



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Glencairn Park – Feasibility study on provision of pitches
Date:	11 August 2011
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Emer Boyle, Policy and Business Development Manager Gary McNeill, Landscape Planner

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	<p>The purpose of the this report is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) present an outline feasibility study for the development of soccer pitches at Glencairn Park to the Committee; and(ii) to seek direction as to whether the potential development should be referred to the Strategic Policy and resources Committee as a capital project and progressed in line with the normal council procedures.
1.2	<p>At the meeting of full council in July 2011 during the discussions on the draft playing pitches strategy a member proposed that an examination be undertaken on the feasibility of the development of soccer pitches in Glencairn Park.</p>
1.3	<p>Following on from this the Landscape Planning team has undertaken an examination of the park and a summary of the study is outlined below.</p>
1.4	<p>Glencairn Park is a 65 acre linear park that sits within the Glencairn ward in north-west Belfast. This high quality parkland was the demesne of the two former estates (Glencairn and Fernhill House) and contains the Ballygomartin River Valley including mature deciduous woodland. As regards public facilities the park contains a small children's playground, a bitmac basketball court and a BMX track.</p>
1.5	<p>The topography of the site rolls down from each of the perimeter boundaries to create a low, flat parkland area on which the playground and BMX track are constructed (approximately 3 acres in size).</p>

2	Key Issues
2.1	<p>Members should note that the following planning designations exist for the park under the Belfast Metropolitan Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An historic park, garden and demesne – on account of the former adjoining estate gardens of Fernhill and Glencairn House now incorporated into the park. • A local landscape policy area – on account of its environmental quality and amenity value. • An area of existing open space. • Site of local nature conservation importance because of the number of mature trees and vegetation within the site and the existence of the Ballygomartin River. • Forth River/Glencairn/Ligoniel Community Greenway is designated within the park.
2.2	<p>In terms of already existing surrounding council provision (see Appendix 1), the area is well provided for and breaks down as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarendon Park – two senior grass soccer pitches, one junior grass pitch and a synthetic multi-use games area • Woodvale park – two senior grass pitches (these will be reoriented and enhanced as part of the Woodvale regeneration plans) • Ballysillan – 5 senior grass pitches and a new 3G soccer pitch (including ball-stop fencing/floodlighting).
2.3	<p>Given this existing provision and the fact that the pitch audit carried out for the strategy development states that soccer pitches are not under-provided for in the area, there is no current plan or budget for any pitch development at this site.</p>
2.4	<p><u>Feasibility of constructing 1 Grass or 3G Facility (see Appendix 2 for location)</u></p> <p>A flat parkland area (approx 3 acres) exists at the eastern sector of the site adjacent to Forthriver Road. A small play area, bitmac basketball court and BMX track are provided here. In terms of the feasibility of developing a grass or 3G pitch within the park this location would be the most practical and cost effective.</p>
2.5	<p><u>Other additional site implications</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In terms of size requirements topography at the outlined area in Appendix 2 can accommodate a full size 3G soccer pitch (100 x 60m) including 6m high ball-stop fencing and floodlighting. However, this would result in the loss of the existing BMX track and bitmac basketball court. The estimated construction cost for a full size 3G soccer pitch is in the region of £750k • At present no changing facility exists within the park. There will be a necessity to construct a four room sports pavilion for teams at an estimated cost of circa £600k

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicular access to a facility at this location must be enhanced. This will require upgrading of existing vehicular access from Forthriver Crescent and the construction of a formal carpark adjacent to the pavilion. Civil engineering works for improved vehicular/pedestrian access are estimated to be in the region of £20k. • Due to the low lying topography at this part of the park additional land drainage will be required, given the distance to the nearest watercourse engineering works could be in the region of an additional £10k • Due to the planning protections it will be necessary to integrate any proposed 3G facility with the landscape character of the park. This will require landscape/tree works in the region of £15k • As Glencairn park is designated as 'historic' DoE Planning Service may be reluctant to approve development that significantly changes the landscape character of the site. In planning terms an application for a full size synthetic sports pitch with associated fencing, floodlighting and pavilion may be unacceptable <p>Members will be aware that the committee has completed a prioritisation exercise regarding investment in pitches and ancillary provision based on the findings of the research undertaken to support the pitches strategy and also taking into account deliverability issues. In the original exercise Glencairn scored poorly due to adequate provision already in the area and the site only lending itself to 3G association football and not hybrid provision therefore not supporting intensification of use. It was therefore not considered a priority for development at that stage.</p>
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3	<p>Resource Implications</p> <p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>In the event that planning approval is viable, very draft estimated construction costs might break down as follows:</p> <p><u>1x 3G pitch</u></p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 5%;">1.</td> <td style="width: 85%;">Pitch construction (fencing/floodlighting)</td> <td style="width: 10%; text-align: right;">£ 750,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2.</td> <td>New changing pavilion</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£ 600,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3.</td> <td>Access Road/carpark</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£ 20,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4.</td> <td>Additional land drainage</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£ 10,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5.</td> <td>Landscaping works</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£ 15,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Total estimated cost</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£ 1,395,000</td> </tr> </table> <p><u>1x grass pitch</u></p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 5%;">1.</td> <td style="width: 85%;">Pitch construction</td> <td style="width: 10%; text-align: right;">£ 400,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2.</td> <td>New changing pavilion</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£ 300,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3.</td> <td>Access Road/carpark</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£ 20,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4.</td> <td>Additional land drainage</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£ 10,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5.</td> <td>Landscaping works</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£ 15,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Total estimated cost</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£ 745,000</td> </tr> </table>	1.	Pitch construction (fencing/floodlighting)	£ 750,000	2.	New changing pavilion	£ 600,000	3.	Access Road/carpark	£ 20,000	4.	Additional land drainage	£ 10,000	5.	Landscaping works	£ 15,000	Total estimated cost		£ 1,395,000	1.	Pitch construction	£ 400,000	2.	New changing pavilion	£ 300,000	3.	Access Road/carpark	£ 20,000	4.	Additional land drainage	£ 10,000	5.	Landscaping works	£ 15,000	Total estimated cost		£ 745,000
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	<p><u>Human Resources</u> None at this stage.</p> <p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u> None at this stage, however any future development would alter the council's sports asset provision.</p>
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4	Equality and Good Relations Implications
	There are no implications at this stage.

5	Recommendations
	<p>Committee is asked to consider the information provided in relation to the development of a single 3G or grass surface soccer pitch at Glencairn Park and agree either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not to progress this proposal further at this stage; or • Refer the proposal to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee for capital programme funding subject to the gates process.

6	Decision Tracking
	Policy and Business Development Manager to implement the decision of the committee.

7	Key to Abbreviations
	3G pitch: 3 rd generation pitch

8	Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1 – Existing council pitch provision within 1 mile of Glencairn park</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Outline of feasible location for pitch development within the park.</p>