



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Parks and Leisure Committee.
<b>Subject:</b>	Proposal from Michael Davitt's GAC
<b>Date:</b>	10 November 2011
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Stephen Walker, Departmental Portfolio Programme Manager

<b>1.</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
	<p>The committee of Michael Davitt's GAC has requested that the council give consideration to a proposal for privileged access and use of the main GAA pitch at Boucher Playing Fields. A copy of the proposal and background is attached at Appendix 1 and a letter of support from Antrim GAA County Board is attached at Appendix 2.</p> <p>The club has offered to meet the cost of the provision of 40ft ball stop net behind each goal, and erect a 4ft spectator boundary around the pitch together with a gated entry. The estimated cost of the work would be in the region of £25,000. The club has stated that these works will improve and benefit the facility and bring it up to county level competition standard. In return the club has asked that the council to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• provide privileged access to the pitch for the club</li><li>• provide access for a period of 20-25 years;</li><li>• provide total access to the pitch for training and playing of matches;</li><li>• provide key holder status for access to the pitch and the facility for nominated officers from the club;</li><li>• consult the clubs before permission is granted for use of the pitch for purposes other than the club's activities;</li><li>• provide use for the Antrim County GAA Board as a neutral venue.</li></ul> <p>The club has obtained the support of the Antrim County GAA Board and officers have met with the club to discuss their proposal.</p>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
	<p>The Committee is asked to take the following points into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Facilities management agreements (FMAs) are still under review as part of the pitches strategy and no decision has been taken regarding the future of such agreements. Members might prefer not to enter into a new type of agreement in advance of completion of the review.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The offer from the club is not in respect of a management arrangement but rather for preferential use. Council has not entered into similar arrangements to date and there is an issue of any precedent that would be established and the impact that this might have for other sites.</li> <li>As part of the pitches strategy council officers have engaged with GAA at county level to develop a partnership approach. The discussions are at an early stage and it may appear premature to enter into a bespoke agreement at this time.</li> <li>The council has not in the past entered into agreements for the length of time suggested here, i.e. 20 -25 years, unless significant investment has been made in the site and the length of the management agreement and lease has been a condition of the funding body supporting the investment, eg Sport NI. The majority of the existing FMAs are for between three and seven years and are currently being extended on a month by month basis pending the outcome of the FMA review.</li> </ul>
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<b>3.</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
	<p><u>Financial</u> It is not clear if the proposal would bring any potential benefit to the council as the agreement does not appear to relate to facility management. The cost of management would remain however and the ability to generate revenue from it would reduce.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u> There are no additional human resource implications.</p> <p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u> Should this proposal be approved it would have the potential to create a new precedent which could create management difficulties at other playing field sites.</p>

Comment [w1]: Should this read facility management?

<b>4.</b>	<b>Equality and Good Relations Considerations</b>
	None.

<b>5.</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
	It is recommended that the Committee defer taking a decision on this request until the review of facilities management agreements has been completed and authorise officers to continue to work with Michael Davitt's GAC to develop their proposal.

<b>6.</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
	Departmental Portfolio Manager to implement the decision of the committee.

<b>7.</b>	<b>Key to Abbreviations</b>
	None.

<b>8.</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	Appendix 1 Proposal from Michael Davitts GAC Appendix 2 Letter of Support from Antrim County GAA Board