



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Willowbank / Clarendon MUGA Programme
Date:	10 April 2014
Reporting Officer:	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Stephen Walker, Departmental Portfolio and Programme Manager

1.	Relevant Background Information
	<p>The Committee will recall that at its meeting on 13 February 2014 it received a report outlining proposals in respect of the development of a MUGA Programme. The report outlined proposals made at Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 24 January 2014 for Phase 1 of the programme detailing the sites for refurbishment and proposed new builds. A copy of the report is attached as Appendix A.</p> <p>The report provided an operational working definition of a MUGA as being suitable for a variety of informal sports including football, netball, basketball etc and that they tended to be openly accessible and free to use. There are a number of exceptions to this, namely the North Belfast Play Forum at the Waterworks Park; Clarendon Playing Fields and Willowbank Park. Each of these facilities is currently managed locally either through a Facilities Management Agreement or a lease.</p> <p>The North Belfast Play Forum has recently secured funding to upgrade the polymeric surface to 3G artificial turf, within the terms and condition of that funding the facility was leased to the Forum for a period of 10 years.</p> <p>In relation to the proposals to upgrade the MUGA's at Clarendon Playing Fields and Willowbank Park, discussions were held with the FMA holders. It was stated that both facilities had in the past tended to be used by local football teams for training purposes and had been used to generate income which would be used to the betterment of the facilities. It was noted that clubs had been seeking alternative venues for training and were unwilling to train on a polymeric surface, preferring instead to use artificial turf (3G). In addition, the FMA holders had referred to the</p>

	<p>problem of ‘ponding’ on the surface owing to rainfall and as a consequence the need to cancel bookings at short notice.</p> <p>In both these cases it was agreed that a 3G facility would better reflect the requirements of the existing users. In relation to Willowbank, the surface has been replaced and is now operational. In relation to Clarendon Playing Fields, it will require a planning approval and detailed design and is unlikely to be completed before the end of 2015.</p> <p>In both cases, the facility is managed through a facilities management agreement. Members will be aware of the work currently ongoing regarding the development of new partnership agreements in relation to our natural turf pitch provision. However, the partnership agreements currently exclude artificial turf and a position on this is yet to be established.</p> <p>It is intended that a piece of work be completed, aligned to the partnership agreement proposal, over the summer months with a view to bringing a report to Committee in September 2014.</p> <p>In the interim it is proposed that the existing arrangements be discussed with the two FMA holders to agree any variation which may be required and subject to any future review of arrangements in relation to artificial turf pitches.</p>
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2.	Resource Implications
	<p>Financial Implications</p> <p>There are no financial implications in terms of additional costs. However, Committee will be aware that the income generation from 3G pitches is potentially greater than from MUGAs, even where a charge is levied.</p> <p>Human Resources</p> <p>There are no additional human resource implications at this time.</p>

3.	Equality Implications
	<p>There are no equality implications</p>

5.	Recommendations
	<p>It is recommended that the Committee note the report and agree that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Officers review management arrangements at Willowbank Park as the new facility is currently operational; 2. Officers establish a position regarding future management of 3G artificial turf pitches; and

	3. A report will be brought to September 2014 Committee.
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6.	Decision Tracking
	A report will be brought to the Committee in September 2014.

7.	Key to Abbreviations
	FMA – Facilities Management Agreements

8.	Documents Attached
	Appendix A - Previous Committee Report re MUGA Programme