



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Proposed Temporary arrangements at Cliftonville Playing Field
Date:	15 April 2010
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Stephen Walker, Principal Parks and Cemeteries Development Manager

Purpose

The purpose of the report is to outline for Committee how it is proposed that the provision of temporary changing facilities at Cliftonville Playing Fields is to be funded.

Relevant Background Information

The Committee is reminded that the proposed development of facilities at Cliftonville Playing Fields has been discussed on several occasions in the past. At its meeting on 6 February 2007 the former Community and Recreation (Parks and Cemeteries) Sub Committee adopted the recommendation that:

- 1. The Sub-Committee agrees to proceed with the sale of the land to the Bunscoil in respect of the 1.3 acres at a price of £355k; and agrees to proceed with the grant of rights to the Bunscoil in respect of the 0.54 acres for £75k to facilitate the development of shared car parking, access etc to be funded through the Department of Education; and*
- 2. The Sub-Committee agrees to the development of a new pitch on the residue of the land at an estimated cost of £510k."*

This decision sets the context for any works on the site. The current position is that the Department of Education has informed the Bunscoil that the economic appraisal has been approved by the Department and that the preferred option is for a replacement school on a new site (Cliftonville Playing Fields). There is a review of capital schemes within the Department and the Bunscoil has been informed that they will be contacted once this review has been completed and advised on a way forward. In short, our understanding of this is that there is no time scale set for construction of the new school and we await clarification from DENI.

The Committee is asked to note that the figures contained in the report of February 2007 will need to be revised given the passage of time and to reflect the current prevailing market conditions.

The Committee is reminded that at its meeting on 11 March 2010 it received a report on proposals to provide temporary changing facilities at Cliftonville Playing Fields. The Committee agreed to progress on the basis of Option 4 which was to progress the proposal as part of a group scheme of similar projects within the context of the developing pitches strategy.

At the Council meeting on 1 April 2010 the following proposal was agreed:

That the decision of the Committee be amended to provide that, recognising that studies for the development of a rational approach to the provision of sport and leisure facilities indicate clearly that, amongst other imbalances, a shortage exists of playing fields in North and West Belfast, the Council agrees to approve the provision of temporary changing accommodation at Cliftonville Road and that this decision be prioritised due to the child protection issues arising from the current management arrangements, on the condition that the Council is not responsible for the costs of supervising or managing the facility or for the removal of the same, should that be required. Further, the Director of Parks & Leisure be instructed to pursue the urgent completion of a comprehensive strategy to help rationalise the provision of sport and leisure facilities in Belfast by the Council and others.

The Council also agreed:

That a detailed financial report on all aspects of the Cliftonville Playing Fields project, and in particular outlining where the finance for the provision of the temporary changing accommodation will be found and the implications of this for other Parks and Leisure projects, be submitted to the Committee at its meeting in April.

Current context

The Committee report stated that the estimated cost of the interim measures to refurbish the pitch and to construct temporary changing facilities would be in the region of £100k. This is based on approximate and estimated costs of:

£20,000 for pitch refurbishment
£40,000 for the unit / changing facility and
£40,000 for installation

It was also stated that a secure by design report was awaited at the time and that an estimated cost of the security measures would be provided at the meeting. Unfortunately the information was not available in time for the meeting.

Finally, the report noted that there was no provision in the revenue estimates for such work and that it was likely that the proposals would be capital; however, this would need to be tested given the temporary nature of the arrangement.

Following the meeting it was agreed that the works, as they were deemed to be temporary and non permanent, could be considered as revenue items.

No specific provision has been made for these works in the 2010/11 revenue budgets, however there are two possible sources of funding streams within the departmental budgets from which the money could be found. These are:

- The playground refurbishment budget; and
- The property maintenance budget.

This would require the re-prioritisation of projects in both areas.

We are currently completing the playground inspection survey which will form the basis for the improvement programme for 2010/11. It is anticipated that the programme will be finalised by June 2010 and at this time it will be possible to see where potential savings could be made.

We are also currently finalising with parks managers planned maintenance, this includes looking at one off projects to be funded out of the departmental property maintenance budget. These will be re-prioritised to include the Cliftonville project.

At this stage, it is not possible to identify specific items of work that won't happen this year but this could be provided once available.

Key Issues

The key issue for the Committee to note is that Officers have been instructed by Council to undertake this work, as a matter of priority, and to do so from within the existing revenue budget. So as to minimise the impact on routine maintenance, it is proposed that the money be found from within the playground improvement budget and from the property maintenance budget.

Resource Implications

Financial

There are no additional financial implications associated with this report.

Human Resources

There are no additional human resource implications.

Asset and Other Implications

The proposed work would provide an improved facility for the area.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee note the report.

Decision Tracking

A further report will be presented to Committee by the Principal Parks and Cemeteries Development Manager by June 2010.

Key to Abbreviations

None.

Documents Attached

None.
