

Extract from meeting of Parks and Leisure Committee
of 14th May, 2009

“City of Belfast Playing Fields – Cricket Proposals

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

The Committee is reminded that at its meeting on 13 March 2008 it received a deputation from the Northern Cricket Union and Woodvale Cricket Club. At that meeting the lack of provision for cricket was highlighted and it was agreed that a further report on the matter would be brought back to Committee at a future date. Officers are currently working on the development of playing pitch strategy which will include all pitch based sports including cricket. Unfortunately, difficulties in obtaining adequate returns from clubs and sports bodies have delayed the development of the strategy, however, renewed efforts are being made to obtain the necessary level of information required to assess existing and latent demand.

In the interim, officers have been approached by representatives of Cliftonville Cricket Club. The club no longer has access to its facilities at Greenisland, however, it has been possible to meet the club’s match requirements at the City of Belfast Playing Fields. The club, while appreciative of the support from the Council in facilitating the playing of its matches, has highlighted the lack of cricket provision and has suggested the installation of a synthetic wicket at the City of Belfast Playing Fields.

The club has secured £3000 funding from the Lord Taverners Organisation, however the total cost is likely to be in the region of £7,500. At a recent meeting with the club and Cricket Ireland the matter was discussed and it was agreed that a report would be brought to Committee to seek approval to install the wicket. It was highlighted that there was not sufficient finances in the budget for the site and that the shortfall would need to be found from within other elements of the Parks and Cemeteries overall budget.

Key Issues

The Committee will be mindful that:

- It has previously received a presentation on the issue of the under provision of facilities for cricket; and
- It will be receiving a report on the issue of playing field provision across a range of sports in due course.

There is however an opportunity to increase provision for cricket clubs at a relatively modest cost. In addition to the request by Cliftonville, the proposal has received support from:

- The Northern Cricket Union;
- Academy Cricket Club;
- Belfast International Cricket Club; and
- Cricket Ireland

All have expressed a willingness and a desire to use such a facility.

Resource Implications

Financial Implications

The cost of the works would incur expenditure in the region of £4,500 which has not been provided for in the revenue estimates for 2009/10. There is a property maintenance budget which could be used, however, this would further reduce the budget and would have an impact on other projects during the course of the year.

There would be minimal revenue implications in terms of maintenance.

The life of the pitch would be in the region of 8-10 years and would require replacement at the end of its useful life. This would be at estimated cost of £7,500 based on 2009 figures.

The provision of the wicket will provide a modest source of income which would offset any small increase in revenue costs. At this time there is no pricing schedule and no firm figure on usage levels which would enable an estimated income to be established.

Human Resource Implications

There are no additional human resource implications, other than Officer time.

Asset and other implications

The installation of the synthetic surface would improve provision.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Committee agree to the request to install a synthetic cricket wicket at City of Belfast and agree to meet the short fall in funding subject to the receipt of £ 3,000 from the Lord Taverners Organisation to support the project.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.”