

# Parks and Leisure Committee

Monday, 16th June, 2008

## MEETING OF PARKS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Stoker (Chairman);  
the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor D. Browne); and  
Councillors Adamson, Austin, M. Browne, Convery,  
Cush, Humphrey, C. Maskey, McCann, McCausland,  
Newton and Stalford.

In attendance: Mr. A. Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure; and  
Miss L. Hillick, Committee Administrator.

### Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from the High Sheriff (Councillor McKenzie) and Councillors Kyle, McClenaghan and O'Reilly.

### Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 15th May were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 2nd June.

### Councillor J. Kyle

The Committee was advised of the death of the mother of Councillor Kyle and agreed that a letter of condolence expressing its sympathies be forwarded to Councillor Kyle and his family circle.

### Improvement Agenda

The Committee agreed to note the contents of a report in relation to the progress which had been achieved in relation to the Parks and Leisure Department's Improvement Programme. In addition, the Committee noted that a Members' Focus Group in relation to the matter would be held on Tuesday, 17th June at 12.00 noon.

### Memorialisation Proposals at Roselawn Cemetery

(Ms. F. Holdsworth, Principal Parks and Cemeteries Services Manager, and Mr. J. MacFarlane, Bereavement Services Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### “Relevant Background Information

**Memorialisation is the term used to describe a scheme whereby families can purchase a type of commemoration after the death of a loved one, which contains wording. Some types of memorialisation**

can include the provision for the disposition of cremated remains within the memorial.

The Memorial Tree Scheme introduced in 1977, was very popular and successful, meeting the needs of families who wished to purchase a tree in Roselawn Cemetery in memory of their loved ones. Cremated remains could also be buried at the trees. Since 1977 over 11,000 memorial trees have been purchased.

Other memorial schemes on the site have been introduced. These are a commemoration in the Woodland Memorial Copse including an inscription on a stone, memorial seats and an entry in the Book of Remembrance. In 2002 a columbarium was introduced for the disposition of cremated remains for a 10 year lease. Thereafter the lease may be renewed or the remains scattered in the 'Garden of Remembrance'.

#### Key Issues

Currently there is no space for further memorial tree planting, although as new sections of the Cemetery are developed in the future, it is hoped to identify small areas for the establishment of memorial trees. Meanwhile, it is estimated that by October there will be no more memorial trees left for allocation at Roselawn

To ensure that we meet the needs of families for memorialisation on the site there is a need now to provide additional methods to those already listed.

An investigation into a range of alternatives has been undertaken by the Bereavement Services staff and it is proposed to provide the following range of options and let the public choose the memorial type most suited to their family wishes. The new options proposed are

- a memorial stone book
- a stone desk top memorial
- a basilica memorial.

The existing columbarium which was built in 2002 has had only 3 niches allocated which is known to be partly due to the short 10 year lease for purchasers. This issue also needs to be addressed and it is proposed that the lease is extended to 25 years.

#### Resource Implications

##### Financial

The costs of installation are as follows

- the memorial stone book will cost approximately £7,500
- the stone desk top memorial units cost £387 each, 20 units would be installed initially at a cost of £7,740

- the basilica memorial units cost £421 each, 20 units would also be installed initially at a cost of £8,420

The proposed charges for the new memorials are

- £250 per plaque for the memorial stone
- £750 for the stone desk top memorial units to include interment and engraving of a plaque
- £850 for the basilica memorial units to include interment and engraving of a plaque

The charges for the existing memorialisation are

- £53 for a Book of Remembrance two line entry
- £298 for the Woodland Memorial Copse memorial engraving
- £357 for a memorial tree and plaque
- £567 for a columbarium niche with plaque, this is for the current 10 years and if agreed for a 25 year lease
- £850 for a memorial seat

It is projected that income from charges will offset the initial investment.

#### Human Resources

The staff on site will install the memorial units.

#### Asset and Other Implications

A contract will be set up with a monumental sculptor for the engraving of the plaques and tablets on the stone book, stone desktop memorial and the basilica. Arrangements are already in place for the supply and engraving of the tree plaques, stands and columbarium tablets.

