



**Belfast City Council**

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	School of Music Premises adjacent Reverend Bradford Memorial Park
<b>Date:</b>	19 August 2011
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Gerry Millar, Director of Property and Projects, Ext. 6217.
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Cathy Reynolds, Estates Manager, Ext. 3493.

<b>1</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
1.1	BELB have recently declared three properties at Belfast School of Music surplus to their requirements. Two of these properties are located on Donegall Pass and the third property, known as the Porter's Annex Building, is located on Apsley Street (off Donegall Street) This Porter's Annex building directly adjoins Council land at Reverend Robert Bradford Memorial Park. Donegall Pass Community Centre (Council owned) also adjoins the park.
1.2	Prior to disposal to the private sector, expressions of interest were sought by Land & Property Services from public sector bodies who may be interested in acquiring the premises. An indicative value of £160,000 has been placed on the Porter's Annex building by LPS.
1.3	The Reverend Robert Bradford Memorial Park site is relatively small in size with limited scope for development of any facilities. A multi use games area type facility had previously been proposed for inclusion in the Capital Programme but this did not advance. This is one of the few 'green' spaces in this area.

<b>2</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A former School of Music property at Apsley Street (off Donegall Pass) has been declared surplus by BELB. It adjoins the Council's land at Reverend Robert Bradford Memorial Park.</li><li>• Due to its small size the park has limited opportunity to potentially develop any kick about area or a multi use games area type facility (should funding be available)</li><li>• There is currently no proposal in the Capital Programme to develop the park facility and no identified funding at the current time to develop. . However, if the property was purchased now it could be held in the Corporate Landbank pending funding becoming available at some later stage to further develop the park facility, which would include demolition</li></ul>

	<p>of the subject property. In the interim a temporary use of the building could be sought either for a suitably identified Council requirement or a short term letting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land and Property Services require confirmation from the Council by 22 August that they wish to proceed. This confirmation will not bind the Council as such but is to confirm to LPS that the Council (in accordance with public sector transfer rules) have a requirement to acquire the property, the public interest for acquisition and funding is available to purchase etc. Any acquisition would be subject to the usual due diligence in terms of title, condition, site contamination and valuation issues.</li> <li>• Further initial feasibility could be undertaken by Council officers around future potential options for development and viability.</li> </ul>
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<b>3</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
3.1	<p><b>Financial</b></p> <p>An initial valuation of £160,000 has been placed on the property by LPS. If a decision is made to progress with the purchase Council officers will undertake appropriate checks in terms of title, condition or other matters that may impact on the value, as well as initial feasibility work as to potential scope for redevelopment as part of the adjoining park.</p> <p>The Director of Finance &amp; Resources has indicated that funding for acquisition could be made available this year. Council officers could explore the potential for external funding for future development and report back to Committee in due course.</p> <p><b>Human Resources</b></p> <p>Staff resource required to progress, primarily from Property &amp; Projects, Legal Services &amp; Parks &amp; Leisure.</p> <p><b>Asset</b></p> <p>Acquisition of this property will provide an improved site configuration for the Council's adjoining land at Reverend Robert Bradford Memorial Park. This could facilitate development of an improved facility at the park in the future should funding become available. This would be subject to some initial feasibility work around the potential for future redevelopment as part of the park (subject to future funding).</p>

<b>4</b>	<b>Equality and Good Relations Considerations</b>
4.1	None at this time.

<b>5</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
5.1	Members are recommended to approve, in principle, the acquisition of the former School of Music, Porters Annex Building at Apsley Street (adjoining the Council's land at Reverend Robert Bradford Memorial Park), subject to an initial feasibility

	study being undertaken by Council officers and to agreement on detailed terms and conditions. A further report will be brought back to Committee on the terms.
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<b>6</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
Director of Property & Projects to progress within 3 months of committee decision.	

<b>7</b>	<b>Key to Abbreviations</b>
None	

<b>8</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
Appendix 1: Location map	