



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Land at Whiterock Close: Lease to Glór Na Móna, Whiterock
Date:	14 February 2013
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Estates Manager, Property and Projects Department

1.0	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The purpose of this report is to make the Committee aware of a lease request from Glór Na Móna in respect of the potential development of Council land adjacent to Whiterock Leisure and Community Centre and to seek a decision on this matter.
1.2	The SP&R Committee at its meeting on the 24 August 2012 endorsed the West AWG recommendation to provide £112,000 of Local Investment Fund to Glór na Móna subject to match funding being obtained within 18 months and subject to confirmation of costs, clarification of legal issues, sustainability etc.

2.0	Key Issues
2.1	The Council owns an extensive area of land in the vicinity of the Whiterock Leisure and Community Centre. Part of this area, shown outlined red on the plan attached at Appendix '2', was formerly the site of Bunscoil an Sleibhe Dhuibh; the site has been vacant since that school opened its new accommodation on the Ballymurphy Road in 2002.
2.2	The site lies within the Whiterock Community Corridor concept area. The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on the 22 June 2012 agreed that the Whiterock Community Health and Well Being Corridor was one of a number of schemes that should be progressed to Strategic Outline Case stage. This would allow for it to be considered by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for inclusion in the uncommitted section of the Capital Programme.
2.3	Glór na Móna is an Irish language organisation that operates to promote Irish language and related activities in Upper Springfield and the surrounding area.

	The group promotes Irish through cultural events and develops services for the Irish language community.
2.4	Glór na Móna's existing leased premises is basement accommodation which is poorly lit and ventilated with low ceilings creating an uncomfortable and oppressive environment.
2.5	Glór na Móna have received approval in principle for £112,000 of Local Investment Fund support as outlined at paragraph 1.2 above which will be matched by a further £112,500 from CISTE to construct a modular building on that part of the former Bunscoil site shown shaded yellow on the plan attached at Appendix '2'.
2.6	The Committee is asked to note that Glór na Móna have requested a seven year lease for the area of land shaded yellow on the plan attached at Appendix '2'. This proposal is in line with the SP&R Committee's clarification of LIF guidance to Members at its meeting on the 22 June 2012, that a LIF proposal in respect of a Council asset could be eligible if it was subject to a lease of reasonable duration from the Council.
2.7	The Glór na Móna project, while progressing under the LIF, is also being considered as part of the wider project proposals emerging for the Whiterock site as the Strategic Outline Case for the Whiterock Community hub develops. Given the modular nature of the proposed construction it is proposed to retain flexibility within the lease to allow for future reconfiguration of the overall site, if required, in order to ensure a joined up delivery of community facilities at this location.

3.0	Resource Implications
3.1	<p>Financial</p> <p>The SP&R Committee at its meeting on the 24 August 2012 endorsed the West AWG recommendation to provide £112,000 of Local Investment Fund to Glór na Mona subject to match funding being obtained within 18 months and subject to confirmation of costs, clarification of legal issues, sustainability etc. CISTE have confirmed match funding of £112,500. If any additional funding is required Glór na Móna have advised that they may will seek a loan from the Ulster Community Investment Trust.</p>
3.2	Detailed terms of the lease including rent will be brought to the SP&R Committee for approval.
3.3	<p>Human Resource</p> <p>Resources in the Estates Management Unit and Legal Services involved in agreeing detailed terms and drawing up the appropriate form of lease.</p>
3.4	<p>Asset and Other Implications</p> <p>The siting of the proposed modular building for Glór na Móna at the Whiterock Road end of the former Bunscoil site leaves the use of the remainder of the area flexible in terms of the emerging Whiterock Community Health and Well Being Corridor.</p>

4.0	Equality and Good Relations Implications
4.1	An EQIA was carried out at the outset of the Investment Programme. As part of the due diligence process, officers will equality screen all the LIF projects, both individually and as a whole programme. Where any adverse equality impact is identified, either at individual project level, or at a programme or area level, mitigating actions will be devised for inclusion in the letter of offer, and/or for the consideration of the AWGs.

5.0	Recommendations
5.1	<p>It is recommended that the Committee:</p> <p>Agree, in principle to enter into a lease arrangement with Glór Na Móna for a period of 7 years subject to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Glór na Móna receiving £112,500 of match funding from CISTE. (ii) Glór na Móna providing a satisfactory business plan. (iii) Glór na Móna securing the appropriate approvals including planning, building control. (iv) Approval of the SP&R Committee to the rent and detail terms of the lease in accordance with Standing Orders.

6.0	Decision Tracking
<p>Actions to be completed by the Estates Management Unit and Legal Services by the 30 April 2013.</p>	

7.0	Key to Abbreviations
<p>LIF: Local Investment Fund</p> <p>EQIA: Equality Impact Assessment</p> <p>AWGs: Area Working Groups</p>	

8.0	Documents Attached
8.1	Plan attached at Appendix '2'.