



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Development of Mary Peters Track
Date:	14 April 2011
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Stephen Walker, Principal Parks and Cemeteries Development Manager

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The Committee is reminded that the development of the Mary Peters Track (MPT) has been under consideration for a number of years. At its special meeting on 9 February 2011 council agreed to undertake the development of the Mary Peters track and agreed that it be included within the capital programme.
1.2	Prior to the above decision, at the meeting of Strategic Policy and Resources (SP&R) Committee on 22 October 2010 it had been agreed that in order to be ready for the forthcoming World Police and Fire Games in August 2013 that the Mary Peters Track would need to be upgraded to include an 8 lane track, spectator stand and-associated works. SP&R also agreed that officers would undertake some preliminary works in advance of the council approval for the scheme as part of the rate setting process.
1.3	An economic appraisal (EA) has been completed and it is now necessary to seek agreement from the Parks and Leisure Committee to proceed with the recommended option, from a service perspective, and to make an appropriate recommendation to SP&R.

2	Key Issues
2.1	The economic appraisal set out the project aims and objectives as: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Provision of a modern athletics/sporting facility for the Greater Belfast area and Northern Ireland as a whole;2. Development of an athletics venue that will provide the basis for attracting UK and international athletic events to Northern Ireland;3. Provision of a facility that will maximise the number of spectators

	<p>who attend events at MPT;</p> <p>4. Development of a facility that will complement the wider offering at the adjacent Queen's University Playing Fields ('The Dub');</p> <p>5. Development of a venue that will facilitate the World Police and fire Games in August 2013</p>
2.2	The EA has been completed in accordance with DFPNI guidance and includes a strategic context; an assessment of need and the range of monetary and non monetary costs and benefits. A copy of the EA is available upon request.
2.3	<p>The options considered were:</p> <p>Option 1 – Do Nothing</p> <p>Option 2 – Do minimum</p> <p>Option 3 – New 6 lane standard specification track</p> <p>Option 4a – New 8 lane standard specification track</p> <p>Option 4b – New 8 lane standard specification track and spectator stand</p> <p>Option 5a – New 8 lane IAAF specification track</p> <p>Option 5b – New 8 lane IAAF specification track and spectator stand</p>
2.5	<p>3 options have been selected for consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Option 1 would result in closure of the track and this would likely happen by the end of 2011, however, clearly this would not meet the objectives as set in the EA and is therefore not recommended.
2.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Option 3 would meet some of the objectives; however, the EA concludes that 6 lane facilities do not tend to attract events. Therefore, option 3 would support the delivery of an athletics training facility but would not have the potential to attract events to the city and would not be able to host the athletics element of the World Police and Fire Games. The capital cost of option 3 is estimated in the region of £1.1m.
2.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Option 5b meets all of the objectives, would provide a high quality facility and excellent training facilities and would have the potential to attract events to the city. The capital cost of option 5b is estimated in the region of £3m. This is the option recommended in the EA.
2.8	The key issue for committee to consider is whether it wishes to proceed with the development of the MPT in line with recommended option 5b as outlined above, to enable a recommendation to be made to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>Provision of £3m, to be funded by loan, has been made for this proposal in the capital programme.</p> <p>In addition, the committee is asked to note the potential increase in revenue costs associated with the recommended option arising from the</p>

3.2	<p>enhancement of the track, the spectator stand and the increased focus on attracting events to the facility. To support this it will be necessary to appoint a marketing and promotions officer and to allocate a budget to support his/her work. The total cost of this is likely to be in the region of £75,000 for the first three years, this would be reviewed annually. At present the MPT is managed through a facilities management agreement by Northern Ireland Athletics. It is intended that a revised agreement be prepared, to incorporate a strong marketing and promotions element and that officers seek expressions of interest from interested service providers in the Spring of 2012 in line with the committee's decision from March 2011.</p>
3.3	<p><u>Human Resources</u> On the basis that the additional marketing and promotions element will be undertaken externally as part of a wider management agreement, i.e. the marketing resource will be recruited through the service provider; there will be no additional human resource implications.</p>
	<p><u>Asset and other implications</u> The delivery of option 5b would considerably enhance the facility and create a high quality venue for aspiring local athletes. It would help to heighten the profile of the city within the sporting world.</p>

4	Equality Implications
4.1	None.

5	Recommendations
5.1	<p>It is recommended that the committee agree, from a service perspective, to proceed with the development of the Mary Peters Track on the basis of option 5b above, i.e. to provide a new 8 lane IAAF specification track with a spectator stand and associated works, and to commend this decision to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for delivery in time for the 2013 Games.</p>

6.	Decision Tracking
	<p>A further report will be presented by the Principal Parks and Cemeteries Development Manager to committee in September 2011 to provide an update on progress.</p>

7.	Key to Abbreviations
	<p>MPT: Mary Peters Track SP&R: Strategic Policy and Resources Committee EA: Economic Appraisal DFPNI: Department of Finance and Personnel NI IAAF International Amateur Athletics Federation</p>

8.	Documents attached
	None.

