.5 Cricket pitches**

The draft strategy provides for the installation of cricket squares at two sites. Subject to Committee agreement it is proposed that an additional cricket square would be installed at the City of Belfast Playing Fields and that the current cricket square at Blanchflower be upgraded. This would bring the total number of cricket squares that the council provide up to five; three at City of Belfast Playing Fields and one each at Blanchflower and Grove Playing Fields (two of which are synthetic wickets).

## **2.6 Changing Facilities**

An upgrade of existing changing facilities is also planned in the first phase of implementation of the playing pitches strategy. The upgrade will involve 4 sites (at an estimate of approx £300K each) and it is proposed that the sites will be chosen from the following:

- Ballysillan – new facility
- Blanchflower – upgrade to existing facilities
- Dixon - upgrade to existing facilities
- Musgrave Park – new facility
- Victoria – upgrade to existing facilities
- Waterworks (Westlands) – new facility
- Wedderburn – upgrade to existing facilities

The criteria outlined in the prioritisation matrix are not appropriate when applied to the investment decisions required for changing facilities. Instead this list is based on information regarding condition at existing changing facilities given the intention to provide adequate changing at any new pitch site.

Members should note that this list is subject to the final decision that is taken on which sites will be chosen for pitch development and therefore may change.

## **2.7 Next Steps**

Subject to committee and Council approval of the capital investment proposals the next stage in the process is the second phase of public consultation. This will focus on the local impact of the development of sites as agreed by council.

Members agreed at the special meeting in December 2010 that the public consultation exercise will involve a series of meetings with key stakeholders and users and that these will be independently facilitated. The consultation papers will also be available to download from the website and information on the second phase of the consultation will be sent out to all those people on our mailing list.

## **3 Resource Implications**

### **Financial**

£10 million has been allocated in the capital programme for the implementation of the playing pitches strategy in the period 2011-2014

### **Human Resources**

No additional human resources known at this time.

### **Asset and Other Implications**

None at this stage although the implementation of the strategy may have implications on the number and type of playing pitches provided by the council.

## **4 Equality and Good Relations Implications**

Policy Arc Ltd has been appointed to externally verify the equality dimensions to the development of the strategy. Their feedback is that the process to date is in line with the statutory guidance. They continue to offer advice and feedback to the council throughout the consultation and EQIA process.

**5 Recommendations**

Not all of the information and clarification requested by Members at the Special Meeting on 21 March 2011 is yet available. Members are asked to note the progress to date and agree that final recommendations will be reported to the Committee at its June meeting.

**6 Decision Tracking**

A report outlining a final recommendation will be brought to committee in June 2011 by the Director of Parks and Leisure.”

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

**Cemeteries and Crematorium Charges**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1. Relevant Background Information**

Members will recall the report presented in February on the review of fees and charges for burials and cremations which was agreed at Council on 1st March.

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 2011/12 estimates.

**2. Key Issues**

At February Parks and Leisure Committee Members agreed that:

- (i) in relation to the provision of new graves for Belfast residents, option 1 be adopted, that is, no price increase;
- (ii) in relation to the provision of new graves for non – Belfast residents, option 2 be adopted, that is a 5% increase;
- (iii) in relation to those cremation charges applicable to Belfast residents, option 1 be adopted, that is, no price increase
- (iv) in relation to those cremation charges applicable to non-Belfast residents, that a 10% increase be levied each year over the next four year period; and

- (v) a review be undertaken over the next six months in respect of all charges levied in connection to the council's provision of cemeteries and cremation services.

The above decision has implications in relation to the budgeted estimated provision for 2011/12 for the service as they do not provide for an inflationary increase in costs to the service or generate the level of income estimated.

3. **Resource implications**

**Financial**

The analysis of the current levels of demand by residents and non residents indicates a potential loss of income in relation to burials is £24,000. However as 61% of current users of the crematorium are non residents with the 10% increase in charges agreed there is the potential to gain approximately £10,000. The net loss in relation the charges set would be £14,000 approximately. Again these figures are subject to demand and are based on the trends experienced in 2010/11 year to date.

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**

Members are asked to note the contents of the report.

6. **Decision Tracking**

New pricing schedule implemented from 1st April 2011 as per the recommendation adopted to be carried out by the Business Manager and reflected in the estimates going forward where applicable.”

Arising from discussion, a Member referred to a recent case in which, at the request of the coroner, a sample of human tissue had been held back from burial. Thereafter, the deceased person's widow had been charged a fee once again to reopen the grave. He expressed the view that that was unfair and that sensitivity and discretion should be used in such cases and he suggested that the Director of Parks and Leisure be delegated authority to waive fees at the Cemetery and Crematorium where he considered the circumstances to warrant such a decision.

The Committee agreed to adopt the recommendation and noted that a report on the issue of the waiving of fees for such matters would be submitted for its consideration at a future meeting.

### **Arrears of Rent and Rate Reviews at Whiterock Close**

(Ms. D. Thornton, Principal Solicitor, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **“1 Relevant Background Information**

1.1 By a 99 year lease dated 29th December, 1995 the council leased approximately 0.3 hectares (0.74 acres) of land at Whiterock Close to the “trustees of Blackmountain Irish Medium School”. Four named trustees signed the lease. Some time in early 2005 the school moved to another site and in June 2006 because of anti-social behaviour on the site, the site was cleared of buildings and levelled. The site has remained undeveloped since.

1.2 At a meeting on 19th June, 2009 the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee provided authority for the council to accept surrender of the 99 year lease from the school trustees. The Committee also agreed to defer a decision on the pursuance of arrears. Following this, council officers prepared a Deed of Surrender for signature by the trustees. The completed Deed of Surrender was returned to the council on 14th January, 2011. As a result, control of the site has now been returned to the council.

#### **1.3 Arrears of Rent**

Historically the school paid rent quarterly on demand but around the time the school moved to a new location, and vacated the site at Whiterock Close, regular payments came to an end. The last regular payment was made for the period up to 30th August, 2005. Since then the only payments received were in April and June 2008 to cover three periods in 2006. No payments have been made since.

1.4 Around the time the school moved off site, two of the four school trustees (who were developing an adjoining site with social housing) approached the council to seek variation and extension of the lease to allow elements of commercially orientated development on the site. Under the auspices of the then Head of Recreation and Community Development, discussions on the future of the site ensued with school



representatives. During this period the council sought, and were provided with, assurances regarding the payment of arrears of rent, including:

- (i) Letter dated 9th June, 2006 from the school Principal stating the trustees will abide by the conditions of the lease;
- (ii) At meeting on 18th July, 2006, school representatives (including one trustee) agreed arrears would be settled shortly;
- (iii) At meeting on 16th November, 2006, school representatives agreed to forward a letter setting out proposals for clearance of arrears;
- (iv) Letter dated 16th January, 2008 from one of trustees saying the trustees have agreed to pay outstanding rent arrears; and
- (v) Letter dated 25th November, 2008 from the school Principal saying that some outstanding invoices had been passed for payment.

1.5 In view of the continuing non-payment of rent and other issues, a report was brought to Parks and Leisure Committee in March 2008 in relation to the trustees request for conversion of the their leasehold interest to an unrestricted freehold interest. The report also highlighted potential for termination of the lease and recovery of the site and potential reference to the Lands Tribunal in relation to the outstanding rent review. The matter was deferred for further information. In June 2008 a similar report was brought to Parks and Leisure Committee and was deferred for a further legal opinion.

1.6 In a letter dated 11th March, 2009, two of the four school trustees, confirmed they wished to surrender their interest in the 1995 lease. Following this a report was presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in June 2009. This sought authority on two matters. Firstly acceptance of the surrender, subject to completion of an appropriate legal agreement and secondly to seek authority to pursue arrears up to the date on which the trustees first indicated in writing that they would surrender the lease (i.e. by letter dated 11th March, 2009). Committee agreed to accept the surrender of the lease and deferred a decision on pursuing arrears to enable further information to be obtained.

1.7 Since the Strategic Policy and Resources decision of June 2009, Legal Services and Estates Management Unit, with the assistance of community representatives, have endeavoured to arrange completion of the formal Deed of Surrender. This has proved a long and difficult process,

mainly on account of the uncertain whereabouts of one of the four trustees (the Deed required the signatures of all four trustees named in the original 1995 lease). As mentioned at the commencement of this report the completed Deed of Surrender has only recently been received.

