



## Belfast City Council

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| <b>Report to:</b>         | Parks and Leisure Committee                               |
| <b>Subject:</b>           | <b>Grove Wellbeing Centre – Provision of Pool Seating</b> |
| <b>Date:</b>              | 9th May, 2013   |
| <b>Reporting Officer:</b> | Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure, ext 3400   |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b>   | Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure, ext 3400   |

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| <b>1.</b> | <b>Relevant Background Information</b>   |
|           | <p>Members will be aware that the Grove Wellbeing Centre was opened in 2008 as a replacement to the Grove Swim Centre. When the decision was taken in 2003 to build the centre it was made on the basis that priority should be given to public recreational swimming rather than to swimming clubs. As a result the main pool in the Grove Wellbeing Centre was not designed or built to accommodate spectator seating to allow for competitions to be held.</p> <p>Significant work was undertaken with swimming clubs displaced by the closure of the Grove Swim Centre to endeavour to meet their needs, although it was not possible to meet all their requirements.</p> <p>Since that time, one of the clubs, Alliance Swimming Club at Grove Wellbeing Centre has continued to press the Council to make structural alterations to provide spectator seating. This club has been actively engaged with a number of local politicians in pursuit of this goal.</p> |

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| <b>2.</b> | <b>Key Issues</b>   |
|           | <p>Clearly the provision of spectator seating in the pool area would require significant structural alterations. To investigate what if anything is possible a feasibility study would be required.</p> <p>Members will be aware that in the process confirmed by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 22 March 2013 any emerging capital schemes require the approval of that committee to proceed to have such a study undertaken.</p> <p>Members will also be aware that as part of the Investment Programme it has been agreed to develop proposals for leisure transformation. It is anticipated that there will be extensive political engagement over the next number of months to develop proposals for the renewal of the leisure estate and the transformation of</p> |

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|  | <p>the service delivery. As part of that process, consideration will have to be given to the needs of swimming. Therefore a decision will be needed on whether the Council should in one of its proposed developments make provision for gala swimming.</p> <p>There are two options open to Members when considering the request from Alliance Swimming Club:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. refer the request for the provision of spectator seating at the Grove Wellbeing Centre to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee as an emerging capital project with a request that funding be allocated to enable a feasibility study be carried out, or</li> <li>2. decide not to pursue the request from Alliance Swimming Club for the provision of spectator at Grove Wellbeing Centre on the basis that the Council is currently engaged in a review of its leisure facilities and that it will take into account the needs of swimming clubs in the city when making decisions on the shape of the future estate.</li> </ol> |
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| <b>3.</b> | <b>Resource Implications</b>  |
|           | These are unknown at this stage and could only be clarified through more detailed work, but are likely to be significant. |

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| <b>4.</b> | <b>Equality Implications</b>  |
|           | There are no equality or good relations implications at this stage. |

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| <b>5.</b> | <b>Recommendation</b>   |
|           | It is recommended that the Committee adopts option 2 and not pursue the request from Alliance Swim Club at this time. |

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| <b>6.</b> | <b>Decision Tracking</b> |
|           | None                     |

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| <b>7.</b> | <b>Key to Abbreviations</b> |
|           | None                        |

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