

# Parks and Leisure Committee

Thursday, 11th August, 2011

## MEETING OF PARKS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

- Members present: Councillor Corr (Chairman);  
Aldermen Humphrey and Rodgers;  
Councillors Austin, Haire, Hargey, Hendron, Kyle,  
Kelly, Mallon, McCabe, McKee, McNamee, McVeigh,  
Mac Giolla Mhín, Mullan, A. Newton and Thompson.
- In attendance: Mr. A. Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure;  
Mrs. R. Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks  
and Leisure; and  
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillors O'Neill and Robinson.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 9th June 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 July, subject to the decision under the heading "Playing Pitches Strategy" being amended to provide that the Dixon Park Playing Fields and Victoria Park sites be included in Phase I of the programme associated with the upgrade of changing facilities and that officers submit a report to the Parks and Leisure Committee on the possibility of providing playing pitches within the Glencairn Park.

### **Incident at Grove Wellbeing Centre**

The Director provided the Members with an update in relation to an incident which had occurred earlier that day at the Grove Wellbeing Centre. He indicated that he would keep the Committee informed of any developments in relation to the incident which was currently being investigated by the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

Noted.

### **Media Report**

The Director reported that there had been recent press coverage in relation to the cost of provision of leisure services by the Council and that he would submit to the Committee, in due course, a report in this regard which would be framed around the on-going improvement agenda.

Noted.

### **Green Flag Awards**

The Director reported that five sites within the Parks and Leisure Department had recently received Green Flag Awards, with two others having retained their existing awards. The Awards had been established in 1996 and were managed by Keep Britain Tidy, the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers and GreenSpace. The standard was for quality management and, in particular, for community engagement, with significant emphasis being placed on the stakeholders' experience and involvement in site development and improvements.

The two properties which had retained their awards were the Cavehill Country Park and the Musgrave Park, with the five new Green Flag Awards going to the Barnett Demesne, Botanic Gardens, Falls Park, Ormeau Park and Roselawn Cemetery.

The Director explained that two officers from the Department were qualified Green Flag judges and participated annually in the United Kingdom judging rounds. Using that expertise and the Green Flag framework an assessment had been made of the feasibility of entering additional Council sites for the 2012 awards. The assessment had identified that the parks best placed to enter the awards next year were Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park, the Waterworks Park and Belmont Park. At this stage, it was also anticipated that the 2013 entries would be Lagan Meadows, the Grove Playing Fields and Victoria Park.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided, approved the three additional sites to be put forward for accreditation in the 2012 assessment round and agreed that letters be forwarded to staff congratulating them on their achievements.

### **Association for Public Service Excellence – Awards 2011**

The Director informed the Members that the Association for Public Service Excellence Awards scheme provided local authorities across the United Kingdom with an opportunity to gain recognition for their work which demonstrated their ability to innovate within service delivery, actively demonstrate new concepts and examples of best practice which would continuously improve the level of service to local communities. He reported that the Parks and Leisure Department had submitted one entry in the Best Efficiency category for the Parks and Leisure Departmental Improvement Programme and had since been advised by the Association that the initiative had been selected as a "top finalist". He explained that the Association would be holding its Annual Awards Ceremony in Bristol on the evening of 8th September and, accordingly, he recommended that the Chairman, together with the Director of Parks and Leisure (or their nominees), be authorised to attend the event. The cost per delegate for attending was approximately £380.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

**Replacement Cremators at Roselawn Crematorium**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1 Relevant Background Information**

The Committee is reminded that at its meeting on the 16th June 2008 it received a report outlining that new legislation would require that UK based crematoria remove mercury emissions from the flue gases of at least 50% of all their cremations. This work is to be completed by the end of 2012. At the meeting the Committee had agreed to remove mercury emissions from 100% of its cremations and recommended that provision be made within the capital programme for this work.

In line with decision of the Committee Officers had moved to place the project on the Council's capital programme and prepare an appropriate specification and tender documentation. It had been intended to seek tenders in May 2011 to allow sufficient time for procurement and installation.

However, a recent operational review by the ICCM into the operation of the crematorium highlighted a number of issues around the time taken for cremations. In order to complete the information a further technical report was commissioned to look at the condition of the cremators.

This report concluded that the cremators were not functioning as efficiently or effectively as would be expected. The precise reason could not be determined however, it was concluded that the cremators were nearing the end of their useful life and that it would be imprudent to attach mercury abatement equipment to cremators which would need to be replaced in the short term.

Within the context of that report Officers are of the view that the Council should replace the existing cremators in parallel with the installation of mercury abatement equipment. In line with the Council's Gate's process and as required for loan sanction an economic appraisal was commissioned to establish the preferred option in regards to replacement. The appraisal considered a range of options:

- Option 1 – Do nothing
- Option 2a – Do minimum - Abate two existing cremators
- Option 2b - Abate all existing cremators
- Option 3a - Install three new cremators and abate 3
- Option 3b - Install two new cremators and abate 2
- Option 3c – Install four new cremators and abate 4

The Committee is asked to note that while the report from ICCM in respect of the condition of the cremators concluded that the existing four cremators are nearing the end of their useful lives; it did state that they could continue to function for a further several years, albeit with an decreasing level of efficiency.

Notwithstanding this position, it is the view of Officers that it would be prudent to replace the existing cremators and incorporate abatement equipment now rather than install abatement equipment on aging cremators which may need to be replaced in the short term. Members are asked to note that if abatement equipment is attached to the existing cremators it could limit the range of manufacturers at some future date owing to issues around compatibility.

The Committee is further asked to note that while the guidelines for abatement relate to existing cremators they also state that where replacement cremators are installed they must meet the new standard, i.e. they must be abated. Therefore, in this case it must be 100%, there is no option for a lesser level of abatement.

## **2 Key Issues**

The economic appraisal has highlighted a number of points for the Committee to note:

1. Given the ICCM Report it would not be recommended to abate existing cremators;
2. There are 3 main options: - Provide 2, 3 or 4 new cremators;
3. The EA indicates that given the improved efficiency of the new equipment and the increased capacity it would provide, 4 new cremators are not necessary;
4. The EA indicates that the number of cremations 2 Cremators would be sufficient; however, it further states that the provision of only 2 might compromise the Council in the event of a continued 'organic' growth in the number of cremations each year; the potential to increase the numbers being cremated through increased awareness and understanding of the process; a potential break down in the equipment; an outbreak of flu or pandemic;

5. The EA therefore concludes that the provision of 3 new cremators would be the most cost effective option

The Committee is required to convey its agreement to proceed with the preferred option, to make recommendation to Strategic Policy and Resources to amend the capital programme to incorporate the replacement of the cremators, and to give its delegated authority to seek, evaluate and award the tender to the most economically advantageous submission.

### **3 Resource Implications**

#### **Financial**

The Committee is asked to note that provision of £1.55m has been made within the capital programme to abate all four of the existing cremators.

The capital cost of the preferred option, to install three new cremators and associated abatement equipment, is estimated to be in the region of £1.8m. This figure was sorted from the current market however it is subject to fluctuation depending on prevailing market conditions at the time of tender.

The Committee is also asked to note that if cremators were installed separately at a later date the cost would be approximately £1.55m for the abatement equipment plus in access of £500k for the new cremators, plus installation.

The ICCM report indicates the current cremators are burning higher levels of gas therefore replacement will result in significant energy savings.

#### **Human Resources**

There are no additional human resource implications.

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

The provision of the new cremators will ensure that the Council meets its legislative obligations and will provide a high quality cremation service for the city and the wider region.

### **4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations**

There are no equality implications.

**5 Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Committee adopt the preferred option as outlined above i.e. to install 3 new cremators and associated mercury abatement equipment and to recommend to Strategic Policy and Resources that this be incorporated within the existing capital programme.

It is also recommended that it be recommended that Committee agree that the director of Property and Projects be given delegated authority to issue, evaluate and award tenders to ensure that work is completed by December 2012.

**6 Decision Tracking**

**Officer responsible: Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure  
To be completed by December 2012.**

**Key to Abbreviations**

**SP&R – Strategic Policy and Resources Committee  
EA – Economic Appraisal.”**

In response to a number of questions, the Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure explained that the existing cremators had been in place for eight years and had a useful life of approximately ten years. However, currently the existing cremators were not operating efficiently and that during the two remaining years of use the efficiency of the cremators would be further reduced, therefore, it would be prudent to replace them at this time. She explained also that the Economic Assessment had indicated that two new cremators would be sufficient to meet with current demand and that the recommendation to install three new cremators would allow for the crematorium to deal with any potential increase in demand and to allow for routine maintenance.

After further discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

**City of Belfast Golf Course**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 24th January, it had discussed the future of the City of Belfast Golf Course at Mallusk. At that meeting it had been agreed that the Council would retain the Golf Course and continue to manage it within the context of a facilities management agreement framework and consider the realisation of the development potential of the site in the medium-term. It had been agreed also, in principle, that the Facility Management Agreement be extended for a period of up to twenty-one years subject to:

- further information in relation to the club's business case for the replacement of the clubhouse being submitted within a six month period;

- the business case specifying in detail how the redevelopment was to be financed; and
- the incorporation of a buy-out clause within the agreement.

The Director reported that the Club had provided a detailed business case regarding the financing of the replacement clubhouse within the six months specified and Council officers had met with representatives of the Club to progress discussions in relation to future agreements.

He explained that the need for a replacement clubhouse had been established through the Council's own property inspection process. The existing building had been installed in 1985 as a temporary structure and was no longer fit for purpose. The Club was proposing to provide a new clubhouse which would incorporate a shop and adequate toilet and changing facilities, the estimated cost of which was approximately £235,000. In order to finance the building, the Club had considered obtaining a mortgage, however, it had been informed that a ten year repayment period at 7.9% per annum would be offered and that had been rejected by the Club committee. The Club had explored other options but had agreed that the use of its accumulated building fund provided the most cost-effective method of financing a replacement building.