#### **1.8 Rent Reviews**

The initial market rent under the 1995 was £3,325 per annum. The lease provided for reviews of rent every five years. The first Rent Review fell due on 1st December 1999 and was agreed with the school Principal at £6,500 per annum. The second review with effect from 1st December 2004 was triggered by Estates Management Unit on 29th December, 2004, at which time a proposed revised rental level of £9250 per annum was proposed to the school. With the other issues prevalent at that time, the school did not engage in any negotiations or indicate a level of rent they would be prepared to pay. In light of this, the reports to the Parks and Leisure Committee in March and June 2008 (referred to above) included a request for authority to refer (if necessary) the matter to the Lands Tribunal for decision on the level of revised rent. Committee deferred consideration of these matters. The next reference to Committee in March 2009 sought direction only on the core issues of lease surrender and collection of arrears.

- 1.9 While Rent Review is an important issue with financial implications for the parties to the lease, the extent of the financial implications are to a large degree influenced by the date up to which Committee decide to pursue Arrears of Rent.

### **2 Key Issues**

#### **2.1 Arrears of Rent**

- (i) Rent paid regularly up until 30th August, 2005;
- (ii) The only payments since 2005 were made in April and June 2008 specifically to cover three quarterly invoices from March, June and August 2006;
- (iii) Assurances were provided by school representatives in 2006 and in 2008 that arrears would be dealt with;
- (iv) By letter dated 11th March, 2009 the two trustees who had been in discussions regarding future development of the site agreed to surrender their interest in the 1995 lease;
- (v) Formal Deed of Surrender, signed by all four trustees, received on 14th January, 2011.

Advice obtained from Legal Services is that all four trustees are individually and collectively liable for rental payments. While the financial capacity of the trustees to pay arrears is not known, it is likely the ability of some trustees to make payment, will be greater than that of others.

## **2.2 Rent Reviews**

The date up to which Committee decide to pursue Arrears of Rent will have a considerable influence on the financial impact of Rent Review(s) upon the trustees. In view of this it is proposed to leave the matter of Rent Review for further discussion with the school trustees following the Committee's decision regarding the date to which Arrears of Rent are to be pursued.

## **3. Resource Implications**

### **3.1 Financial Implications**

#### **Arrears of Rent**

Rent is a debt owed and the council is obliged to pursue this to seek the best settlement available. Committee's view on the date up to which the council should seek to recover payment are set out as Options 1 to 7 below. Each quarterly invoice is for a sum of £1,625.

Option 1. Seek payment up to completion of the Deed of Surrender, 14th January, 2011. The amount due up to this date is £29,983.87.

Option 2. Seek payment up to the date when the initial Deed of Surrender, signed by three of the four trustees was received (19th March, 2010). The amount due up to this date was £23,081.93.

Option 3. Seek payment up to the date the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee authorised surrender of the lease, 19th June, 2009. The apportioned amount due up to this date is £19,301.27

Option 4. Seek payment up to the date of the letter from two of the trustees (the two who had been involved in discussions with the council regarding potential commercial development of the site) indicating their willingness to surrender the lease, 11th March, 2009. The apportioned amount due up to this date is £17,525.49.

**Option 5.** Seek payment of any invoices which pre-date the date the last payment made to the council. This is on the basis that the making of payments was a clear indication of the acceptance of responsibility by the school for the site. The last payment was made on 6th June, 2008 and the outstanding amount due at this date is £12,566.62.

**Option 6.** Seek payments for amounts up to the date the site was cleared of school buildings. It is believed this was in the week commencing 12th June, 2006. The total amount outstanding as at 12 June 2006 is £3,250.

**Option 7.** Seek payment up to the date the school left the site for their new premises. This is believed to be circa the end of January 2005. Amounts outstanding up to this date are £nil.

In summary:

**Option 1.** Rent up to 14 January 2011 - £29,983.87.

**Option 2.** Rent up to 19 March 2010 - £23,081.93.

**Option 3.** Rent up to 19 June 2009 - £19,301.27.

**Option 4.** Rent up to 11 March 2009 - £17,525.49.

**Option 5.** Rent up to 6 June 2008 - £12,566.62.

**Option 6.** Rent up to 12 June 2006 - £3,250.

**Option 7.** Rent up to 31 January 2005 - £nil.

**3.2** None of the proposed settlement dates referred to in the above Options would be curtailed by the operation of the Limitation Act 1980 (referred to as the 'Statute of Limitations'). Legal Services advice is that Members will be acting within their powers in determining which ever date Members consider reasonable.

**3.3** Following discussions with one of the trustees on 14th March, 2011 it was agreed he would make a written submission for consideration by Committee. This may be available for tabling at Committee.

**3.2 Rent Reviews**

Financial implications related to Rent Review(s) to be reported to a future meeting of Committee following further discussion/negotiation with the school trustees.

**3.3 Human Resources Implications**

Resources in Central Transactions Unit will be required to seek payment up to whatever date and for whatever amounts Committee determine are appropriate. Any difficulties in obtaining payments up to the designated date could involve Legal Service resource in an effort to recover arrears due. Further negotiation of rent reviews would draw primarily on Estates Management resource.

**3.4 Asset and Other Implications**

The continuing non-payment of rent combined with the difficulties in obtaining surrender of the lease have now been brought to an end by completion of the Deed of Surrender and consequent recovery of the site for council use. The asset is now available for the potential benefit of the local Community and users of the adjoining council facilities.

**4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations**

4.1 No known equality or good relations considerations.

**5 Recommendations**

5.1 Recommendations on the two issues i) Arrears of Rent; and ii) Rent Review; are set out separately below. Members are recommended to provide relevant authority on each of these separately.

**(i) Arrears of Rent**

The site was leased for 99 years for school purposes. Around the time the site was vacated by the school, two of the trustees entered discussions with the council to seek an extension of the term of the lease and widen the terms of the lease to facilitate elements of commercial development. During this period regular payments of rent ceased, although the council received assurances from the school Principal and the relevant two trustees regarding payment of arrears. The most recent letter suggesting arrears would be paid is dated 16th January, 2008. A subsequent letter dated 25th November, 2008 said that some outstanding invoices would be passed for payment, but gave no undertaking as to

which invoices or how much of the arrears would be cleared. In view of the various assurances it is considered the council seek payment of arrears up to the date on which a letter was received from the two relevant trustees confirming their intention to surrender their interest in the lease (i.e. letter dated 11th March 2009). Option 4 is therefore recommended for Committee approval subject to the further approval of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in accordance with Standing Orders 46 and 60.

(ii) Rent Review

Members are asked to note that further discussions between officers and the trustees regarding the Rent Review(s) will be initiated following the Committee's decision on the principal issue of Arrears of Rent and that a further report will be brought to Committee within two months to update members on progress regarding Rent Review.

6 Decision Tracking

Director of Parks and Leisure to liaise with the Director of Property and Projects with a view to bringing the matter of arrears to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee within two months of the ratification by full council of the decision of this Parks and Leisure Committee. Director of Parks and Leisure to liaise with Director of Property and Projects to bring a report on Rent Review(s) to the Parks and Leisure Committee within two months."

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Corr,  
Seconded by Councillor McCarthy,

That the Committee agrees to adopt Option 7 contained within the report.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Stoker,  
Seconded by Councillor J. Rodgers,

That the Committee agrees to adopt Option 4 contained within the report.

On a vote by show of hands three Members voted for the amendment and nine against and it was accordingly declared lost. The original proposal standing in the name of Councillor Corr and seconded by Councillor McCarthy was thereupon put to the meeting with nine Members voting for and none against and it was accordingly declared carried.

