



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Parks and Leisure Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Belfast Sewer Project
<b>Date:</b>	14 August 2008
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks & Leisure Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Stephen Walker, Principal Parks and Cemeteries Development Manager

### Relevant Background Information

The Committee is reminded that at its meeting on 16 June 2008 it received a report outlining proposals from NI Water in respect of the ongoing Belfast Sewer Project. A copy of the report is appended for the convenience of Members. The report highlighted that NI Water had advised that the original approach, to drill underground was no longer viable owing to rock composition. Consequently, NI Water advised that owing to technical, financial and time constraints it was necessary to use open trench excavation rather than underground drilling.

The Committee expressed concerns at the new proposal and highlighted the detrimental impact on both the playing fields at Ormeau Park and also the Golf Club, which would have to close for the duration of the work. Members instructed Officers to engage with NI Water to ascertain whether all options had been considered.

In the intervening time, officers from Parks and Cemeteries Service and the Estates Management Unit have met with representatives from NI Water and their Engineering Consultants. The concerns of the Committee were expressed together with the view that the Council's preferred option would be for the less intrusive underground drilling.

NI Water was receptive to the concerns and undertook to further review the options. It was clear that the open trench methodology was also not NI Water's preferred approach. NI Water has now reviewed the approach to be adopted together with consultants and contractors and have proposed an alternative solution which reverts to the previous method of underground tunnelling. The main elements of the method are:

- Drive tunnel at shallower depth in the 'upper boulder layer' along the original route (tunnel will be around 6m depth as opposed to 9m depth in original proposal). This will reduce the risk of hitting a boulder.
- The tunnel diameter will be 1.95m.

- The existing shafts will have to be modified but this will not affect the golf course or Ormeau park.
- The tunnel equipment will be modified to help deal with small boulders.
- Any boulders encountered will be removed by surface excavation.
- Preparatory work will commence in September 2008 with tunnelling starting at the beginning of October 2008. Tunnelling in Ormeau Park and the Golf Club will take eight months to complete.

NI Water has met with representatives of the Golf Club and reached agreement on this approach. The Director has also confirmed with the Golf club that they are now content with the proposed method.

### **Key Issues**

The Committee is asked to note the following key points.

1. NI Water has reverted to the original proposal of underground drilling, with drilling taking place at a lesser depth in an attempt to avoid larger boulders;
2. NI Water has cautioned that open trench excavation may still be necessary if large boulders are encountered although they have assessed this possibility as low risk;
3. NI Water requests that the Council grant its approval to enter its property and undertake the appropriate works to complete this element of the Belfast Sewers Project;
4. An appropriate agreement will be drawn up on behalf of Parks and Cemeteries by the Estates Management Unit and the Director of Legal Services.

### **Resource Implications**

#### Financial

This work will be undertaken by NI Water including reinstatement and appropriate compensation to the Council and the Golf Club.

#### Human Resources

This project will require Officer time in the drafting of the legal agreement and monitoring of progress of the scheme plus reinstatement.

#### Asset and Other Implications

It is hoped that through the use of the less intrusive underground drilling that the impact on the asset will be minimised.

<b>Recommendations</b>
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<p>The Committee is asked to note the contents of the report and approve the request to permit access to NI Water for the purposes of completing this element of the Belfast Sewer Project, authorise Officers to enter into discussions with NI Water with a view to drafting an appropriate legal agreement as outlined above.</p>
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<b>Key to Abbreviations</b>
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<p>None.</p>
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<b>Documents Attached</b>
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<p>Appendix 1: Committee Report 16 June 2008 – Belfast Sewer Project.</p>
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