



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Partner Agreements Delivery Framework 2014/15
Date:	14 August 2014
Reporting Officer:	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks & Leisure
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1.	Relevant Background Information
	<p>In 2011, it was agreed by Council that a fundamental revision of FMAs was required.</p> <p>In October 2013, to support the transition from current facilities management agreements to partner agreements the Council undertook an engagement exercise which included three workshops at Council venues citywide with over fifty participants including existing FMA holders.</p> <p>In February 2014, a report on the findings of that engagement exercise with current FMA holders and other partners was considered by Committee and Members approved a recommendation that officers bring a partnership agreements framework back to Committee for its consideration.</p>

2.	Key Issues
	<p>The process for the introduction of partner agreements with associated timeline which will be subject to consultation and is summarised for Members' information at Appendix 2.</p> <p>In managing existing FMAs and other arrangements to a close and phasing in a new approach, Committee has agreed that written communication should be issued to current FMA holders by the end of September 2014 advising that;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. FMAs will be revised and replaced with a competitive grant aid partnership agreements programme which will be subject to public advertisement in April 2015 and open to eligible applicants.2. The final management fee payment will be paid to existing holders in May 2015.3. Their current agreement will come to an end in June 2015.4. A range of consultation opportunities and information workshops will be made available to all potential applicants to the new grant aid partner agreements programme from September 2014 onwards. <p>This timeframe accommodates league bookings for the 2014/15 playing season and elected Members will be kept fully informed of this communication with current FMA holders. In phasing in this new approach it is proposed that a new grant aid programme is established, applications to which will be invited by expression of interest in April 2015. Following receipt of applications from interested parties, an assessment will be carried using an assessment scoring matrix.</p>

- The proposed assessment criteria and weighting are as follows;
- Participation type – 25 %
- Participation – increased in usage – 15%
- Partnership working -20%
- Demonstrate social value- 20%
- Level of venue/site management 5%
- Strategic fit - 5%
- Applicant's governance/ management structure – 10 %
- A detailed proposed scoring matrix has been drafted and is attached at Appendix 3.

A comprehensive set of guidance notes and an application form will be distributed to all applicants. Further information and assistance will be provided at information workshops throughout the process.

The draft policy attached at Appendix 1 applies to grass playing pitches only and it is proposed that application to any new programme will be restricted to grass pitches, a list of which will be advertised in local press. Members should also note the exclusions to this policy as detailed in the policy document.

The introduction of partnership agreements in April 2015 will ensure we can also accept applications from clubs and groups based in the incoming council areas in both Lisburn and Castlereagh. Those grassed pitch sites the Council selects for inclusion in any future expression of interest will be presented to and subject to assessment and agreement by members following a report to this Committee by the end of 2014.

Belfast City Council has a number of pitches located across the city which are used by intermediate association football clubs. However, facilitating requests to provide pitches to intermediate standards as outlined in the Irish Football Association (NI) joint ground criteria needs careful consideration due to the impact on limited financial resources as well as the impact on casual play. In developing the 'Playing Pitches Strategy' the Council took the view that it was not its role to facilitate the development of intermediate standard pitches. In the last year the department has considered the findings of the engagement exercise and the required changes in operational arrangements to support the new policy. This includes changes required in both pitch bookings and maintenance which will return in-house with provision made by Council to accommodate both competitive and casual play on grass pitches.

Council will continue meaningful and ongoing communication with all stakeholders. The next stage of which will be a consultation phase which will be independently facilitated on the new policy and process to run until November 2014 to include an online questionnaire, citywide information sessions/workshops in October 2014 for potential applicants, including those located with incoming council areas under LGR and other partners. Supplementary workshops will also be provided as required by council officers post consultation.

As highlighted in the report to this Committee in February 2014 any award of future partner agreements would have to give consideration to the findings of the baseline

	<p>study on supply and demand for pitches in the city. These findings will be presented to members in due course by the department.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the process will be completed and new partners agreements in place by September 2015.</p>
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3.	Resource Implications
	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>Resources required for independent facilitation of the consultation form part of an already agreed research services budget. Existing FMA payments will be re-distributed in the form of grant aid for active sports development plans. The total figure available for this has not yet been defined.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u></p> <p>Ongoing officer time from a range of officers across the department will be dedicated to implementation and ongoing management in the medium to long term.</p> <p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u></p> <p>It is proposed within the draft policy that new partner agreements will impact on the future management of assets. Legal services will continue to provide advice on this for Committee's consideration.</p>

4.	Equality Implications
	The policy will be screened in line with the Council's existing equality screening process.

5.	Recommendations
	<p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the update report and provide any comments. • Agree the proposed application process for partner agreements. • Agree the proposed assessment criteria, subject to any comments, amendments or inputs from Members.

6.	Decision Tracking
	A final report outlining the consultation findings will be brought back to Committee in January 2015.

7.	Key to Abbreviations
	<p>FMA's- Facilities Management Agreements</p> <p>LGR – Local Government Reform</p>

8.	Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1: Playing Pitches Agreement Policy</p> <p>Appendix 2 Partner agreements process and timeline</p> <p>Appendix 3 Proposed assessment and scoring matrix</p>