



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Proposed acquisition of land at Old Golf Course Road, Dunmurry
Date:	20 March 2015
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Property and Projects, Ext 6217
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1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at their meeting on 30 January 2015, were advised that the Department of the Environment Northern Ireland Environment Agency (DoE NIEA) had declared surplus a site of approximately 14 acres at Old Golf Course Road, Dunmurry. Land and Property Services (LPS) had sought expressions of interest for the acquisition of the site in accordance with D1 Disposal of Surplus Public Sector Land Procedures. A preliminary expression of interest in the land was submitted by the Council to LPS. A copy of the Committee report and location map is enclosed. .
1.2	The site falls within the current Lisburn City Council area but will come into the new Belfast City Council boundary on 1 April 2015. .
1.3	The land is currently informal open space and comprises two plots which have been zoned as an area of Existing Open Space and designated as an Urban Landscape Wedge and Community Greenway in the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015.
1.4	Committee noted that a report would follow when terms of the disposal were available in order to seek Committee direction on whether to proceed.

2	Key Issues
2.1	LPS subsequently valued the site for NIEA although NIEA have advised that they have received authorisation from the DOE Minister that the land can be transferred to the Council by way of a gift on the condition that all of the land is retained as open space for public access.
2.2	The site comprises informal, semi-wild scrubland and trees. As such, minimal maintenance should be required in its current layout. Future maintenance and

	management costs will vary depending on eventual end use but at the moment it is understood that the local community are keen to retain the land as an environmental resource.
2.3	Future upgrading works could potentially be undertaken on a phased basis if funding becomes available at a later stage and there may be opportunities to seek external funding. In the interim the Council could undertake an initial cleanup of the site and retain as informal open space.
2.4	Any acquisition of the site would however be subject to satisfactory title and site investigations. Work is currently underway in respect of this.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>As NIEA are proposing to gift the land to the Council there is no cost payable for the acquisition of the site. An initial cleanup of the site will be required and thereafter some ongoing maintenance, which should not be significant if the land is retained as informal open space. It is envisaged that this can be met from existing budgets. Any future upgrading works would need to be considered in the context of available budget or external funding opportunities.</p>
3.2	<p><u>Human Resources</u></p> <p>Staff resource from Estates and Legal Services is required to complete the acquisition. Thereafter, staff resource will be required from Parks & Leisure for ongoing management of the site.</p>
3.3	<p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u></p> <p>The acquisition of a 14 acre site would increase the Council's property portfolio. In line with NIEA conditions of transfer the site is to be used for open space purposes with public access.</p>

	Recommendations
4.1	Committee is asked to approve the acquisition of the subject land from DoE NIEA on the basis as detailed above, subject to detailed terms to be agreed by the Estates Manager and the Town Solicitor.

5	Key to Abbreviations
	<p>NIEA – Northern Ireland Environment Agency DoE – Department of the Environment LPS – Land and Property Services</p>

6	Documents Attached
	Appendix 1: Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee report 30 Jan 2015