### **Land at Lenadoon Millennium Park**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **“1 Relevant Background Information**

- 1.1** In early March 2011 the council were approached by the architect acting for Lenadoon Community Forum (LCF), representatives of Lenadoon Community Forum (LCF) and Suffolk and Lenadoon Interface Group (SLIG) regarding the proposed construction of changing accommodation on Housing Executive land which lies between council owned sites at Horn Drive Community Centre and Lenadoon Millennium Park. The area outlined red is being purchased by LCF from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (I).
- 1.2** It is understood LCF are developing changing accommodation for players using the nearby pitches at Lenadoon Millennium Park. The construction of the changing accommodation is being funded by Sport NI. As part of the grant conditions Sport NI had required LCF to spend a substantial proportion of the grant aid this current financial year (i.e. before 31st March, 2011). Council officers were informed that failure to spend the relevant grant aid within this timescale would put the entire project at risk. Sport NI has however now relaxed this requirement to allow LCF to obtain good title to the necessary lands, provided this is in place before mid-June 2011. LCF currently have a facility management agreement with the council in relation to operation of Lenadoon Millennium Park.
- 1.3** Following the approach from LCF it was discovered that the forum wished to use portions of council owned land to facilitate the construction of changing accommodation for which they already had planning permission. In essence the building, as designed, was too big for the site which LCF were purchasing from the Housing Executive and LCF required additional land to allow construction to proceed. Council officers from Community Services (Development Department) and Parks and Leisure Department have considered the various proposals from LCF. Input was also provided by the Estates Management Unit and the council's Security Manager. It was considered that the least detrimental solution in relation to the council's existing land holdings would be to permit

development into part of Lenadoon Millennium Park to facilitate the construction of the LCF changing accommodation. This solution, together with some additional security measures along the roof of the new building, were seen as going a long way towards eliminating any additional risks to the site security of the council's adjoining Horn Drive Community Centre. The total incursion into the Lenadoon Millennium Park site is a strip measuring approximately 1.85 metres wide by approximately 23 metres long, which LCF would need to purchase/lease from the Council to accommodate part of the footprint of the new building.

- 1.4 Following discussions with the architect and contractor, in relation to proposed temporary use of council land as a contractor's compound, the architect and contractor sought a working width of 3 metres of the park (this is in addition to the strip referred to in the previous paragraph). Officers considered this was on the limit of what was acceptable given the proximity to the council's adjoining playground at Lenadoon Millennium Park.

## 2 Key Issues

- 2.1 Lenadoon Community Forum is seeking to purchase a 1.85 metre wide strip of council land measuring approximately 43.32 square metres. At this stage a disposal price has yet to be agreed, however a sale price of approximately £1200 in respect of the aforementioned 43.32 square metres is considered to reflect the level of market for this type of use (on basis of the agreed purchase price for the sale of adjoining land from I to LCF).
- 2.2 At a meeting on 28th March, 2011 with LCF representatives they indicated that no further funds are available to allow them to acquire the relevant land at market value and they are seeking to acquire the land free of charge. As the land is to be used for purposes which the council can support under powers conferred on the council by the Recreation and Youth Services (NI) Order 1986, Articles 10(a) and (c), Legal Services advice is that the council is at liberty to dispose of the land at less than 'best price' without seeking Department of the Environment approval.
- 2.3 The above mentioned land area to be disposed of to LCF, is held by the council on a 10,000 year lease from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and the council is required to seek Housing Executive approval to any disposal. The Housing Executive will also require the council to make a payment to



them for release of a covenant which restricts use of the site to 'Informal Open Space'. The payment for release of the covenant (to allow community use/changing accommodation on this small part of the site) has been assessed by the District Valuer (acting for I) at £1000.

- 2.4 The land at Lenadoon Millennium Park is also held subject to a Deed of Dedication between the council and The Millennium Commission. This Deed requires the council to seek Millennium Commission approval (now administered by the Big Lottery Fund) to any leasing or sale of land and to any change of use of the land. Council officers have contacted The Millennium Commission and have obtained informal approval to the proposed disposal. This approval remains subject to formalisation via a legal Deed of Variation. It is understood the Millennium Commission will not seek any repayment of grant aid.
- 2.5 The terms of the proposed temporary Licence Agreement for a contractor's compound are currently being agreed with the contractor Moss Construction (NI) Limited for a 4.85 metre wide strip of council land (i.e. the 1.85 metres which LCF propose to purchase plus a further 3 metres working width). Terms include payment of a weekly Licence Fee.

In summary:

- (i) Members are asked to consider disposal of approximately 43.32 square metres of land at Lenadoon Millennium Park to Lenadoon Community Forum. Disposal of the land to be by way of a 99 year lease with use of the land restricted to 'community use and changing accommodation only'. These terms need to be, and are, consistent with the terms under which LCF will hold the land on which the main part of the changing accommodation will be located. Members may wish to consider whether to dispose of this land on a basis similar to the adjoining land being acquired by LCF, or to dispose of the land free of charge based on the Council's ability to do so under the Recreation and Youth Services (NI) Order 1986. That is, at approximately £1200, or alternatively, at Nil value;
- (ii) Members are asked to note that various formal approvals from the Housing Executive need to be obtained prior to any disposal to LCF. In relation to the relaxation of the restriction on use of the land to

allow its use as a community building / changing accommodation, the District Valuer has assessed the value payable by the council to the Housing Executive at £1000;

- (iii) Members are asked to note that any proposed disposal to LCF will require Millennium Commission approval via a formal Deed of Variation; and
- (iv) Members are asked to consider the grant of a temporary Licence Agreement to Moss Construction (NI) Limited, during the construction of the changing accommodation, subject to detailed terms being agreed by the Estates Manager.

Summarising i) and ii) above the Housing Executive will charge the sum of £1000 to allow use of 43.32 square metres of Lenadoon Millennium Park for community use/changing accommodation. The council has the option of selling LCF the land at market value (£1200) or at £Nil. This would allow a number of financial outcomes for the council.

Option 1.	BCC charge LCF market value for land	£1200
	Council bear costs for release of covenant	(£1000)
	Net positive financial benefit to Council	<u>£ 200</u>
Option 2.	BCC charge LCF nil value for land	£ 000
	LCF bear Council costs for release of covenant	<u>£ 000</u>
	Net cost to Council	£ Nil
Option 3.	BCC charge LCF nil value for land	£ 000
	Council bear costs for release of covenant	<u>(£1000)</u>
	Net cost to Council	(£1000)

### **3 Resource Implications**

#### **3.1 Financial**

In terms of the proposed disposal of land to LCF, none of the financial outcomes referred to above involve significant amounts of money, ranging from a net financial gain to the council of £200 (Option 1) to a net financial loss to the council of £1000 (Option 3). However, a sum of £1000 will be payable to NIHE for the release of the restrictive covenant and in the event that this is not recouped from LCF it should be noted that there is currently no identified budget allocation for this in the Parks and Leisure budget.

In accordance with usual practice it is proposed to charge the contractor a weekly fee for grant of the proposed Licence Agreement. The purpose of the fee is designed to encourage the contractor not to remain on the site for any longer than is necessary and to help defray the council's legal and other expenses in relation to provision of the Licence Agreement. It also recognises the potential cost savings to the contractor that provision of this additional working width provides.

#### **3.2 Human Resources**

No additional human resources required. Resources from Parks and Leisure Department, Estates Management Unit and Legal Services have been and will be required, to reach agreement on terms with LCF and with the various external agencies (NIHE and Millennium Commission).

#### **3.3 Asset and Other Implications**

The provision of changing accommodation at Lenadoon Millennium Park may assist in underpinning the longer term sustainability of the playing pitches on the site. The proposed transactions would result in loss of a small area of the site from the immediate control of the council but may cement community involvement in the site. This positive outcome is contingent upon the LCF being able to sustain the facility in the longer term.

**4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations**

- 4.1 No known equality or good relations issues although Lenadoon Community Forum (LCF) are engaged as part of the Suffolk Lenadoon Interface Group (SLIG). Information is currently being sought from LCF in relation to Section 75 compliance.

**5 Recommendations**

- 5.1 Members are recommended to authorise the disposal of a portion of Lenadoon Millennium Park to Lenadoon Community Forum on a 99 year lease at nil value with the Council recouping the costs of relaxation of the NIHE restrictive covenant on the land, from Lenadoon Community Forum (Option 2 above) at a net cost to the council of £nil, subject to the approval of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in accordance with Standing Orders 46 and 60 and appropriate legal agreements to be compiled, or approved by, the Town Solicitor and Assistant Chief Executive. The disposal of the land will be subject to funding from Sport NI to facilitate the development of the proposed changing accommodation.
- 5.2 Members are further recommended to provide approval to the Grant of Licence Agreement to Moss Construction (NI) Limited to facilitate the construction of changing accommodation for Lenadoon Community Forum, for a period of 26 weeks (and week to week thereafter up to a maximum of 52 weeks) with the Licence to cover all insurance and reinstatement issues, at a Licence Fee of £50 per week, for approximately 123.3 square metres, hatched blue on the attached Appendix 3. Grant of Licence also to be subject to Lenadoon Community Forum taking primary responsibility for liaising with the local community in relation to any issues arising from the construction project.