The Director reported, since the Club was not obtaining a mortgage, that removed the need for a buy-out clause. He reminded the Members that the initial concern had been that the Club Committee would incur debt and liabilities through a mortgage and that the Council might at some future date close the facility, perhaps in advance of the mortgage having been paid. The buy-out clause had been intended to safeguard individual Club members. However, the Club Committee had requested that the Council incorporate instead within its Management Agreement a "comfort clause". The Club wished to bring a degree of longevity to the management arrangement and, although the Committee had agreed to a Facilities Management Agreement of twenty-one years, it had included within its decision provision to review the development potential of the site in the medium-term. It was proposed that Council officers enter discussions with the Club in relation to the form of the agreement which would give sufficient comfort to the Club regarding the length of the agreement and the termination clauses within the context of the future development potential.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to affirm its decision of 24th January to extend the Facility Management Agreement for a period of up to twenty-one years, subject to an appropriate agreement being prepared by the Council's Assistant Chief Executive and subject to the appropriate management and financial arrangements being agreed.

### **Playground Improvement Programme**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **"1 Purpose**

**The purpose of this report is to update the Committee regarding the playground improvement programme for 2011/2012 and to seek approval to carry out a refurbishment**

programme based on a selection of sites in most need of improvement as identified in the independent playground inspection report.

## **2 Relevant Background Information**

The Committee is reminded that at its meeting on 10th June 2010 it received a report on the playground improvement programme. The Committee agreed that refurbishment be carried out in respect of playgrounds at:

- Alexandra Park (Lower);
- Alloa Street;
- Horn Drive;
- Springhill Park; and
- Willowbank.

It is further reminded that at its meeting on 12th August 2010 it subsequently agreed to also include play areas at:

- Carrick Hill; and
- Tyndale

At its meeting of 12th August 2010 it was reported that subject to funding, playground refurbishment would be carried out at Alderman Tommy Patton Memorial Park, Alexandra Park (Upper) and Glencairn as part of the refurbishment programme for 2012/2013.

The Inspection Process for Belfast City Council playgrounds which prioritises playgrounds for refurbishment has been reviewed and updated with some improvements to more accurately reflect the condition and effectiveness of each playground and its equipment.

A tender for the supply of play equipment is now in place which will help to expedite the refurbishment works more effectively.

The Inspections contract was carried out as usual by an independent consultancy in June. From this report a programme of work compiled for a range of refurbishment work from replacement of items of equipment to complete refurbishment of the playground. Where a playground is to be completely refurbished, consultations with local communities will be sought through the Parks Outreach Officers. Any consultation will be time bound so as not to unduly delay proposed refurbishment work.



### **3 Key Issues**

The 2011 Annual Playground Inspection was undertaken by 'Play Services Ireland' in June of this year. Detailed reports for all 79 playgrounds have been produced which assess the quality and safety of each facility against current European standards. Inspection reports also prioritise essential repairs and identify existing equipment suitable for children with disabilities.

As part of the inspection process individual items of equipment, within each playground, were assessed and received a quality score. A mean quality score for all play equipment within each site was then derived and classified as follows:

- Score 0.0 – 4.9      Classified as 'Poor'
- Score 5.0 – 7.5      Classified as 'Fair'
- Score 7.6 – 10.0      Classified as 'Good'

The independent inspection recorded a total of 20 playgrounds across the city with a mean quality score of less than 5.0; these sites are deemed to contain equipment in an overall 'poor' condition. In terms of this year's refurbishment budget the poorest quality playgrounds will be a focus for improvement.

In line with this year's overall budget and the restrictive construction deadline of April 2012 the list of the 20 poorest quality playgrounds was reviewed and condensed to produce an improvement programme that is practical in terms of delivery on site. The desired outcome will be to move the following 10 sites from their current status of 'poor' to that of 'good'

- Glassmullin Playground
- Finlay Park
- Lenadoon
- Alexandra Upper
- Highfield
- Marrowbone junior
- Tir na nog Ligoneil
- Tommy Patton Playground
- Knocknagoney Playground
- Grampian Avenue Playground

The following 10 sites have been omitted from this year's refurbishment programme for the following reasons;

Tynedale	refurbishment works ongoing from 2010-2011
Dunville Park	DSD/BCC to fund development of new playground
Woodvale	DSD/BCC to fund development of new playground
Victoria Park	Sydenham Bypass widening to impact on the site
Avoniel	to be reviewed as part of Connswater Community Greenway
Ballymacarrett	to be reviewed as part of Connswater Community Greenway
McCrorry Park	capital investment made within last 5 years and scored well in ancillary structures
Falls	capital investment made within last 5 years and scored well in ancillary structures
N. Queen Street	wider application for funding to improve entire facility
Cavehill	stand alone scheme required to enhance facility and landscape setting

As part of the 2011 inspection process ancillary structures e.g. seats, bins, fencing, signage within each playground were also assessed and given a mean quality score. Playgrounds with ancillary structures that have a mean quality score of less than 5.0 are classified as being in an overall 'poor' state of repair. Of the ten selected playgrounds for improvement the following will require total refurbishment to include replacement of all play equipment, surfacing and ancillary structures:

- Finlay Park
- Alexandra Upper
- Marrowbone Junior
- Highfield
- Glassmullin

In order to encourage greater community ownership of playgrounds undergoing total refurbishment it will be necessary to undertake consultation with local communities on the planning and design of new facilities. It is envisaged that this consultation process will be managed by our Parks Outreach Officers in partnership with officers from the Landscape Planning & Development Unit.

Of the remaining five sites selected quality scores for ancillary facilities were classified as either 'good' or 'fair'. Therefore, in terms of refurbishment, items of existing play equipment only must be replaced at the following sites.

- Lenadoon
- Tir na nog Ligoneil
- Tommy Patton Playground
- Grampian Avenue
- Knocknagoney

#### **4 Resource Implications**

##### **Financial**

All refurbishment work will be funded through the Playground Refurbishment Budget which currently stands at £649,200.00 for the current year with any additional funding from external sources if available and appropriate.

##### **Human Resources**

Delivery will be managed by the Landscape Planning and Development Unit within existing resources.

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

The desired outcome will be to move the following 10 sites from their current status of 'poor' to that of 'good'

- Glassmullin Playground
- Finlay Park
- Lenadoon
- Alexandra Upper
- Highfield
- Marrowbone Junior
- Tir na nog Ligoneil
- Tommy Patton Playground
- Grampian Avenue
- Knocknagoney

#### **5 Equality and Good Relations Implications**

#### **6 Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Committee approve the selected sites for total refurbishment and replacement items.

**7 Decision Tracking**

**Officer responsible: Paul Barr  
Actions to be completed by: Summer 2012”**

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendation and noted that a report on facilities in parks for older persons would be submitted to a future meeting.

**Shankill United Football Club - Review of Pilot Lease Arrangements for the Hammer Pavilion**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1. Relevant Background Information**

**The Committee is reminded that during 2008/09 the Shankill United Football Club (SUFC) had discussions with officers from Parks and Leisure and Community Services requesting a management lease for the Hammer Pavilion Building.**

**The Pavilion is a small community facility managed by Community Services and is adjacent to the Hammer Community Centre. The Club currently uses the existing pitch at the Hammer which is under a facilities management agreement with Lower Shankill football Club, although Shankill United FC have preferential use of the facility to secure it's current league status. The current facilities management agreement relates to the management of a football pitch and a porta-cabin located within the Hammer Complex site. The club also had independent access to part of the Hammer Pavilion for changing and shower facilities.**

**To support the lease request, the Club asserted that its development was curtailed because the physical resources at its disposal did not meet senior league requirements, permit it to host visiting teams, allow it to expand its membership and permit access during busy weekend activities.**

**In 2008 BDO Stoy Hayward carried out a management options appraisal consulting with local stakeholders. Its report recommended that the Council consider a pilot lease arrangement with SUFC to allow the group to demonstrate it possessed the necessary financial and management capability. It also recommended that pending a successful outcome of the pilot period, Community Services should transfer the Pavilion to Parks & Leisure in order to align it with a similar business model namely sport, leisure and recreation.**

The Directors of Development and Parks & Leisure tabled a joint report at their respective Committees on 20 April 2009 and 14 May 2010 recommending a pilot facility management lease of the Pavilion to the SUFC from August 2009 until August 2010.

Furthermore it was recommended that pending a successful pilot phase, the lease and building would transfer to Parks & Leisure.

Council agreed to these proposals in May and June 2009.

During the pilot phase, Community Services was specifically tasked to set up the legal agreement, monitor and support the clubs governance structures and pay the agreed management fee of £13,354 per annum.

Community Services through its designated officers has worked with the SUFC on a range of issues during 2009/10 including formal monitoring as per grants procedures. We are satisfied on the evidence presented to us that the SUFC has in place a strong volunteer base including structures and expertise to provide open and accountable management of the facility and resources. SUCF most recent AGM took place in June 2010 with the presentation of reports, including recent financial statements and the open election of a committee. All supporting documentation is held on file.

The Club have developed a range of policies and procedures for the effective and safe management of the facility including health & safety, child protection, booking systems and out of hours contact. SUFC has also strengthened local partnership working and network links such as Greater Shankill Sports Committee, West Kirk Community Project, Stadium Sports, North City Training, Greater Shankill Community Council, Malvern Primary School and Greater Shankill Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership.

In support of the pilot project, Parks & Leisure were tasked with supporting the Club to develop a Sports Development Plan, including pitch and facility management. Furthermore it was agreed that Parks & Leisure would support the Club to access sports funding opportunities.

## **2 Key Issues**

The Committee is asked to note the following key issues:

The pilot has been assessed as successful and it is now proposed that the management of the building transfer to Parks & Leisure with a view to permit the establishment of a longer term lease with Shankill United Football Club;

As previously noted, the existing facilities management agreement is currently with Lower Shankill Football Club and not with Shankill United FC. To commence a process wherein the management arrangements regarding the entire site are consistent and regularised it is proposed that the existing facilities management agreement relating to the pitch be amended to permit a joint agreement with Shankill United FC and Lower Shankill FC. The agreement will continue to be on a month by month basis and will be subject to review pending the outcome of the ongoing review of facilities management agreements.

**3 Resource Implications**

**Financial Implications**

The related revenue budget is within revenue estimates and should transfer from Community Services to Parks to support the management lease fee. (£13,354).

