



Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	Investment Programme: Stadia Upgrades – Windsor and Casement Parks
Date:	22 June 2012
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1.0	Background and relevant information
1.1	Members will be aware that last year the NI Executive committed significant investment towards local sports facilities including - £61.4m to the IFA (of which £25.2m will go towards the redevelopment of Windsor Park), £61.4m to the GAA for the redevelopment of Casement Park and £15million to the IRFU towards the upgrade of Ravenhill. The respective sporting governing bodies are also expected to provide additional substantial funding of their own towards facilities upgrades. The governing bodies are now in the process of developing full business cases for their respective projects.
1.2	The Council owns a number of leisure assets in the immediate vicinity and surrounding areas of both Windsor Park and Casement Park. These include - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Windsor Park</i> – Olympia Leisure Centre/Community Centre, Boucher Road Playing Fields, head landlord for majority of Boucher Road Estate - <i>Casement Park</i> – Andersonstown Leisure Centre, North Link Playing Fields
1.3	Council related projects aligned to the stadia upgrades are highlighted as emerging projects in the Council's Investment Programme 2012-2015. In addition, a comprehensive review of the Council's leisure estate is also a key project under the Investment Programme.
1.4	The Council therefore regarded it as important that these stadia developments and investments were not viewed in isolation but rather that the full regeneration impacts, added value of and synergies between the developments was examined. This will have the potential to help build critical mass, lever further infrastructure investment, engender greater public interest and potentially generate greater economic, social and physical regeneration outcomes for the city.
1.5	It was therefore agreed last year that the Council would commission consultants to - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - examine the potential added value and regeneration impact of the proposed stadia upgrades; and - identify practical opportunities where it might add value to the developments, and to explore how its future investments, resources and assets might be configured to align with the construction of the new stadia and secure optimum social outcomes and community benefits. <p>The scope of this work was limited to the investment in Casement Park and Windsor Park given the proximity of the Council's leisure assets to these stadia. Following a competitive tendering process Deloitte were appointed to progress this work.</p>

1.6	It should be noted that this work is being undertaken in parallel to the work which is being progressed by the sport's governing bodies (IFA and GAA) on the development of their business case proposals and the work on the development and design of the stadia themselves. Sport NI, as part of the of the consultation for the Deloitte report, highlighted that the funding for the redevelopments of the stadia is committed under this CSR round and there is a very finite 'window of opportunity' in which the Council can input into the design process – in terms of, for example, the integration into the surrounding area and provision of services etc. DCAL highlighted their support for the wider regeneration of the stadia areas but it was made clear that the stadia projects have fixed budgets and fixed timescales under which the money has to be spent.
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2.0	Key issues
2.1	Deloitte have now produced their report which considers - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the strategic context of the stadia developments; - future potential in terms of the surrounding areas; - an economic assessment of the recommended way forward for each stadium site in conjunction with Council assets; - the potential social impact and benefits which the redevelopment of the stadia could have on the local areas; and - the potential for partnership working.
2.2	A Summary of the report in terms of the potential positive outcomes of the stadia and wider regeneration, together with main recommendations is attached at Appendix 1.
	Strategic Context
2.3	In their report, Deloitte have highlighted that as at the 2001 Census both areas were within the top 30% of most deprived areas of N.Ireland and have low levels of economic activity. The major investment in the redevelopment of the major sports stadia in Belfast should therefore provide a much needed boost to the local construction industry and create new jobs, training and employment opportunities. The projects link directly to the Programme for Government 2011-2015 and will contribute to national strategies relating to sport and physical recreation as well as the Council's own priorities on playing pitches and enhancement of open spaces. The wider regeneration benefits of the projects will impact positively on the health and well being of surrounding communities and provide economic regeneration through new employment, training and skills development opportunities.
	Future Potential
2.4	The proposed stadia upgrades provide a one-off opportunity to consider how the surrounding council assets could be best utilised to facilitate a more comprehensive regeneration of both sites. The report highlights that leisure services are a vital aspect of both the Windsor and Casement Park areas. User numbers at both Olympia and Andersonstown Leisure Centres have been increasing with swimming a key feature at both sites. The 3G pitch is very well used at Olympia. However they feel that there is a lot of poorly utilised space within both leisure centres and their exteriors are not well configured to maximise the potential of both sites.
	The Way Forward
	Windsor Park
2.5	The Deloitte report highlights that Windsor Park site offers significant potential and it was felt that there is a specific need to improve the access and welcome to the stadium itself from Boucher Road which requires the use of land at Linfield's Midgley Park and the Council's Olympia Leisure Centre. At present, the area is poorly utilised from both an operational and financial perspective. It was also felt that Olympia presents a poor frontage to the site and in combination with Midgley Park and the children's play area, serves as a physical and psychological barrier to those approaching Windsor Park from the west. Exploring a comprehensively refreshed approach to Windsor Park offers a number of potential benefits. Access to the site could be improved, helping to create a shared and inclusive environment. Sporting uses could be consolidated deeper into the site, releasing the frontage for commercial development, taking advantage of the strong retail and showroom market along Boucher Road. The current downturn in the property