**6 Decision Tracking**

Director of Parks and Leisure to liaise with Director of Property and Projects in relation to agreement on terms of disposal with LCF, various third party approvals and reference of the disposal to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at the earliest opportunity.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

### **Transfer of Land at Belmont Park to Strathearn School**

The Committee noted a report in relation to the progress which had been achieved regarding the transfer of land at the Belmont Park to the Strathearn School.

In addition, the Committee noted that, following the land transfer a number of local residents had expressed concern regarding the transfer and the works which had been carried out by the school's contractor on the site. As a result, the residents had formed a Friends' Group and were working closely with officers to formally constitute the Group in line with the Department's Friends' Group policy. Officers would be working with the new group to develop a plan to help mitigate the impact of the transfer of the land to the school and to identify opportunities for new events and other activities in Belmont Park.

### **Gallaher Bowling Club**

The Committee agreed to defer until its meeting scheduled to be held on 9th June consideration of a report in relation to access by the Gallaher Bowling Club to the Council's land known as the Black Path located off Severn Street.

### **Grove Park Community Garden**

The Committee was advised that, during July, 2010, a request had been received from the Friends of the Grove Park to establish a community garden at the Park. Since that time, there had been a series of meetings with the Friends Group and other stakeholders to develop the idea and to establish a time-frame for its delivery. In addition, the Group had partnered with Groundwork Northern Ireland to assist with the Project.

The Director reported that the Friends of the Grove Park had been in existence since January, 2009 and had delivered many events and activities within the Park, including tea dances in the bowling pavilion and family festivals which had encouraged participation and increased the health and wellbeing of park users. The Group had secured various amounts of funding to assist with the delivery of its events, activities and initiatives and had identified the Community Garden as a viable project which would:

- encourage community involvement and participation through growing fruit and vegetables;
- promote health and wellbeing;
- encourage physical activity;
- raise awareness of healthy eating;
- provide home grown sustainable food;
- promote shared space; and
- address and tackle health related illness.

The Group had been working with Groundwork to address several key issues, such as supply and demand, sustainability, the identification of a suitable and secure area within the park for the garden and landscape plans and costs. An application for funding in the sum of £50,000 for the project would be submitted to the Alpha Fund

during June and the Council would be requested to contribute 10% of any amount received. The Director stated that, should the Group be successful with its application to the Alpha fund, the community garden would be managed in accordance with the Council's Developing Community Gardens and Allotment Strategy. Accordingly, he recommended that the Committee agree to support the submission of the application to the Alpha programme in respect of the Group's development of a Community Garden at the Grove Park and grant approval for the construction of the Garden at an appropriate area within the Grove Park.

The Committee adopted the recommendation, granted the approval sought and agreed to contribute 10% of the amount received by the group from the Alpha Fund.

### **Concerts at Ormeau Park**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **"1 Relevant Background Information**

**1.1 The Committee is asked to note that the council has received a request for the use of the summer soccer playing fields in Ormeau Park for Vital Festival concerts in August 2011, with an audience of approximately 35,000 people per day, from Denis Desmond, of MCD Productions, Park Road, Dunlaoghaire, Co Dublin.**

#### **2 Key Issues**

**2.1 The key issues for the Committee to consider are:**

- 1. The Council wishes to promote the use of its parks and open spaces and where appropriate will permit the use of these facilities for large events and concerts.**
- 2. In this particular instance the council has received a request for a minimum of two and a maximum of three concerts between 22 – 26 August 2011, each based on a 35,000 capacity each show.**
- 3. The concert promoter is aware of the normal charges applied for concerts i.e. £2 per person for the first 11,000 and £3 for each person thereafter. For 3 concerts with a maximum of 35,000 people attending the potential fee would be £304,000. However on this occasion the promoter has offered the council the sum of £20,000 per show day, giving an income of £40,000 for the minimum 2 shows and £60,000 for the 3 shows.**
- 4. The committee should be aware that another promoter has accepted the charges outlined in paragraph 3 this year and permission was granted accordingly for a concert in Botanic Gardens in June 2011. These charges have been paid previously for an event at the North Foreshore and there is a need for the council to act in a consistent way in setting out the terms and conditions for hiring of land.**

5. The concert promoter is aware of the need for the payment of a Bond of Intent of £10,000 which must be completed prior to confirmation that the venue shall be available.
6. A bond of reinstatement for £40,000 shall be paid prior to the event taking place and be part of the legal agreement.
7. The promoter has indicated that alcohol will be sold at the concerts.
8. The park will remain open as usual during the concerts as a ten foot high fence erected on the boundary of the concert area, shall demarcate the event.
9. The operational management of the event by the promoter shall require the exclusive use of the Ozone car park from 22 – 26 August 2011 and partial use in the remaining period of 13 – 31 August 2011. This would have significant impact on the operation of the Ozone Centre. The loss of income is estimated at approximately £6,000.
10. The promoter has confirmed that the park and Ormeau Embankment would be cleansed from litter during and after each event by a hired service provider at his expense.
11. The event would be subject to the preparation of an event management plan which would cover all aspects of management including health and safety, access and shall comply with the current events policy.
12. The events will adhere to the requirements of the entertainment licence.
13. The genre of the music will be compatible with the locality.
14. A legal agreement shall be prepared by Legal Services.
15. Consultation shall be conducted by the concert promoter with local stakeholders such as local residents, local commercial operators, etc.
16. The promoter will ensure adequate care for the occupants of the dwelling within Ormeau park;
17. Some soccer bookings may have to be deferred to alternative locations during the concert period.
18. MCD Promotions were granted the use of Ormeau Park for a concert last year for 2 nights between 14 – 26 August 2010 which did not take place. A bond of intent of £4,000 was to be paid at the time, however MCD have so far failed to pay this bond. The outstanding bond of intent figure must be paid as a precondition to approval of a concert.

**3 Resource Implications**

**3.1 Financial**

A bond of intent of £10,000 must be paid to the council before approval is given for this event. Also the promoter must pay the outstanding bond of intent of £4,000 from last year before approval is finalised. The fee stated by the council shall be paid prior to the event taking place and be part of the legal agreement. There is an estimated potential loss of income to the Ozone Tennis Arena of approximately £6,000 during the time the car park will be closed.

**3.2 Human Resources**

There may be overtime required by staff to assist with the management of the proposed event which would need to be met from the fee charged.

**3.3 Asset and Other Implications**

The promoter shall ensure a minimal impact on council property and they shall provide a bond of reinstatement of £40,000 prior to the event as part of the legal agreement.

**4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations**

**4.1** There are no equality implications.

**5 Recommendation**

**5.1** It is recommended that committee grants permission for MCD to hold the proposed event at Ormeau Park on agreement of the payment of the normal charges applied for concerts i.e. £2 per person for the first 11,000 people and £3 for each person thereafter and provided that:

- (i) the event organiser meeting all statutory requirements including licensing agreements;
- (ii) the payment of the outstanding bond of intent of £4,000 from last year and the proposed Bond of Intent figure for this year of £10,000;
- (iii) the timely payment of the Bond of Reinstatement of £40,000;
- (iv) the event organiser resolving all operational issues to the council's satisfaction; and
- (v) an appropriate legal agreement being completed and agreed by Legal Services."



The Director informed the Committee that the promoter had now paid to the Council the outstanding bond of £4,000 from last year and the Bond of Intent of £10,000 for this year's proposed event.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

### **Refurbishment of Dunville and Woodvale Parks**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **"1 Relevant Background Information**

- 1.1 The Committee will recall that it has received a series of update reports over the past number of years regarding the refurbishment of Dunville Park and Woodvale Park. These two parks were selected for refurbishment as part of the parks improvement agenda in conjunction with the Belfast Regeneration Office (BRO) neighbourhood renewal work.
- 1.2 At its meeting on 15th October, 2009 the Parks and Leisure Committee agreed to commend the proposals for the refurbishment of Woodvale and Dunville Parks to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for advancement to the 'committed' section of the capital programme.
- 1.3 Subsequently at its meeting on 19th February, 2010, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreed to advance the proposals subject to budget limits and £1m match funding being provided by the Department for Social Development (DSD) for each park.
- 1.4 The current position is that the proposals for both schemes are currently with the Planning Service and a decision from the Department for Social Development (Belfast Regeneration Office) regarding matched funding was announced on 24th March, 2011.
- 1.5 Economic appraisals have been carried out on behalf of the Department for Social Development (Belfast Regeneration Office) and the recommended options are as follows:  
**Dunville Park: Option 2**  
**Woodvale Park: Option 4a**
- 1.6 An extract from the economic appraisals which sets out the options considered is attached. An illustration of the proposed preferred options is attached.

