



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee.
Subject:	Woodvale Park – After Hours use of Multi User Games
Date:	14 November 2013
Reporting Officer:	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Stephen Walker, Departmental Portfolio Programme Manager

1	Relevant Background Information
	<p>The purpose of this report is to seek Committee approval to an interim proposal to open the multi user games area at Woodvale Park in the evenings and levy a charge in respect of bookings for the facility.</p> <p>The Committee will be aware that as part of the refurbishment of Woodvale Park a Multi User Games Area was constructed on the site. This facility contains a polymeric surface and is approximately 64m x 31m, plus a 2m run off area. The pitch which is floodlit is not full size but can be used for training purposes and use for 5 and 7 a side football.</p> <p>Members will be aware that parks opening and closing times are governed by seasonal variations and that during the autumn and winter closing times are much earlier, indeed closing at around 4:30 – 5:00 pm during the winter months. Therefore any use of the facility after that time incurs additional staff costs through overtime, which as members will be aware we are seeking to minimise.</p> <p>Members may be aware that typically multi user games areas tend to be casually used and not bookable. They are intended to be used by local people much the same as a playground, i.e. casual drop in use. This was the intention of the MUGA at Woodvale. Floodlighting was installed primarily to enable it to be used as part of diversionary programmes within the area.</p> <p>However, it has come to our notice that some local football clubs are using the facility for training purposes. Clubs are using the facility as a replacement for pay for use facilities such as Clarendon Playing Fields.</p> <p>Members will be aware that there is a review of pricing for pitches, in particular Third Generation pitches. A number of local clubs have expressed concern at the cost. This review is still in progress.</p> <p>It is important that the Council is seen to be consistent in its approach to the use of its facilities for training purposes. It is therefore proposed that the MUGA at Woodvale be closed at the normal closing times over the autumn / winter period. However, it is suggested that clubs can book the facility through the Booking Office at the Ozone. Parks staff can therefore arrange for the park to be opened and floodlighting switched on at the appropriate time.</p>

	It is proposed that this is an interim measure to run until the 31 March 2014 and will be reviewed in the interim period.
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2	Key Issues
	<p>The Committee is asked to consider the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Multi User Games Area at Woodvale is currently being used in the evening times for training by local football clubs; 2. With the onset of Autumn / Winter this incurs additional costs on Council; 3. Normally these facilities are casually used, however in the case of Woodvale there are occasions when it is being used for training by local clubs; 4. Clubs in other areas are required to pay for use of grass or other synthetic surfaces, such as 3G; 5. It is proposed to make the facility at Woodvale available for booking through the Booking Office at Ozone and an appropriate fee will be charged, this is likely to be a percentage of the rate for a comparable 3rd generation facility 6. Members are asked to note that this is outside of the scales of charges and will be approved by the Director using delegated authority;

3	Resource Implications
	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>The fee levied is yet to be agreed but is likely to be in the region of £17.50 for full pitch and £8.75 for half pitch, with concessionary rates, in line with those for 3G pitches.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u></p> <p>Opening and closing the facility will require an attendant to be on duty outside of normal hours.</p>

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	There are no equality implications.

5	Recommendations
5.1	The Committee is asked to approve the opening and closing of the Multi User Games Area at Woodvale outside of normal hours until 31 March 2014 and permit local clubs to book the facility through our booking office at Ozone.

6	Decision Tracking
	An update report will be brought to Committee at a future date.

7	Key to Abbreviations
	Multi User Games Area – MUGA

8	Documents Attached
	None