



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Female Association Football provision in South Belfast
Date:	13 February 2014
Reporting Officer:	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Claire Moraghan, Sports Development Officer Patrick Smyth, Community Parks Manager

1.	Relevant Background Information
	<p>There are 8 senior female football clubs in Belfast, many with second and third level streams and junior sections. However they represent only 6% of Belfast football clubs.</p> <p>Members will be aware that a baseline survey into pitch provision is underway with early indication that there are issues around provision of grass pitches in the summer to meet the demand for women's football. Further information on the survey will be provided in due course.</p>

2.	Key Issues																					
	<p>The current review of provision has highlighted the lack of playing opportunity for female football with only 9 confirmed grass pitches available for summer play in 2014.</p> <p>Table 1. Summer Provision</p> <table border="1"><thead><tr><th>Pitch</th><th>Area</th><th>No. of pitches available</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Mallusk</td><td>North</td><td>3</td></tr><tr><td>Ballysillan</td><td>North</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>Boucher</td><td>South</td><td>1 (unavailable due to Tennets Vital)</td></tr><tr><td>Wedderburn</td><td>South</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>Ormeau</td><td>East</td><td>3</td></tr><tr><td>Victoria</td><td>East</td><td>3 (likely to be available due to Connswater Greenway development)</td></tr></tbody></table> <p>With the loss of the single summer pitch at Boucher Road the provision for the south of the city is reduced. This is coupled with the issue of reports of anti-social behaviour during the summer months and the use of one of the pitches at Wedderburn as a bonfire site.</p>	Pitch	Area	No. of pitches available	Mallusk	North	3	Ballysillan	North	1	Boucher	South	1 (unavailable due to Tennets Vital)	Wedderburn	South	2	Ormeau	East	3	Victoria	East	3 (likely to be available due to Connswater Greenway development)
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	<p>An alternative site in the south of the city is Strangford Avenue playing fields which currently has no provision for summer play and is routinely under used due to the additional costs for providing a second manned changing pavilion.</p> <p>The proposal to “flip” one winter pitch on this site to summer play would also come with key handling agreements for the second changing facility and therefore no additional costs would be incurred by the council.</p> <p>This would result in meeting one of the key playing pitch policy objectives of providing quality dedicated space for competitive sporting play.</p>
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3.	Resource Implications
	None. The clubs booking the facility would still pay the agreed rate following the agreed booking procedure through Outdoor Leisure.

4.	Equality Implications
	The proposal aims to rebalance the provision across the city and will be quality screened in accordance with Council requirements through the review of Parks & Leisure playing pitches review.

5.	Recommendations
	Members are asked to agree the proposal to convert one winter pitch at Strangford Avenue playing fields to a summer pitch and for officers to draw up key handling arrangements with legal services. The legal agreement to be in place for the beginning of the summer season in April 2014.

6.	Decision Tracking
	The Sports Development Officer to arrange the drawing up of an appropriate legal agreement.

7.	Key to Abbreviations
	None

8.	Documents Attached
	None