1.7 The project programme anticipates invitation of tenders in September 2011 to enable work to commence towards the end of 2011.

2 **Key Issues**

2.1 The recommendations of the economic appraisal are little changed from the outline proposals but as part of the gates process the committee must confirm the recommended proposals from a service perspective.

3 **Resource Implications**

3.1 **Financial**

There are no additional financial implications; provision of £1m to be funded by loan has been made for each of these proposals in the capital programme.

3.2 **Human Resources**

There are no additional human resource implications

3.3 **Asset and Other Implications**

The undertaking of the works will enhance the quality of life for residents of the surrounding area.

4 **Equality and Good Relations Considerations**

None.

5 **Recommendations**

5.1 It is recommended that the Committee agree to proceed with the refurbishment of the both the Woodvale and Dunville parks on the basis of the option recommended in the economic appraisal and to commend this decision to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

6 **Decision Tracking**

Quarterly reports will be brought to committee to provide an update on the progress in respect of the two proposals.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations and noted that a copy of the economic appraisals were available on the modern.gov website.

### Suffolk Playing Fields

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1. Relevant Background Information**

The Committee will recall that at its meeting on 10th March, 2011 it agreed to change the recommendation of the report regarding Suffolk playing fields and to accede to the request from the Suffolk football club to refurbish one of the disused pitches at the facility. In order to provide the necessary direction to officers this report sets out the background to the request together with the policy and legislative context for the decision.

Members are reminded that Suffolk playing fields are currently managed in part by Suffolk football club under a facilities management agreement. There are 5 pitches on the site, 2 of which are unused and require refurbishment and drainage. There are no plans at this time to undertake this work.

Members are aware of ongoing discussions regarding the draft pitches strategy.

Council officers have, at the request of the football club, met with its representatives to discuss its development proposals. The football club plays an important role within the small community housed within the Suffolk estate and wishes to further support and contribute to that community through making the best use of its resources and the surrounding facilities. The club itself has aspirations for its own future development and its ambition to play at a higher level.

To support these aims the club has prepared a preliminary development proposal which contains two phases:

- Phase 1 relates to the refurbishment of one of the two unused pitches to bring it into use; the cost of this would be met through a grant for £30,700 from the Alpha programme which is administered through Groundwork NI. In addition, the club would, at its own expense, erect perimeter and spectator fencing and undertake additional work regarding access. It should be noted that the pitch would not be available for use until the start of the 2012/2013 season. Members are

asked that the club would request preferential use of this pitch, in line with the facilities management agreement, when it becomes playable.

- Phase 2 of the proposal relates to the construction of additional changing facilities, this would be on land adjacent to the pitch, and would be in addition to the existing changing facilities; it is our understanding that the new facility would primarily be for the use of the club and its opponent teams, although at this time there is little detail available. The provision of this facility would require significant external funding; it is likely to require security of tenure as part of the terms and conditions of the funding and it would require the necessary statutory approvals, planning, building control etc. The exact implications for the council, if any, are not known.

The current position is that the club has received conditional approval from Groundwork NI in respect of their application for funding to refurbish the pitch as outlined as part of Phase 1. Unlike other funding bodies there is no specific requirement from Entrust as regards security of tenure. Groundwork NI has informed us that 5 years is normally a sufficient period. The club has asked for a 7 year agreement, however, in order to be consistent with other agreements and previous legal advice it is proposed that the 5 year period be applied.

In relation to Phase 2, proposals are at a concept stage and there has been no significant progress towards obtaining the necessary approvals or seeking of funding. The Committee is therefore asked to note that at some point the Club may return with a further request for land to facilitate the construction of additional changing facilities.

## 2. Key Issues

There are a number of issues emerging from these proposals which the Committee should take into account when considering its view on this:

- The ongoing discussions regarding the draft pitches strategy; it is important that the strategy provide a framework within decisions regarding playing field provision should be considered.
- Officers from Property and Projects are currently working up a disposal policy which will be agreed through Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. One of the key issues is the need to be consistent and transparent in matters relating to disposal. This may

include the need to seek expressions of interest to ensure that other interested parties have been given an opportunity to benefit from any council decision to dispose of land in support of its wider objectives. However, on the basis that there is an existing facilities management agreement in place; that the club has already secured funding; and that this is not a disposal; we can proceed with the request. Any agreement in relation to this request will require the retention of an element of public use.

- The Committee is reminded that where a lease is considered be the most appropriate form of agreement a premium/rent is normally paid, as is the case with other such leases or terms of disposal.
- The Committee will be aware that the leasing of any land within larger council facilities might constrain future development options.
- The current proposal from Suffolk FC will increase the net provision of playing fields by 1 pitch through bringing an used pitched, in need of refurbishment, back into use again.
- The works will be carried out at no financial cost to the Council.
- The club clearly has aspirations to play at a higher level, therefore the club will be ultimately aiming to establish a standalone facility within the wider playing field provision.

### **3 Resource Implications**

#### **Financial Implications**

The proposals will be totally funded through external funding with any short fall matched by Suffolk football club.

#### **Human Resource Implications**

There are no additional human resource implications.

#### **Asset and other implications**

The proposal will increase the availability of pitches for general booking.

### **4. Equality and Good Relations Implications**

None.

**5. Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Committee agree:

1. to enter into an appropriate management arrangement with Suffolk football club for a period of 5 years in respect of the use of the agreed pitch on condition that the refurbishment works are satisfactorily completed and that the necessary statutory approvals have been obtained;
2. that the Council will not contribute to any short fall in capital funding;
3. that the club will, at its own expense, undertake the management and maintenance of the pitch and its ancillary fencing etc;
4. that the decision to enter into an agreement regarding the use of the pitch does not commit the council to any similar agreement in respect of any future request for additional land.

**6. Decision Tracking**

**A further report will be brought to the Committee in August 2011 by the Principal Parks and Cemeteries Development Manager to provide an update on progress.”**

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations, subject to the management arrangements with the Club being extended for a period of seven years.

**Alexandra Park**

The Committee was reminded that, during 2008, Groundwork Northern Ireland had, through the European Union Peace III Programme - Building Positive Relations at a Local Level, been awarded £998,000. The Director reported that the programme, which was operational throughout Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, aimed through regeneration projects to reduce sectarianism and racism. Groundwork's programme entitled "Reconciling Communities Through Regeneration" would run until August and had four key objectives:

- (i) the development of key skills for peace and the creation of opportunities for inter-group dialogue, cross-community relationship building and networking;
- (ii) working strategically with the Peace III clusters;
- (iii) building positive relationships at a local level in order to achieve positive change; and
- (iv) addressing contested physical space issues, with the aim of regenerating those spaces and removing the physical manifestations of segregation.

The Director reported that, following consultation with the Council and representatives from the Tiger's Bay, Mountcollyer, Parkside and Newington areas and, as part of its Regional Programme, Groundwork had proposed the Alexandra Park as a specific project. This was in addition to the project work which the Council was initiating at the site, such as the People in Parks Youth Intervention and the Anti-Social Behaviour Programmes. It would complement also other ongoing work by the Council on good relations, community safety and the proposals within the Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plan for the area and would dovetail with the Council's proposals for the promotion of shared space within the City.

The Director advised the Committee that a Steering Group had been established during 2009 to improve usage and develop regeneration proposals for the Park. Those proposals had been developed with representatives from the Council, the Department of Justice, the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister and the Police Service of Northern Ireland and had subsequently been approved by the Parks and Leisure Committee at its meeting on 11th November, 2010.

