

Parks and Leisure Committee

Thursday, 11th September, 2014

MEETING OF PARKS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor McKee (Chairman);
Aldermen Robinson and Rodgers;
Councillors Attwood, Beattie, Convery,
Corr, Hanna, Hussey, McCabe,
McNamee, Mullan;
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 the Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor Maire Hendron, and Councillors Cunningham, Haire and Kyle.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 14th August were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st September.

Declarations of Interest

Alderman Robinson declared an interest in Item 4, that is, Summer Camps/Schools – OFMDFM Support.

Falls Park Pitch Development - Proposed Consultation

The Assistant 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 meeting on 14th June 2014 it received a copy of a report regarding proposed construction of a 3rd generation artificial turf pitch at Falls Park as part of the implementation of the Pitches Strategy which was adopted in March 2012. The report, a copy of which has been circulated, highlighted the concerns from some residents regarding the implications of the new facility. To help address those concerns it was suggested that an

engagement exercise be undertaken with residents to identify the issues and agree ways in which these might be mitigated. The Committee Minute stated that:

After discussion, during which the Committee expressed concern regarding the cost of hiring external consultants to undertake a consultation exercise on behalf of the Council, it was agreed that an invitation be extended to representatives of the residents' group to attend the August monthly meeting in order to outline their concerns in respect of the proposed development, after which the Committee would give consideration to the best manner in which to undertake future consultation.

The residents were unfortunately unable to attend the August meeting and asked that a deputation be received at the September meeting.

At the Council's meeting on 1st July, the matter was further discussed and minuted that

the decision under the heading "Falls Park – Consultation Re: 3G Pitch" be amended to provide that an enhanced engagement process be undertaken between the Council and local residents in advance of the meeting of the Committee in August.

In the interim, Officers from Parks and Leisure Department have met with a group of residents in August. There has also been recent correspondence from one of the residents on behalf of the group. The most recent correspondence appended a draft proposal as to the extent of the consultation and engagement which those residents believe is necessary in relation to this project. This is attached at Appendix B.

During the meeting it was evident that there was a difference of opinion in terms of the purpose of the consultation exercise. Officers were of the view, in line with the committee report from June, that the consultation was to address mitigation measures around management of the new facility. However, the residents expressed the view that they were opposed to the development and were essentially requesting that the Council undertake an exercise to determine whether the development should go ahead or not.

Further to the meeting with the resident's group in August 2014 it was decided that in order to obtain a wider view from

stakeholders that a further public meeting should take place and this has been scheduled for 23rd September 2014.

2. **Key Issues**

The Committee is asked to note:

1. The Council has adopted the pitches strategy in March 2012 and agreed that a 3rd generation pitch and changing pavilion and ancillary structures would be located in Falls Park; the strategy has been subject to consultation in line with the Council's Equality Scheme;
2. Meetings have previously taken place and alterations to the proposal have been made such as the repositioning of the changing pavilion and agreements around landscape plans to minimise noise and light escape from the new facility; a further meeting is scheduled for 23rd September with letters being hand delivered to those residents from the adjoining streets. Posters will be put up in local facilities and throughout the park to inform other park users of the meeting;
3. The project has been lodged with the Planning Service; the matter was deferred at the Town Planning Committee and a lighting report is currently being prepared for submission to the Planning Service to enable a final adjudication to be made; during the planning process a range of objections were received, these will be taken into account as part of the determination.
4. The residents have submitted a proposed methodology which would require significant additional resources as outlined in the Committee Report in June and about which Members expressed their concerns;
5. While for some residents there are concerns around future management issues emerging from the extended hours and floodlighting etc, there is a group of residents who are opposed to the development and would prefer to see the decision to construct the artificial turf pitch at Falls Park reversed;

3. **Resource Implications**

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications at this time.

Resource Implications

There are no additional human resource implications at this time.

4. **Equality Implications**

There are no equality implications

5. **Recommendations**

The Committee is asked:

1. To note the report;
2. To receive the deputation from a group of residents from streets adjacent to Falls Park;
3. To note the planned public meeting scheduled to take place on 23rd September which is focused on implementation and mitigation.”

It was reported that Mr G Kearney, Mr F Malone, Ms F Maguire, Ms S Boyce and Ms F Campbell, representing a group of residents from the streets adjacent to the Falls Park, were in attendance and they were admitted to the meeting.

The deputation tabled for the information of the Members a detailed presentation outlining their concerns and opinions regarding the installation of a 3G Pitch at the Falls Park. The key points of which were as follows:

- the Falls Park, as one of the few remaining open, green spaces in West Belfast should be protected and invested in as a park. Installation of a 3G pitch would irreversibly change the nature and character of the park;
- there had been no adequate consultations to date with the West Belfast community on the proposal to locate a 3G pitch at the specific location identified within the Falls Park;
- the broader consultation within West Belfast on the Pitches Strategy had been totally inadequate and in breach of the Council’s Section 75 equality duties;
- with the increase in provision of 3G pitches in West Belfast in recent years, plus further planned provision, the business case for the development of a 3G Pitch in the middle of the Falls Park had not been made; and
- the Council now needed to engage in proper, meaningful and cost effective consultation with the community about what it wished to have in the park.

The Deputation then answered a number of questions from the Members and the Chairman on behalf of the Committee, thanked them for attending and they retired from the meeting.

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations contained within the report.

Update on Potential Site at Dundrod for Burial Lands

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

Members will be aware that as part of the approach to cemetery and crematorium development we have been engaged in a process to identify a site for development as a new cemetery and that discussions have been ongoing around a potential site at Dundrod.

