



**Belfast City Council**

<b>Report to:</b>	Special Parks and Leisure Committee.
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Cherryvale Playing Fields</b>
<b>Date:</b>	5 November 2013
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Stephen Walker, Departmental Portfolio Programme Manager

<b>1</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
	<p>The Committee is reminded that at its meeting in October 2013 it received a report regarding proposals on pitch development at Cherryvale Playing Fields. A copy of this report is attached as Appendix D. Following representation from some residents and users of the playing fields expressing their objections and concerns to the proposal the Committee agreed to defer the report to allow for a site visit to the playing fields and to receive representation from groups affected by the proposals. The groups invited include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Sports clubs who use the facilities;</li><li>2. Residents from Knock Eden who live immediately adjacent to the playing fields;</li><li>3. Other users of the playing fields who are not affiliated to any of the sporting codes; and</li><li>4. Those who are opposed to the installation of artificial turf pitch on the playing fields;</li></ol> <p>The previous report at Appendix D sets out a series of options. Option 2 of that report (Proposed Agreed Option from Sporting Codes) reflects the optimal sporting solution given the land and financial parameters. It enables a full size artificial turf floodlit pitch to be provided on the site which will enable all three sporting codes use of the facility.</p> <p>There is opposition amongst some residents and users to the construction of an artificial floodlit pitch in the playing fields. However, there is also a lobby which is in support of the investment on the site but opposed to its location as outlined in option 2.</p> <p><b><u>Additional Option to locate artificial pitch on Pitch 1</u></b></p> <p>Following the most recent engagement some residents' representatives have proposed as an alternative that an artificial turf pitch be located on Pitch No 1 which is immediately adjacent to the Ravenhill Road and which is currently a full size grassed turf GAA pitch.</p> <p>Members are asked to note that whilst this may alleviate the concerns of some of the residents from Knock Eden, it may generate opposition from those living immediately facing the location, however, there has been no discussion with those residents about the proposal. From a technical point of view, a full size synthetic pitch to meet the needs of GAA cannot be provided on Pitch 1 without removing the line of trees which are a feature</p>

	<p>of the park.</p> <p>An undersized synthetic pitch could be fitted on this site but there is no real argument for development of a sub standard sports solution.</p> <p>The provision of a synthetic pitch at Pitch 1 would also require the replacement of the grass GAA pitch on the site which is estimated to cost in the region of £300,000 for which there is no budget established within the financial limit set by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.</p> <p>This option creates issues with fitting two full sized grass GAA pitches into the space available. The options for pitch 1 are set out in the drawings at Appendix A (option 5) and B (option 6).</p> <p>In addition Option 5 would remove a full size GAA pitch from the site at a time when under provision of GAA pitches in the city has been identified.</p> <p><b><u>Amendment to Option 2</u></b></p> <p>In an attempt to alleviate a number of the issues raised by residents option 2 has been amended, the amendment includes positioning the pitches as far away from the houses in Knock Eden as possible. In reality, this will mean approximately 30m from the fence line at the rear of the properties. In addition, we will prepare a landscape plan which will include the planting of additional trees to buffer the light and noise from the playing of sporting games. Other options such as timing of floodlights can also be examined. A drawing of the amended option 2 can be found at Appendix C.</p>
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<b>2</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
	<p>The Committee is asked to consider the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. As part of the prioritisation of sites under the Pitches Strategy the Council has agreed that an artificial turf pitch will be constructed at Cherryvale Playing Fields;</li> <li>2. The Gaelic Association is currently contributing £350,000 to the development of a replacement sand based natural turf pitch with floodlighting, however, this funding is predicated on Council investment in the site;</li> <li>3. There are objections to the proposals and these range from those who do want any artificial surface to those who wish to displace it to an alternative location in the playing fields; objectors can make submissions via the planning process.</li> <li>4. There is support from the 3 sporting codes for the provision of an artificial turf pitch which will increase the availability for each of the sports; in addition St Joseph's College which is adjacent to the playing fields has also highlighted the benefit to the school;</li> <li>5. It is the view of Officers that Option 2 as amended represents the best sporting option particularly given the major investment by Council and should be progressed to planning at which time issues around noise; lighting etc can be addressed within the statutory framework;</li> </ol>

<b>3</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>There are cost implications of replacing Pitch 1 with 3G and establishing a grass pitch in another location on the site. Cost estimated to be £300,000 and no budget has been established to support this.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u></p> <p>There are no additional human resource implications at this time.</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	<p>The Committee is asked to consider the report and the representations in line with its decision to defer the report in October.</p> <p>The Committee is asked to agree that Option 2 as amended be submitted to Planning for consideration at which times representation on matters relating to planning can be considered.</p>

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

<b>7</b>	<b>Key to Abbreviations</b>

<b>8</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	<p>Appendix A – Option 5 – Pitch 1 3G with 2 new grass GAA pitches on current orientation</p> <p>Appendix B – Option 6 – Pitch 1 3G with 2 new grass GAA pitches to fit space</p> <p>Appendix C – Amended Option 2</p> <p>Appendix D – Previous report to Parks and Leisure Committee – October 2013</p>