



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Epizootic Depot
Date:	14 April 2011
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Fiona Holdsworth, Principal Parks and Cemeteries Services Manager

1	Relevant Background Information
	<p>A committee report on 14 January 2010 outlined that the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Veterinary Service had written requesting that the council would enter into contingency rental agreements with them for the use of Danny Blanchflower Stadium and the City of Belfast Playing Fields. It was understood that the car park areas of these sites were considered suitable for use as Delivery Operations Centres (DOC) in the event of an outbreak of epizootic disease (such as Avian Influenza, Newcastle Disease or Foot-and-Mouth disease).</p> <p>The Department proposed to have rental type agreements drawn up in advance which would be activated as and when the premises were required i.e. upon the confirmation of a disease outbreak. As part of its contingency planning arrangements the Department is committed to taking all possible measures in order to contain future outbreaks of epizootic disease and thereby minimise the economic impact on the community.</p> <p>The report noted that only parts of the sites were required as DOCs and that normal activities could continue on the other parts of the site, including the pitches when they would be in operation. At that meeting the committee granted authority for the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) to use part of the premises at Blanchflower Stadium and City of Belfast Playing Fields as Delivery Operations Centres during an outbreak of Epizootic Diseases.</p> <p>An appropriate licence agreement was to be prepared by the Director of Legal Services to protect the council's interests and to meet all statutory requirements. However the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development on submission of the draft licence agreements and associated maps responded stating that they would require full access to the office, yard</p>

	<p>and bothy facilities on these sites when in operation as DOCs, this had not been clear from the Department's original report.</p> <p>Full access proposed to these facilities would have significant impact on the operational use of these sites, something that the committee had not been able to consider when reaching its decision on 14 January 2010. Therefore in the interim period the decision to accommodate this request was not progressed to allow for further discussion with the Department.</p> <p>Beechvale Farm which is the site of the council's horticultural nursery was suggested as a possible alternative depot to DARD. A meeting was arranged with representatives from DARD to assess the site and it was evaluated by them as being suitable for use.</p> <p>Subsequently DARD has requested the use of Beechvale Farm Nursery bothy area for use as a Delivery Operations Centre in the event of an outbreak of epizootic disease. They have also confirmed they would still like the council to allow the use of parts of Blanchflower Stadium and City of Belfast Playing Fields as Delivery Operations Centres, however considering our operational requirements for these sites they would now only require their use as a last resort (i.e. if there are no other options open to them).</p>
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2	Key Issues
	<p>The key issues for the committee to note are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department will pay for rent and associated costs. • The proposed agreements will be for a 5 year period • An appropriate licence agreement will be drawn up • The Department will be required after the use of the site to ensure that all the appropriate cleansing/disinfecting is undertaken throughout the premises. • If permission is granted for of the service areas at Blanchflower Stadium and City of Belfast Playing Fields for the council to use in the event of them being required alternative accommodation would have to be found for council use in the event of them being required as these areas provide storage and staff facilities for operational needs on these sites

3	Resource Implications
	<p><u>Financial</u> A rent will be paid to Belfast City Council for the premises, the amount will be assessed by the District Valuer at the time, to cover any period of occupancy. The Department will also undertake to meet ancillary costs associated with the occupancy, for example in respect of heating (if appropriate) and electricity charges.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u> If any Parks staff are required the Department will be required to pay for their costs.</p>

	<p><u>Asset and other implications</u> Part of premises may be unavailable for a period of time during operation as DOCs. It is in the interest of the wider community that such disease outbreaks are controlled effectively. The Department will be expected to reinstate any damage to the premises arising from their occupancy.</p>
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4	Equality and Good Relations Implications
	None.

5	Recommendations
	<p>It is recommended that the committee approve the request from DARD to use part of Beechvale Farm Nursery as a Delivery Operations Centre in the event of an outbreak of epizootic disease. It is also recommended that committee agrees to permit the use of parts of Blanchflower Stadium and City of Belfast Playing Fields as Delivery Operations Centres but only if required as a last resort (i.e. if there are no other options open) by DARD. An appropriate licence agreement will be prepared by Legal Services to protect the council's interests and to meet all statutory requirements.</p>

6	Decision Tracking
	City Park Managers East and North to prepare the agreement.

7	Key to Abbreviations
	<p>DOC – Delivery Operations Centres DARD – Department of Rural Development</p>

8	Documents Attached
	None.