The site at Dundrod came to the Council through an expression of interest exercise which the Council initiated. This site was put forward by an agent acting on behalf of a business man who holds an option on the site. Officers from the Parks and Leisure Department, Legal Services and the Estates Management Unit have held a number of meetings with the party who holds an option on the site along with their agent. The Council is aware of who the landowners are but at this point have had no direct dealings with them.

A company, Carston Undertakings Ltd, has now been established and has taken over the option on the site. Carston Undertakings has commissioned a number of pieces of work around the development of the site and a delegation led by Strategic Planning made a presentation, on their behalf, to the Committee in June, outlining their proposals for the development of a cemetery on the site.

2 Key Issues

Members will be aware that in selecting a site for development as a potential cemetery there are several issues which need to be considered. The report brought to the Committee in August outlined the work that has been undertaken to date in relation to the site and informed Members that URS, who have undertaken previous assessments for the Council in relation to our search for a new cemetery site have been commissioned to undertake an analysis of all the findings of the previous four studies around the viability of the site and to provide a concise view on the issues and constraints to developing the site to allow Members to make a decision on the options available.

1 Access

As previously outlined to Members the proposed site is on the circuit of the Ulster Grand Prix which would result in the main

access, onto the Quarterland Road, being closed for the duration of this event and therefore a secondary access would be required. A potential secondary access has been investigated onto the Carnaghliiss Road. Two issues that have arisen relating to this secondary access are that additional land would be required from adjoining landowners and that due to the undulating topography of the road significant re-grading would be necessary.

The expert opinion is that secondary access from the Carnaghliiss Road is not viable due to vertical alignment and that even if the access was viable the proposed site does not make adequate allowance for the 215m sightlines required.

2 Environmental

The expert opinion assessed the works that had previously been undertaken in relation to the environmental issues associated with the site. The site has a major watercourse (Coopers River) running through it and several minor watercourses. There are NIEA guidelines on the buffer zones required around watercourses and based on this the expert opinion has indicated that it can be assumed that approximately 29 acres of land would be unavailable for use as burial plots. Some of this land may be available for other cemetery related infrastructure. There may be potential to divert the minor watercourses to reduce the amount of land that is lost to burial, however there would be a cost associated with such works and it is not known at this point if the various statutory agencies would agree to this as it may contravene their own objectives.

Within the northern portion of the site there is a Scheduled Rath and there are three other unscheduled Rathes in close proximity but outside the site boundary. There is also a scheduled complex of Rathes 500m to the east of the site, all of which would likely indicate that the area in which the cemetery is located would have high archaeological potential and there remains a certain amount of potential for as yet unknown archaeology to survive below the current ground surface. The work undertaken to date on the site has not included a consultation with NIEA- Built Heritage but URS have indicated that it is unlikely that they will permit development of the Scheduled Rath site and they are likely to recommend a walkover survey takes place followed by a Programme of Archaeological Work. The expert opinion has estimated that if we are required to undertake an archaeological investigation and interpretative analysis of the Scheduled Rath site, this is likely to cost in the region of £250,000. Depending on what else is found on the site the

Council could spend another £250,000 on archaeological work for the rest of the site. Archaeological investigations would require the approval of the landowner as it would include intrusive site works.

3 Geoservices

The Council has had some initial ground condition tests undertaken on the site. However the expert opinion has concluded that there are significant gaps present that restrict the ability to fully assess the suitability of the site as a cemetery and recommends a series of further tests. The original trial pits were dug to a depth of 3m which is sufficient for a 2 burials grave. However the Council's practice is to have 4 burials per grave and therefore deeper excavations are required across the site. At the time of the original site investigations the Council was not considering purchasing the far northern/north western area of the site and no trial pits or boreholes were dug in this area. However a trial hole in the area below this portion of land has shown bedrock at a high level.

The expert opinion is that a complete Tier 1 hydrogeological risk assessment would be required for the site. This would be submitted to NIEA who would make a determination on whether Tier 2 or Tier 3 tests would be required but given the site is considered as a high burial rate site it is likely that Tier 3 tests would be required. It is estimated that the cost of doing the essential works required to allow the Council to complete a Tier 1 is £8,000. Tier 2 or Tier 3 investigations would result in a period of testing and remodelling which would require in excess of 12 months additional work and have additional cost implications.

4. Planning

The expert opinion in relation to planning is that the site has the benefit of a pre-application in principle 'yes' to a proposed cemetery use from the Planning Authority. However this is qualified on the basis that a significant amount of supporting technical study and detail is required. Their opinion is that the risks of not achieving planning are currently high when issues of access, archaeological impact and possible contamination are so uncertain.

A map outlining the site and potential restrictions on burial has been circulated. The map shows the watercourses that are present within the site and the potential buffer zones. It also shows the position of the Scheduled Rath and those areas that we have not carried out ground investigations in. There is a possibility that archaeological investigations and

the additional ground investigations required may indicate that further areas of the site would be unsuitable for burials. In the absence of these investigations it is difficult to determine how much of the site is suitable for burials.

5 Conclusion

The expert opinion concludes that there is high risk of not achieving planning approval on the basis of a second vehicular access but also with regard to archaeological impact and possible contamination uncertainties. Further studies to bridge the gaps in archaeological and contamination/ground investigation information will be required to fully assess the suitability of the site as a cemetery but may not remove the uncertainty over planning approval.

6 Costs

As indicated throughout this report the expert opinion has identified a number of significant potential constraints on this site and a comprehensive body of work would need to be completed if the Council is to continue considering this site as a potential cemetery. The work required and the costs are outlined in the appendix 2 and in summary essential works (which includes the potential archaeological works) are estimated at £508,000. Other future works including a likely Tier 3 assessment are estimated at £51,000. The completion of this work could not guarantee that the site would be suitable for use as a cemetery given the initial issues and constraints that have already been identified.

