

Summary of Consultation and Engagement Re: Falls Park Pitch Development

The Playing Pitches Strategy provided a city-wide rationale for pitch-development, ensuring a strategic approach to the provision of high quality, accessible pitch provision which had not been in place prior to 2012.

The Parks and Leisure Department undertook a full EQIA on the Playing Pitches Strategy and as part of this we held two periods of public consultation. The first of these public consultations was on the draft Playing Pitches Strategy and the second phase of consultation focused on the local impact of the development of pitches to inform the EQIA and sought views on the action plans for years 1-3 of the Playing Pitches Strategy which included the proposed investment locations.

The first phase of public consultation took place in January-March 2011. The draft strategy was available to download from the Council's website and a response questionnaire was developed which was also available to download. Correspondence was sent to Governing Bodies and sporting clubs across the city informing them of the consultation. All Elected Members were made aware of the consultation and a letter was sent to all the organisations on the Council's Equality Consultative List informing them of the consultation and inviting them to respond. An article was placed in the March-June 2011 edition of *City Matters*, the Council's magazine that goes to all residents, letting them know that we had developed a playing pitches strategy providing them with details on how they could get further information.

The second phase of public consultation in respect of the action plans which included the locations of the proposed investments and the EQIA report was conducted over a 12 week period from 25th July to 14th October 2011. This process included:

- an online questionnaire;
- opportunities to comment in writing;
- a series of 4 independently facilitated public meetings (September 2011)
- consultation with the NI Youth Forum (September 2011) and the Council's Youth Forum (October 2011); and
- consultation with the Council's Section 75 Forum (November 2011).

Notices of this second phase of consultation, including details of the public meetings, were sent to Governing Bodies and sporting clubs across the city, Councillors and those people who had responded to the first phase of consultation and had indicated that they wished to be included on our mailing list. These letters were sent out in the first week of September 2011. Once again a letter was sent to all the organisations on the Council's Equality Consultative List informing them of the consultation and inviting them to respond.

The table below outlines the dates and venues for the public meetings that were held as part of the consultation process. These meetings were open to everyone and the format was the same at all four meetings.

Date	Venue	Time
Wednesday 21 st September 2011	Falls Leisure Centre 15-17 Falls Road, Belfast	7pm – 9pm
Thursday 22 nd September 2011	Indoor Tennis Centre and Ozone Complex Ormeau Embankment, Belfast	7pm – 9pm
Tuesday 27 th	Grove Wellbeing Centre	7pm – 9pm

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September 2011	120 York Road, Belfast	
Wednesday 28 th September 2011	Alderman Tommy Patton Bowling Pavilion Inverary Avenue, Hollywood Road, Belfast	7pm – 9pm

The public meetings were also advertised in a number of ways - through the Council's website; posters in leisure facilities and at changing rooms in parks and through public advertisements in a number of newspapers during the w/c 12th September 2011. These newspapers were the *Andersonstown News*, *North Belfast News*, *South Belfast News* and *the Community Telegraph – South, East and North*.

The Independent Facilitator drafted a report on all the public meetings which included a list of attendees at each meeting. Attendees were asked to sign in at the meetings, to indicate if they were representing an organisation and to provide an email address if they wished to be added to our mailing list. We did not ask for home addresses or any other Section 75 information.

The final EQIA report was considered by the Parks and Leisure Committee on 9th February 2012. The Committee was asked to:

- note the findings of the EQIA
- agree the proposed additional actions relating to the provision of junior facilities included in the final Playing Pitches Strategy and Action Plans.

The Committee gave particular attention to the proposed mitigating actions and some Members felt that they were not sufficient to deal with certain differential impacts identified. However, after further discussion, the Committee accepted the findings of the EQIA and this decision was ratified by Council on 1st March 2012.

The next stage in the process was the selection of specific locations within the relevant parks and potential sites for the pitches were brought to the Parks and Leisure Committee in April 2012 for their agreement. As part of the site selection process discussions took place with potentially affected residents and users and this was facilitated through discussions with elected members for the area and at a public meeting on (date to be confirmed). In Falls Park, as with all park locations, consideration was given to the accessibility of several sites and potential engineering and planning issues were identified before a final decision was taken on the specific site of the new pitch.

Planning Service undertook its routine consultation with directly affected residents. During this period in December 2013 an information meeting was held to provide further information on the development to local residents. The final application included a changing pavilion and 3rd generation pitch with associated perimeter fencing, floodlighting and additional car parking facilities. This was presented to Town Planning Committee in April 2014 where it was agreed that it would be "deferred to enable an officer meeting to be held."

Following requests from local residents for further consultation the Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure met with local residents in August 2014 and a deputation was received at Parks and Leisure Committee in September 2014. A public meeting was held in September 2014 to outline proposals and a report is due back to Parks and Leisure in October 2014.

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Summary to date:

January – March 2011	Phase 1 Consultation
March – June 2011	City Matters article
July – October 2011	Phase 2 proposed – included proposed sites <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4 public meetings• Online questionnaire
Sept 2011	Consulted with NI Youth Forum
November 2011	Consulted with Section 75 Forum
January – April 2012	Agreement on specific locations
October 2013	Public Meeting
November 2013	Planning Application submitted
December 2013	Public information meeting at Falls Park
August 2014	Assistant Director met with representatives of local residents
September 2014	Deputation of local residents received at P&L Committee
September 2014	Public meeting held in Falls Park