



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Falls Park Pitch Development – Proposed Consultation
Date:	11 September 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 is reminded that at its meeting on 14th June 2014 it received a copy of a report regarding proposed construction of a 3rd generation artificial turf pitch at Falls Park as part of the implementation of the Pitches Strategy which was adopted in March 2012. The report, attached as appendix A, highlighted the concerns from some residents regarding the implications of the new facility. To help address those concerns it was suggested that an engagement exercise be undertaken with residents to identify the issues and agree ways in which these might be mitigated. The Committee Minute stated that:</p> <p><i>After discussion, during which the Committee expressed concern regarding the cost of hiring external consultants to undertake a consultation exercise on behalf of the Council, it was agreed that an invitation be extended to representatives of the residents' group to attend the August monthly meeting in order to outline their concerns in respect of the proposed development, after which the Committee would give consideration to the best manner in which to undertake future consultation.</i></p> <p>The residents were unfortunately unable to attend the August meeting and asked that a deputation be received at the September meeting.</p> <p>At the Council's meeting on 1st July, the matter was further discussed and minuted that</p> <p><i>the decision under the heading "Falls Park – Consultation Re: 3G Pitch" be amended to provide that an enhanced engagement process be undertaken between the Council and local residents in advance of the meeting of the Committee in August.</i></p>

	<p>In the interim, Officers from Parks and Leisure Department have met with a group of residents in August. There has also been recent correspondence from one of the residents on behalf of the group. The most recent correspondence appended a draft proposal as to the extent of the consultation and engagement which those residents believe is necessary in relation to this project. This is attached at Appendix B.</p> <p>During the meeting it was evident that there was a difference of opinion in terms of the purpose of the consultation exercise. Officers were of the view, in line with the committee report from June, that the consultation was to address mitigation measures around management of the new facility. However, the residents expressed the view that they were opposed to the development and were essentially requesting that the Council undertake an exercise to determine whether the development should go ahead or not.</p> <p>Further to the meeting with the resident's group in August 2014 it was decided that in order to obtain a wider view from stakeholders that a further public meeting should take place and this has been scheduled for 23rd September 2014.</p>
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2.	Key Issues
	<p>The Committee is asked to note:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Council has adopted the pitches strategy in March 2012 and agreed that a 3rd generation pitch and changing pavilion and ancillary structures would be located in Falls Park; the strategy has been subject to consultation in line with the Council's Equality Scheme; 2. Meetings have previously taken place and alterations to the proposal have been made such as the repositioning of the changing pavilion and agreements around landscape plans to minimise noise and light escape from the new facility; a further meeting is scheduled for 23rd September with letters being hand delivered to those residents from the adjoining streets. Posters will be put up in local facilities and throughout the park to inform other park users of the meeting; 3. The project has been lodged with the Planning Service; the matter was deferred at the Town Planning Committee and a lighting report is currently being prepared for submission to the Planning Service to enable a final adjudication to be made; during the planning process a range of objections were received, these will be taken into account as part of the determination. 4. The residents have submitted a proposed methodology (Appendix B) which would require significant additional resources as outlined in the Committee Report in June and about which Members expressed their concerns; 5. While for some residents there are concerns around future

	management issues emerging from the extended hours and floodlighting etc, there is a group of residents who are opposed to the development and would prefer to see the decision to construct the artificial turf pitch at Falls Park reversed;
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3.	Resource Implications
	<p><u>Financial Implications</u></p> <p>There are no financial implications at this time.</p> <p><u>Resource Implications</u></p> <p>There are no additional human resource implications at this time.</p>

4.	Equality Implications
	There are no equality implications

5.	Recommendations
	<p>The Committee is asked:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To note the report; 2. To receive the deputation from a group of residents from streets adjacent to Falls Park; 3. To note the planned public meeting scheduled to take place on 23rd September which is focused on implementation and mitigation.

6.	Decision Tracking
	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure

7.	Key to Abbreviations
	None

8.	Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix A – Copy of previous report June 2014</p> <p>Appendix B – Copy of proposed consultation process from residents</p>