



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Licence Agreement 155-157 Newtownards Road, Belfast
Date:	14 August 2014
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Property and Projects, Ext. 6217
Contact Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Estates Manager, Ext.3493

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	At its meeting on 14 February 2013 the Parks and Leisure Committee approved the acquisition of a small area of land at 155/157 Newtownards Road by the Council from the Department for Social Development (DSD) for a period of five years. The Parks and Leisure Committee also agreed that a contribution should be sought from DSD regarding the maintenance and cleansing costs of the site following its development as a 'pocket park'. At that time it was envisaged the development of the 'pocket park' would be carried out prior to the Council taking any responsibility for the site.
1.2	Since February 2013 Council officers have been in discussions with DSD and East Belfast Partnership Board regarding the proposals for this site and have taken account of the proposed transfer of assets from DSD to the Council as part of Local Government Reform.

2	Key Issues
2.1	Since the Parks and Leisure Committee decision the mapped limits of the site have been amended to reflect the extent of DSD's title. The revised site area is shown outlined in red on Appendix 1 to this report.
2.2	A proposed landscaping scheme for the site has been developed through the Council's Development Department as part of the Renewing the Routes project in consultation with the East Belfast Partnership and Parks and Leisure Department. Rather than the scheme being funded by East Belfast Partnership Board it is envisaged it will be 100% funded via the Council's Renewing the Routes project. This project was approved as part of the Integrated Regeneration Plan for the 2012/2013 Renewing the Routes programme for Newtownards Road that was presented to the Development Committee 21 August 2012 and agreed by Council on 3 September 2012.

2.3	Because the site will transfer from DSD to the Council as part of Local Government Reform, it is proposed the arrangement up to the end of March 2015 should be in the form of a Licence Agreement. The Licence would provide the Council with permission to develop the site in accordance with an agreed scheme drawing and place responsibility for public liability insurance, management and maintenance of the developed facility upon the Council. The Licence Agreement will confirm that DSD will provide funding for the management and maintenance and no additional insurance costs will be incurred by the Council in connection with extending public liability insurance cover to the site. A nominal Licence Fee of one pound (payable by the Council to DSD) will be included in the Agreement in order to give the document legal effect.
2.4	It is envisaged the proposed scheme would commence upon completion of the Licence Agreement with a construction period of approximately six weeks.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	<p>Finance</p> <p>Council funding for the proposed 'pocket park' development is being provided as part of the Council's Renewing the Routes. The cost for the scheme will be covered within the agreed budget of up to £14,000 allocated for boundary improvements to vacant sites along Newtownards Road.</p> <p>Annual management and maintenance costs associated with the completed scheme have been estimated by Parks and Leisure Department at £1,360 and DSD have agreed to provide pro rata funding based on this cost for the duration of the Licence Agreement.</p>
3.2	<p>Human Resources</p> <p>Resources in Development Department, Parks and Leisure, Property and Projects and Legal Services have been involved in bringing forward these proposals. Following acquisition of the site Development Department and Parks and Leisure personnel will continue their involvement through the scheme development and its subsequent maintenance.</p>
3.3	<p>Asset and Other Implications</p> <p>This small plot (approximately 116 square metres) will be transferred to the new Belfast City Council on 1 April 2015. Development of the proposed 'pocket park' in advance of this will make a contribution to the local visual amenity of the site and contribute to wider improvements resulting from Renewing the Routes in this area.</p>

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	There are no known equality or good relations issues associated with this report.

5	Recommendations
5.1	Committee is recommended to provide authority for the Council to enter into a Licence Agreement with DSD which would run up until 31 March 2015 to allow the Council to develop a 'pocket park' on a vacant site at 155/157 Newtownards Road (shown outlined red in Appendix 1 attached) and to further approve that the Council manage and

	maintain the developed Park during the Licence period, subject to such management and maintenance being funded by DSD.
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6	Decision Tracking
Director of Property and Projects to ensure completion of Licence Agreement within one month of full Council ratification of this Committee decision.	

7	Key to Abbreviations
DSD – Department for Social Development	

8	Documents Attached
Appendix 1 - Map showing (outlined red) the extent of land to be taken by way of Licence Agreement.	

APPENDIX 1