Members are reminded that the Council has not entered into any contractual arrangements with the option holder regarding this site and nor has the Council made any commitment in terms of agreeing any acquisition terms for the site, including the purchase price. If after the necessary further investigations were carried out, it was deemed that the site, or part of it, was viable for development as a cemetery, and Members agreed, the Council would have to enter into negotiations to ascertain whether the land we required could be acquired at a level of value which could be recommended for Council approval. In addition to the purchase price we would also have to pay legal fees and land registry fees which would be determined by the title to the lands (i.e. if it is registered / unregistered land) and the value of the lands. The Council would not be in a position to agree to acquire the land until planning permission was in place.

- 7 **Recommendation**
Based on the constraints that have been identified with this site, in particular the issues around secondary access and archaeology, and the costs of the additional works required, which are likely to confirm the evidence to date, it is proposed that Members do not pursue any further interest in this site as it would not provide good value for money.

- 8 **Review of burial policy**
The last review of the Council's burial policy was undertaken in 2010 and it identified at that time that the Council required a site of 72 acres, in addition to what was available in other cemeteries to provide it with sufficient burial capacity for a 50 year period. As has been demonstrated over the last number of years there are real difficulties in identifying a suitable site of this size, which meets the strict guidelines required for a cemetery, within a reasonable distance of Belfast. Should the Committee decide not to proceed further with the Dundrod site it is recommended therefore that the burial policy is revisited to look at what options are available and whether or not we should revise the size of site we are seeking, for example that we develop a number of smaller sites. To allow the Council to do this, it is recommended that suitable expertise be commissioned to undertake this review, which will include an update of the statistics and burials etc.

If this is agreed in principle a report would be prepared for consideration by the Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

- 3 **Resource Implications**

Financial

The development of a new cemetery is currently a Stage 1 emerging project in the Council's capital programme.

We anticipate that the cost of the work around the reviewing of the Council's burial policy will fall within the Council's quotation limits and can be met from existing revenue budgets.

Human Resources

There are no human resource implications at this stage.

Asset and Other Implications

None at this stage although the final phases of the project will inevitably increase the Council's land ownership and associated liabilities.

4 Equality and Good Relations Implications

There are currently no equality or good relation implications however this will continue to be reviewed as the project is developed.

5 Recommendations

Members are asked to agree:

- i. That given the constraints and issues that have been identified with the site at Dundrod, and the costs required to carry out the further investigations, that it is agreed that this site would not provide good value for money and therefore is no longer considered viable for development as a potential cemetery; and
- ii. To recommend that a review of the current burial policy be undertaken and to refer this to the Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration.

6 Decision Tracking

Director of Parks and Leisure to implement the Committee's decision"

After discussion, the Committee agreed that:

- (i) negotiations continue with the site owner or agent to ascertain whether or not a smaller portion of the site at Dundrod could be utilised for burial lands;
- (ii) a workshop be held early in the new year, at which all the information previously submitted to the Committee in relation to burial sites be presented to enable the Members to review the current burial policy and the provision of crematoria; and
- (iii) an updated report be submitted to the Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Summer Camps/Schools – OFMDFM Support

The Committee was advised that the Council's Good Relations Partnership had, on behalf of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM), agreed to commission and oversee a regional pilot of a range of activities/projects which would inform the design of a summer schools/camps programme from 2015 onwards. The proposed pilot programme was to run over the Hallowe'en period. The Leisure Development Unit had responded to a call for submissions when the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister had confirmed that further funding, in the amount of £50,000 had been made available, with that office agreeing to support the cost of the programme at 100% including an evaluation. The Good Relations Partnership, at its

meeting on 8th September, had noted a report in relation to the funding and the nature of the programme.

The Committee was advised that, whilst the OFMDFM had recognised that the Council would be limited in terms of the timescale available for delivery, it had requested that the intervention be of a strategic nature and that it be aligned, as closely as possible, to the Ministerial vision of a summer schools/camps with a good relations input as that would facilitate the evaluation and future design of the programme for forthcoming years.

The Leisure Development Unit would coordinate the intervention in the lead up to and during Hallowe'en. The programme would be aimed at children and young people aged between 11 and 19 years of age and would use sports clubs as delivery partners in local neighbourhoods across all areas of the city, focusing on Council assets. Programme planning was currently underway and it was anticipated to be a mix of sports activities and good relations workshops. Recruitment to the programme would be through existing networks and would fulfil the objectives of a cross-community programme.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and agreed that funding be allocated as outlined.

Proposed Northern Ireland Centre of Food Education

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1. Relevant Background Information

The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of an emerging proposal from Groundwork NI to develop a National Centre of Food Education.

Appendix A to this report sets out the proposal. The main points of the proposal are:

- 1. The proposal is based on work to develop a healthy living centre at Colin Glen;**
- 2. The aim is to develop a social enterprise centre to provide a city wide resource to promote a health and well being agenda and to create opportunities to enhance multiculturalism and provide employment opportunities;**
- 3. There have been preliminary conversations with Queens University Belfast and with a number of community and voluntary organisations in the South of the City;**
- 4. The proposal includes a small sustainable building which would be an administrative base; an education**

and information centre; a facility to sell produce and potentially a café;

In the context of the development of a healthy living centre at Colin Glen and their engagement with Queen's University, Groundwork has approached the Council with a view to investigating potential sites in South Belfast and is seeking the Council's consent to identify sites and undertake some preliminary site surveys to determine the suitability of the soil for growing and indeed for the building. It is estimated that approximately an acre of land would be required.

