



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	City of Belfast golf course: evaluation report
Date:	9 December 2010
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks & Leisure
Contact Officer:	Stephen Walker, Principal Parks and Cemeteries Development Manager

Relevant Background Information	
	<p>The Committee is reminded that at its meeting in January 2010 it received a report regarding the provision of fencing at the City of Belfast Golf Course. Members will recall that the request had originated from ongoing discussions with residents from the properties adjacent to the Golf Course, and their elected representatives from Newtownabbey BC; regarding damaged caused to property and the threat of injury to home owners, their family and visitors. In addition, discussions have been held with members of the Golf Club Committee.</p> <p>The Committee had been asked to approve a one off payment to the Golf Club Committee to erect a ball stop net. After consideration the Committee decision was not to approve the payment. In addition, the Committee asked for further information regarding the operation of the Golf Course and possible future use of the facility and asked that a further report be submitted for its consideration in due course.</p> <p>At the meeting the Committee asked for a report outlining the background to the facility, usage levels, costs and future development options.</p> <p>At present the course is jointly managed by the Golf Club Committee and Belfast City Council within a facilities management agreement. This agreement is due to expire in July 2011.</p> <p>The agreement dates back to 2005 and emerged following a series of committee reports between 2001 and 2005 which considered at that time a range of options including the disposal of the site. The outcome of those discussions was a facilities management agreement which sought to reduce the overall running</p>

	<p>cost of the facility.</p> <p>The current position is as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The facilities management agreement expires in July 2011; 2. The issue of the ball stop netting has been raised again as the original planning decision not to grant approval has been overturned and planning approval has now been granted; 3. The cost of the netting would be a minimum of £40,000; 4. In addition, the existing Club House is an old porta-cabin which has reached the end of its functional life and needs to be replaced. The Club Committee has intimated that it is willing to undertake to provide a permanent structure but would require a long lease, in the region of 15 years to provide secure of tenure and to meet the terms of mortgage; 5. The future designation of the land remains subject to clarification through BMAP with a final decision not expected until the summer of 2011, however since this was last considered by the Committee a report into the planning assessment commissioned by Estates has now been received. This considers the whole site and sets out some options for consideration.
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	<p>Key Issues</p> <p>The current position as set out above presents the conditions for a review of the facility and for the Council to determine whether it wishes to retain a Golf Course at City of Belfast under a facilities management agreement or other lease arrangement or whether it wishes to close it and consider alternative uses of the site itself. It would therefore be inappropriate at this time to make a decision regarding the issue of the erection of ball stop fencing in isolation from a consideration of the future of the site in terms of whether we continue with a facilities management arrangement; enter into a lease arrangement or close the facility and consider alternative uses including disposal.</p> <p>To enable the proper consideration of all the issues to arrive at a decision regarding the future of the City of Belfast Golf Course it is proposed to hold a special meeting of the Committee early in the new year at a date to be agreed with the Chairman.</p>
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	<p>Resource Implications</p> <p><u>Financial</u> There are no financial implications at this time.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u> There are no additional human resource implications at this time.</p> <p><u>Asset and other implications</u> There are no additional implications at this time.</p>
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	Equality and Good Relations Implications
	None.

	Recommendations
	It is recommended that the Committee note the report and agree to hold a special meeting in January 2011 to consider the matter.

	Decision Tracking
	A further report will be brought to a Special Meeting in January 2011 by the Principal Parks and Cemeteries Development Manager.

	Key to Abbreviations
	None.

	Documents Attached
	None.