#### Recommendations

It is recommended that the Council agrees to the installation of the new proposed forms of memorialisation at Roselawn Cemetery and that the lease on all columbarium niches is extended to 25 years.”

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendation.

#### City of Belfast Crematorium - Mercury Abatement Options

(Mr. N. Brennan, Assistant Project Manager, Core Improvement Team, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“Relevant Background Information**

Forthcoming Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (GB)/Department of the Environment legislation requires that by 2012, UK based crematoria must remove mercury emissions from the flue gasses of at least 50% of all their cremations. To comply with the legislation £1,050,000 has been included in the Capital Programme for the installation of equipment to provide 50% abatement. This was originally included in the 2008/09 estimates. This will need to be revisited to ensure that implementation happens in good time to comply with the legislative requirement.

The Community and Recreation (Parks and Cemeteries Services) Sub-Committee at its meeting on 3 April 2007 granted authority to engage consultants to provide an independent appraisal of the extent of mercury abatement that should be provided at City of Belfast Crematorium.

The consultant’s report reviews a number of options, and further considers the need to expand the City of Belfast Crematorium facility, to allow for an additional chapel and ancillary rooms.

**Key Issues**

Through the assessment of monetary and non-monetary factors, the report recommends 100% mercury abatement should be implemented at the Crematorium. Legislatively this would directly meet the minimum (50%) mercury abatement by 2012, and also gives cognisance to the expected Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North East Atlantic Commission guidance for 100% abatement by 2020. The ‘spare’ 50% abatement capacity would therefore be traded through the Cremator Abatement of Mercury Omissions Organisation’s burden sharing scheme to offset the increased operating costs incurred through the installation and operation of mercury abatement equipment. This would result in a £91,000 per annum income to the Council based on current cremation rates.

Consultations with key stakeholders including DOE, EHS and Castlereagh Borough Council noted that many local stakeholders expected abatement to at least 50% in order to reduce the impact of cremation on the local environment. Also Castlereagh Borough Council who regulate the Crematorium facility indicated that they expected 50% abatement, with a preference for 100%, but acknowledged the cost implications to the Council.

The report also considers the need for an additional chapel and ancillary rooms. This would allow for the increasing demand to use the facility through the scheduled improvements, and provide capacity for larger numbers at cremation services. The provision of a second chapel would have a number of constraints, including integration with the current basement Cremator Hall, disruption to services due to construction noise, duct, etc, and the fact that there are potential plans for privately owned crematoria in locations such as Moira.

The report concludes that further practical consideration and research including cost considerations are required into the affordability and ongoing service implications of providing an additional chapel.

### Resource Implications

#### Financial

An amount of £1,050,000 has been included in the Capital Programme for the provision of 50% mercury abatement. An additional estimated amount of £500,000 will be required to allow for 100% mercury abatement of all cremations at City of Belfast Crematorium.

The cost of cremations will need to be increased to offset increased operating costs, however should the 100% abatement option be approved, the 'spare' 50% abatement capacity may be traded through the CAMEO burden sharing scheme to partially offset the increased operating costs.

#### Human Resources

In relation to mercury abatement, dependant on the chosen system there may be a slight increase in cremation time.

#### Asset and Other Implications

In relation to mercury abatement, providing at least 50% abatement will ensure that the facility is compliant with the legislation's 2012 deadline and failure to comply with the 50% abatement requirements is likely to result in the withdrawal of the operating licence. Providing 100% abatement will ensure compliance with any future enhanced legislative requirements.

In relation to providing an additional chapel, this will be assessed as part of the proposed business case exercise.

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Committee:

- i) **Agree that 100% mercury abatement at the Crematorium is the best environmental and cost effective option;**
- ii) **approve that the increase in the Capital Programme amount be referred to SP&R Committee to allow for 100% mercury abatement at City of Belfast Crematorium; and**
- iii) **grant authority for a full business analysis be carried out to investigate the requirement for, and practicality of, providing an additional chapel at City of Belfast Crematorium.**

### **Abbreviations**

<b>CAMEO</b>	<b>Cremator Abatement of Mercury Emissions Organisation</b>
<b>DEFRA</b>	<b>Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (GB)</b>
<b>DOE</b>	<b>Department of Environment (NI)</b>
<b>EHS</b>	<b>Environment and Heritage Service (NI)</b>
<b>OSPAR</b>	<b>Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North East Atlantic (the 'OSPAR convention')</b>

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations contained within the report.

