



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Proposed Environmental Improvement Scheme At Lower Shankill
Date:	10 October 2013
Reporting Officer:	Caroline Wilson, Neighbourhood and Development Manager
Contact Officer:	Stephen Walker, Departmental Portfolio Programme Manager

1.	Relevant Background Information
	<p>The Committee is asked to note that Officials from the Department for Social Development have met with Council Officers to update them on proposals to undertake a significant environmental improvement scheme in the Lower Shankill. A copy of the outline concept plan is attached as Appendix 1 for information.</p> <p>The indicative cost of the scheme at this time is in the region of £1.8m which will be met by the Department.</p> <p>Discussions are ongoing between the Housing Executive and the Roads Service, each organisation owns part of the land, although the Housing Executive is the main landowner in this instance.</p> <p>Members are asked to note that no capital money has been committed to this project by the Department. However, it is the Department's intention to seek the necessary allocation. Preliminary discussions with Officials from the Department have intimated the cost of maintenance for 12 months, post completion, will be included.</p> <p>Whilst the Housing Executive is the main land owner Officials have indicated that the Executive is not in a position to undertake the operational maintenance post completion. The Council has been asked to consider whether it is prepared to accept the transfer of land and the associated maintenance and public liability associated with the project.</p>

	<p>The Executive has indicated that low level maintenance will underpin the design.</p> <p>Members will note from the attached drawing that the proposal includes a multi user games area and a playground. The remainder of the area will incorporate grassed areas, paths and some hedging. It is not intended that bedding will be included.</p>
--	---

2.	Key Issues
	<p>The key issue that the committee is being asked to consider at this stage is whether the Council is willing to accept the land transfer from the Housing Executive and to undertake the maintenance and public liability associated with the scheme post completion and after the first year. In considering its position the Members may wish to consider the following points:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The project is at its early stages in development; 2. There has been limited consultation with the community; 3. The funding from DSD has not yet been committed; 4. It is likely that it will be a further 2-3 years before the project is completed; 5. Council Officers have not yet commented on the proposals; 6. There are a number of management issues which have not been worked through such as the management of the MUGA or the need for an additional playground in area which already has three such facilities in close proximity at the Hammer, at Dover Street and at Brown Square; 7. The revenue costs are not available at present, however, a preliminary estimate based on the playground and the MUGA might be in the region of £30,000 per annum; 8. It is unlikely that this work could be absorbed within the existing budget and staffing structure;

3.	Resource Implications
	<p><u>Financial Implications</u></p> <p>Whilst there are no capital expenditure requirements the initial estimated revenue cost may be the region of £30,000 per annum, subject to further review.</p> <p><u>Human Resource Implications</u></p> <p>Consideration will be required to be given to the impact of this on overall workload of the current establishment.</p>

	<p><u>Asset and Other implications</u></p> <p>This will increase the Council's asset holding and will also increase the council's liability.</p> <p>From a community perspective this project will improve the aesthetic appearance of the area and minimise the potential for anti social behaviour through incorporating secure by design principles.</p>
--	--

4.	Equality and Good Relations Implications
	There are no equality or good relations implications.

5.	Recommendations
	<p>Committee is asked to support the proposed in principle at this stage subject to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • capital funding being secured by the Department; • the land is transferred at nil cost to the Council and the Department meets the cost of maintenance in the first year. • The details of the scheme being agreed by the Council. <p>The decision on transfer of the asset will be referred to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in line with Standing Orders.</p>

6.	Decision Tracking
	Caroline Wilson, Neighbourhood and Development Manager.

7.	Key to Abbreviations
	DSD – Department for Social Development.

8.	Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 – Outline concept drawing showing proposed scheme for environmental improvement in Lower Shankill.