**Human Resource Implications**

There are no additional human resource implications within the Parks and Leisure Department

**Asset and other implications**

The proposal will support the regularisation of management of the facility

**4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations**

None

**5 Recommendations**

It is recommended that Committee agree to

1. Accept the internal transfer of the Pavilion from Development Department Community Services to the Parks & Leisure Department;

2. **Accept the associated budget transfer from Community Services to Parks to support management lease fee, (£13,354), subject to annual review; and**
3. **Agree to vary the existing facilities management agreement to include Shankill United Football Club, subject to the ongoing review of facilities management agreements.**

**6 Decision Tracking**

**Stephen Walker will implement the decision of the Committee.**

**7 Key to Abbreviations**

**SUFC - Shankill United Football Club.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Community Capital Programme**

The Director of Parks and Leisure submitted for the Committee's consideration the undernoted report:

**“1. Relevant Background Information**

**The committee is reminded that at its meetings in December 2010 and January 2011 it received reports regarding a number of funding applications, which had been made by organisations, to Sport NI (SNI) under the Community Capital Programme (CCP). These applications related to land and/or facilities which were owned by Belfast City Council. The proposals and sites were:**

1. **Provision of a mountain bike trail at Barnett's Demesne**
2. **The provision of a 3G full size soccer pitch at Marrowbone Millennium Park;**
3. **The provision of a full size 3G soccer pitch at the Hammer Open Space; and**
4. **The provision of a 3G multi user games area and casual polymeric kick about area at North Queen Street Playground; and**

**The Committee agreed to support the schemes in principle subject to further information being made available around funding; terms and conditions of the funding; receipt of the necessary statutory approvals; type of security of tenure required and the proposed management arrangements post completion.**

Following an evaluation of all applications by SNI, the first 3 of the 4 applicants were asked to provide evidence of their 'state of readiness' by 15 March 2011. Unfortunately it was a short turn around period, around 6 weeks and none of the applicants were sufficiently well advanced to proceed within the financial year 2011/2012. The 3 were placed on a call of list.

Since that time there has been a further request from SNI seeking evidence of the 'state of readiness' to progress the schemes. Again the schemes have not been sufficiently advanced to enable SNI to make an offer of funding. We believe that a further request to the 3 applicants will be issued in September seeking an update on progress with each of the applications.

The purpose of this report is to seek the necessary approvals from Committee in order to move forward.

#### *Current position*

Sport NI has indicated that the applicants have all demonstrated a high level of need for their respective projects and that these projects fit with the criteria of the programme. There are three main areas to be addressed to the satisfaction of SNI:

1. security of tenure;
2. matched funding; and
3. possession of the necessary statutory approvals.

#### *Security of tenure*

In order to secure funding the applicant must demonstrate that the facility will continue to function for a period of 10 years following the provision of grant. The council can either agree to enter into a lease arrangement in respect of the land, in which case it would be normal to seek some form of annual 'rent' in return for the lease; or to enter in to a deed of dedication where in the council would retain management responsibility for the facility for a period of 10 years and in addition should the council not comply with the terms and conditions of the deed then it may have to repay a proportion of the grant.

At this time there has been no agreement with the applicants as to the most appropriate form of tenure required, however, in order to move this forward the committee is asked to authorise officers to enter into further discussions with local groups regarding the terms and nature of any potential agreements, including proposed management arrangements.



### ***Matched Funding***

The maximum grant from SNI is £245,000. There is a short fall in funding with each of the three projects. At this time there is a degree of uncertainty around then exacts, however it is estimated that the short fall in respect of each scheme is as follows:

1. The provision of a mountain bike trail at Barnett's Demesne is believed to be in the region of £70-100k;
2. The provision of a 3G pitch at the Hammer open space in the region of £70-100k; and
3. The provision of a 3G pitch at Marrowbone in the region of £250k.

The Committee is asked to note that the facility at Marrowbone would require additional fencing and floodlighting consequently the overall cost is considerably greater than that at the Hammer Open Space.

Ordinarily these projects would be treated as capital projects and would be subject to the gates review process. However, Members will be mindful that the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee is considering the introduction of a local investment fund to support projects such as these and to enable the council to meet the shortfall in funding. The scheme is still being worked up and will be subject to the development of an application process setting out criteria, eligible expenditure, maximum grant etc, there are to be party group briefings regarding this. However it is hoped that the scheme will be in place and will be able to support this type of project.

Parks and Leisure Department has no provision in the revenue budget to cover any match funding for these projects.

### ***Statutory and other approvals***

The statutory approvals are a matter for the applicant, although the committee has previously conveyed authority for officers to work with the applicants where necessary in support of the application, this could mean the preparation of drawings for planning purposes. As the facilities will be on council land, this would be a practical approach to take.

The Committee is asked to note that approvals may also be required from external bodies (for example the Millennium Commission re Marrowbone) before any agreements are entered into or construction is commenced.

2. **Key Issues**

The key issues for the committee to note are:

1. The need for additional 3G pitches has been established as has the need for a mountain bike trail;
2. The need for the council to provide an appropriate form of security of tenure to satisfy the requirements of SNI, this is likely to be either a 10 year lease or a 10 year deed of dedication with associated management costs and a potential claw back clause should the council default on the agreement;
3. There is a funding shortfall in respect of each of the proposed projects and there is an expectation that the council will meet the short fall, one possible route is the proposed local Investment fund, which is currently under consideration. Another option would be through the capital programme with projects being subject to the gates process.

3. **Resource Implications**

**Financial Implications**

The financial implications remain unclear. Preliminary estimates would indicate that there the shortfall in respect of each project is as follows:

- The provision of a mountain bike trail at Barnett's is believed to be in the region of £70-100k;
- The provision of a 3G pitch at the Hammer open space in the region of £70-100k; and
- The provision of a 3G pitch at Marrowbone in the region of £250k.
- The revenue implications will be influenced by the nature of the legal agreement.

However, where a 3G facility is provided we would expect a business plan to demonstrate that the facility would break even and would not incur additional revenue expense on the part of the council.

Entering into legal arrangements with third parties, which are themselves subject to grant aid conditions, places some financial risk on the council in addition to the proposed council contribution to capital funding. This risk potentially includes the repayment of grant monies or obligations to repair or replace damaged facilities during the whole of the 10 year period.

### **Human Resource Implications**

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

### **Asset and other implications**

These facilities will enhance the existing asset and will improve service provision and provide additional opportunities for residents to participate in physical activities to improve health and well being and may also be support diversionary activities to combat anti social behaviour. Entering into legal arrangements with third parties could help ensure the assets are not disposed of by the council for other purposes for a minimum of 10 years.

### **5. Equality Implications**

There may be equality implications in respect of the provision of soccer pitches, however, this issue will be considered within the wider discussions on the pitches strategy.

### **6. Recommendations**

The Committee is asked to:

- Note the content of the report;
- Authorise officers to enter into further discussions with the various groups to agree the nature of any legal arrangements, including management arrangements, and to agree the terms of these prior to seeking approval to same from the Parks and Leisure Committee and ultimately the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in accordance with Standing Orders 46 and 60. Any approvals required from third parties would be sought at an appropriate stage.
- Agree that Officers continue to explore ways in which the Council might support these projects through the provision of funding

### **7. Key to abbreviations**

3G: third generation  
SNI: Sport Northern Ireland.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

### Alexandra Park

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

**1.1** Groundwork NI is a not-for-profit organisation, set up in 1991, which undertakes community-led regeneration projects.

**1.2** In late 2008, Groundwork NI was awarded £998,000 under the European Regional Development Fund Peace III Programme, Priority 1.1 Building Positive Relations at a Local Level, to deliver the *Reconciling Communities through Regeneration* (RCTC) programme. RCTC is run across Northern Ireland as well Counties Cavan, Leitrim and Donegal, with the following objectives:

- to develop 'key skills for peace' and create opportunities for inter-group dialogue, cross-community relationship building and networking;
- to work strategically with the Peace III clusters (i.e. the eight council groupings tasked with delivering Priority 1.1) ;
- to build positive relationships at the local level in order to achieve positive change; and
- to begin to address contested physical space issues with the aim of regenerating physical spaces and removing the physical manifestations of segregation.

**1.3** In consultation with the council and the local community, Alexandra Park was chosen as a specific project within RCTC, with a budget allocation of £50,000 towards physical regeneration works. In November 2009, a community/inter-agency project steering group (the Steering Group) was established, including representatives from the following:

- Belfast City Council;
- Groundwork NI;
- North Belfast Community Development and Transition Group;
- Intercomm;
- PSNI;
- North Belfast Interface Network;
- Greater Newington Residents Association;
- Challenge for Youth;
- Friends of the Grove;
- Department of Justice;
- Youth Justice Agency; and

- Youth Justice Agency; and
- Non-affiliated residents from Parkside, Dunmore, Castleton, and Mountcollyer.

- 1.4 In November 2010, Committee approved regeneration proposals made by the Steering Group including development of a nature trail, installation of seating and interpretive panels on the history and wildlife within the park, and development of a picnic area. Site work was completed earlier this year with the assistance of an additional £50,000 secured from the Alpha Programme (the Landfill Communities Fund distribution body).
- 1.5 In February this year, following discussion with community representatives, Groundwork NI conducted a survey to gauge residents' opinions on enhancing access at the peace line running through the park and the side entrance at Alexandra Park Avenue. The survey responses were in favour of enhanced access. In April, Committee agreed to the installation of a gate in the peace wall, to be funded by the Department of Justice, to be opened on a pilot basis.

