



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Suffolk Football Club – Changing Facilities
Date:	15 November 2012
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Stephen Walker, Parks and Leisure

1	Relevant Background Information
	<p>The Committee is reminded that at its meetings in March, April and October 2011 it received reports outlining proposals from Suffolk Football Club to upgrade the existing playing pitch and changing facilities at the site.</p> <p>Members will recall that the Club had initially sought, and subsequently received, approval from the Council to bring an existing unused pitch, at Suffolk Playing Fields, into use through the provision of new drainage. The Club further proposed to erect a spectator rail and enclose the new pitch with a security fence. It was noted that the pitch would be used by Suffolk Football Club. The Council did not make a financial contribution to the works which were undertaken with support through Alpha funding obtained through Groundwork NI. On the foot of this the Council agreed to enter into a seven year management agreement with the Club in respect of the pitch on the basis that the Club would at its own expense undertake the management and maintenance of the pitch and associated fencing. This work was completed and the pitch is available for use.</p> <p>In the report in April 2011 it had been reported that the club had aspirations to further develop the site and construct separate changing facilities to service the new pitch. This would allow the club to meet the ground requirements of the Intermediate League and enable its progression to higher league within the Soccer structure.</p> <p>In October 2011 it was reported that the Club had been presented with an opportunity to acquire two pre-used modular buildings, one of which would provide a changing facility to service the upgraded pitch and the other to</p>

	<p>function as a meeting room for pre and post match entertainment for travelling teams. The Club was seeking permission to locate temporary changing facilities on the site, adjacent to the pitch and close to the former school site.</p> <p>In the interim, the club has reconsidered the purchase of the pre-used buildings and owing to their condition and associated cost of restoration decided to consider other options such as the leasing or purchasing of new modular buildings. The matter was considered within the West Area Working Group and although the Group saw merit in the proposal it was one of a number of competing projects for limited Local Investment Funds. The Group agreed that other projects had a priority for West Belfast but that the Suffolk proposal as it was on a council asset be referred to the Parks and Leisure Committee for a decision on whether it wished to make recommendation to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to include in the uncommitted list of the Capital Programme the provision of a two changing room pavilion and associated meeting room.</p>
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2	Key Issues
	<p>There are a number of issues associated with the proposal which the Committee may wish to reflect upon in reaching a position:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Suffolk site has an existing changing pavilion which will require upgrading or replacement in time. However the current proposal is for a separate temporary modular changing pavilion to service the pitch which is currently under a separate 7 year legal agreement with Suffolk FC to enable the club to meet the grounds criteria of the Intermediate League; 2. It would be the intention to include the changing pavilion within the terms of the current seven year lease with Suffolk Football Club. 3. The long term provision of facilities on the Suffolk site need to be considered within the context of a plan for all the provision on the site which might include the BELB school site. This has been given some initial consideration by the West Area Working Group following a visit to the site.

3	Resource Implications
	<p><u>Financial</u> Without details of the specific requirements regarding level of provision it is not possible to provide definitive costs at this time but a likely estimate of £80,000 to £100,000.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u> There are no additional human resource implications other than Officer time and the project could potentially be added.</p> <p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u></p>

	Provision of changing accommodation at the site would provide an enhancement of the council asset.
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4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
	There are no equality or good relations issues.

5	Recommendations
	The Committee is asked to agree to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it include on the Capital Programme list of uncommitted projects the provision of a two room changing pavilion and meeting area at Suffolk Playing Fields.

6	Decision Tracking
	Director of Parks and Leisure.

7	Key to Abbreviations
	None

8	Documents Attached
	None