### **Clement Wilson Park - Pedestrian Footbridge**

The Director of Parks and Leisure informed the Committee that the narrow bridge located at the entrance to the Clement Wilson Park had been in use for approximately fifty years. He pointed out that, at the time of construction, it was anticipated that the life duration of the bridge would be ten years. Following a recent survey, officers had noted a deterioration in the structural integrity of the bridge, with the degree of vibration increasing when crossed by small groups of pedestrians. In addition, the bridge had been used as an access point for medium-sized vehicles, such as those used by staff maintaining the park. As a result of officers' concerns, an engineering report, using the Council's adopted framework for the commissioning of consultants, had been commissioned from RPA Consultant Engineers, which had identified that the bridge was in need of urgent remedial repair.

The Director informed the Committee that the bridge formed part of the Lagan Valley Regional Park towpath which connected Belfast to Lisburn and, during 2007, approximately 400,000 cyclists and pedestrians had used the park. The engineering survey and risk assessment had concluded that it should be closed to all vehicles and that access to pedestrians should be restricted pending remedial works. The survey had identified also two options for repair, including the replacement of the bridge at a

cost of approximately £125,000 or the repair of the bridge at a cost of approximately £65,000, with the replacement having been identified as the best option. Accordingly, he recommended that the Committee agree:

- (i) with immediate effect to the closure of the bridge to vehicles;
- (ii) to the erection of signage to caution members of the public and restrict the number of pedestrians using the bridge at any one time, subject to discussions with the Director of Legal Services; and
- (iii) to reinstate the bridge and that the associated works be submitted for the consideration of the Council's Project Management Unit for inclusion within the Capital Programme, subject to the Gateway process, detailed cost options in regard to repair or replacement and to the approval of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

### **A2 Sydenham Bypass Improvement Scheme**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **“Relevant Background Information**

The Committee will recall that at a Special Meeting on 29 April 2008 it received a presentation from representatives of the Roads Service outlining the background to and proposals for the widening of the A2 Sydenham Bypass.

The Roads Service has initiated a public consultation exercise. Responses must be submitted by 20th June 2008. However, Roads Service has advised that there will be further opportunities for affected land owners to comment. That said we believe it is important that Council makes a response.

#### **Key Issues**

The Committee is asked to note the following key points:

1. The proposals in respect of the A2 road widening will have an impact on Victoria Park. The widening will require approximately a 6m incursion onto the park. This will affect facilities in the park including the service yard, bowling pavilion, playground and other facilities and open space.
2. There will be loss of open space.
3. There will be increased traffic noise and potentially other pollutants in the park as greater volumes of faster moving vehicles use the widened road.
4. There will be additional disruption to the park during construction of new carriageways.

5. Consultation to date has been focused on the issues associated with this specific scheme and has failed to take account of wider concerns.
6. There are planning issues with the proposal in terms of impact on the local community.
7. The scheme must be viewed within the context of the Connswater Community Greenway and further proposal for a new flyover and junction at Connsbank which is being undertaken as part of the Titanic Quarter Development.
8. The Connsbank junction proposal, if it receives approval to proceed, will result in the further loss of open space at King George V Park.
9. Both schemes are being progressed independently and focus on car-based transport solutions.
10. There appears to be a lack of a co-ordinated approach on the wider transportation issues and their impact on East Belfast despite officers from the Council having met with the key players in an attempt to highlight this as an issue.

#### **Resource Implications**

##### **Financial**

The Committee is asked to note that there will be significant financial implications involved in the redesign and re-location of elements of the existing park; these costs will need to be reflected in negotiations for compensation in respect of the proposed loss of open space.