## 2 Key Issues

- 2.1 Peace III funding for RCTC is due to finish in December 2011. Groundwork NI has requested funding from the council to continue its involvement in Alexandra Park for a further year, up to December 2012. A proposal by Groundwork NI has been circulated.
- 2.2 Should funding be granted, this would afford an opportunity for continuity in the partnerships and community relationships which have been developed through RCTC, and progression of established initiatives. In particular, the programme has been instrumental in developing the forthcoming peace line arrangements, and continuity is likely to be a key factor in ensuring effective community engagement once access through the new gate is made available.
- 2.3 It is recognised that, without proper management, there is potential for overlap between the work of Groundwork NI and the role of council officers, in particular the Community Parks Manager and Community Parks Outreach Manager. Should funding be granted, it is therefore proposed that:
1. All Groundwork NI's activities are planned in consultation with (and where appropriate delivered with the direct involvement of) relevant officers, and are in line with existing Departmental policy and planning, including the outreach plan for the park;

2. The principle of 'additionality' is applied, so that any work delivered through the project would not be possible or as effective without Groundwork NI's involvement;
  3. Funding is provided on an output basis, paid incrementally against successful completion of distinct, pre-determined activities for which costs have been agreed - rather than as an overall contribution to 'core funding' of Groundwork NI; and
  4. Groundwork NI's continuing involvement is agreed as a medium term measure limited to December 2012. To ensure sustainability beyond this period, appropriate planning will be undertaken for mainstreaming any ongoing activities through the work of officers and/or formal establishment of a Friends Group in the park.
- 2.4 It is proposed that provision of funding would allow delivery of a programme of activities which complements and augments the current work of officers in Alexandra Park, and meets council and Departmental aims with regard to good relations, anti-social behaviour and shared space. It is expected that key activities could include shared space events, community engagement around access through the peace wall, and development of education materials, protocols and training to ensure future achievement of benefits.
- 2.5 Following further consultation with the two main sections of the community, it has been agreed that the gate in the peace wall will be constructed in time for a trial opening period from September to December this year, from 7.30 a.m. to 4.00 p.m., Monday to Friday. During this period, the new arrangements will be closely monitored and reviewed. In particular, officers in conjunction with PSNI will measure the impact on levels of anti-social behaviour and conflict in the immediate area. Subject to the results of this review and further consultation, it is proposed that the opening will later be extended for a further trial period.
- 2.6 To mark the opening of the gate and to celebrate the wider success of the recent regeneration activities in Alexandra Park a community event will take place on Saturday, 17th September, 2011. The formal opening of the gate is planned for Friday, 16th September.

### **3 Resource Implications**

#### **3.1 Financial**

An accurate figure for the amount of funding required by Groundwork NI would be determined following agreement of a fully costed action plan. However, based on figures provided by Groundwork NI for typical project costs, it is estimated that the council would be required to provide around £11,000 from revenue budgets. This expenditure would be subject to approval of a business plan to be prepared by officers, as required by the council's Policy and Guidance on Revenue Appraisal.

It is expected that Groundwork NI, in conjunction with the Steering Group, would seek additional sources of external funding, as required.

There is no expected cost to installing the new gate in the peace wall, as this will be funded by the Department of Justice.

#### **3.2 Human Resources**

There will be no additional human resources required at this stage.

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

None at this stage.

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

4.1 There are no implications at this stage. However, equality and good relations factors will be taken into account in any activities delivered at Alexandra Park through the project.

### **5 Recommendations**

#### **2.2 Committee is asked to:**

- (i) agree in principle to providing funding to Groundwork NI on the basis described in this report and Groundwork NI's proposal, subject to requisite approval of a business plan; and
- (ii) note the details of the celebratory event, on which further information will be provided with formal invitations in due course."

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Compensation for Installation of a  
Storm Drain at Carr's Glen**

The Director advised the Committee that, in June, 2008, Northern Ireland Water had undertaken the installation of a storm drain on Council-owned land at Carr's Glen. The works involved the installation of a 525 millimetre diameter drain over a distance of approximately 65 metres of the Council's property. However, much of the land under which the drain flowed had subsequently been sold to the Belfast Education and Library Board, leaving approximately 12 metres of pipe under a portion of land which had been retained by the Council.

The Committee was informed that compensation for the installation of the sewer had now been agreed with the District Valuer's Office, Land and Property Services, which was acting on behalf of Northern Ireland Water, in the sum of £3,000. The agreed compensation took into account the use of the land as a formal open space/amenity land at the time of the installation, with the installation date also being the relevant date at which compensation had been assessed.

The Committee agreed to accept the compensation in the sum of £3,000 in respect of the 65 metres of storm sewer laid at Carr's Glen.

**Proposed Sewer Easement at  
City of Belfast Golf Course**

The Committee was advised that a request had been received from consulting engineers acting for A & M Campbell, which was developing land at Antrim Road, Mallusk, seeking permission to install a foul sewer across Council-owned land to facilitate the development. The proposed development consisted of warehousing and ancillary offices totalling approximately 25,000 square feet. The site also had Outline Planning Approval for a mixed-use development, including local retail and hotel uses. The proposed foul sewer had been sized to accommodate those future uses and would run from the development site under the public road until it entered the Council's land at the City of Belfast Golf Course.

The Director explained that the Easement sought would be for a distance of approximately 3 metres, with a working width of 3 metres either side of the pipe required to facilitate its installation and future maintenance. The position of the proposed foul sewer meant its presence would not affect the existing or any proposed replacement clubhouse. The position and depth of the sewer meant also it would have no significant impact upon any proposed development at that location. The developer's consulting engineers had undertaken to cause minimum disruption to the operation of the Golf Course during the installation works and would restrict their operations to an area which would not affect the operation of the first tee. Access to the site for plant and machinery would be directly from the Antrim Road and not through the Golf Course car park. Full reinstatement of the property would be undertaken to the Council's satisfaction and in conjunction with the Golf Club. It was proposed that the work would commence as soon as possible following completion of any legal agreements, with the work lasting approximately two weeks.



The Committee approved the grant of an Easement to A & M Campbell to allow the installation, future operation and maintenance of a 150 millimetre diameter foul sewer pipe at the City of Belfast Golf Course, Mallusk, subject to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee approving financial and other terms in accordance with Standing Order 60 and to the parties entering into an appropriate legal agreement to be prepared by the Legal Services Section.

**Disposal of Land at Belmont Park,  
Adjoining 67 Schomberg Avenue**

The Director submitted for the Committee's consideration the undernoted report:

**"1 Relevant Background Information**

- 1.1 The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 23rd October, 2009 approved the disposal of a 3 metre wide strip totalling approximately 82 square metres of land adjoining 67 Schomberg Avenue. The terms of disposal are set out in the extract from the relevant Minute and are clarified in e-mail dated 3rd November, 2009 from the Chief Executive's Department (copies of which have been circulated).**
- 1.2 The main element of debate at committee was whether to permit the construction of a small portion of building on the land being sold and it was agreed that to permit this building would contravene the restriction agreed at the Parks and Leisure Committee of 12th February, 2009 (i.e. that use of the land be restricted to open space and garden use). Consequently it was agreed that building should not be permitted.**
- 1.3 Members may wish to note that at the 12th February, 2009 meeting Committee had also agreed two similar disposals of land to members of the public. Both of these were subsequently approved by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on the basis of use being restricted to open space/garden use.**
- 1.4 The disposal of the land adjoining 67 Schomberg Avenue has not yet been completed on account of small part (approx. 13 sq metres) having been registered at Land Registry as being owned by DRD Roads Service. It appears this element of Registration may be erroneous and legal steps are being taken to clarify the matter.**

## **2 Key Issues**

**2.1 Although the disposal of the 82 square metre strip of land has not yet been completed the owner of 67 Schomberg Avenue has proceeded with the following:**

- (i) House Extension.** A house extension has been constructed and a small portion of this is on the land which Committee had previously agreed to sell to the owner of 67 Schomberg Avenue. This is contrary to the decision of the Parks and Leisure Committee of 12th February, 2009 and the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee decision of 23rd October, 2009 which approved disposal of the land on the basis that it was to be retained as open space/garden use only. The area being sold has already been fenced into the house site.
- (ii) Retaining Wall.** The owner of 67 Schomberg Avenue has levelled his rear garden by excavating a substantial quantity of earth and constructing a retaining wall (over 2 metres in height) close to the rear boundary of his site. The retaining wall crosses the full width of the 3 metre strip which Committee had agreed to dispose of, plus approximately a further 1.5 metres into Council owned land at Belmont Park. Parts of the site of 67 Schomberg Avenue are now considerably lower than the surrounding park. This portion of the Park also borders property in private ownership at 53 Schomberg Avenue and there would be concerns regarding ground stability at the north-west corner of the (No. 53) house site if the retaining wall was removed.
- (iii) Deposit of Spoil.** The garden of 67 Schomberg Avenue formerly rose steeply from the house towards the boundary with No. 53 Schomberg Avenue. The ground level of the garden has now been reduced by up to two metres to approximately the same level as the ground floor of the house. The soil and clay removed from the garden of 67 Schomberg Avenue was deposited among trees on adjoining Council land at Belmont Park. The owner of 67 Schomberg Avenue states that all the spoil has been removed although there appears to be residual deposits affecting trees on Council land.

**2.2 Photographs.** Appendix 5 contains photographs illustrating the position of former and existing fences, house extension, retaining wall and deposits of spoil. Further information relating to each photograph is contained in Section 8 of this report.

2.3 Options. Options for dealing with each of the above matters are set out in Appendix 3, which has been circulated for the information of the Members.

3 **Resource Implications**

3.1 **Financial**

Financial Implications are included as part of the options consideration in Appendix 3.

3.2 **Human Resources**

All options will require input from existing resources in Legal Services, Estates Management Unit and Parks and Leisure Department. Given the nature of potential site works associated with some options these may require engagement of contractors.

3.3 **Asset and Other Implications**

Those options which transfer risk associated with land movement to the owner of 67 Schomberg Avenue will require disposal of additional land, however the amount of land can be quantified and the disposal regulated by a legal agreement. If land ownership is not transferred the risks associated with potential future land movement remain with the council and are not presently quantifiable in financial terms. The construction of part of the house extension, on land upon which the council had sought to prevent building, is technically a breach of the arrangements previously agreed by committee, however a pragmatic approach could bring a solution which could be to the benefit of all parties.

4 **Equality and Good Relations Considerations**

4.1 No known equality or good relations issues associated with these matters.

5 **Recommendations**

2.2 Committee is recommended to approve those options which are most likely achievable within a reasonable timeframe and bring reasonable outcomes for both parties, that is:

- House Extension, Option 1, allow house extension to remain and proceed with disposal of originally proposed area at the previously agreed value of £10,000.