2. **Key Issues**

The Committee is asked to note the following:

1. This project would fit with the Council's own Growing Communities strategy;
2. Identifying suitable sites in South Belfast is likely to be difficult, Botanic and Ormeau have been suggested during preliminary conversations;
3. Whilst no discussion has taken place as to the nature of the legal arrangement should a suitable location be identified; it is anticipated that a lease agreement will be the preferred arrangement;
4. As the site has not been identified no statutory approvals have been sought at this time;
5. No funding has been secured for the project, there are no cost projections but Groundwork are optimistic that given the range of potential funding options they would be able to draw down the necessary grants;

The key issues for the Committee are:

- Is it supportive of the principle of the proposal?
- Is it supportive of the proposal to potentially locate the centre on Council land in South Belfast?

3. **Resource Implications**

Financial Implications

At this time there are no financial implications

Human Resource Implications

There are no additional human resource implications

4. **Equality Implications**

There are no equality implications.

5. **Recommendations**

The Committee is asked to consider the report and to

1. Support the proposal in principle;
2. Agree that officers meet with Groundwork to discuss potential sites;
3. Agree that appropriate tests be carried out to determine the suitability of the land subject to the necessary legal agreements being in place if necessary; and
4. Agree to receive a further report at a later date to update the Committee on the proposal and seek necessary further approvals as required.

6. **Decision Tracking**

A further report will be brought to the Committee at a later date.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

UEFA Youth Final Tournaments 2017 - Request from the Irish Football Association

The Committee was informed that the Irish Football Association (IFA), was considering submitting a bid to UEFA to host its under 19 youth final tournaments in 2017 and was seeking approval, in principle, from the Committee to support the bid.

The Committee was advised that Council officers had met with representatives from the IFA to discuss the proposal. The Association was currently carrying out a scoping exercise to ascertain if there were any available training venues in the greater Belfast area. In addition planning for the event was in an early stage and currently the costs were unknown. The preliminary discussions with the IFA had identified a number of potential training venues, that is, the Blanchflower Stadium, the Ulidia Playing Fields, the Strangford Avenue Playing Fields, the Victoria Park and the Dixon Park Playing Fields.

Three significant factors in reaching the preliminary list were:

- the need for natural turf pitches only;
- the ability of those venues to meet UEFA standard pitch requirements in terms of size; and
- the ability to restrict access to the site or part of the site for a period of up to 17 days during June/July, 2017.

At this stage the IFA had requested that the Council agree, in principle, to the use of those facilities during the period of the tournament, which had as yet to be confirmed. The Association had submitted a reservation form in respect of each of the aforementioned sites and was requesting the Council to sign those agreements to meet the requirements of UEFA as part of the bidding process.

The Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure explained that that there were a number of issues for the Members to consider, namely:

- (1) this was a significant tournament and would be a high profile event for the city;
- (2) similar competitions had been held in the past and had been successful;
- (3) if the bid were to be successful, there would be operational implications for the Council in providing training venues which would include:
 - a) potential closure of the pitches before the end of the local football season, also pitches might require attention prior to the regular season and might not be available until after the start of the season;
 - b) potential restricted access to each of the sites for members of the public;
 - c) realignment of the pitches to meet the pitch size requirements;
 - d) possible hire of equipment, such as marquees for refreshments pre and post training sessions;
- (4) further discussions were required in relation to points 3 (a) – 3 (d) and it was intended that a further report would be submitted to the Committee at a later date to inform the Members of the success or otherwise of the bid;
- (5) the cost implications had not yet been quantified, however, it was suggested that the Council agree to meet the costs of providing the marquees for hospitality purposes and to agree to the free use of the facilities by the squads; and
- (6) the Committee was asked to note that the City Events Team, based in the Development Department, had been made aware of the bid and a further meeting would be held to explore other ways in which the Council might link in with the preparation of the bid and any subsequent arrangements should the bid be successful.

After discussion, the Committee agreed:

- (i) that the Director of Parks and Leisure sign, on behalf of the Council, the reservation forms submitted by the Irish Football Association in relation to the five sites which had been identified; and
- (ii) that the Council provide the agreed venues free of charge for training purposes.

Amateur Boxing Strategy - (Start-up Club Funding)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 At Parks and Leisure Committee in October 2012 Members approved the draft budget and workplan for the Amateur Boxing Strategy 2012-2022.
- 1.2 Members will be aware that within the Strategy, under the theme of Club support and development, an action of providing start-up funding to allow for the development of new clubs across the city was included.
- 1.3 At its meeting in June 2014 Committee agreed to revisions to the budget area with £10,000 per annum allocated to support and develop new clubs. It was agreed that a further report would be brought to Committee to agree the mechanism and guidelines in providing this support.

2 Key Issues and Update

- 2.1 The support and development of new clubs complementing existing clubs especially in under-represented areas such as East and South Belfast will be an essential element in the successful legacy of the Amateur Boxing Strategy and key to providing a citywide service to all who may wish to enter the sport.
- 2.2 The programmes being delivered by our Boxing coaches and clubs citywide are increasing the demand for coaching provision and in-turn this will raise the demand for new clubs especially in areas of underrepresentation such as East and South Belfast. It is anticipated that a number of new club start-up requests for support will be received annually. The programme is actively promoting the sport through after schools activities across the city in liaison with existing clubs in each area.
- 2.3 Recently we have received enquiries for new club start-up support from potential clubs in Oldpark and on the Upper Ormeau Rd. A further enquiry has been received from a Castlereagh Boxing club interested in relocating to the Braniel area. More enquiries are anticipated to be received as amateur boxing develops as a mainstream sport citywide and as such an adopted start-up club fund and criteria for funding is required. A fund of £2500 per applicant has been allocated with

£10,000 for new start-up grants in the current financial year.