##### **Human Resources**

The ongoing discussions and negotiations with the Department will require significant Council Officer time. This will involve input from Parks, Core Improvement (Estates Management and Project Management); Development (in terms of the Planning issues); and Legal Services (in terms of the legalities). It is not possible to quantify this at this time.

##### **Asset and Other Implications**

The proposals will have a detrimental impact on the provision of open space and recreational facilities within Victoria Park and will make access to the park and the facilities within it much less attractive.

### Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee agree that a short response be issued to the Roads Services highlighting:

1. The Council's concern at the loss of open space incurred as a consequence of the proposed Road widening scheme and the need for all possible measures to be put in place to minimise the impact of any road scheme(s) on the ability of the park to function as a recreational facility for the health and well-being of the citizens of Belfast.
2. The Council's concern at the lack of consultation on the wider issues surrounding the proposal.
3. The need for proposals to fully reflect the needs of the local community.
4. The proposals to reflect the combined impact of the Road widening proposals and those of the Titanic Quarter Development.
5. To agree that the Council seek a co-ordinated approach from the Department for Regional Development to the transportation issues of which the Sydenham Bypass widening forms part.
6. To Report to the Strategic P&R and Development Committees seeking support for this co-ordinated approach."

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

### Belfast Sewer Scheme - Impact on Ormeau Park

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### "Relevant Background Information

The 'Belfast Sewers Stormwater Management Works Project', more commonly known as the Belfast Sewers Project (BSP), has now been underway since late 2006. The Project is aimed, among other things, at reducing the risk of flooding in inner and central Belfast due to storm water surges. The work is being carried out under NI Water's statutory powers which provide authority to carry out works on privately owned lands.

As part of the scheme NI Water have opted to lay extensive pipework across Council owned lands at the Gasworks and at Ormeau Park (including Ormeau Golf Club). The entire operation was to have been carried out by sinking a limited number of deep shafts on Council land with installation of the actual pipework being conducted underground using a variety of different technologies. The choice of machinery to be used for pipe installation was dependant upon pipe size and depth.

While the works at the Gasworks are proceeding as planned, NI Water's contractor (Morgan-est Farrans) has encountered problems within Ormeau Park and the Golf Course. Members may be aware of the situation as reported in the local media.

The pre-contract geological investigations failed to detect the presence of a substantial number of large boulders along the proposed route. In view of the presence of these boulders the proposed technology for pipe installation, at a depth of 10 metres, has been rendered ineffective. Consequently the contractor has conducted an appraisal of alternative technologies and methods for delivery of the Project at Ormeau Park and the Golf Course.

We received a definitive position from NI Water on 28th May regarding their preferred way forward. The options laid out in their appraisal were:

- Option 1. Deeper and larger bore tunnel.
- Option 2. Shallower tunnel, with tunnel size as originally planned.
- Option 3. Open Trench Excavation to allow pipe installation at shallower depth than originally planned (with pipe size as originally planned).
- Option 4. Part installation as per Option 2 and Part as per Option 3.
- Option 5. Larger bore tunnel at planned depth.

NI Water has identified a series of risks associated with each option. Of particular risk in relation to Options 1, 2, 4 and 5, is if machine failure should occur the recovery of the machine from the tunnel can only be achieved by sinking a suitable shaft from surface level at whatever location the machine failure occurs. These interventions are by their nature unpredictable in terms of frequency and location.

The contractor's (and NI Water's) preferred Option is the Open Trench technique (Option 3 above). This minimises risk of delay and increased costs but is potentially the most disruptive to Ormeau Park and the Golf Club. On the basis of this Option the contractor envisages commencement of site preparation in September 2008 with completion of pipe laying in April 2009. The contractor intends that reinstatement would be carried out on a rolling basis between February and the end of June 2009.

In terms of the remaining options, Option 5 appears to carry the least risk of unpredictable disruptions to the Park and Golf Course but is likely to cause greater delays and increased costs to NI Water. Our latest indication from NI Water is that option 5, would result in a delay of approximately 12 months with additional cost implications of up to £10m. Although the range is from £3 -10m. Additional information has been requested.