- **Retaining Wall, Option 1, allow the retaining wall to remain and dispose of an additional 41 square metre strip of land for the sum of £2500.**
- **Deposit of Spoil, Option 1, provide authority for further discussions between council officers and the owner of 67 Schomberg Avenue, regarding suitable reinstatement, and in the event that agreement cannot be reached regarding reinstatement, to report the outcome of discussions to a future meeting of committee.**

**All subject to the approval of the additional land disposal by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in accordance with Standing Orders 46 and 60 and incorporation of appropriate terms in a legal agreement to be prepared by Legal Services and subject to completion of the land transaction by the purchaser in accordance with the proposals contained in this report.”**

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

#### **Victoria Park - Control of Geese**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meetings on 10th December, 2009 and 14th January, 2010, it had considered reports in relation to the ongoing issue surrounding the number of greylag geese within Victoria Park and the potential threat to public safety through bird strikes on aircraft landing or taking off at the George Best Belfast City Airport. In addition, the Committee had been advised of the risk to public health resulting from the extensive amount of bird droppings from the unsustainable numbers of geese contaminating the water and other areas of the Park. The Committee had subsequently agreed the following range of measures to control the greylag geese, which were in the most part funded by the airport:

1. The erection of low level wire fencing around the two islands to prevent access for the geese to safe breeding areas. This would also serve to reduce the erosion of the island caused by the geese ‘puddling’ around the edges.
2. The erection of low level wire fencing along the edge of the lake at the car park area, to prevent the geese from having easy access to and from the water.
3. Planting appropriate shrubs along parts of the lake to prevent the geese having easy access to and from the water.
4. Undertaking an awareness raising campaign to dissuade members of the public from feeding the geese, particularly with white bread, by feeding the birds the public are encouraging the

birds to remain within the park; in addition, bread is not considered appropriate for the birds. This could include a sign, leaflets distributed around the local area, a press release and information on our web site. Education on this issue could also be included in the Watch This Space programme with local schools and the Saturday club at Victoria Park.

5. To continue with the annual egg pricking under licence (this may prove less necessary if the geese are prevented from gaining access to the islands by the fencing)
6. Monitor the affects of these measures to assess their effectiveness.

The Assistant Director explained that, following the evaluation of the effectiveness of the measures to date, the airport authorities wished to:

- replace the wire fence on the islands with a chestnut pale fence which would be more effective and require less maintenance;
- extend the fence at the car park along one side of the lake and replace it with a decorative metal fence which would match existing park fencing; and
- continue to campaign to dissuade members of the public from feeding the geese.

She pointed out that, since the lake areas of the Victoria Park were an Area of Special Scientific Interest, any of the above-mentioned measures would only be undertaken after appropriate consultation with and the consent of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency. An appropriate legal agreement would be drawn up with the Airport Authority to ensure that it would meet all the associated installation and maintenance costs and that the fence would meet with the Council's specification.

The Committee approved the undertaking of the additional bird control measures as outlined, subject to an appropriate agreement with the Airport Authority.

#### **Glencairn Park - Feasibility Study on the Provision of Pitches**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

##### **1.1 The purpose of this report is to:**

- (i) **present an outline feasibility study for the development of soccer pitches at Glencairn Park to the Committee; and**

- (ii) to seek direction as to whether the potential development should be referred to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee as a capital project and progressed in line with the normal council procedures.
- 1.2 At the meeting of full council in July 2011 during the discussions on the draft playing pitches strategy a member proposed that an examination be undertaken on the feasibility of the development of soccer pitches in Glencairn Park.
- 1.3 Following on from this the Landscape Planning team has undertaken an examination of the park and a summary of the study is outlined below.
- 1.4 Glencairn Park is a 65 acre linear park that sits within the Glencairn ward in north-west Belfast. This high quality parkland was the demesne of the two former estates (Glencairn and Fernhill House) and contains the Ballygomartin River Valley including mature deciduous woodland. As regards public facilities the park contains a small children's playground, a bitmac basketball court and a BMX track.
- 1.5 The topography of the site rolls down from each of the perimeter boundaries to create a low, flat parkland area on which the playground and BMX track are constructed (approximately 3 acres in size).

## **2 Key Issues**

- 2.1 Members should note that the following planning designations exist for the park under the Belfast Metropolitan Plan:
- An historic park, garden and demesne – on account of the former adjoining estate gardens of Fernhill and Glencairn House now incorporated into the park
  - A local landscape policy area – on account of its environmental quality and amenity value
  - An area of existing open space
  - Site of local nature conservation importance because of the number of mature trees and vegetation within the site and the existence of the Ballygomartin River

- Forth River/Glencairn/Ligoniel Community Greenway is designated within the park

2.2 In terms of already existing surrounding council provision, the area is well provided for and breaks down as follows:

- Clarendon Park – two senior grass soccer pitches, one junior grass pitch and a synthetic multi-use games area
- Woodvale Park – two senior grass pitches (these will be reoriented and enhanced as part of the Woodvale regeneration plans)
- Ballysillan – 5 senior grass pitches and a new 3G soccer pitch (including ball-stop fencing/floodlighting).

2.3 Given this existing provision and the fact that the pitch audit carried out for the strategy development states that soccer pitches are not under-provided for in the area, there is no current plan or budget for any pitch development at this site.

2.4 Feasibility of constructing 1 Grass or 3G Facility

A flat parkland area (approx 3 acres) exists at the eastern sector of the site adjacent to Forthriver Road. A small play area, bitmac basketball court and BMX track are provided here. In terms of the feasibility of developing a grass or 3G pitch within the park this location would be the most practical and cost effective.

2.5 Other additional site implications

- In terms of size requirements topography at the outlined area in Appendix 2 can accommodate a full size 3G soccer pitch (100 x 60m) including 6m high ball-stop fencing and floodlighting. However, this would result in the loss of the existing BMX track and bitmac basketball court. The estimated construction cost for a full size 3G soccer pitch is in the region of £750k
- At present no changing facility exists within the park. There will be a necessity to construct a four room sports pavilion for teams at an estimated cost of circa £600k

- Vehicular access to a facility at this location must be enhanced. This will require upgrading of existing vehicular access from Forthriver Crescent and the construction of a formal car park adjacent to the pavilion. Civil engineering works for improved vehicular/pedestrian access are estimated to be in the region of £20k.
- Due to the low lying topography at this part of the park additional land drainage will be required, given the distance to the nearest watercourse engineering works could be in the region of an additional £10k
- Due to the planning protections it will be necessary to integrate any proposed 3G facility with the landscape character of the park. This will require landscape/tree works in the region of £15k
- As Glencairn Park is designated as 'historic' DoE Planning Service may be reluctant to approve development that significantly changes the landscape character of the site. In planning terms an application for a full size synthetic sports pitch with associated fencing, floodlighting and pavilion may be unacceptable

Members will be aware that the committee has completed a prioritisation exercise regarding investment in pitches and ancillary provision based on the findings of the research undertaken to support the pitches strategy and also taking into account deliverability issues. In the original exercise Glencairn scored poorly due to adequate provision already in the area and the site only lending itself to 3G association football and not hybrid provision therefore not supporting intensification of use. It was therefore not considered a priority for development at that stage.

### **3 Resource Implications**

#### **3.1 Financial**

In the event that planning approval is viable, very draft estimated construction costs might break down as follows:

##### **1x 3G pitch**

1. Pitch construction (fencing/floodlighting)	£750,000
2. New changing pavilion	£600,000
3. Access Road/car park	£20,000
4. Additional land drainage	£10,000
5. Landscaping works	£15,000
Total estimated cost	£1,395,000



**1x grass pitch**

1. Pitch construction	£400,000
2. New changing pavilion	£300,000
3. Access Road/car park	£20,000
4. Additional land drainage	£10,000
5. Landscaping works	£15,000
Total estimated cost	£745,000

**3.2 Human Resources**

None at this stage.

**2.2 Asset and Other Implications**

None at this stage, however any future development would alter the council's sports asset provision.

**4 Equality and Good Relations Implications**

There are no implications at this stage.

**5 Recommendations**

Committee is asked to consider the information provided in relation to the development of a single 3G or grass surface soccer pitch at Glencairn Park and agree either:

- Not to progress this proposal further at this stage; or
- Refer the proposal to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for capital programme funding subject to the gates process."

During discussion, several Members suggested, given that the Council, after a lengthy process, had recently developed a Playing Pitches Strategy and approved Phase I of that programme, that the proposals for a pitch at the Glencairn Park should be incorporated into that process.

A Member pointed out that the Church of Ireland was currently looking at the provision of a third generation pitch in the vicinity and discussions should be undertaken with that Body and the management of the nearby Clarendon Park Playing Fields.

After further discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Mullan,  
Seconded by Councillor Hargey,

That the Committee agrees not to progress the proposal any further at this stage but that it be incorporated within the Council's Playing Pitches Strategy.

### **Amendment**

Moved by Councillor Thompson,  
Seconded by Alderman Humphrey,

That the Committee agrees that further discussions be undertaken with representatives of the Church of Ireland and the management of the Clarendon Park Playing Fields to discuss the potential of a playing pitch at Glencairn Park and, in the meantime, the proposal be referred to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for inclusion in the Capital Programme for funding, subject to the gates process.

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

The original proposal standing in the name of Councillor Mallon and seconded by Councillor Hargey was thereupon put to the meeting when eleven Members voted for and six against and it was accordingly declared carried.

### **London 2012 - Games Maker Bursary**

The Director of Parks and Leisure submitted for the Committee's consideration the undernoted report:

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

- 1.1 **The purpose of this report is to seek Member approval for the diversion of £30,000 from the Support for Sport budget to the "London 2012 Volunteers Bursary" scheme.**
- 1.2 **The London 2012 Volunteers Bursary Scheme is designed to assist individuals to become a London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games Volunteer - or 'a Games Maker'.**
- 1.3 **The application process to become a Games Maker was launched on 27th July, 2010 and closed on 27th October, 2010. 220 volunteers from Belfast have been interviewed (20.7% of NI total). In order to aid these volunteers a 2012 NI Volunteers Bursary Scheme has been developed through a partnership between DCAL and Volunteer Now.**
- 1.4 **The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) is the lead Government Department in relation to the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics in Northern Ireland. DCAL is taking the lead in promoting the Bursaries Scheme and extending the opportunity to potential funders to participate in the Scheme and galvanise their support.**

1.5 Volunteer Now leads on the delivery of a sustainable Volunteering Legacy for Northern Ireland in connection with the Olympics and Paralympics. They are well placed to progress the legacy as the lead organisation for the promotion and development of volunteering in Northern Ireland. Volunteer Now has responsibility for the administration of the 2012 NI Volunteers Bursary Scheme.