	market may however adversely impact on demand. Planning will also be key
2.6	The report notes that the both the pitches at Olympia and Boucher Road playing fields are well utilised, particularly at weekends. With regards to the Boucher Road playing fields however, a significant element of the site is currently laid out with a cinder service and changing facilities are poor. The site also offers no synthetic turf surfaces. This also opens up the potential of looking at the future use of this site.
	<i>Recommendations</i>
2.7	<p>Given the close proximity of Council assets to Windsor Stadium, Deloitte consider that the Windsor Park site offers significant development potential with a suggested option for the wider Windsor Park to create a Sports Village incorporating Windsor Park, Midgley Park, Olympia LC and Boucher Road Playing Fields. The key features of this could <u>potentially</u> include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Windsor Park development as planned by the IFA - Replacement/realignment of Midgley Park pitch to facilitate longer term access from Windsor Park to Boucher Road - Replacement Olympia LC – with reconfigured foot print and facilities - Provision of a mini-stand back to back with West Stand of Windsor Park - Development of commercial, floodlit 5 a side pitches - Removal and relocation of 3G pitch to Boucher Playing Fields - NEAP quality play facilities targeting younger people - Frontage on Boucher Road freed up to be developed for commercial/hospitality use
2.8	<p>Deloitte highlight that a comprehensive approach would offer a number of potential benefits. However in order to realise such a vision a number of issues would require further detailed consideration by the Council in terms of–</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The structure of any development between the Council and Linfield - Funding for a replacement leisure centre - Funding for spectator facilities associated with a replacement pitch at Midgley - Capacity of the site to include a commercial 5 a side (which would help generate revenue) - Quantum of commercial development - Would the scheme be promoted by the Council or a third party development partner - Longer term management options for the centre/site
	Immediate issues – Windsor Park
2.9	The current access to Windsor Park is either through side streets in the Village area or via the caged walkway at the side of Olympia. An important requirement for the new stadium development is improved access from the Boucher Road in the construction phase and IFA have approached the Council for approval in principle to have an access for construction traffic to the side of Olympia Leisure Centre onto Boucher Road. The construction access will not be required until later next year but IFA wish to include it as part of their planning application process in terms of a construction access. A report is being brought to the Parks & Leisure Committee on 14 June seeking approval in principle to the construction access. The <u>approximate</u> location of the proposed access is shown on the map at Appendix 2 although further detailed proposals will be brought back to Committee for approval.
2.10	In the longer term a permanent access to the stadium onto Boucher Road may present opportunities to properly enhance the access and aesthetics of the approach to the stadium, provide additional economic and regenerative benefits, and it may also improve the perceptions of the stadium, making it more neutral. In this scenario a comprehensive approach would be required which took in Midgley Park, the Olympia Leisure Centre site, and Windsor Park. Initial discussions have been held with Linfield re this and were positive however this will need to be formalised. Current IFA proposals and the preparation of their Business Case does not however provide for this permanent access

