



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Sydenham By-Pass Road Widening Scheme
Date:	14 October 2010
Reporting Officer:	Rose Crozier, Head of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Stephen Walker, principal Parks and Cemeteries Development Manager.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update the Members regarding proposals in respect of road widening at the Sydenham By-Pass.

Relevant Background Information

The Committee will be aware of proposals to widen the Sydenham By-Pass and the potential impact on Victoria Park. Members are reminded that as part of the consultation exercise which concluded at the end of June 2008, a Special Meeting of the Parks and Leisure Committee was convened on 29 April 2008 to receive a presentation from Roads Service regarding these proposals. At that meeting Members expressed concern on a number of points:

1. The proposals would have an impact on Victoria Park requiring a 6m incursion onto the park which would impact potentially on the service yard, bowling pavilion, playground and other facilities and open space.
2. There would be a reduction in the amount of open space;
3. There would be increased traffic noise and potentially other pollutants in the park as greater volumes of faster moving vehicles use the widened road.
4. There would be additional disruption to the park during construction of new carriageways.
5. Consultation had failed to take account of wider concerns;
6. There were planning issues in terms of impact on the local community.
7. The scheme should be viewed within the context of the Connswater Community Greenway and further proposal for a new flyover and junction at Connsbank which is being undertaken as part of the Titanic Quarter Development.
8. The Connsbank junction proposal would result in the further loss of open space at King George V Park.
9. Both schemes were being progressed independently and focus on car-based transport solutions.
10. The apparent lack of a co-ordinated approach on the wider transportation

issues and their impact on East Belfast despite officers from the Council having met with the key players in an attempt to highlight this as an issue.

In the intervening period Roads Service has completed their Stage 2 Assessment which confirmed the proposed road widening as the preferred option and they are now proceeding with work on Stage 3 (development of detailed plans).

Current context

The current position is that officers from the Council have recently met with Roads Service to obtain an up to date position. The current position is as follows:

- The scheme has been agreed and it will impact on Victoria Park;
- It will impact on a 5m wide strip but this will widen to around 15m as it nears the join with the proposed Connsbank Junction;
- The next stage is for Road Service consultants to work up the detail of the widening scheme;
- Upon receipt of the more detailed work we will have a clearer picture of the actual impact on the facilities in the park. It is anticipated that this detailed work will be completed early in the New Year, although it is intended to hold a meeting with Roads Service in December to review the position;
- Roads Service are continuing to programme towards 2015 for the commencement of the work, however this is subject to funding.

Officers will prepare some preliminary drawings regarding the impact on existing facilities to inform our meeting in December, at that time a more detailed report will be brought to Committee together with recommendations in respect of how we need to move this forward. Specialist advice on potential increased traffic noise on the Park has also been commissioned.

Key Issues

The key issue for Members to note is that this proposed scheme is moving forward and will have an impact on Victoria Park and the access to it. Council officers are working to minimise the impact of the scheme and to ensure any compensation properly reflects the loss of facilities.

Resource Implications

Financial

There are no additional financial implications at this time.

Human Resources

There are no additional human resource implications at this time.

Asset and Other Implications

While the proposed scheme will deliver an improved transport infrastructure it will have detrimental impact on Council assets.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee note the contents of this report.
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Decision Tracking

A further report will be brought to Committee by the Principal Parks and Cemeteries Development Manager in February 2011.

Key to Abbreviations

None.

Documents Attached

None.