To date there has been no face to face meeting with NI water on this latest development. It is intended to hold the meeting shortly after the Committee meeting.

Officers have met with representatives from the Golf Club. Discussions have indicated that the Club members are opposed to such an approach. The Club believe that the main consideration of NI Water is cost and that a more effective and less intrusive approach could be undertaken.

#### Key Issues

The Committee is asked to note the following key points:

1. The Belfast Sewers Project is a major scheme aimed at reducing the risk of storm flooding in inner Belfast and the city centre. NI Water is installing new sewers using their statutory powers to carry out such works on private lands (this includes Council owned lands);
2. NI Water is unable to proceed with the planned method of sewer pipe installation at Ormeau Park (including at the Ozone/Tennis Centre) and at Ormeau Golf Club (leased by the Council on a thirty year lease to the Trustees of Ormeau Golf Club);
3. A series of alternative methods of sewer installation have been put forward by NI Water and their contractor. Their preferred option is to install new sewers by 'Open Trench' excavation (option 3);
4. The 'Open Trench' Option is the least likely to result in time and cost overruns for NI Water but will be much more disruptive to Council property and the Golf Course than the original proposal;
5. Additional information regarding the implications of each option;
6. Officers are seeking a further meeting with representatives from the Golf Club.

### Resource Implications

#### Financial

The work will have financial implications. NI Water's preferred construction method (i.e. 'Open Trench') will result in temporary loss of revenue receipts from pitch bookings at Ormeau (one soccer pitch, one rugby pitch and one all weather pitch). However additional costs, or lost revenue, incurred by the Council as a result from the sewer installation works can be included in any claim for compensation which the Council may make to NI Water. It will be necessary to establish the extent and nature of the disruption. The greatest impact will be in respect of the Golf Club's finances. Compensation in this matter will be between the Club and NI Water.

#### Human Resources

There are no additional Human Resource implications at this time.

#### Asset and Other Implications

NI Water's preferred option will be much more disruptive to Ormeau Park than the technique originally proposed.

### Recommendations

It is recommended that,

1. Note the contents of this report;
2. Agree that Officers meet with NI Water to highlight Council concerns and explore the options more fully and report back to the next meeting of the Committee.

### Key to Abbreviations

**BSP – Belfast Sewers Stormwater Management Project"**

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

#### Land at Whiterock Close

(Mr. K. Anderson, Core Improvement Team, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of a report in relation to the Council's lands located at Whiterock Close to enable further discussions to be held with community representatives and a legal opinion to be obtained from the Director of Legal Services.

**Belfast Zoological Gardens –  
Electrical Survey and Repairs**

The Committee agreed, in order to comply with wiring regulations and to satisfy the Council's insurers of risk minimisation, to grant authority to the Director of Parks and Leisure to seek and approve tenders in relation to repairs to the electrical wiring at the Belfast Zoological Gardens which have been identified by the Royal Sun Alliance Insurance Group. The approximate costs of the works would be approximately £50,000.

**Biodiversity Update and Review of  
Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1986**

The Committee agreed to receive at a future meeting a presentation from the Council's Biodiversity Officer regarding the progress achieved in relation to the Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2007.

**Andersonstown Leisure Centre - Feile an Phobail**

The Committee was informed that a request had been received from Feile an Phobail for the use of the Andersonstown Leisure Centre in connection with the West Belfast Festival during the period from 3rd till 10th August. The Committee was reminded that on previous occasions the Leisure Centre had been made available for the holding of various events associated with the Festival.

Accordingly, the Director recommended that the Committee approve the request from Feile an Phobail to hire facilities at the Andersonstown Leisure Centre during the period from 3rd till 10th August, including set-up and site clearance days as required, subject to the organisers complying with Council and statutory requirements.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

**North Belfast Summer Intervention Programme**

The Director reported that the North Belfast Interface Steering Group had been established by the North Belfast Community Action Group in order to exchange information and good practice in relation to interface work. The Group consisted of a number of community and statutory organisations, including the Council, and over the previous three years it had supported a broad range of community groups in the development of a Summer Intervention Programme aimed at diverting young people from anti-social behaviour during the Summer months.