- 2.4 The application form for funding has been developed by the Steering Group and has been attached as Appendix 1 for new club support funding. Funding will be allocated on a first come first serve basis. The Steering Group following the support of the Sports Development Officer will assess the applications received within the specified guidelines for funding. The Director of Parks and Leisure will approve the proposed grants to new clubs under delegated authority as is currently the process for Support for Sport grants.
- 2.5 The table below indicates the proposed breakdown of new club funding with some examples of anticipated application requests

Item detail	Available Funding	Notes
Coach Education	£500	Coaching course associated to delivery of Boxing in club. Eg Level 1 /2 /1 star courses
Equipment	£1000	Equipment deemed suitability by IABA for the delivery of Boxing in a club environment
Facility Development	£500	Support for other club goods or equipment necessary for delivery
Other misc	£500	Other items or services required for clubs set up.
Total available	£2500(max)	

- 2.6 The following criteria have been recommended by the Steering Group in order to ensure best practice adherence :
1. Applicants must submit a letter/email of support from County Board or higher within boxing along with this application.
 2. Provide evidence of governance documents (constitution and assorted policies) plus sign-up to Clubmark via IABA and / or BCC prior to acceptance of application.
 3. Identify their catchment area for club and prove that other clubs are not necessarily affected by the new clubs establishment.
 4. Not be established more than 6 months.
 5. Not be a commercial venture of any nature.

6. Be established as a Boxing club (not MMA or other activities) and be affiliated to IABA or a recognised Nation GB).

3 Programme Plan and Resource Implications

3.1 Financial

The budget for the Amateur Boxing Strategy has been agreed.

Human Resources

There are no Human Resources implications at this stage.

Assets and Other Implications

None at this stage

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

- 4.1 There are no equality and good relations impacts from this grant scheme.

5 Recommendations

- 5.1 That Members note the content of this report with regard to the current implementation of the Amateur Boxing Strategy 2012-2022.
- 5.2 The Committee is asked to agree the proposed mechanism and guidelines for allocation of grants up to £2500 towards the support of new clubs.

6 Decision Tracking

Rose Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Ballysillan Masterplan – Implications for Ballysillan Playing Fields

The Committee was reminded that work commissioned by the Department for Social Development, together with the Ballysillan/Upper Ardoyne Neighbourhood Partnership and the North Belfast Partnership, was ongoing in the preparation of a master plan, the aim of which was to regenerate the Ballysillan area in North Belfast. Whilst the work on that was continuing no funding had been secured. In the meantime, officers had been approached by elected representatives from the area to request that the Council, within the context of the master plan, undertake some preliminary work with the local community to explore options which would help regenerate the existing playing fields and bowling pavilion and bring it into wider use within the area.

At this stage it was being proposed that a small steering group be established which would involve officers from the Council, elected representatives from the area and representatives of existing community and sports groups within the area, with a view to working up a series of options which could, in turn, inform a wider discussion within the area as part of the master planning process.

After discussion, the Committee agreed:

- (i) that a steering group be established, with agreed terms of reference, with the aim of producing concept options for the potential reconfiguration of the Ballysillan Playing Fields;
- (ii) a report on the options and next steps be submitted to the Committee in due course; and
- (iii) the works on the understanding that it did not commit the Council to any expenditure.

Marrowbone Park and Dixon Park Playing Fields

A Member requested that the Committee consider duplicating the above mentioned exercise on the Marrowbone Park site.

In response, the Director of Parks and Leisure stated that the proposal for the Ballysillan Playing Fields was being developed in the context of the Ballysillan master plan. However, the Council had undertaken a similar exercise in relation to a development plan for the Falls Park and City Cemetery. That plan had been developed through a number of workshops and meetings involving the Friends of Falls Park and key stakeholders to identify priorities for the site. The development proposals had been worked-up on the understanding that no funding was available. However, if funding did become available, then any development proposals already had community buy in and he suggested that that option could be used in the Marrowbone Park area.

After discussion, the Committee agreed that the development proposal scheme which had been used in the Falls Park and City Cemetery be implemented within the Marrowbone Park and also the Dixon Park Playing Fields.

Landslide at Cave Hill Country Park

The Committee was reminded that the Hazelwood Nature Reserve was located adjacent to the Belfast Zoo and formed part of the Cave Hill Country Park. There had been sporadic landslides in the area as had been detailed in a previous report which had been submitted to the Committee at its meeting on 12th June. At that meeting a decision had been taken to close the path on the advice from Legal Services, following receipt of an engineer's report on the issue. In the interim Parks Management had been investigating the options available and consulting with relevant stakeholders to inform a decision on the future of the path.

The Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure reported that, at the site in question, there was an existing steep rock face which was generally covered with a thin mantle of overburdened material. That overburden was approximately 0.5 – 0.7 metres deep and

was heavily overgrown with trees and undergrowth. The slips were occurring at various locations and at frequent intervals and were due to the instability of the overburdened material on the steep rock face of the escarpment. The rock face itself appeared to be stable so the problem was with the overburden. Due to the extent of the overburden material and the heavy undergrowth, it would be impractical to remove it in order to stabilise the slope above the path. Slips would, in the engineer's view, continue to occur and were more likely to occur during or after very wet periods or snowfall. Those events would increase the weight of the overburden and trigger the slippage of the overburden down the rock face.

She reported further that, during subsequent investigations, a further engineer's report had been commissioned on a pedestrian bridge that serviced the closed path. That report had recommended the removal of the bridge due to structural defects and the bridge had subsequently been removed by a contractor and a suitable fence erected. Due to the topography of the area, a suitable replacement path, to avoid the risk of landslides, was not feasible and, therefore, a replacement bridge would not be required. An alternative route, avoiding the former bridge and the risk of slips, was available as part of the sites current infrastructure and would involve walking up through Hazelwood to link with caves path and descending down to the rear of the Zoo past the "Devils Punch Bowl". That had added an average of 30 minutes to the original journey time.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and agreed to the permanent closure of the path.

