

### Lands Acquisition at Blythefield Open Space

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### “Relevant Background Information

The Committee is reminded that on 9 May 2006 the former Community and Recreation (Parks and Cemeteries Services) Sub-Committee adopted the recommendation to take back approximately 0.32 acres of lands from the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB) by way of part surrender of a lease at nil cost to Council. The purpose of the acquisition was to facilitate the development of a multi use games area (MUGA) and changing accommodation on adjoining Council lands. The land being surrendered to the Council would provide access to the changing accommodation and necessary car parking space for users. The land being surrendered would also provide a site for potential construction of a community facility by the Sandy Row Community Trust.

The Committee is asked to note that this project, should it proceed, will be funded externally and that it will be self sustaining with no financial contribution from the Council in terms of either capital or revenue. The Committee is further asked to note that any future request regarding a community facility will be considered through the Development Committee.

The BELB has agreed to surrender the lands to provide vehicular access. However BELB is bound by legislation as is Council to obtain best price and best terms for all disposals. Due to this the Estates Management Unit has agreed a figure of £16,000 for the land.

If the acquisition proceeds it is proposed to lease a portion of the lands to the Sandy Row Community Trust. A further report will be brought to Committee on the detail of this proposal at a later date. However the primary purpose for acquisition of this land is to provide access and car parking for the changing accommodation and multi use games area. BRO has agreed to fund the development of the changing accommodation, MUGA, access and car parking.

Members are asked to note that should the Council not acquire the land from BELB the scheme could possibly continue, but with a reduced pitch size to accommodate parking and access on-site. In addition, it would result in a delay in the delivery of the scheme.

#### Key Issues

The Committee is asked to note that:

- The acquisition of 0.32 acres of land will incur a cost of £16,000;
- The lands proposed for acquisition are required to support the development of the multi use games area and changing accommodation on adjoining Council land;
- Failure to acquire the land will result in a reduction in the size of the proposed pitch to accommodate the necessary car parking and access within the Council's existing site;
- A portion of the 0.32 acre proposed for acquisition could be leased to Sandy Row Community Trust to allow construction of a community facility for the benefit of the local community subject to a suitable rent and lease terms being agreed and approved by Committee.

#### Resource Implications

##### Financial

The acquisition of the subject lands will cost £16,000. As land owner Council would have to fund future maintenance costs of the development. However responsibility for part of the land could be passed to Sandy Row Community Trust under the terms of a lease. The level of rent under the proposed lease would likely be in the region of £850 per annum.

**Human Resources**

No additional human resources required.

**Asset and Other Implications**

Recovery of 0.32 acres from BELB and its development at nil cost to the Council for purposes which fall within the Councils statutory functions would be advantageous to both the Council and the local community.

**Recommendations**

Committee is recommended to approve the acquisition of the 0.32 acres of land from BELB subject to the conditions set out in this report and suitable legal agreement being entered into."

The Committee adopted the recommendation, subject to notification, in accordance with Standing Order 60, to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.