The Director reminded the Committee that in previous years the Council had granted free access to community and leisure centres to the organisation during the period from 1st July till 30th September. However, access was subject to availability and the organisation being responsible for any additional staffing costs incurred by the Council. He pointed out that an evaluation process in respect of the Summer Intervention Programme 2007 had been positive and participating community groups had identified that free access to community and leisure services had enhanced their capacity to deliver the Programme. He recommended that, should a Summer Intervention Programme 2008 be established within the North Belfast area, the Committee grant the free use of community and leisure centres during the period from

July till September, 2008, subject to availability and the Programme meeting any additional staffing costs as a result of usage.

The Committee adopted the recommendation and agreed that requests from other bona fide interface groups in the City be granted similar use of facilities.

### **Safer Neighbourhood Anti-Social Behaviour Pilot**

(Ms. L. Hamill, Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee agreed to note the contents of a report in relation to the progress achieved in respect of the Safer Neighbourhood Anti-Social Behaviour Pilot Scheme.

### **Support for Support**

#### **Development Grants**

The Committee noted a Schedule of Support for Sport applications in relation to Development Grants which had been approved by the Director of Parks and Leisure in accordance with the authority delegated to him. A copy of the Schedule was available on the Modern.gov internet site.

#### **Hospitality Applications**

The Director of Parks and Leisure submitted a Schedule of Support for Sport applications in relation to hospitality which had been approved in accordance with the authority delegated to him.

### **Outdoor Urban Sports Facility - Skate Park**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **“Relevant Background Information**

**Members will be aware that discussions to construct a purpose built outdoor Urban Sports (Skate Park) in Belfast have been ongoing for some six or seven years with limited progress. Members may also recall that a report was brought to the previous Community & Recreation Committee at its meeting on 16 January 2007 which identified a potential way forward to progress this project and identified potential options to secure the necessary funding required.**

**At that time there was unanimous cross-party support for this project to progress as it was seen as a facility that would target a particular market of young people for which there is currently a lack of adequate provision across the City. In supporting this project it was also highlighted that this would be the first of its kind in Northern Ireland and therefore it could potentially bring great prestige to the City from not only Northern Ireland but across the UK and Europe in relation to urban sports provision and events.**

Members should be aware that the project has now been referred to as an Urban Sports Park rather than a Skate Park because within the design we have now included scope for the other sports of BMXing, in-line skating and parkour (free running) to be incorporated into the final design to maximise the utilisation of the facility.

The Committee agreed the recommendations contained in the previous report of 16 January 2007 which approved that the Council would meet a minimum shortfall of £80k and this has been included in the Capital Programme. Committee approval was also given to submit applications to both the Sports Council's Building Sport Programme and the Landfill Tax Credit Fund to secure the deficit funding.

### Key Issues

Since the last Committee report the following progress has now been made:

- We have been successful in our Landfill Tax Application and we have managed to secure £50k subject to compliance against their term and conditions.
- A 21 year lease has been secured at a peppercorn rent from Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company (NITHC the landowners) for the Nelson Street site to commence when the funding has been secured.
- Outline planning permission has been granted for the site for use as an Urban Sports Park.
- Belfast Urban Sports (BUS) has now been officially recognised as a legitimate organisation and they have also now obtained registered charity status.
- A comprehensive public consultation exercise has been completed in relation to the proposed Urban Sports Park plans with the potential users and their views were incorporated into the specification which was put out to tender.
- A full economic appraisal of the project has been completed by BDO Stoy Hayward.
- An extensive procurement exercise has been completed which has attracted interest from world class companies from as far away as North America and a preferred 'design & build contractor' has been identified subject to securing the required funding and getting committee approval.

### Funding options explored

An application was made to the Sports Council's Building Sport Programme and while the application was initially successful; subsequently due to Central Government's decision to redirect funding towards the 2012 Olympics the money was removed from the Building Sport budget and all applications therefore were put on hold.