Cavehill Country Park Entrance Improvement Scheme

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“ **Relevant Background Information**

Carr's Glen Linear Park forms part of the wider Cave Hill Country Park. It fronts the Ballysillan Road for a distance of 30 metres incorporating a low level steel barrier and 1.2 metre high bow top fence.

The need to improve the visual appearance of the entrance to Carr's Glen Linear Park from the Ballysillan Road has been raised by DSD. The entrance is located within the Greater Ballysillan Master plan area and commands a prominent location on a secondary arterial route.

Currently, Belfast City Council does not have available funding to improve the visual appearance of the entrance as part of its capital programme and following discussions with local political representatives DSD put forward a proposal to upgrade and enhance the entrance.

DSD have confirmed that no terms and conditions will apply to the completed scheme although they would anticipate the Council will wish to maintain the facility for the benefit of the local community.

The works including the portion within Carr's Glen Park will be carried out by DSD's contractor.

The contractor for the works will be procured by DSD using their own processes and governance arrangements. The scheme does not form part of the Councils capital programme.

It is envisaged that the park entrance will remain open during the course of the works, with DSD's contractor providing any necessary security arrangements and temporary fencing for the site compound, materials and equipment.

Access for DSD's contractor will be regulated by a Licence Agreement to be drawn up by the Town Solicitor. The licence will set out responsibilities for public liability insurance, reinstatement and any adjoining areas of the Park and provide time limits for completion of the works.

Key Issues

The scheme comprises a replacement boundary treatment; an estate railing, with new kissing gate and vehicle gate and feature stone wall and pillars with a new sign. The project also includes an area of resurfacing at the entrance and tree planting.

The scheme also extends into adjacent Belfast Educational Library Board lands and continues the new estate railing, as a replacement boundary and some tree pruning.

The Parks and Leisure Department were consulted on the project at design stage and some changes were made to the original design in terms of signage and the specification for railings.

If approval is granted, works could be scheduled to commence on 15th September 2014 with a timeframe of four - six weeks to complete.

The proposed Licence Agreement will provide a regulatory framework for the works to be undertaken by DSD's

contractor including a requirement for the works to be completed to the Councils satisfaction.

A 12 month defects liability period will be in place for the scheme with the council becoming responsible for the new structures upon satisfactory completion of the works.

Planning approval was not required for the scheme as it falls under permitted development.

Resource Implications

Financial

There are no financial implications to Belfast City Council other than associated future maintenance costs which will be absorbed into existing budgets.

The cost of the scheme will be approx £64,000 funded by DSD.

Human Resources

There are no additional human resource implications.

Asset and other implications

This investment will greatly enhance the entrance to the park and transform a tired and unattractive frontage into a more welcoming and accessible entrance which fits into the Green Flag criteria for which this park has been awarded.

Recommendations

Members are asked to approve the proposed scheme subject to a suitable Licence agreement being in place between the Council and the Department for Social Development and to the approval of the Licence Agreement by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in accordance with Standing Orders.

Members are also asked to agree the commencement of works, at DSD's risk, prior to SP&R approval and ratification by Council.

Approval is also subject to confirmation that all works can be completed by March 2015 to ensure that no financial liability transfers to the Council post April 2015."

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Cherryvale Gate Lodge – Proposed Change of Use
and Utility Wayleaves**

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

"1 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 By a 999 year Lease dated 18 March 1998 and Supplemental Lease dated 5 March 1999 the Council disposed of the Gate Lodge at 670 Ravenhill Road. The Gate Lodge is situated near the entrance to Cherryvale Playing Fields. The Lease restricts use of the property to residential purposes and preserves the Council's rights of drainage and sewerage across the Gate Lodge site from the remainder of Cherryvale Playing Fields.
- 1.2 The current owners of the Gate Lodge, Conor McGirr and Siobhan McGirr, have made representations to the Council seeking a variation of the Lease to allow the property to be used for office purposes. A copy of a letter from Conor McGirr, dated 7 September 2012, has been circulated.
- 1.3 From investigations on site it also appears that a number of utilities which serve the Gate Lodge appear to cross the Council's land at Cherryvale Playing Fields. It appears the route of these utility services has not altered since the time of the 1998 Lease and that a general right to enjoy the utilities (then) installed, should reasonably have been included within the terms of the Lease.

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 Use of the present building on the site, for residential and/or office purposes appears to be compatible with the use of the adjoining Park. The 1998 Lease will continue to contain covenants which require the Leaseholder to seek Council consent to any external alteration to the property. The Council will retain the power to object to any proposed future development on the site, if that development was of a scale which was incompatible with the Park. The present Leaseholder obtained Planning Approval in September 2013 for a change of use to offices.
In respect of a proposed variation of the terms of a Lease the Council would be entitled to seek a premium from the Leaseholder if the value of the Leaseholder's interest is increased on account of the Council's consent to the variation. In this case the value of the property for office use is

considered not to exceed its value for residential purposes and thus no premium would become payable by the Leaseholder to the Council in this instance.

- 2.2 At the time the property was sold by the Council it was not the Council's intention that services, across the Council's adjoining land to the Gate Lodge, would be disconnected or re-routed. It is therefore considered the property should continue to enjoy the benefit of those services which pass through the Council's adjoining property en route to the Leased property. It is also considered the Council should seek to preserve entitlement to any similar services which pass through the Leased property en route to the Council's adjoining land. It would appear reasonable that both these provisions would also exclude the right to install any new services across the respective lands of the other party.
- 2.3 Any proposed variation of the terms of the 1998 Lease would require incorporation within a Deed of Variation. While the balance of benefit from these arrangements may lie with the Leaseholder, it is considered, in view of the reciprocal benefit to the Council, that each side would bear their own legal expenses in connection with the drawing up and execution of the proposed Deed of Variation.

