



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Midnight Soccer Programme
Date:	15 March 2012
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Katrina Morgan, Leisure Operations Manager

1. Relevant Background Information

The Midnight Soccer intervention programme, which was funded by council and the Department of Justice, was provided from July – September 2011.

The initiative was primarily operated between the hours of 2000-2300, and was facilitated during Tuesday/Wednesday and Friday evenings at five locations:

- Avoniel Leisure Centre
- Ballysillan Leisure Centre
- Olympia Leisure Centre
- Whiterock Leisure Centre
- Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group (LORAG).

Average weekly attendances for both age groups were recorded as follows:

- Avoniel: 75
- Ballysillan: 105
- Olympia: 45 (limited pitch availability)
- LORAG: 75
- Whiterock: 85.

Evaluation of the programme involved surveying 104 participants on 19 August 2011. The resulting surveys indicated that some 77% of participants identified that if the programme had not been commissioned they would have either been consuming alcohol (27%) taking narcotics (18%) or walking the streets (32%). 96% of young people advised that they had enjoyed the initiative and the optimum ages ranges were 16-17 (55%) and 14-15 (37%).

The original objective of the project was to create a diversionary activity in order to help reduce traditionally higher levels of antisocial behaviour within Belfast during the summer months. In addition the expansion of community and voluntary sector linkages was identified as a mutual benefit to operating

	the project. The mix of participants included clubs, youth groups and street teams with coaching being provided by paid and voluntary community workers in addition to professional coaching personnel.
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2. Key issues/events

<p>At the Parks and Leisure Committee on 10 November 2011 Councillors agreed that Officers would submit a report on the possibility of the Shore Road area being included within the Midnight Soccer Programme. Initial investigations have noted that Loughside Leisure Centre would not be suitable for usage during the summer months due to scheduled seasonal pitch maintenance. Exploratory talks will be held with Crusaders FC in order to assess if a joint venture can be achieved on the Shore road area.</p> <p>It is proposed that in addition to retaining the host venues from 2011 that the scheme is expanded in 2012 to include:</p>
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<p>A suitable venue identified within the Shore Road area. Parallel activities to target young females.</p>

<p>The host venues were originally identified in order to maximise the potential geographical coverage of the initiative throughout Belfast. The venues were also able to provide modern 3G / Astro turf pitches and critically had floodlighting provision.</p>
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<p>It costs approximately £3,500 per venue to run an 8 week midnight soccer programme, with total costs for 2011 being met from funding of £6,900.00 from the Department of Justice and the remainder was from the Parks & leisure budget.</p>
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<p>The Midnight Street Soccer Company were employed to manage the coaching, refereeing, registration, and evaluation of the 2011 initiative, due to their expertise, staff and community links and an ability to organise and promote the project. It is proposed that, in line with procurement protocols, council seeks expressions of interest to provide coaching and administrative services for the initiative during 2012.</p>

3. Resource Implications

<p><u>Financial</u></p>

<p>Cost per venue, including midnight soccer programme and parallel activities for females are estimated to be £3,500 per site. The total expenditure is estimated at £21,000 and will be funded from within existing budgets.</p>
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<p><u>Human Resources</u></p>

<p>The Leisure Manager (Participation) will co-ordinate the programme development and will liaise with, Leisure Development, Community Safety, Anti Social Behaviour Co-ordinator and the appointed Management company.</p>

	<p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u> Facilities will be utilised during periods of low usage and times of closure.</p>
4.	Equality and Good Relations Implications
	This is a cross community scheme which contributed positively to good relations in the city.
5.	Recommendations
	That Committee approves the provision of a Midnight Soccer initiative during the summer of 2012 and that the coaching and administrative provision is undertaken by a suitably appointed provider.
6.	Decision Tracking
	Leisure Operations Manager – to advise of suitable venue on Shore Road area
7.	Key to Abbreviations
	LORAG – Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group
8.	Documents Attached
	None.