As a result of this set-back we were forced to explore other potential sources of funding. Members will be aware that the Peace III Programme commenced a call for applications in February 2007 in relation to pipeline projects to be funded via the Programme's capital measure (Measure 2.1 – Creating Shared Public Spaces). The Skatepark was the only project to succeed in this process and since this time officers within the Parks and Leisure and Development Departments have been progressing this bid via a further two stages of application. A final bid will be presented to the Managing Authority, the Special European Union Programmes Body (SEUPB) for consideration on 17 June 2008. This application is seeking £370 000 out of a total project cost of £500,000 to enable capital developments, employment of a dedicated Sports Development Officer and Programmes costs to ensure the facility is used not only by all communities but by those within the Border Counties of Ireland. Members should note that the overall project cost as part of this application has been increased to £500k to comply fully with the Peace III criteria.

Subsequent to commencing this application we were invited to meet with the former Sport Minister Edwin Poots in April 2008 alongside the other Building Sport short listed applicants to put our case and to attempt to secure funding for the previously short-listed projects. The outcome of this meeting was that we were informed that additional funding has now been secured from the UK Treasury to support some of these short listed projects if completed by March 2009.

Since this time we have therefore 'hedged our bets' and actively pursued both potential funding streams and we have continued to work closely with both the SEUPB (Peace III) and Sports Council to progress this project. We are also now at a fairly advanced stage in relation to our Sports Council application and we have now received a formal stage two letter. The Sports Council have indicated that they will be prepared to fund the project up to a maximum of £250k but they are likely to qualify this by placing some specific criteria around match funding, provision of a two year fixed term Sports Development Post (for which no provision of revenue funding has been provided for at this stage) and the inclusion of a toilet block provision on the site which our Project Manager has ascertained would cost in the region of £15k-£20k. It should be highlighted

though that while we do see the benefit of including such facilities our benchmarking work has highlighted the potential for anti-social behaviour to arise around such facilities and we need to bear this in mind. This will be the subject of further discussion with Sport NI.

### Timescales

If the required funding is secured for this project then our aim would be to commence construction on-site in October/November 2008 with an expected completion date of February/March 2009.

### Resource Implications

#### Financial

It had been highlighted in the previous Committee report that the estimate for constructing the Urban Sports Park would be in the region of £250K. As a result of the recent tendering exercise it has been subsequently highlighted that the final 'design & build' figure will actually be in the region of £387K. If we are successful in securing the Peace III funding we will not require any additional funding other than the £80k previously agreed by Council and included in the Capital Programme.

If however we are not successful with our Peace III application and we pursue the Sports Council option there will be a shortfall in the region of approximately £75k. (This figure is based on the following assumptions, a total project cost of £410k including £20k for a toilet block provision, less the 50% match funding from Sports Council £205K, £50k from Landfill Tax Fund, £80k already included in BCC Capital Programme leaving a shortfall of approx £75K).

#### Human Resources

There will be a requirement to make provision for a 2 Year Fixed Term Urban Sports Development Officer to support this project. If we are successful in securing the Peace III funding provision has been made for this element. If however we do not receive the Peace III funding and we need to go down the Sports Council funding route no provision has been made for this and we would therefore have to make provision for this in our revenue estimates. It is likely that this post would attract a notional grade of SO 2 which with on-costs would equate to approximately £32k per year for two years. It would be our intention to look at all alternative sources of funding for this post prior to the final 09/10 revenue estimates being considered and agreed.

**Asset and Other Implications**

We are currently in the advanced stages of agreeing the final 21 year lease subject to final sign off from our Legal Services Department and the Estates Management Unit have been fully involved in this.

**Recommendations**

- It is recommended that Committee agree to revise the proposal to the Capital Programme to include an additional £75k to progress the construction of the Urban Sports Park if Peace III funding is not secured and the 50% Sports Council Funding is secured. This would be subject to the Capital Programme's 'gates' process and approval by Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.
- Members are asked to approve in principle that provision can be made in the Department's revenue estimates for £32k per year over two years to accommodate the creation of an Urban Sports Development Officer post should the Council be unsuccessful in securing the Peace III funding."

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Chairman