Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	**Balmoral Show – Car parking at Strangford and Boucher Playing Fields**
Date:	15 March 2012
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Patrick Smyth, Community Parks Manager

1	Relevant Background Information
	The Committee is asked to note that the Council has received a request from The Royal Ulster Agricultural Society (RUAS) to use all four soccer pitches at Strangford Playing Fields and the gravel area at Boucher Playing Fields for an additional 1,200 car parking spaces for the Balmoral Show. This is a prestigious annual event which attracts visitors from all over Ireland and the UK, enhancing the image of the City. The event will be attended by approximately 70,000 people from Wednesday 16 May 2012 through to Friday 18 May 2012. The Council in the past has given its consent for the use of these facilities.

2	Key Issues
	Although the Balmoral Show runs from Wednesday to Friday the organisers will occupy both sites from Monday 14 May 2012 to begin set up and envisage that de rig will be completed and the site vacated by Saturday 19 May 2012.

The Committee are asked to note that if permission is granted for the use of Boucher and Strangford Playing Fields it will be necessary to close these site for the duration of the Balmoral Show to accommodate the park and ride facilities and therefore the Soccer and GAA clubs will need to be informed. The Outdoor Leisure Unit will endeavour where possible, to relocate these teams to alternative Belfast City Council venues.

The organisers will be required to pay a levy for the use of the aforementioned facilities. The organisers will also be required to resolve all operational, safety, statutory and reinstatement issues to the satisfaction of the council, entering into an appropriate agreement based on advice from Legal Services. |

3	Resource Implications
	Financial It is proposed to charge the event organisers £12,140 plus VAT for the use of Strangford and Boucher Playing Fields. This is a 3% increase on last years charge. It has been estimated that both sites could cater for approximately 1,200 cars. The event organiser has indicated that any income raised through car parking charges are required to meet the costs of providing the park and ride facilities. Human Resources There will be no human resource implications as the car parking facilities will be set up, stewarded and de-rigged by the event organisers. Asset and other implications It is anticipated that some damage to the grass areas will occur due to the significant increase in footfall on particular areas. Significant damage to the soccer pitches at Strangford will occur if there is notable rainfall during the event. The proposed legal agreement and bond will guarantee that the site is suitably reinstated to the satisfaction of council officers at the organiser's expense if damage occurs The event organisers will carry out a daily litter pick and general tidy of the site and on completion , the organisers will leave the area as they found it.

4	Equality Implications
	There are no equality implications

5	Recommendations

	It is recommended that the Committee grant authority for the event organiser to use Strangford and Boucher Playing Fields for additional car parking spaces for the Balmoral Show 2012. The Committee approval will be subject to satisfactory terms being agreed by the Director of Parks and Leisure and on the condition that:
	    (i) the event organisers resolve all operational issues to the council's satisfaction;
	    (ii) an appropriate legal agreement, to be prepared by Legal Services, is completed;
	    (iii) the event organisers meet all statutory requirements.

6	Decision Tracking
	All actions will be completed by the Community Park Manager.

7	Key to Abbreviations
	RUAS – Royal Ulster Agricultural Society

8	**Documents Attached**
	Appendix 1 - Royal Ulster Agricultural Society's letter requesting the use of Belfast City Councils facilities for additional car parking at the Balmoral Show 2012