



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Parks and Leisure Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Proposal for development of a play park at Monagh Road, Belfast</b>
<b>Date:</b>	14 February 2013
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Stephen Walker, Departmental Portfolio and Programme Manager

1	Relevant Background Information
	<p>Officers have received a request from the Upper Springfield Development Trust relating to a proposal to develop a piece of land to the rear of shops and flats adjacent to Monagh Road / Monagh Drive in West Belfast.</p> <p>The land is currently owned by the Belfast Education and Library Board. An unused Youth Club is currently on the site however the Board has declared the land surplus and has engaged with the local community and the Department for Social Development to consider development options for the site. The site is essentially derelict, rubbish is routinely dumped, fires are set and it is a gathering point for local youths engaging in general nuisance activity in the area. The community is anxious to regenerate the site and bring it into positive use and believe that a physical development will aid this.</p> <p>The Upper Springfield and Whiterock Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership Board commissioned a Feasibility Study, supported by DSD, to look at potential development options for the Monagh Road Site at Turf Lodge. A copy of the study is available upon request. The study has identified a series of options. The preferred option was a multipurpose community facility at an estimated cost of £700,000, excluding Vat and professional fees and charges. However, a number of issues have been raised around the sustainability of such a building and the feasibility study is currently being reviewed. One of the options considered related to the provision of a play park. The Council has been asked, should a Play Park emerge as the best option for the site, following a review of the feasibility study:-</p>

	<p>Would BCC take ownership of the land? Would BCC maintain it?</p>
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<b>2</b>	<p><b>Key Issues</b></p> <p>The Committee is asked to consider the request within the following context:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Community is anxious for the derelict land to be brought into positive use. A feasibility study has been completed, albeit being reviewed at present;</li> <li>2. The community is aware of the social challenges within the area and believe that the physical improvement of this site will greatly support their efforts on the ground;</li> <li>3. There is a commitment from those involved at a community level to make this project work;</li> <li>4. However, the proposal at this time is speculative, there is no design detail; there have been no site surveys and there is no funding commitment; although the DSD has been supportive of the feasibility study;</li> <li>5. Traditionally the Council has accepted the transfer of land and the associated management, maintenance and public liability of play parks where the capital cost has been secured from sources other than the Council. However, within the current financial constraints it is becoming increasingly difficult to absorb the revenue cost of additional facilities, estimated to be £13,500 per annum, excluding any cost associated with vandalism or anti social behaviour on the site; in addition, this increases the future potential capital liability of the Council, i.e. the need to replace the facility; agreeing to the request would increase the liability placed upon the Council;</li> <li>6. The position regarding the disposal of the land by the Board is not yet clear, it is likely that there would be a cost associated with the acquisition of the cost; this cost may be borne by DSD but it is not clear nor are the terms and conditions associated with the disposal;</li> <li>7. The Committee is asked to note that there are a number of Council maintained play parks in the general area at Falls Park; Moyard; Springhill; and Pat O'Hare Park (McCrorry Park); in addition consideration is currently being given to a further play area. Committee should note that no assessment of this proposal has been carried out under the Council's Strategy for playgrounds. However this will now be carried out in advance of the Committee's meeting.</li> <li>8. The general area suffers from anti social behaviour;</li> <li>9. The site itself is sufficient in terms of size for a play park, however it is situated in a secluded area at the rear of properties, it is not considered to be an ideal location for a play park;</li> <li>10. In addition, access to the site is limited, there are pedestrian paths however vehicular access is restricted and construction on the site would be hampered by these factors.</li> </ol>
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<b>3</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>Whilst there would be no capital spend implications it is anticipated that the routine maintenance of this would be a further £13,500 per annum plus the associated public liability and any costs resulting from anti social behaviour.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u></p> <p>The project would be added to the work load to existing in the area in terms of opening and closing of the facility; daily inspection and any associated clean up.</p>

<b>4</b>	<b>Equality and Good Relations Considerations</b>
4.1	There are no equality implications

<b>5</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
5.1	The Committee is asked to note the report and to direct Officers as to whether they wish to agree in principle to accept the management, maintenance and public liability responsibilities for the proposal in the event that it should go ahead.

<b>6</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
	A further report will be brought to Committee at a later date if required.

<b>7</b>	<b>Key to Abbreviations</b>
	DSD – Department of Social Development

<b>8</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	None