Alongside ongoing discussions and dialogue with community representatives, Groundwork Northern Ireland had conducted a survey to gauge residents' opinions in relation to enhancing access to the existing peace line and the side entrance to the Park. The results of the survey had indicated that 92% of respondents would like to see increased access at the interface wall and that 91.5% of respondents would like to see increased access at Alexandra Park. The Department of Justice which owned the wall had indicated that it would be willing to meet the costs associated with the purchase and installation of a gate within the walled structure of the Park. It had been proposed that, on a pilot basis, there would be a negotiated opening and closing time of 9.00 a.m. till 3.00 p.m. Monday to Friday. However, it was envisaged that the gate would remain locked until such time as the community felt sufficiently confident to pilot opening hours. There was unanimous support for those proposals from the Steering Group and various community groups. The Director recommended that, in order to enable the proposed pilot to be instigated, the Committee authorise the installation of the gate at the wall during the summer period.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

### **Summer Intervention Programme**

The Director reported that, since 2005, the Council had approved free access to the Council's Leisure Centres by participants in the Summer Intervention Programme during the period from 1st July till 30th September. That access had been subject to availability and the Programme being responsible for any additional staff costs incurred by the Council. Permission was granted also to requests which had been received from bona fide interface groups within the City for similar use of the facilities.

He pointed out that the evaluation process in respect of the Summer Intervention Programme 2010 had been positive and community groups had indicated that free access to Leisure Centres had enhanced their capacity to deliver the programme. In addition, verbal confirmation had been received from the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister indicating that funding for a Summer Intervention Programme 2011 would be provided. The Good Relations Partnership had also granted approval to proceed with the programme, subject to the receipt of the official letter of

offer. It was estimated that, during the previous financial year, free access had cost the Council approximately £200 and it was not expected that the potential uptake during 2011 would be significantly greater. Accordingly, he recommended that, due to the fact that the programme would assist in easing tensions at key dates over the summer period and would have a positive effect on good relations throughout the City, that the Committee agrees to:

- (i) the programme being granted free use of the Council's Leisure Centres during the period 1st July till 30th September, subject to availability and to the receipt of the letter of offer from the Office of First Minister and the Deputy First Minister; and
- (ii) requests received from other bona fide interface groups within the City being granted similar use of the facilities.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

#### **Development of the Mary Peters Track**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

##### **"1 Relevant Background Information**

- 1.1 **The Committee is reminded that the development of the Mary Peters Track (MPT) has been under consideration for a number of years. At its special meeting on 9th February, 2011 council agreed to undertake the development of the Mary Peters track and agreed that it be included within the capital programme.**
- 1.2 **Prior to the above decision, at the meeting of Strategic Policy and Resources (SP&R) Committee on 22nd October, 2010 it had been agreed that in order to be ready for the forthcoming World Police and Fire Games in August 2013 that the Mary Peters Track would need to be upgraded to include an 8 lane track, spectator stand and associated works. Strategic Policy and Resources also agreed that officers would undertake some preliminary works in advance of the Council approval for the scheme as part of the rate setting process.**
- 1.3 **An economic appraisal (EA) has been completed and it is now necessary to seek agreement from the Parks and Leisure Committee to proceed with the recommended option, from a service perspective, and to make an appropriate recommendation to Strategic Policy and Resources.**



**2**     **Key Issues**

**2.1**    The economic appraisal set out the project aims and objectives as:

- 1.**    Provision of a modern athletics/sporting facility for the Greater Belfast area and Northern Ireland as a whole;
- 2.**    Development of an athletics venue that will provide the basis for attracting UK and international athletic events to Northern Ireland;
- 3.**    Provision of a facility that will maximise the number of spectators who attend events at MPT;
- 4.**    Development of a facility that will complement the wider offering at the adjacent Queen's University Playing Fields ('The Dub');
- 5.**    Development of a venue that will facilitate the World Police and fire Games in August 2013

**2.2**    The EA has been completed in accordance with DFPNI guidance and includes a strategic context; an assessment of need and the range of monetary and non monetary costs and benefits. A copy of the EA is available upon request.

**2.3**    The options considered were:

Option 1 – Do Nothing

Option 2 – Do minimum

Option 3 – New 6 lane standard specification track

Option 4a – New 8 lane standard specification track

Option 4b – New 8 lane standard specification track and spectator stand

Option 5a – New 8 lane IAAF specification track

Option 5b – New 8 lane IAAF specification track and spectator stand

**2.4**    Three options have been selected for consideration:

- Option 1 would result in closure of the track and this would likely happen by the end of 2011, however, clearly this would not meet the objectives as set in the EA and is therefore not recommended.

- Option 3 would meet some of the objectives; however, the EA concludes that 6 lane facilities do not tend to attract events. Therefore, option 3 would support the delivery of an athletics training facility but would not have the potential to attract events to the city and would not be able to host the athletics element of the World Police and Fire Games. The capital cost of option 3 is estimated in the region of £1.1m.
- Option 5b meets all of the objectives, would provide a high quality facility and excellent training facilities and would have the potential to attract events to the city. The capital cost of option 5b is estimated in the region of £3m. This is the option recommended in the EA.

2.5 The key issue for Committee to consider is whether it wishes to proceed with the development of the MPT in line with recommended option 5b as outlined above, to enable a recommendation to be made to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

### 3 Resource Implications

#### 3.1 Financial

Provision of £3m, to be funded by loan, has been made for this proposal in the capital programme.

In addition, the Committee is asked to note the potential increase in revenue costs associated with the recommended option arising from the enhancement of the track, the spectator stand and the increased focus on attracting events to the facility. To support this it will be necessary to appoint a marketing and promotions officer and to allocate a budget to support his/her work. The total cost of this is likely to be in the region of £75,000 for the first three years, this would be reviewed annually. At present the MPT is managed through a facilities management agreement by Northern Ireland Athletics. It is intended that a revised agreement be prepared, to incorporate a strong marketing and promotions element and that officers seek expressions of interest from interested service providers in the Spring of 2012 in line with the committee's decision from March 2011.

**3.2 Human Resources**

On the basis that the additional marketing and promotions element will be undertaken externally as part of a wider management agreement, i.e. the marketing resource will be recruited through the service provider; there will be no additional human resource implications.

**3.3 Asset and other implications**

The delivery of option 5b would considerably enhance the facility and create a high quality venue for aspiring local athletes. It would help to heighten the profile of the city within the sporting world.

**4 Equality Implications**

4.1 None.

**5 Recommendations**

5.1 It is recommended that the Committee agree, from a service perspective, to proceed with the development of the Mary Peters Track on the basis of option 5b above, i.e. to provide a new 8 lane IAAF specification track with a spectator stand and associated works, and to commend this decision to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for delivery in time for the 2013 Games.

**6 Decision Tracking**

A further report will be presented by the Principal Parks and Cemeteries Development Manager to Committee in September 2011 to provide an update on progress.”

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

**Shaping The Future – Consultation on The Heritage  
Lottery Fund's Strategic Framework 2013-2019**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1 Relevant Background Information**

1.1 In February 2011, the Council received an invitation from Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to submit an on-line response to their consultation “Shaping The Future – Consultation on The Heritage Lottery Fund’s Strategic Framework 2013-2019”. HLF is seeking responses by 26th April, 2011.

- 1.2 It was agreed that the Parks and Leisure Department would coordinate preparation of a response on behalf of the council. The Policy and Business Development Unit has prepared a draft response following a request for input from relevant officers across the council.

## 2 Key Issues

- 2.1 The aim of the consultation is to seek views on HLF's proposed strategic framework from 2013 onwards. Full details of the consultation are available at <http://www.hlf.org.uk/consultation2011>.

- 2.2 In summary, the consultation asks for views and comments in three sections:

1. "Our Strategic Framework and How We Work", including:

- future strategic aims and priorities; and
- the application process and support for applicants and grantees.

2. "Our Current Grant Programmes", including:

- proposals for open programmes (eg heritage grants, including simplified processes and revised budgets); and
- proposals for current targeted programmes (ie Young Roots, Landscape Partnerships, Parks for People, Repair Grants for Places of Worship, Townscape Heritage Initiative).

2. "Additional Opportunities and Challenges", including:

- proposals to address climate change;
- proposals for digital heritage;
- funding for innovation;
- proposals for heritage skills development; and
- proposals for acquisitions and collecting.

