



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Development of Land at Slievegallion Drive
Date:	11 December 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 Committee is reminded that at its meeting in June 2013 it received a report outlining a proposal from De La Salle College in West Belfast to construct an artificial turf pitch and smaller pitch and associated changing pavilion on Council land at Slievegallion Drive. The Committee agreed to officers progressing discussions with De La Salle School with a view to exploring the appropriate arrangement (including leasing options) for the development of the informal space. Discussions were to include:

- Details of the school's business model in terms of costs and income producing capacity
- Public Access arrangements
- Partnership or leasing arrangements to ensure wider community use
- Sources of funding for the development of the site.

In March 2014 a further report was submitted which highlighted concerns by some residents regarding the proposal; these concerns focused around lack of consultation by the school and the loss of open space. At the meeting it was noted that the Member of Parliament for West Belfast had indicated that he would facilitate a community consultation with a view to resolving the issues. The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the report to enable the member of Parliament to conclude the consultation.

In the interim, Council officers have continued to meet with representatives from the College in relation to the pitch proposal. While there are number of issues that require further discussion it is necessary to establish a position at this time to enable progress to be made within the timescales for the project.

2.	Key Issues
<p>Members are asked to note the following key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The College has approximately 1,100 pupils aged 11-18 years and has inadequate space to provide for sporting activities and opportunities; • Whilst the Council is sympathetic to this situation it is not sufficient in itself to warrant the transfer of the land and it is primarily a matter for the Department and the Board to address; • However, this location has been subject to quite serious anti social behaviour over the years; • The Council has no plans to refurbish the site and bring it into productive use; this would require significant capital investment on the part of the council; • By investing in the asset and bringing positive interventions and programming to the site there is the possibility that the site can be reclaimed and the level of anti social behaviour reduced; <p>The College is currently working to bring to a conclusion to following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The business case and supporting Sports Development Plan, to include wider community use; • Securing the necessary funding to deliver the scheme • Securing planning consent and other statutory approvals; and • Agreement around lease arrangements. <p>Officials from the Department; the Council; and the College have agreed a provisional boundary, see Appendix A, however this may change subject to ongoing discussions. The redline designates the area required by the College; the area outside of this will remain under Council ownership.</p> <p>There are a number of technical issues to be resolved in relation to the management and maintenance of shared areas; car parking; entrance routes etc. However, the main issue to be resolved relates to the area of land that is outside of the pitch proposal. It has been proposed that this area be landscaped with a view to enabling its use by residents. A preliminary scheme has been prepared as part of the College's proposal at an estimated cost of £110,000; however, this cost is subject to review and further scrutiny. The Department has advised that as this outside of the pitch proposal it is not able to fund the works. The Department has, through it draft Heads of Agreement proposal, asked that the Council undertake this work. It is suggested that a portion of the fee for the land be used to fund this work.</p> <p>Should members be minded to agree to the landscaping of the area outside the pitch proposal, it is proposed that the Council's Landscape Planning and Development Unit undertake the design element of the work with a view to ensure that the scheme reflects similar Council developments and to take into account cost considerations.</p> <p>The Council has been advised by the College that a consultation exercise has been carried out in the immediate vicinity of the open space. The survey indicates that there is significant support for the development of the pitch and there is some opposition to it. We have been advised by the College</p>	

	<p>representatives that they had hosted a public meeting on 23 October 2013 and propose to hold further meetings on 15/16 December 2014 to enable the public to view the revised proposal prior to submission of a planning application. We have also been advised that the Member of Parliament for West Belfast has also met with both those who support the proposal and those who are opposed to it. However, we believe that no agreement was reached and that there remain those opposed to the development.</p> <p>A planning application is yet to be submitted and at that time the issue around the loss of open space can be raised in representation to the Planning Service together with other issues of concern which residents may have.</p>
--	--

3.	Resource Implications
	<p><u>Financial Implications</u></p> <p>This report has no financial implications at this time, however, there may be capital implications at a future date.</p> <p><u>Resource Implications</u></p> <p>There are no additional human resource implications at this time; the work on the project will be carried out within existing resources.</p>

4.	Equality Implications
	There are no equality implications

5.	Recommendations
	<p>It is recommended that the Committee agrees that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Officers continue to meet with the College representatives to progress the matter; 2. Agree in principle to the leasing of the land subject to obtaining the necessary statutory approvals; securing the funding and reaching agreement with Council Officers regarding terms and conditions including a community use clause; 3. Agree to make recommendation to Strategic Policy and Resources that the Council fund the refurbishment of the land outside of the pitch proposal using the land fee; and that the Landscape Planning and Development Unit be tasked to undertake the design element of this work.

6.	Decision Tracking
	Assistant Director Parks and Leisure

7.	Key to Abbreviations

8.	Documents Attached
	Appendix A Provisional Boundary Map Appendix B Committee Report June 2013 Appendix C Committee Report March 2014