



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Former Civic Amenity Sites at Seapark Drive and Primrose Street
<b>Date:</b>	Thursday 24 <sup>th</sup> January 2008
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Gerry Millar, Director of Improvement Ext: 6217
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### Relevant Background Information

Two former Civic Amenity Sites at Seapark Drive and Primrose Street were declared surplus to the requirements of the Health and Environmental Services Committee on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2005. The two sites were subsequently moved to the corporate land bank, to be held for the purposes of the improvement, development or future development of the district, pending further investigation of alternative uses with a view to protecting and optimising the value of the assets.

The Primrose Street site, which extends to approximately 0.087 acres, is located off Crumlin Road at the end of a block of terraced properties (location map enclosed at **Appendix A**) and comprises a small enclosed yard area with an adjoining two-storey end terrace property containing stores, locker rooms and canteen. These premises also adjoin a small area of vacant and derelict land (approx 0.032 acres) which is owned by a local pigeon club. The pigeon club have indicated that if the Council make a decision to dispose of their premises on the open market, then they would also dispose of their land simultaneously.

The Seapark Drive site, which extends to approximately 0.06 acres, is located in a residential area close to Shore Road and adjoining Northwood Linear Park (location map enclosed at **Appendix B**). It comprises a small enclosed yard area with adjoining stores and offices.

The Estates Management Unit have previously circulated details of the two sites to the various departments within the Council to ascertain if they had any interest in the properties for use in connection with a Council function, but no interest was identified. In addition, the Estates Management Unit have also previously written to the Councillors in the Oldpark and Castle electoral areas (where the sites are located) inviting any comments or views on the future use of the sites.

**Key Issues**

-The properties have been declared surplus to the operational requirements of the Health and Environmental Services Committee, and as no alternative Council use has been identified, it is being recommended that the properties are declared surplus to the requirements of the Council.

-It is also being recommended that the value of the assets are optimised by disposing of the properties on the open market, free of restrictions as to their future use. In this way the market will decide their optimum use and hence the highest value.

- Due to the small size of the sites and their location in residential areas it is likely that the future use could be residential, which may satisfy a housing need in the area. Due to the small size of the two sites any housing would however be limited. Alternatively, given the nature of the previous uses, the premises may be suitable for some form of business or commercial use (subject to planning approval), which would produce an economic and social benefit for the locality. It would be up to the prospective purchaser to apply for planning permission.

-Disposal will result in a capital receipt for the council, which can be directed towards the City Investment Strategy.

-The premises are susceptible to vandalism as they lie vacant, and both have had a number of break-ins. Redevelopment of the sites will provide a greater sense of security in the surrounding area and improve visual amenity. In addition, if the area of derelict land (owned by the local pigeon club) adjacent to the Primrose Street site is also marketed and developed simultaneously it will further improve the visual amenity of that area. It is envisaged that the Council's land and the land owned by the pigeon club would be marketed jointly and the disposal costs and proceeds apportioned accordingly.

**Resource Implications**Financial

Disposal of the sites will result in a capital receipt for the Council, as well as some nominal savings in maintenance costs associated with security of the premises. The capital receipt can be directed to the City Investment Strategy.

Asset and Other Implications

As no Council use has been identified for the properties and on the basis that a decision is made to declare them surplus to the requirements of the Council, their disposal on the open market and the realisation of a capital receipt represents a better use of resources and accords with effective management of the Council's assets.

**Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Committee grants approval to:

- (i) declare the former Civic Amenity Sites at Primrose Street and Seapark Drive surplus to Council requirements, and
- (ii) place the premises for sale on the open market (free of restrictions as to future use), subject to a further report being taken to Committee following marketing, for approval to the terms of any disposal.

**Documents Attached**

Appendix A: Site Map: Primrose Street  
Appendix B: Site Map: Seapark Drive