- 2.3 Respondents are required to complete a (largely multiple choice) on-line survey. This has now been completed in draft form by officers and awaits final submission subject to approval by Members. Because the draft response sits within HLF's on-line system, it is not readily accessible for review. However, the following summarises key views expressed within the draft response on issues which are of particular relevance to the Council:

- HLF should target more funding at strategic priorities identified through discussion with councils, and solicit applications for new projects accordingly;
- significant funding is still required for historic buildings and monuments, landscapes, parks, ships and maritime heritage, and wildlife and conservation;
- HLF should work closely with organisations to identify needs at the local level;
- HLF should provide appropriate support to applicants, simplify the application process for grants, and clarify such issues as the position regarding multiple applications from individual organisations;
- HLF should facilitate partnership working between the heritage sector, community organisations, local and central government and other agencies, and potential private donors;
- HLF should continue to welcome larger grant applications for major projects, and should continue to apply the recent reduction in partnership funding requirement;
- Parks for People remains a priority targeted funding programme, and that HLF's proposal to include cemeteries in this programme is welcomed;
- HLF could support communities' engagement with place-based heritage by ensuring effective dialogue with local councils with respect to any proposed transfer of heritage assets, to ensure complete understanding of requirements, limitations etc;
- HLF's proposals to fund digital heritage projects are welcome; and
- Belfast City Council would welcome the opportunity to work with HLF to identify priorities for future funding, in particular with regard to Heritage Grants and Parks for People, and to ensure that shared strategic approaches are identified within Belfast.

Subject to approval by this committee, it is proposed that the final response is submitted to HLF by 26 April with the proviso that this is subject to full council approval in May.

**3 Resource Implications**

None.

**4 Equality and Good Relations Implications**

4.1 None.

**5 Recommendation**

- 5.1 Members are asked to approve submission of a response subject to any comments provided.

**6 Decision Tracking**

Project officer to submit approved consultation by 26th April, 2011."

The Committee approved the submission as the Council's official response.

**Request for Use of Botanic Gardens –  
"Dinner in the Sky"**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**"1. Relevant Background Information**

- 1.1 The Committee is asked to note that the council has received a request for the use of Botanic Gardens for an event called "Dinner in the Sky" in June and July 2011 from Kirk Jordan, JKD Events.

Dinner in the Sky is described as "a unique event that transforms an ordinary meal into a magical moment that will leave a lasting impression". The promoter states that the event has taken place in 32 countries at around 2500 events.

The Dinner in the Sky event in Belfast will be the first stop of its UK tour. Dinner in the Sky can cater for 22 guests around the table with a personal chef and two assistants in the middle. Dinner would be served 50 metres above ground. There would be 9 lifts per day (two breakfast lifts, 2 lunch lifts, 3 drinks and canapés lifts and 2 dinner lifts).

**2 Key Issues**

- 2.1 The key issues for the Committee to consider are:

1. The Council wishes to promote the use of its parks and open spaces and where appropriate we will permit the use of these facilities for events.
2. In this particular instance the Council has received a request for an event operating from 17 June to 4 July 2011. Set up shall commence on 15 June and take down shall be completed on 6 July 2011, for a total period of 22 days the event operation shall be on site.

3. The promoter has indicated two locations for consideration, the Great Lawn and the Bandstand area, however it is proposed that the Great Lawn is not used for this purpose but that the bandstand area is offered instead.
4. Cool FM is the media sponsor and shall broadcast on the opening day at the event.
5. On one evening the promoter proposes to have a charity night which shall raise money for the Cash for Kids Charity.
6. The "table" has capacity to accommodate 22 people, it is lifted approximately 50 metres above ground level into the air.
7. On each day of the event from 8.00am to 9.30pm, there shall be possibly 200 paying customers. Ticket prices for customers vary from £25 to £70 per person.
8. The promoter has indicated that alcohol shall be available at the event.
9. Botanic Gardens shall remain open as usual during the event and the promoter shall employ security to assist with the stewarding of the event.
10. The event shall adhere to the entertainment licence requirements.
11. The event would be subject to the preparation of an event management plan which would cover all aspects of management of the event.
12. A fee of £2,000 is proposed for the use of the bandstand area within Botanic Gardens plus a bond of reinstatement of £1,000 (for the ground) to be paid prior to the event taking place and which will be part of the legal agreement.
13. A legal agreement shall be prepared by Legal Services.
14. Consultation shall be conducted by the promoter with local stakeholders such as local residents, local commercial operators, etc.
15. The promoter shall consult prior to the event with local residents, Ulster Museum, Queens University, etc.
16. Due to the nature of this event there are definite health and safety concerns which will need to be considered and addressed.

### **3 Resource Implications**

#### **3.1 Financial**

A bond of intent of £200 (to secure the booking) shall be paid to the council before approval is given. The above fee will also be paid prior to the event taking place and will be part of the legal agreement.

**3.2 Human Resources**

There may be overtime required by staff to assist with the management of the proposed event which would need to be met from the fee charged.

**3.3 Asset and Other Implications**

The promoter shall ensure there is a minimal impact on council property and they shall provide a Bond of Reinstatement of £1,000 prior to the event as part of the legal agreement. The promoter will be required to ensure the site is adequately reinstated.

An event lasting 22 days shall have a detrimental effect on the Great Lawn and possibly affect the quality of the surface available for following events.

**4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations**

4.1 There are no equality implications.

**5 Recommendation**

5.1 It is recommended that the Committee grant authority for the 'Dinner in the Sky' at Botanic Gardens in the bandstand area in June and July 2011, subject to satisfactory terms being agreed with the Director of Parks and Leisure and on the condition that:

- (i) the event organisers resolve all operational issues to the council's satisfaction;
- (ii) an appropriate legal agreement, to be prepared by the Town Solicitor and Assistant Chief Executive is completed; and
- (iii) the event organisers meet all statutory requirements including entertainment licensing.
- (iv) the event organiser must ensure that all health and safety requirements are met to the council's satisfaction including risk assessments, safe systems of work and equipment inspection information.

**6. Decision Tracking**

All actions will be completed by the City Parks Manager (East) by August 2011."

The Committee adopted the recommendation.



### Epizootic Depot

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 14th January, 2010, it had considered a request which had been received from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Veterinary Service requesting that the Council enter into a contingency rental agreement in relation to the use of the car park areas at the Danny Blanchflower Stadium and the City of Belfast Playing Fields, which had been considered suitable for use as Delivery Operations Centres in the event of an outbreak of epizootic disease such as avian influenza, newcastle disease or foot and mouth disease.

The Director stated that the Department had proposed to have rental type agreements drawn up in advance which could be activated as and when the premises were required and, as part of its contingency planning arrangements, it had indicated that it was committed to taking all possible measures to contain future outbreaks of epizootic disease and thereby minimise the economic impact on the community. At that time, it had been indicated that various parts of the sites were required as Delivery Operations Centres and normal activities could continue on other parts of the site, including the pitches.

Accordingly, the Committee had granted authority for the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development to use part of the premises at the Blanchflower Stadium and City of Belfast Playing Fields as Delivery Operations Centres during outbreaks and had agreed that an appropriate Licence Agreement be prepared by the Director of Legal Services to protect the Council's interests and to meet all statutory requirements. However, the Department, on submission of the draft Licence Agreement and associated maps, had realised that it would require full access to the office, yard and bothy facilities at both sites. The Director stated that this had not been made clear from the Department's original request and that full access to the above-mentioned facilities would have a significant impact on operational use and that this had not been brought to the Committee's attention at its meeting on 14th January, 2010. Therefore, in order to enable further discussions to be held, the Licence Agreement had not been progressed.

The Director pointed out that, an alternative site, the Beechvale Farm, which facilitated the Council's horticultural nursery, had been suggested to the Department. Thereafter, a meeting had been arranged to assess the site, which had been deemed as suitable for use and the Department had subsequently requested the use of the Beechvale Farm Nursery bothy area for use as a Delivery Operations Centre. In addition, it had confirmed that it would still like to use parts of Blanchflower Stadium and the City of Belfast Playing Fields as Delivery Operations Centres. However, due to the Council's operational requirements at those sites, the Department had indicated that they would only be used as a last resort. Accordingly, he recommended that the Committee approve:

- (i) the request which had been received from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Veterinary Service to use part of the Beechvale Nursery Farm as a Delivery Operations Centre; and

- (ii) as a last resort, the use of parts of the Blanchflower Stadium and City of Belfast Playing Fields as Delivery Operations Centres.

The Committee granted the approval sought, subject to an appropriate licence agreement being prepared by the Assistant Chief Executive and Town Solicitor.