	and the future funding and deliverability of such an access are unknown.
	Casement Park
2.11	The Deloitte report highlights the close proximity of Andersonstown Leisure Centre and the North Link playing fields to Casement Park and although the opportunity to collaborate leisure services with the stadium is reduced given the physical separation of the sites, there is a suggested option for the wider Casement Park development as a GAA hub.
2.12	The report also highlights that the rear of Andersonstown Leisure Centre is currently unused and suggests that this could potentially be redeveloped as an outdoor park for urban sports (for example skate boarding / BMX – similar to the Bridge Urban Sports Park). It further suggests that consideration be given to the North Link Playing Fields being potentially redeveloped with new 3G pitch and changing rooms together with enhanced children’s play facilities.
2.13	There are various other recommendations in the report around wider opportunities to extend the time people spend in the Andersonstown area on match days. It highlights the fact that if Casement’s profile is raised as a big match venue there is greater potential for spectators to extend their stay in Belfast overnight which will further help the area develop as a tourism location with links to the Gaeltacht Quarter, Culturlann, West Belfast Festival and Belfast Hills. Parking was also highlighted as a major concern.
	Economic Assessment
2.14	The report highlights that even if the Council does nothing to influence the stadium developments at both Windsor Park and Casement Park or does not instigate wider regeneration, the projects will still deliver a definite economic impact to the local areas, through for example short-term temporary employment or occasional spin off match-day expenditure. However, the economic impact of the stadium projects on surrounding neighbourhoods is likely to be minimal without the Council utilising its civic leadership role to prioritise wider investment and to work with local communities to determine positive outcomes that will have long-term, sustainable effect.
2.15	It is estimated that over 950 temporary jobs (person years) will be supported through the construction of the stadiums themselves and this can increase where there is additional capital build elements of regeneration as is recommended at Olympia / Midgley Park. The inclusion of social clauses where possible across both developments will help enable local people to have access to these jobs and other skills and training initiatives.
2.16	The report provides some recommendations in relation to establishing community stadium working groups to influence issues such as parking and match-day experience.
	Social Impact Assessment
2.17	The report notes that the high levels of social and economic deprivation associated with the surrounding neighbourhoods of both stadium areas means that there is great potential for the capital investments, delivered alongside wider regeneration initiatives, to increase opportunities of economic activity. Unless local people have access to jobs and training, it will be very difficult for the stadium projects to have any impact on reducing poverty or making positive impacts on social issues such as health or welfare.
2.18	Economy is a critical element of ‘quality of life’ and it is recommended that Community Benefit Agreements be established for both the Windsor Park and Casement Park projects to ensure local people benefit from new jobs and opportunities for training, as well as access to facilities and opportunities for participation.
2.19	Any new facilities should be of modern and high quality specification and include the wider public realm which will help improve the sense of civic pride and place amongst the local community. Improving accessibility will make it easier for people to feel part of the developments and opportunities for community ownership of elements of the regeneration schemes should be explored.
	Community Consultation
2.20	Community consultation is a key element of the planning process for both stadia developments and Planning Service will require evidence of a robust community engagement process. Whilst some initial community consultation has commenced, both the IFA and the GAA are currently working up proposals for future community engagement. Council officers have requested a meeting with the GAA and IFA in the near future to assist in taking forward the community engagement process and in engaging with Members. This issue of community engagement and consultation is something that

	the Area Working Groups may wish to consider and officers can bring forward more details on this following an initial meeting with the GAA and IFA.
	Main Recommendations
2.21	The main recommendations in the Deloitte report are included at Appendix 1. A report is being taken to the Parks & Leisure Committee on 14 June seeking approval in principle to a temporary construction access; progressing discussions with the IFA, Linfield and the GAA regarding the potential projects which might add value to and improve the regeneration impacts of the stadia developments; undertaking a feasibility study in relation to the Windsor, Olympia and Midgley Park options in the context of the wider strategic review of leisure and to also consider the future development of leisure facilities on the Andersonstown site including the lands to the rear in the context of this review.
2.22	A cross-party delegation comprising Party Group Leaders and chair of SP&R and Development Committee is to meet with the DCAL Minister on 25 th June to discuss a range of issues facing the city and to explore potential areas in which the Council and the N.Ireland Executive and Government Departments can work together to achieve mutual aims. One of the key areas for discussion includes the stadia developments and exploring the recommendations emerging from the Deloitte report. A follow-up meeting with DCAL officials has also been scheduled for 4 July to discuss how the Council can work more closely with the Department to maximise the potential impact of the stadia investment, and any associated activity by the Council, for the citizens of Belfast.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	<p><u>Financial</u> Not known at this stage. Financial implications can be assessed following the completion of the recommendations below.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u> Staff resource, primarily from Parks & Leisure and Property & Projects in taking forward the proposed recommendations.</p> <p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u> Depending on the outcome of any of the recommendations the proposals should lead to enhanced regenerative, economic and social outcomes</p>

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	None at this stage.

5	Recommendations
5.1	<p>Members are asked to note that a report on the stadia upgrades was taken to the Parks & Leisure Committee on 14 June 2012 seeking approval to the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approval in principle for an access for construction traffic to the side of Olympia Leisure Centre onto Boucher Road. A further report will be brought back in due course for approval to the detailed terms of the construction access. 2. The Director of Property and Projects and the Director of Parks and Leisure progressing discussions with the IFA, Linfield and the GAA regarding the potential projects which might add value to and improve the regeneration impacts of the stadia developments with a report to be brought back to Committee in due course. 3. Undertake a feasibility study in relation to the Windsor, Olympia and Midgley Park options in the context of the wider strategic review of leisure. 4. In the context of the wider strategic review of leisure, to consider the future development of leisure facilities on the Andersonstown site including the lands to the rear. <p>The Director of Property & Projects will provide a verbal update on the outcome of the Parks & Leisure Committee.</p> <p>Members are also asked to note the forthcoming DCAL Ministerial and officer meetings</p>

	in relation to the stadia developments, together with the proposed officer meetings with the IFA and GAA. Further reports will be brought back to Committee regarding proposals arising from these meetings and the recommendations as contained in the Deloitte report.
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6	Documents Attached
6.1	Appendix 1: Olympia Leisure Centre /Windsor Stadium Map Appendix 2: Summary of Deloitte Report