



Subject:	Belfast City Airport Request – Rook Management at Victoria Park: Implications to Air Safety
Date:	2 nd December 2025
Reporting Officer:	David Sales, Strategic Director of Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Stephen Leonard, Neighbourhood Services Manager

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes ☐ No ☒
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	☐
After Council Decision	☐
Some time in the future	☐
Never	☐

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes ☒ No ☐

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of the report is for Members to consider a request from the George Best Belfast City Airport (GBBCA) to gain access to Victoria Park to continue habitat modifications to mitigate against the risk of bird strike.
1.2	This is part of an ongoing control programme in line with their Wildlife Hazard Assessment and the Civil Aviation Authority licensing requirements.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	Members are asked to agree to the request from George Best Belfast City Airport to grant them access under licence to Victoria Park, to facilitate rook management and that the Council move to a 3 year agreement for this process similar to what is currently in place for greylag goose management.
2.2	Members are advised that any decision to grant this permission is subject to legal agreement, developed by the Councils Legal Services Department and includes a requirement to ensure that any works are permissible and any required NIEA licence and

	consents are in place. Also should they agree to the request for a 3 year council agreement that this would be subject to annual review.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<u>Key Issues</u> Members should be aware that the control of birds in the flight path to the airport is a requirement of the airport's Civil Aviation Authority licence. In line with GBBCA's national aerodrome license requirements and associated guidance material presented in CAP772: Wildlife Hazard Management at Aerodromes, the airport is required to identify sources of risk and to reduce and maintain risk to an acceptable level in compliance with the Civil Aviation Authority licensing requirements.
3.2	<u>Rooks</u> Members will recall granting a similar request for rook management at the November 2024 meeting of this Committee. GBBCA report that rooks partly abandoned the previous year's nesting location at the South-West periphery of the site and focused on the trees opposite Shorts Bros. offices either side of the outer path. Ten nests were completed by May a reduction from 15 in 2024 and the second lowest number since the programme began in 2020. By removing previous years' nests and pruning out support branches, the number of nests have declined and the colony has become less aggregated.
3.3	The numbers of rooks counted during monthly counts remained low compared to previous years and initial colonisation of a small breeding colony in 2020. The airport has identified the need to continue the current management to continue dispersing, reducing and discouraging rooks from re-laying in areas used in the previous year.
3.4	The proposed works to include: 1. The removal of old rook nests to take place during the Works Period; 2. Any necessary structural pruning of preferred nesting trees and reducing shelter provided by ivy, 3. The removal of clumps of Birch Besom.
3.5	GBBCA will appoint a suitable contractor with previous experience to undertake the work. The area in question will be cordoned off and the old nests removed using a cherry picker. They suggest this will take a day to complete.
3.6	If members are content, officers will review the submitted risk assessment and insurance certificates in line with procedure and work with Legal Services to issue the requested licence. The licence will include relevant conditions to ensure that the airport confirm that all work is permissible and any required licences are in place to allow work to take place within the required timescales. The licence will also place an onus on the airport to ensure that health and safety measures are implemented, essential signage is assembled and one-way systems are established where necessary.
	<u>Financial & Resource Implications</u>
3.7	GBBCA will be responsible for any costs associated with the request.
	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u>
	None

4.0	Appendices
	None