### **Belfast Hills Partnership**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 10th September, 2009, it had granted approval to provide an annual grant of £28,720 to the Belfast Hills Partnership for the period from April, 2010 till March 2013. The Director reported that the Partnership brought together a range of partners from local government, environmental groups, local business, quarry and farming representatives and local communities to promote the Hills and to take steps to protect its resources. The work of the Partnership and its members over the last number of years had resulted in the development of accessible Open Spaces on the Hills and additional walking routes. He informed the Committee of the Partnership's recent success in attracting £1.17 million in funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund in order to support the development of a major Landscape Partnership Scheme within the Belfast Hills. The proposed Scheme would support the delivery of thirty different projects aimed at mitigating threats to the landscape, enhancing community involvement and access and the provision of training to volunteers. The success of the Partnership in attracting that level of funding would raise the profile of the Belfast Hills as an important tourism attraction.

The Director pointed out that, whilst the funding would cover a range of capital schemes and support some revenue initiatives, the Partnership had contacted the Council to request additional financial support to meet core staff and project costs and those costs associated with additional work which would be carried out within the Council's area. Accordingly, the organisation was seeking an additional funding commitment from participating Councils and had already secured £94,000 from the Northern Ireland Environment Agency. In addition to its annual grant, the Council was being requested to contribute an additional £2,050 during the 2011/2012 financial year and an additional £8,180 per year towards staff costs over the next four years. The Belfast Hills Partnership was also asking the Council to extend its period of annual funding from March, 2013, until the end of March, 2016.

The Director stated that, should the Committee agree to accede to the request, potential works scheduled for Council properties, such as the Cave Hill Country Park and Ligoniel Park, would include path improvements, new path works, community biodiversity projects, heritage interpretation, installation of visitor counters and junior orienteering routes. Those projects would help to encourage local people to get involved in managing their environment through volunteering opportunities, consultations and events as well as the associated physical and mental health benefits. He recommended that the Committee agree to:

- (i) provide an additional £2,050 in funding during the financial year 2011/2012;
- (ii) increase the annual grant paid to the organisation from £28,720 to £36,900 with effect from 1st April, 2012; and
- (iii) extend the funding period from March, 2013 till March, 2016.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Use of Woodvale Park for Cultural  
Celebrations on 11th July, 2011**

The Director of Parks and Leisure reminded the Committee that the Bonfire Management Programme was a Council-led initiative which sought to bring about enhanced management of bonfires in Belfast. He advised the Committee that the Woodvale and Cambrai Youth and Community Association had been active participants on the programme for a number of years. During 2007, the group had been involved in the design of a Bonfire Beacon which had been developed as an alternative to the traditional 11th July bonfire.

The Group had ran successful Beacon events, which included a range of community activities, during 2008 and in 2009, with over six thousand people having attended each year. The staging of the event had been approved by the Parks and Leisure Committee on each occasion and, during 2010, a Bonfire Frame had been utilised as an alternative to the Beacon and had been considered as a successful alternative similar to the Beacon. The frame was based on a bed of sand and had proven to cause no damage to the ground surface. In this regard, the Council had received a further request from the Association to hold a similar event at the Park during 2011 which would include the use of the Bonfire Frame, a range of family based activities and a music event.

In order to comply with all statutory requirements, an event management plan would be required. The organisers would be required to liaise with Council officers, the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service, the Police Service of Northern Ireland and other statutory agencies. Accordingly, the Director recommended that the Committee grant authority for the cultural event to be held at the Woodvale Park on 11th July, subject to satisfactory terms being agreed and on the condition that:

- (i) the event organisers resolve all operational issues to the Council's satisfaction;
- (ii) an appropriate legal agreement was signed and adhered to; and
- (iii) the event organisers meet all statutory requirements, including entertainments licensing.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

**Enchanted Garden Belfast Festival**

The Committee was informed that a request had been received from the Director of the Belfast Festival at Queens in relation to the use of the Botanic Gardens for an Enchanted Evening Garden Event during the period from 26th till 29th October. The organisers had indicated that the event would commence at 7.00 p.m. and end before 10.00 p.m.

The Director reported that the Evening Garden Event would complement the Council's celebrations which would be held over the Halloween weekend. It had been described as an unique artistic event incorporating both local and international artists and would transform the Gardens into a magical garden providing a spectacular experience for both young and old. The theme for the 2011 event was still under development but it was anticipated that it would involve a family-based theatre production. The organisers had requested also that the Council provide £25,000 to cover the costs of installing and maintaining both the outdoor lighting supply and the lighting required to illuminate the Park.

He reported that, in relation to the 2010 event, the organisers had requested £2,000 to cover the costs of reinstatement of the Botanic Gardens and £14,500 for lighting installation and, given that the planned event was still under consideration more detailed discussions would be required to be held with the organisers in order to determine the exact nature of the event, the financial commitment required and to satisfy the Council that all health and safety, licensing and other legal obligations would be met. He recommended that the Committee agree, in principle, to the inclusion of an Enchanted Gardens event as part of the 2011 Belfast Festival at Queens, subject to officers engaging in further discussions with the organisers and a further report thereon being submitted to the Committee's meeting scheduled to be held on 9th June.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

#### **Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management**

The Director reported that a request had been received from the Secretary of the Scottish and Northern Ireland Branch of the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management requesting the Council to host its Annual Branch Meeting during August/September, 2011. He stated that the Scottish and Northern Ireland Branch had six Members in Northern Ireland currently, four of who, were officers within the Parks and Leisure Department. The vast majority of previous Branch Meetings had been held in Scotland, which had proven expensive for those members to attend on a regular basis. The Branch had attempted to schedule a meeting in Northern Ireland every few years with the last meeting hosted by the Council during August, 2006. In addition, the Council was a corporate member of the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management and availed of the specialised services which the organisation offered to its members. He pointed out that, based on thirty-four members attending the Branch meeting during the Autumn, the cost would be approximately £1,280 and he recommended that the Parks and Leisure Department be granted authority to host the Branch Meeting of the Scottish and Northern Ireland Branch during August/September, 2011.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

#### **Transplant Sport UK**

The Director reminded the Committee that the Council would be hosting the British Transplant Games during the period from 4th till 7th August, 2011. The Games, which were managed by Transplant Sport United Kingdom, a registered charity, were held annually. Adults and children aged between four and eighty years who had received a life saving organ would be participating. He stated that the prime objective

of the Games was to highlight the need for people to sign up to the Organ Donor Register and give the 'gift of life'. Northern Ireland was one of the poorest regions throughout the United Kingdom in terms of donor registration and he reported that Transplant Sport United Kingdom had requested permission to place and manage a collection box at the reception desk of each of the Council's Leisure Centres during the period from 3rd May till 5th August. Any funding raised would be invested in the delivery of the Belfast Games during August. He recommended that the Committee grant authority for Transplant Sport United Kingdom to place and manage a collection box at the reception desk of each of the Council's Leisure Centres during the period from 3rd May till 5th August.

The Committee granted the authority sought.

### **Sustrans Fundraising**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 14th May, 2010, it had granted approval for Sustrans to carry out fundraising activities within the Clement Wilson Park during the summer period. The Director reported that Sustrans was the charity behind the National Cycle Network and that the fundraising at Clement Wilson Park was part of a wider initiative on sections of the National Cycle Network, including the Comber Greenway and the City Centre.

He advised the Committee that a similar request has been received from the organisation to carry out fundraising activities during the period from July till September at the Clement Wilson Park and at the towpath at the Gasworks site. The Director stated that there was currently no policy in relation to charitable collections within the Council's Parks and Leisure facilities and that individual requests were required to be considered by the Committee. The organisation had indicated that the initiative would be undertaken by personal fundraisers who would ask cyclists and walkers if they wished to make regular donations and no cash would be collected. He pointed that the Gasworks site was not within the Parks and Leisure portfolio, however, the Town Solicitor and Assistant Chief Executive had advised that a decision could be taken by the Committee and submitted to the Director of Property and Projects for information.

Accordingly, he recommended that the Committee grant approval for Sustrans to carry out fundraising activities at the Clement Wilson Park and the towpath at the Gasworks site during the period from July till September.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

### **Support for Sport – Small Development Grants and Hospitality Applications**

The Committee noted the schedule of Support for Sport applications in relation to small development grants and hospitality applications 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.

**Last Meeting**

The Chairman, Councillor O'Reilly, reminded the Members that this would be the last meeting of the Committee before the Local Government Elections scheduled to be held on 5th May and he thanked the Members and officers for their help and assistance during his time as Chairman.

Chairman