## 2 Key Issues

### 2.1 Games Makers – the Commitment

Where an applicant is successful in being selected to become a Games Maker - there is the expectation from the Games organisers that they commit to the following:

- 10 days volunteering, over a potential 3 week period;
- personally arrange and cover the cost of their journey to any applicable training and games time venue; and
- personally arrange and cover the cost of their accommodation.

### 2.2 Staff Volunteering at London 2012

The department is aware of a number of staff who have volunteered to become Games Makers and given the commitment required.

2.3 It is anticipated that for those successful in being selected special leave would be granted in line with arrangements previously applied to similar opportunities subject to the ability of the business area to release individuals.

### 2.4 Status to Date

- 220 potential 'Games Makers' from Belfast have been interviewed. They will be contacted from November onwards with a decision.
- Volunteer Now have been appointed to administer the bursary scheme and have developed criteria for applicants. They will launch the scheme following the first appointments.
- A number of members of staff (unknown at time of writing) have applied to volunteer at London 2012 and will be required to commit to a minimum of 10 days. The precedent has been set from previous events where staff received half the time off with pay.

**3 Resource Implications**

**3.1 Financial**

Match funding of £30,000 is to be paid to Volunteer Now to be distributed to Belfast 'Games Makers'. There is no provision for this amount in this year's budgets. However, historically the small grants fund under Support for Sport has been under claimed by clubs due to over estimating their requirements or changes to the scope of their events. The Leisure Development Unit has estimated that in this financial year there is the potential for at least £30k of unclaimed grant to be available. It is therefore recommended that this unclaimed Support for Sport grant is used to fund this scheme.

**3.2 Human Resources**

Successful staff members will require approximately 5 additional days leave. Volunteer Now will manage the allocation of funding on council's behalf.

**3.3 Asset and Other Implications**

None at this stage.

**4 Equality and Good Relations Implications**

None at this stage.

**5 Recommendations**

**2.2 Members are asked to:**

- (i) approve the recommendation to allocate a maximum of £30,000 to the bursary scheme from the support for sport fund; and
- (ii) agree to the recommendation of staff receiving half the time off with pay as adhered to for previous events."

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Request for Political Party Briefings –  
Strategic Cemetery and Crematorium Development**

The Committee agreed that Political Party Briefings be undertaken in relation to cemetery and crematoria development.

### Use of Delegated Authority

The Director of Parks and Leisure advised the Committee that since the Committee's last meeting in June, the following decisions had, in the interests of efficient ongoing running of the business under Section 3 of the Council's Scheme of Delegation, been taken in conjunction with the Chairman of the Committee where appropriate:

- (i) a request for the use of the Botanic Gardens for an event for the Filipino community;
- (ii) a request to hold fitness/dance classes in at least five of the Council's parks;
- (iii) agreement, in principle, to use one of the parks/pitches to hold a charity "Polo in the City" event, subject to a number of pre-conditions being met;
- (iv) the removal of the £5 administration fee associated with the Boost loyalty card; and
- (iv) authority to proceed with a reduced price promotional campaign to try and increase the numbers attending the Council's leisure centres.

The Committee noted the use of the Delegated Authority in relation to the aforementioned matters.

### Facility Management Agreement – Annual Evaluation 2010/11

The Director submitted for the Committee's consideration the undernoted report:

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

- 1.1 A Facility Management Agreement (FMA) is a legal agreement that the Council enter into with a community or sporting based organisation to undertake specified tasks on the park resource. The facility still remains in Council ownership and the Council remains responsible for certain maintenance operations on the site and for setting the terms and conditions of the agreement. Due to the success of the initial scheme, the number of FMAs grew; currently there are 18, with most of the agreements being for the management of sports pitches (See Appendix 1. Facility Management Agreements – facility breakdown).**

- 1.2 **Audit, Governance and Risk Services** undertook an audit in Parks and Leisure Department which examined the operation of Facility Management Agreements in Parks and Leisure 2010-11. Audit indicated that there were shortcomings in the monitoring and management of the FMAs and a number of recommendations for improvements were made. Parks and Leisure Management have accepted these recommendations and have produced an action plan for 2011 -2012 to address the issues, outlining agreed actions, responsible officers and target dates for implementation. One of the recommendations was the submission of an evaluation report to Committee each year, including last year 2010-2011.
- 1.3 This report sets out the current position in terms of compliance for the financial year ending March 2011 and actions taken in the first quarter of the year 2011-2012 to mitigate further risks that were identified by the audit report.

## 2 Key Issues

- 2.1 Compliance - The key issues for 2010-2011 regarding compliance on FMAs were:
- Usage returns – All the Clubs using pitches provided their usage returns for the 2010-2011 season. Usage returns were also provided for the City of Belfast Golf Club, Alderman Tommy Patton Bowling Club, the Waterworks MUGA and Alderman Tommy Patton Bowling Club. The Fishermen were not required to provide usage returns.
  - Financial Information - Financial reports for the previous year were supplied by all but one of the Clubs and are being reviewed by Business Support.
  - Accidents or Dangerous Occurrences – No accidents or dangerous occurrences were reported.
  - Child Protection – No child protection incidents or issues were reported concerning any FMA holder.
  - Management and maintenance – No major compliance issues were identified though the need for more rigorous monitoring has been identified.
- 2.2 Non-Compliance – The one Club that failed to provide their financial returns and more recent usage figures has received a ‘notice of termination’. They are currently working to meet the stipulated requirements within the dictated timeframe approved by Legal Services. However if they fail to rectify the issue authority may be sought from Committee in September to terminate the agreement concerned.

- 2.3 **Improvements** – The Audit report highlighted that there was a need to improve monitoring levels to provide increased evidence of compliance and to reduce the level of associated risks. The Occupational Development Unit have commenced a review of the Outdoor Leisure Unit to ensure that a dedicated resource is put in place to manage the key risks associated with FMAs. An Open Space and Active Living Manager has been appointed to head the Outdoor Leisure Unit which monitors FMA's.
- 2.4 A program of compliance audits has been drawn up (See Appendix 2. FMA Return Requirements). This will ensure that evidence is being collected regularly and enable arising issues to be addressed quickly and efficiently. Clubs are being asked to provide more detailed usage information, in a new format. Community Park Managers are providing monthly site monitoring sheets.
- 2.5 Quarterly Meetings are now being held with all Clubs following a set agenda to ensure that all relevant issues are discussed and minutes taken. To increase assurance around 'Child Protection' issues, all Clubs have been asked to confirm their compliance with new Child Protection Departmental guidance. An action plan has been compiled to ensure compliance and this will be implemented as resources are made available.
- 2.6 The relevant Clubs will be asked at their Quarterly meeting to provide copies of their insurance policies which will be checked to ensure compliance with the requirements of the terms and conditions of the relevant FMA.
- 2.7 The Departmental Management Team recommended to Committee in the Pitches Strategy Report that the status quo regarding pitch management, maintenance and bookings remains until a review which is now underway is undertaken. The findings and recommendations of this review will then be reported to Committee later in the year to enable Committee to consider future options for the management of FMA sites.

### **3 Resource Implications**

#### **2.2 Financial and Human Resources**

There are financial and human resource implications arising from the requirements to demonstrate more rigorous monitoring and management of the key risks associated with FMA. Assistance is currently being provided in the

management and monitoring of the FMAs by an agency member of staff. ODU are reviewing the Unit and will make a recommendation to Committee of an appropriate structure / role for the Outdoor Leisure Unit. The exact financial and human resource implications will then be assessed.

**4 Equality and Good Relations Implications**

4.1 None

**5 Recommendations**

5.1 The Committee are asked to note the issues highlighted in the report and that there will be an increased level of FMA monitoring, management and evaluation in 2011-2012.

**Appendix 1: Facility Management Agreements - Facility Breakdown**

Site Name	Agreement Holder	Number of pitches
<b>ATHLETIC TRACKS</b>		
Mary Peters Track	Athletics NI	N/A
<b>BOWLING GREENS</b>		
Alderman Tommy Patton	Sydenham Bowling Club	N/A
<b>MULTISPORTS</b>		
Waterworks	North Belfast Play Forum	N/A
Willowbank	Willowbank Multi-sports Facility	N/A
<b>PITCHES/PAVILION</b>		
Alderman Tommy Patton	East Belfast Football Club	4 Soccer
Clarendon Playing Fields	Clarendon Football Club	3 Soccer
Dixon Playing Fields	Sirocco Football Club	2 Soccer
Hammer	Lower Shankill Football Club	1 Soccer
Lenadoon Playing Fields	Lenadoon Community Forum	1 Soccer
Loughside Playing Fields	Loughside Football Club	2 Soccer
Musgrave Playing Fields	St. Brigid's GAA	2 Gaelic
Orangefield Playing Fields	Bloomfield Football Club	4 Soccer
Shore Road Playing Fields	Grove Utd Football Club	2 Soccer
Suffolk Playing Fields	Suffolk Football Club	5 Soccer
Ulidia Playing Fields	Rosario Youth Club	2 Soccer
Woodlands Playing Fields	South Antrim GAA	4 Gaelic and 1 Soccer



Site Name	Agreement Holder	Number of pitches
<b>GOLF</b>		
City of Belfast Golf Course	City of Belfast Golf Club	N/A
<b>FISHING</b>		
Waterworks Fishing	Families at the Waterworks	N/A

### Appendix 2: FMA Return Requirements

All Clubs/Organisations who hold Facility Management Agreements will be expected to complete the following:

- Usage figures on a monthly basis (City of Belfast Golf Course – quarterly basis) in the provided standard format, with all sections completed including any nil responses. Returns should be with the Outdoor Leisure Unit on or before the 8th of the following month i.e. June’s figures should be with Outdoor Leisure by 8th July.
- Financial Accounts on an annual basis. These should be provided to the Outdoor Leisure Unit no later than 6 months of the Club’s year end.
- Annually clubs will be asked to confirm that they have valid insurance if not covered by Belfast City Council (with a 5% deduction in the clubs annual payment).
- Annually clubs will be asked to confirm their compliance with the Department’s requirements on Child Protection.

