



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Proposal to develop Blanchflower Playing Fields
Date:	14 August 2014
Reporting Officer:	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Stephen Walker, Departmental Portfolio and Programme Manager

1. Relevant Background Information

The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of an emerging proposal from Harland and Wolff Welders Football club which would seek to develop Blanchflower Playing Fields into a modern playing field facility with Harland and Wolff Welders at its centre.

Harland and Wolff are seeking a lease from the Council in relation to the playing fields at Blanchflower. The Club has preliminary proposals which would, if realised, deliver:

1. A new home stadium for Harland and Wolff Football Club which would be IFA Premiership Standard;
2. Clubhouse facilities including changing rooms, medical room, gymnasium and media room;
3. The Clubhouse would also include a Boardroom and function room with kitchen facilities for the preparation of food;
4. 4 additional 3G artificial turf pitches with ancillary structures including floodlighting, additional changing, and car parking.

The project is at an early stage in its development and lacks detail at this time. The club has however established a Steering Group to manage the project. The Club wishes to engage with the Council both as the landowner and also a potential funder of the project.

The Club has initiated a series of discussions with sports clubs and organisations from with the Greater East Belfast area and has indicated that there is interest from these groups to use such a facility should one be developed.

	<p>The Club acknowledges that this is a significant project to undertake and recognises that it will require significant levels of funding from a variety of sources. The Club also acknowledges that the development may need to be undertaken in a phased manner to reflect the availability of resources.</p> <p>The Club is seeking the Council's support to move this project forward and has requested that an Official representative from the Council join the Steering Group in an advisory capacity.</p>
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2.	Key Issues
	<p>The Committee is asked to consider the following points:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Harland and Wolff Welders is a well established Football Club and also manages a successful Social Club; 2. The proposal in relation to Blanchflower Playing Fields is in its early stages and will require significant planning and funding to be fully realised; 3. The Club recognises that the proposal goes beyond its own aspirations and needs and seeks to provide much needed modern facilities in East Belfast; 4. Through discussions with representatives from the Club and elected Representatives from the area, Officers are satisfied that the Club is aware of the ambitious nature of the project and is seeking to move forward in a structured and professional manner; 5. A business plan to demonstrate the feasibility, deliverability and sustainability of the proposal has not yet been produced but will be undertaken by the Club; 6. The Club wishes to engage with the Council throughout the process and involve the council in the development of the project.

3.	Resource Implications
	<p><u>Financial Implications</u></p> <p>The financial implications are unknown at this time.</p> <p><u>Human Resource Implications</u></p> <p>There are no additional human resource implications although it will require Officer time;</p> <p><u>Asset and other implications</u></p> <p>The facility would benefit from such a large scale project and there are potentially significant health and well being benefits to be gained through increased usage.</p>

4.	Equality Implications
	Equality considerations have not been assessed at this time.

5.	Recommendations
	<p>The Committee is asked to note the report and agree:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To support the proposal in principle on the grounds that it would enhance the facility and enhance provision in sporting facilities in East Belfast;2. Agree to nominate a Council Officer to provide advice and guidance to the Steering Group; and3. Agree to receive a presentation from the Club at a future date following completion of the business case and the firming up of proposals, costs and potential sources of funding.

6.	Decision Tracking
	A further report will be brought to the Committee at a later date.

7.	Key to Abbreviations
	None

8.	Documents Attached
	None