



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Grove Wellbeing Centre – Bowling Area Usage
Date:	15 September 2011
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks & Leisure
Contact Officer:	Adrian Walker, Acting Leisure Operations Manager

1.0	Relevant Background Information
	<p>The Grove Wellbeing Centre opened during May 2008 and an area originally designated for 10 pin bowling has been vacant since that time. The area is at the rear of the facility and measures 355 square feet.</p> <p>Presently the area is unused and despite a 6 lane bowling area being part of an initial design the opportunity existed to reassess available options for this element of the facility.</p> <p>The bowling space differs slightly from traditional 10 pin bowling in that the lane length is reduced by 20-25%.</p> <p>10 pin bowling was a popular activity during the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s and it can be noticeably effective when operating in conjunction with or adjacent to arcade machines as is the case in Dundonald Ice Bowl and Coleraine Jet Centre. However fewer modern leisure centres offer bowling facilities and it was felt that a more effective usage of the available space could be developed.</p> <p>Parks and Leisure committee therefore authorised the undertaking of an economic appraisal for the use of the space in order that recommendations could be forwarded.</p>
2.0	Key Issues
	<p>Initially a long list of twenty three options were considered for suitability and ultimately short listed to four suggestions for further consideration. Some options that were not pursued included:</p>

A swimming pool – deemed to be too expensive and not required due to the facility already containing two swimming pools.

Archery / Fencing – alternative space exists within the centre for such activities and it was not deemed appropriate to create a dedicated area given the level of demand that exists for these activities.

Creche – The Wellbeing Centre already contains a modern children’s play area and this is utilised as a crèche facility when required.

Community Theatre / Mini Cinema – concerns were noted regarding the ongoing cost of film purchase if this idea was to be developed. It was also felt that a more sporting / wellbeing theme should be utilised for the space available.

Indoor Golf Simulator – This option was carefully considered but not ultimately short listed. Benchmarking against alternative providers of this facility resulted in awareness that indoor golf units are more effective if an alcohol license exists on the premises. Whilst some revenue would be possible it was felt that the relatively specialised nature of a simulator unit would not maximise the available space nor attract a sustained level of return business.

The following options were short listed for consideration following assessment and consultation with a range of users of the new Grove facility. This consultation was independently carried out by consultants and cross-referenced against need and existing provision already in the area.

1. Ten pin bowling

This was the first of four options to be assessed following short listing. The option was calculated to cost £375 171 and for reasons stated above was not considered by the appraisal to be a favoured option.

2. Dedicated martial arts facility

This option was calculated to cost £396 758 although this was inclusive of £90000 that was allocated for structural adjustments to the floor level that may not be required.

The area is converted into a Martial Arts regional centre of excellence. The area is sufficiently large in size to accommodate two permanent martial arts dojos and a moderate level of spectator seating. The opportunity of a permanent feature of this nature would be welcomed by Sport NI and would afford the council a distinct publicity and training advantage in martial arts. In addition, changing and locker facilities could enable the area to become self contained.

Expressions of Interest from governing bodies could be sought regarding regular evening and weekend usage. Day time activities such as Yoga, Pilates and kids fitness could be facilitated from within this room and the

design flexibility would afford Children's activities i.e. dance mat training / dance walls etc to be operated as required.

3. Interactive youth space and dance studio

This option was calculated to cost £380 627. Although the potential for income would be increased with this option an estimated leasing cost of £25k per annum for youth interactive equipment should also be noted. In addition increased levels of staff supervision would need to be considered given the nature of the equipment and age range of customers within that part of the facility.

4. Multi – use (Martial Arts / Interactive Youth Space)

This option was split into 2 sub sections and calculated to cost the following:

Option a - £ 319 343 (adjusted floor level)

Option b -£ 290 464 (unchanged floor level)

The difference between options A and B was in relation to the budget allocated to adjust the floor level of the room.

This was marked as the preferred option from the economic appraisal however it would still necessitate annual leasing costs of approximately £25k for Youth interactive equipment and increased levels of staffing supervision.

Option 2 was considered as the preferred option due to the flexibility it affords the service and customers. Annual maintenance / leasing costs would be substantially lower than all other options and the ability to temporarily convert one "dojo" for Youth games could be easily achieved when necessary. Furthermore an established interest from martial arts clubs has been noted and development of this option would be in keeping with the "flagship" ethos of the facility.

3.0 Resource Implications

Financial

It is anticipated that construction costs would be as follows:

- Option 1 would cost £375 171
- Option 2 would cost £306 758
- Option 3 would cost £380 627
- Option 4 would cost £290 464

There is currently provision of £250k in the Capital programme in relation to this scheme and authority would have to be sought from SP&R to exceed this level of expenditure.

	<p><u>Human Resources</u> A semi permanent Leisure Attendant presence would be required for the option 1, 3 and 4. This could be met from within existing resources.</p> <p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u> N/A</p>
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4.0	Equality and Good Relations Implications
	There are not equality or good relations implications.

5.0	Recommendations
	<p>The Committee is asked to note that option 2 is recommended as the preferred option for development.</p> <p>Committee is asked to agree to proceed with this option and commend the decision to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.</p> <p>Members are asked to agree to further developmental works being undertaken in relation to option 2 (Martial Arts Facility) and for agreement that subject to Strategic Policy and Resources approval a tender process can commence with a view to implementation during early 2012.</p>

6.0	Decision Tracking
	Further updates will be brought to the Parks and Leisure Committee by the Director of Parks and Leisure.

7.0	Key to Abbreviations
	None

8.0	Documents Attached
	None