Clubs will also be expected to attend quarterly meetings with appropriate Belfast City Council representatives i.e. Community Park Managers and City Park Managers. These meetings will follow a set agenda and clubs may be asked to prepare in advance some figures e.g. numbers of refusals in the last quarter.

Any issues of non compliance will be addressed through the appropriate channels and persistent issues may result in termination of the FMA following advice from Legal Services.”

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

### Belfast Festival at Queen's Event - Botanic Gardens

The Committee was reminded that the ‘Enchanted Evening’ had been a successful annual event which had been run by the Council for a number of years. The event had attracted an audience of approximately 12,000. However, due to budgetary constraints the cost of running the event, which was in the region of £54,000,

had meant that the Council was unable to sustain the event and it had been discontinued in 2009. Subsequently, in 2010, the Belfast Festival at Queen's had submitted a proposal to the Council to include an event in the Festival programme as part of the popular Enchanted Evening production. The Committee had supported the proposal and provided funding in the sum of £14,500.

The Director reminded the Committee further that, at its meeting on 14th April, it had agreed, in principle, to the inclusion of the Enchanted Gardens event as part of the 2011 Belfast Festival at Queen's, subject to officers engaging in further discussions with the organisers and a further report thereon being submitted to the Committee.

The Director reported that a meeting had subsequently been held with representatives of the Festival Committee and the following points were noted:

- the projected audience size would be approximately 10,000;
- the event would take place on four evenings from Wednesday, 26th till Saturday, 29th October, 2011;
- the event set up and associated costs appeared to be reasonable for the nature and size of the event;
- the audience, whilst primarily aimed at families, would attract a wide age range; and
- the event organisers were seeking funding in the sum of £25,000 from the Council to assist with the holding of the event.

The Committee approved the use of the Botanic Gardens for the holding of the Enchanted Evening event in conjunction with the Belfast Festival at Queen's and agreed to provide financial support in the sum of £25,000.

### **Council Sports Teams - Equality Impact Assessment**

The Committee was reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 1st March, had requested an Equality Impact Assessment to be carried out in relation to funding granted to all Council sports clubs involving employees. Accordingly, the Director submitted a report in this regard.

The Policy and Business Development Manager had sought information from across the Council and while there was limited information available, most support historically would appear to have been for one-off events or competitions.

The Policy and Business Development Manager outlined the events which had been held and the type of support which had been provided in recent years. She explained that as the result of the research which had been undertaken, it appeared that there was no consistent approach or practice followed and there was no Council policy in place for the granting of Council support to staff sports teams. In a small number of cases where a report had been submitted to the Committee, it had been recommended that funding be provided and that the expenditure be approved

under Section 115 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972. She explained that, since the Council did not have a policy in place, there was nothing concrete on which an Equality Impact Assessment could be made. Therefore, the first step for the Council to take would be to develop a policy.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and agreed that the matter be referred to the Corporate Policy Team to develop a draft policy, in conjunction with Human Resources Section, and that the draft policy be submitted to the appropriate Committee for review and approval.

### **Invasive Alien Species Strategy for Northern Ireland Consultation Response**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1 Relevant Background Information**

- 1.1 The Department of the Environment (DoE) published in March 2011 a draft Invasive Alien Species Strategy for Northern Ireland for public consultation. Responses to the consultation must be returned to the DoE by 30th September.**
- 1.2 The consultation document is available at [www.doeni.gov.uk/invasive alien species strategy consultation document.pdf](http://www.doeni.gov.uk/invasive_alien_species_strategy_consultation_document.pdf).**
- 1.3 Invasive alien species (IAS) are defined by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) as an alien species whose introduction and/or spread threatens biodiversity.**
- 1.4 Invasive alien species are now recognised as a major threat to biodiversity loss. This threat is likely to increase in future unless action is taken at all levels to control the introduction and establishment of these species and address those already introduced.**
- 1.5 The impacts of IAS are far reaching from disrupting ecosystem services to threatening economic interests such as agriculture, fisheries and development proposals.**
- 1.6 Recent estimates of the cost of IAS in the EU were at least €12 billion per year. The economic costs of IAS to NI is not currently known however a GB report estimated that IAS cost the GB economy £1.7 billion per year.**
- 1.7 The draft Invasive Alien Species Strategy aims to establish a co-ordinated policy and management framework that minimises the risk of invasive alien species to the economy, environment and society.**
- 1.8 Appendix 2 outlines the suggested council draft response to the strategy. As part of the consultation the department has**

asked a number of questions which have been covered in our proposed draft response.

**2 Key Issues**

**2.1 Need for the Strategy**

The need to address the issue of invasive alien species has been recognised by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) 1992 to which the UK Government is a signatory. Northern Ireland is committed to the Convention on Biological Diversity and EU targets to halt the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services by 2020.

In Northern Ireland we have set targets to significantly reduce biodiversity loss by 2010 and to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2016.

**2.2 Summary of Response**

There is a significant policy and legislative gap in terms of IAS and Belfast City Council welcomes this strategy as a key step to address this complex issue. The strategy will aid co-ordination of action across government departments and stakeholders which will be essential to deliver the objectives.

**2.3** The current NI legislation framework is inadequate to deal with this complex and wide ranging issue. Primary legislation is required to ensure action can be undertaken on IAS.

**2.4** Currently the council receives a significant number of queries from the public on IAS particularly in relation to Japanese knotweed and Giant Hogweed. Education and awareness on IAS and clear guidance on treatment and legislation are essential.

**2.5** The emphasis of the strategy is on prevention of introductions since prevention is more cost effective than control and eradication measures. While an emphasis on prevention is welcomed a more proactive response is required to include restoration to habitats and species affected by IAS.

2.6 The strategy needs to be sufficiently resourced. Investment now will buffer against future costs.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 None.

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

4.1 There are no equality or good relations considerations attached to this report.

5. Recommendations

5.1 Members are requested to consider the content of the proposed draft response to the draft Invasive Alien Species Strategy, as set out in Appendix 2, and if appropriate endorse this as the formal response for submission to the Department of Environment.

Appendix 2

Belfast City Council Response to  
An Invasive Alien Species Strategy  
for Northern Ireland

Introduction

Belfast City Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on an Invasive Species Strategy for Northern Ireland (Draft Strategy). Protection of biodiversity is in line with the Belfast Local Biodiversity Action Plan and a key theme within our Corporate Plan – Better Care for Belfast’s Environment and as such we are pleased to see the development of an Invasive Species Strategy for Northern Ireland.

The EU biodiversity strategy to 2020 acknowledges that biodiversity loss is the most critical global environmental threat alongside climate change – and the two are inextricably linked. Consequently the EU has committed to a new vision and target for biodiversity ‘to halt the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services in the EU by 2020 and restore them insofar as possible, while stepping up the EU contribution to averting global biodiversity loss’.

In Northern Ireland we have set targets to significantly reduce biodiversity loss by 2010 and to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2016.

Biodiversity provides numerous ecosystem services such as water purification, carbon storage and flood protection. For example pollination by bees and other insects provide services boosting agricultural production worth at least £94 billion annually. Many of these services are under threat.

Invasive Alien Species are widely acknowledged as the second biggest threat to biodiversity loss worldwide. This threat is likely to increase in the future unless robust action is taken at all levels to control the introduction and establishment of these species and address those already introduced. The impacts of IAS are far reaching from disrupting ecosystem services to threatening economic interests.

### Summary Comments

- There is a significant policy and legislative gap in terms of IAS and Belfast City Council welcomes this Strategy as a key step to address this complex issue. The Strategy will aid co-ordination of action across government departments and stakeholders which is essential to deliver the objectives.
- Given the costs associated with taking action once species are established, there is clear justification in investing in prevention and Belfast City Council welcomes the development of a policy framework with an emphasis on prevention. However, a more proactive response is required to include restoration to habitats and species affected by IAS.
- There is a need to develop a sound legislative framework to address the issue of IAS. The current legislation is inadequate to deal with these complex and wide ranging issues. Although the EU Biodiversity Strategy proposes a dedicated EU legislative instrument to tackle IAS it will take a number of years to transpose an EU Directive. National legislation is a fundamental requirement to tackle IAS. Without this we will accrue future costs and indeed many species will become established and too costly to address.
- The Strategy needs to be sufficiently resourced. Investment now will buffer against future costs.

### Strategy Questions

Q1 - Belfast City Council supports the principle of a broad partnership approach given the complex nature of IAS and agrees that this issue requires the participation of a wide range of stakeholders to be effective. Both the prevention and control of IAS will require commitment across government both central and local, industry and the private sectors.

- Q2 - Belfast City Council supports the scope of the strategy and welcomes the emphasis on the precautionary approach and prevention. Although we support this approach and the alignment with the guiding principles of the CBD, the European Strategy on IAS (2003) states that it is important to go further than this defensive approach and that policies need to include restoration measures for species, habitats and ecosystems that have been affected by IAS**

**The Council is concerned with the Statement that additional resources are unlikely to be available. There is clear justification for investment in preventing species invasions and rapid response once discovered. The area of IAS is currently under resourced and delays will incur additional future costs for Northern Ireland.**

- Q3 - The Council welcomes the emphasis on preventing new species entering and becoming established in NI. Currently there is no comprehensive legislative instrument to deal with IAS and BCC considers that this will be required in order to achieve this objective. IAS legislation should not only be limited to the sale of high risk species.**
- Q4 - Belfast City Council supports the development of an early warning and rapid response system which is critical to deal with IAS. Legislation which gives authority to implement a rapid response is required.**
- Q5 - Belfast City Council support the objective to develop an effective mechanism for monitoring, reporting and recording invasive alien species to inform the response to threats posed by new and established invasive alien species.**
- Q6 - BCC supports the development of Invasive Species Action Plans but there must be associated resources made available to undertake action. The development of criteria on which decisions are made should be included within the Implementation Plan.**
- Q7 - The Council supports this objective and in particular the need to develop an online toolkit of methods to tackle IAS. This toolkit should be comprehensive, practical and species specific. It should cover the legislation and the impacts of IAS.**

**Practitioners should be involved in the development of the toolkit.**

- Q8 -** Belfast City Council supports the objective to maximise organisational effectiveness and collaboration on invasive alien species issues. We particularly welcome the action ‘to formalise a co-ordination mechanism for joined up working across Government which identifies lead agencies, contact points and clear roles and responsibilities of stakeholders’. This action is key to dealing effectively with IAS in terms of rapid response, control or monitoring. Management of IAS requires cross sectoral and government commitment. We also welcome the commitment to deliver training for Local Authorities in conjunction with Biodiversity Officers and to provide a co-ordinating and information resource on IAS.
- Q9 -** We support the objective ‘to raise awareness of invasive alien species amongst the general public and raise awareness of capacity for action amongst key stakeholders to increase their understanding of the risks that invasive alien species can pose to our native wildlife, economy, environment, society and the actions that minimise these risks’. BCC welcomes that this objective includes the economic and social implications of IAS which the Council considers critical to both engender ownership of these issues both within government and amongst the general public. The Council has already held training sessions on IAS for staff, NGOs and stakeholders but there is an ongoing need. Local Biodiversity Action Plans can provide an effective vehicle to develop Action 28.
- Q10 -** Belfast City Council strongly supports the need ‘To ensure that the legislative framework in Northern Ireland for addressing invasive alien species issues is coherent, comprehensive, fit for purpose and “proportionate”’.