3 Resource Implications

Financial

- 3.1 There are no financial implications to the Council arising from this report.

Human Resources

- 3.2 Legal Services and Estates Management Unit resources required in drawing up and agreeing the terms of proposed Deed of Variation.

Asset and Other Implications

- 3.3 The Leaseholders and the Council may mutually benefit in relation to the proposed formalised arrangements associated with provision of utility services. The Leaseholder would benefit from the flexibility the proposed change of use would bring him and the Council would retain safeguards in the Lease in relation to the future compatibility of any future development with the surrounding Playing Fields.

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

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

5 Recommendations

5.1 Committee is recommended to:

1. Authorise the proposed alteration of the User clause in the Lease dated 18 March 1998 to allow use of the premises for residential and/or office purposes.
2. Authorise the formalisation of arrangements in relation to the grant of rights to the Leaseholder and the Council in relation to currently installed utility services at 670 Ravenhill Road/ Cherryvale Playing Fields.
3. Subject to the approval of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, in accordance with Standing Orders, to authorise the proposed change of User and Grant of Rights be incorporated within a Deed of Variation to be drawn up by the Town Solicitor with each side bearing their own legal costs.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

BMX Track at Ormeau Park

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1. Relevant Background Information

The BMX Track in Ormeau Park had been constructed in the 1980's due to demands for facilities to accommodate what was then a 'new' sport. Since that time no further upgrade of the track has taken place and the facility has not kept pace with changes in cyclists' expectations and the developing sport's standards. BMX, as a discipline within cycling, is now an Olympic sport with development plans and programmes at the Dublin track leading to Ireland's first ever BMX world champion last year.

Issues had been raised with the Department about the condition of the track, the need to modernise it and in particular the importance of improving the standard of the surface.

Therefore as part of the parks routine maintenance programme the Community Park Manager proposed to improve the condition of the track during the 2013/2014 financial year to:

- address concerns that the standard of the track needed to improve
- ensure the continued safety of the existing track for users, addressing any identified risks (Risk Assessment from BMX Ireland 30/11/13 of the track.)
- rectify public interference in the track surface e.g. making jumps.
- meet the recommendation to improve the facility in the Green Flag action plan.

After consultation with BMX Ireland and Property Services a plan was drawn up to undertake modifications to the track to upgrade it. The plan was to remodel the track layout removing any hazards identified and reducing curve angles, this work was to enable the track to receive a governing body certificate for safe use.

The track was to be in the same footprint as before but pulled into a more appropriate shape. The track was to be constructed of clay, (no drainage works were proposed) which when modelled was to be stone dressed with a digger and then dust placed on top. In 2014-15 it was proposed to surface the corners in bitmac.

Work began on site in January 2014 using parks staff and the existing hire of machinery contract. Costs were mainly inclusive of staff time and equipment hire within existing maintenance budgets.

It was estimated that most of this work would be undertaken by Parks staff as part of a winter development work programme. There was a substantial amount of additional work undertaken because of the following issues:

- the amount of recyclable clay material on site for remodelling was less than calculated. To compensate therefore surplus free, material was sourced from other sites.
- wet weather resulted in material having to be deposited nearby and then transported into the site by digger.
- due to poor weather some larger track machinery with operators had to be hired.

Due to budgetary constraints the work was suspended in February 2014 and the site left in a safe condition. It was planned to finish the track modelling work in April 2014, finally applying a top coat of stone and then dust which would be compacted.

2. Key Issues

During a review of the works necessary to complete the project and ensure a more sustainable track, the Park's engineer recommended that a terram membrane is installed to ensure adequate drainage to the facility. This will add to the initial cost but will reduce maintenance and increase the lifespan and durability of the facility.

The Belfast City BMX Club have written to thank the Council for the works so far, stating that this is the first redevelopment of any BMX track in Northern Ireland for 25 years and that it is a great boost to the BMX fraternity. Currently all the riders in Northern Ireland have to travel to Dublin to practice and race. The upgrade of the facility will enable the site to be used for local fun days, community outreach, sports development programmes and coaching sessions.

Following on the completion of the track surface, the Belfast City BMX Club have now formally requested that the Council would raise the standard of the facility to enable the running of safe competitions. (Appendix 2. Letter of request from the BCBMX Club)

The Belfast City BMX Club and BMX Ireland would be keen to help with fundraising for a Phase 2 of further works, if required / permitted. The additions would include the formation of a national 'start hill', a safe start gate, the provision of tarmac on the corners, an anti-vandal proof container and some ancillary services e.g. electricity and water. The organisations would be willing to work with Council officers to advise on requirements and provide other assistance.

To support the investment, it is proposed that a 5 year sports development plan should be developed by Belfast City BMX Club with appropriate performance indicators. This will ensure that sustainable sports development work leads to increased participation and community ownership of the refurbished facility.

3. **Resource Implications**

Financial

To finish the first phase of this refurbishment providing the standard of drainage recommended by the Parks civil engineers would require £26,000. This will be funded from existing budgets.

BCBMX have estimated the cost of the additional improvements they have requested in Phase 2 to be in the region of £25,000. However, a detailed proposal and costing will need to be developed and verified and a budget established. A further report will be brought to Committee on proposals for Phase 2.

Human Resources

Outreach, sports development and park staff will work with those using the facility when the works are completed to ensure the facility is well used and that local young people engage with this activity.

Assets

The upgrade works will transform the facility into a much improved community and sporting asset.

4. **Equality Implications**

There are no equality or good relations issues at present.

5. **Recommendations**

Members are asked:

- to agree to the completion of the works on the BMX track at Ormeau Park referred to as Phase 1 with associated budget of £26,000 allocated from within existing budgets
- to grant approval for Officers to enter into discussion with BCBMX regarding proposals for further improvement works to the facility (Phase 2) to bring it up to a safe and recognised competition standard. The detailed proposals for the additional improvements will be resubmitted to Committee at a future date for its consideration.