To achieve some of the key objectives within the Strategy a sound legislative framework is required. The Wildlife Order and the Wildlife and Natural Environment Bill are wholly inadequate to address IAS. In addition when undertaking action practitioners are faced with contravening other legislation such as the Water Order and the Waste Order.

This objective is critical to delivering any strategy on IAS. As outlined throughout the document there are shortfalls in terms of authority to undertake action, prevent the import and indeed the export of IAS to other countries and the means to address this is the development of primary legislation. The EU has outlined this gap in the EU biodiversity strategy and will develop a dedicated EU legislative instrument. While a Directive on IAS will occur within the short to medium term, the cost of IAS is such that we cannot afford to wait until such a Directive is transposed into National legislation. Scotland has recently introduced far reaching legislation on IAS Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011. Primary legislation is essential to ensure action can be



undertaken on IAS. Without this we will accrue future costs and indeed many species will become established and be too costly to address.

**Q11 - Belfast City Council supports the objective. Any management strategies and control programmes must be underpinned by sound science both to ensure effective use of limited resources but also to ensure public and political support.**

**Q12 - Belfast City Council would like to see the inclusion of the following actions within the Implementation Plan.**

**The development of primary national legislation to address pathways, early detection and response and containment and management of IAS.**

**The development of criteria on which decisions on whether to eradicate and/or control IAS are made.**

**The development of a funding strategy.**

**Education and awareness programme targeted at different interest groups and sectors.**

**Q13 - While we support the review cycle 5 years and even 3 years is a long timeframe in terms of IAS. There must be opportunity to ensure that there is flexibility within the process to deal with new species as and when they occur rather than waiting for a review. The implementation plan must have the flexibility to respond to new species as they arrive and amend priorities as situations develop.”**

The Committee approved the foregoing comments as the Council’s response to the consultation exercise.

#### **Letting of 62 Antrim Road**

The Director of Parks and Leisure advised the Members that a number of Council-owned houses were currently let to staff within the Parks and Leisure Department. The rents payable on those properties had last been revised and approved in May, 2010 and ratified by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in August, 2010. He reported that the property at the Zoo, 62 Antrim Road, had been allocated to Mr. Andrew Hope, Zoo Curator, in August, 2008. However, that had not formally been reported to the Committee at that time and he sought the Committee’s authority to approve the allocation retrospectively.

The Committee granted the authority sought under the terms of the tenancy agreements and the rental rates which had been agreed subsequently.

### **Attendance at the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management Learning Convention and Exhibition**

The Committee was advised that the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management Learning Convention and Exhibition would take place from 3rd till 5th October at the Chesford Grange Hotel, Kenilworth, Warwickshire. Attendance at the event would allow Councillors and officers to keep up to date with developments in the funeral services industry and make contacts with other authorities and service providers, learning from their expert knowledge and experience. This year's Learning Convention and Exhibition would focus on the problems currently being faced by the United Kingdom burial and cremation authorities as they had to cope with reduced budgets and financial restrictions and would explore innovative ways of improving services whilst faced with ever decreasing resources. The cost of attending the event would be approximately £645 per person.

The Committee approved the attendance of the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman and the Director of Parks and Leisure (or their nominees) at the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management Learning Convention and Exhibition.

### **Donations to Spring Fair Committee**

The Committee was reminded that the Spring Fair had taken place at Barnett Demesne on 16th and 17th April. The event had incorporated the annual spring flower show, which had 700 horticultural exhibits on display, a mix of environmental activities, children's entertainment, displays, demonstrations and music. Approximately 1,500 visitors had attended the fair over the two afternoons. He explained that staff from the Parks and Cemeteries Services Section worked in partnership with the Spring Fair Committee to organise the flower show element of the event. There were three horticultural societies represented on the Committee, namely, the Northern Ireland Daffodil Group, Friends of Bonsai and the Northern Ireland Group of Flower Arrangement Societies.

The Director explained that, in previous years, the Committee had authorised the making of a £100 donation to each of the horticultural societies involved in the organisation of the Autumn Flower Show in recognition of their assistance throughout the year. However, up until now a similar donation had not been made to members of the Spring Fair Committee to recognise their help and support. Accordingly, he recommended that the Committee approve the making of a donation of £100 to the Northern Ireland Daffodil Group and the Friends of Bonsai.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

### **Support for Sport**

#### **Small Development Grants and Hospitality Applications**

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

**Large Development Grants**

The Committee considered applications which had been received and had been assessed within the agreed criteria for assistance in relation to large development grants. The standard of application had been high with twenty-seven clubs exceeding the 50% scoring threshold. Given the available budget the Committee agreed to award funding to the twelve top scoring applicants as detailed below. A full list of applicants was available on Modern.gov.

CLUB NAME	AREA	SCORE	RANK	RECOMMENDATION	AMOUNT	SYNOPSIS
Cathal Brugha Swimming and Water Polo Club	West	90%	1	Support	£5,000	To develop new player recruitment and retention programmes, coaching development pathways and performance management. They will focus on primary school children linking in with Belfast City Council School Swimming programme and Make a Splash. Offering the opportunity to join the club and establish a player pathway and support system.
Holy Trinity Boxing Club	West	84%	2	Support	£5,000	Making Holy Trinity a community facility through taking their crime diversion and outreach programme to the next level,. This will be achieved by including children from 10-18 and linking local schools/youth workers to identify children at risk of antisocial behaviour - also hosted at Whiterock Leisure Centre.
Civil Service North of Ireland Cricket Club	East	82%	3	Support	£5,000	The initiative involves 4 aspects i) Centre of excellence for boys aged 12-20 (approx 30) including profiling, lifestyle management, skill development and fitness. ii) Outreach targeting local primary and secondary schools offering technical coaching and leading onto a summer programme which the children can go to gain further coaching. iii) Engaging and actively recruiting girls to the club by integrating into the academy and beginning a ladies club. iv) Developing and strengthen link with NICS Hockey Club developing transferable skills and providing opportunity to try new sport.

CLUB NAME	AREA	SCORE	RANK	RECOMMENDATION	AMOUNT	SYNOPSIS
Windsor Tennis Club	South	82%	3	Support	£5,000	Community outreach programme across Primary, Secondary, Special schools, community, disabled and ethnic minority groups. Introducing tennis to 2 year olds and providing a pathway into clubs while encouraging mums to get into tennis. Also aiming at 55+ introducing new activities to the club such as Pilates, zumba and slimming etc.
North Belfast Harriers	North	79%	5	Support	£5,000	Promotion of athletics to Juniors at secondary schools targeting North Belfast Schools. They will be offered expert training, physio and nutrition workshops and the opportunity to learn from elite athletes. The initiative will utilise Belfast Model.
Friends of Grosvenor Fencing Club	East	78%	6	Support	£5,000	The initiative involves 3 aspects: i) Outreach programme targeting 8 local Belfast Schools. Each school will have 2 coaching sessions targeting 15 children with the emphasis on fun. (Total Participants 120). ii) To develop a Sabre section within the club by utilising an experienced coach in this discipline iii) Specialist coaching for elite and coach development. A 'Master of Arms' to coach the elite athletes to ensure their development whilst mentoring the clubs current coaches.
Belfast Harlequins Women's Hockey Club	South	75%	7	Support	£5,000	To provide specialist coaching to the Ladies Hockey team including goal keeping, forwards and backs. This will also filter through to the coaches in a mentoring scheme and to the junior squad who will benefit from the enhanced coaching and talent id. This will set a well established pathway for junior to progress to the Senior club.
Rising Stars Basketball Club	West	72%	8	Support	£5,000	A community and schools outreach programme through basketball in a cross community multi cultural setting. The initiative seeks to work with those who are do not normally participate in sport and also those who are at a high risk of offending. They will be encourage to develop new skills and self confidence.

CLUB NAME	AREA	SCORE	RANK	RECOMMENDATION	AMOUNT	SYNOPSIS
Saint Marys Football Club	North	70%	9 Joint	Support	£5,000	Project aims to improve the coaching standard of the current club coaches by increasing the coaching clinics available to all club coaches, such as nutrition or strength and conditioning. Assessing individual coaches and providing opportunity to develop and gain further qualifications while providing feedback as they work with the children to develop their skills. This initiative will also look at recruiting additional coaches and volunteers to ensure more age ranges and members can be added to the club.
Belfast Star Basketball Club	North	70%	9 Joint	Support	£5,000	Emerging stars programme to establish an Under 10 and Under 12 club and take part in new league structure. Providing outreach structure and support to encourage children to remain playing Basketball while developing their skills as new coaches and mentors.
Falls Bowling Club	West	67%	11	Support	£5,000	The establishment of a Youth Academy at Falls targeting Primary 7s at Holy Child in an 8 month programme introducing them to the game of bowls and providing a pathway into the club structure and opportunity to sustain and develop the club while reducing the age profile.
Belmont Bowling Club	East	67%	12	Support	£5,000	Try Bowls Under 25 Youth Academy and family programme to incorporate a new membership recruitment campaign. The initiative will aim to attract boys & girls from 14 years by linking with local schools, community groups etc. and hosting a series of coaching opportunities followed by a tournament for specific age groups.

Chairman