6. **Decision Tracking**

The Assistant Director Parks and Leisure will bring a further report to Committee on the Phase 2 proposals”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Request for use of The Waterworks Park for North Belfast
Magical Festival**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 Following on from the success of the North Belfast Lantern Parade and Magical Evening in 2013 this report is seeking Committee approval for the free use of facilities at the Waterworks Park for this year’s event known as the North Belfast Magical Festival which is due to take place on Wednesday 29 and Thursday 30 October 2014.
- 1.2 The event is a project of the Ashton Community Trust and is managed by New Lodge Arts, a voluntary arts organisation working across communities in North Belfast for the past 11 years.
- 1.3 New Lodge Arts has established an inclusive advisory group that provides advice and guidance on the community outreach and event elements of the programme. The group consists of representatives from a number of Community organisations in North Belfast. Including groups from Tigers Bay, Mount Vernon, Skegoneill/Glandore, Rathcoole, Lower Shankill, Cliftonville, Lower Oldpark, Oldpark/Bone, Whitecity, Greencastle and New Lodge.
- 1.4 The event has grown over the past 5 years. In 2012 the event attracted over 5000 participants and audience members, including people from across the city and further afield.
- 1.5 The event has received funding in the past provided by OFMDFM, Irish Government, Energy for Children and Belfast City Council.

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 This year the event organisers aim to have a two day festival called North Belfast Magical Festival. This will take place on 29 & 30 October 2014. On the 29 October the organisers aim to host a range of art workshops and street performers in the Waterworks park from 12noon – 5pm. On the 30 October the organisers aim to provide more workshops and performances from 12 noon – 4pm with the main event taking place from 6.00pm until 9.30pm.

2.2 The event will be ticketed again this year, however this year tickets will be sold at a cost of £1 each. The event was ticketed for the first time in 2013 and proved an effective way to manage large numbers within the park. It was decided this year to charge for the ticket for several reasons:

1. Last year there were many people who took tickets and then didn't attend the event whilst others remained ticketless and unable to attend the event.

2. The £1 charge will cover the cost of purchasing the wristbands and any remaining monies will be put back in to the event by way of covering the cost of some of the performers. In order to manage audience numbers the organisers will distribute 4000 tickets/wristbands to members of the public. Details on how these will be distributed are still to be confirmed.

2.3 The event is aimed at families and will consist of:

- Art workshops and street performances over two days prior to the main event.**
- A lantern parade that makes its way from Crumlin Road Gaol to the Waterworks Park.**
- A magical evening event that will include outdoor performances.**
- Stage entertainment.**
- A fireworks display that will close the event.**

2.4 The site build for the event will begin on 29 October and deconstruction will be completed on the morning of the 31 October 2014.

2.5 The event organisers have requested that 2 fence panels be temporarily removed from the grass picnic area in order to create better access to the site for the duration of the event. The organisers have confirmed they will undertake to do the following in order to make the event as safe and successful as possible:-

- Employ a security firm to safeguard participants and equipment.**
- Employ reputable contractors to ensure a safe and professional event.**
- Put a ticketing system in place.**
- Ensure that a one way system operates within the park for this event.**
- Ensure local residents are informed about the event 7 days prior to the event: ensure that there is no inconvenience or nuisance caused to residents on the day of event.**

- Work with the Parks and Leisure Department to ensure effective management of the park.
- 2.6 An event management plan will be completed and forwarded to Belfast City Council 14 days in advance with final risk assessments being completed 24hrs before the event begins.
- 2.7 The event is in line with both the Council's objectives around economic development and Parks and Leisure departmental objectives in terms of animating the city's parks and increasing community activity and access to the parks.

The event organisers have always worked closely with the Council and other external partners. The management of previous events has been satisfactory and professional.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 Financial

This request is for free use of the Waterworks Park facilities including:

- The lower and upper areas of the Park
- The Sports pitch/area located in the upper area of the park,
- The Park Wardens offices.

Financial assistance from existing Parks budgets to carry out the temporary removal of fencing. This is estimated at £1500.00

For the event this year organisers have received funding from Department of Foreign Affairs for €10,000 and CFNI for £3,000. Applications are currently being assessed by OFMDFM, Belfast City Council and Hope for Youth.

3.2 Human Resources

Human resources will be required to facilitate these requests – all managed within the current resources.

In the past Parks and Leisure have made park staff available to assist with the event site build and deconstruction. The event organisers have also requested that 4 members of staff familiar with the site are made available to work on the evening of the 30 October 2014 to ensure the safe and smooth running of the event.

3.3 Asset and Other Implications

In order to build the site safely and in a timely fashion the organisers have requested that certain areas of park be closed to members of the public on 30 October, until such a time as the event is about to open. All closures will be communicated to the public via notices that will be erected several days in advance.

The organisers also request the removal of 2 fence panels and 1 post within the picnic area closer to the Fire Station. This is to allow for a quick evacuation and for equipment to be delivered on site.

4 Equality Implications

- 4.1 The overall aim of this event, and the associated project elements are to build good relations and trust within communities across North Belfast.

5 Recommendations

- 5.1 It is recommended that the Committee grant approval for the free use of the Waterworks Park and facilities including the temporary removal of 2 fence panels for the North Belfast Magical Festival on condition that:

- The event organisers liaise with the Council's Health and Environmental Services Department and ensure that all health and safety requirements are met to Council's satisfaction including an event management plan and risk assessments.
- Complete an appropriate legal agreement and meet all statutory requirements including entertainment licensing.
- Work closely with BCC Parks staff."

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Chairman