



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources
Subject:	Suffolk Community Centre – Interactive Outdoor Play Area
Date:	18 September 2009
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Improvement, Ext: 6217
Contact Officer:	Catherine Taggart, Community Development Manager, Ext: 3525

Relevant Background Information

Suffolk Community Centre is a directly managed facility. It was officially opened on 27th February 1999 and is the hub of community activity in the Suffolk area. The Suffolk Community Centre Committee has actively contributed to successful partnership approaches to provide a broad based programme of activities at the Centre. The Centre Committee in seeking to develop and improve services have been exploring possibilities to develop a vacant site to the rear of the Community Centre. The site is within the perimeter of the Community Centre and is owned by Belfast City Council.

The Community Centre Committee have now been awarded funding under the ALPHA Programme from Groundwork NI. £48,897.50 will finance all capital costs associated with the development of an interactive outdoor play facility (appendix 1).

The facility will be accessed via the Community Centre and will therefore be subject to supervised use at all times.

Key Issues

There will be no capital cost implications to Council. All capital costs associated with the project will be met by funding from Groundwork NI. However on completion the project will be owned by Council and therefore it will be Council responsibility to manage and maintain the project.

The proposal has asset implications and therefore requires the approval of the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee.

BCC Parks and Amenities are the lead Co-ordinator for all Groundwork schemes in Belfast. Parks and Amenities have no objection to the proposal, however, technical advice has been sought from Parks and Amenities and as a result the plan was subject to some refinement.

The project will have a positive environmental impact enhancing the visual quality of the site.

Resource Implications

There are no capital cost implications. Council will be responsible for maintenance of the site which will be undertaken by BCC Parks and Amenities at a cost of £4,000 per annum. This will not include replacement of damaged equipment.

The Committee is asked to be mindful that the community centre is located adjacent to a large council owned playground. It is noted that the proposed scheme is not intended to replicate the existing playground and will indeed complement it. However, Members will be increasingly cognisant of the pressure on resources, within this context it is proposed, that whilst not wishing to discourage local communities seeking to improve service provision, all such schemes in the future be discussed by the Asset Management Group prior to a decision being taken by the Principal Committee. This will enable a more robust discussion around the strategic fit of the proposal; existing provision and the financial implications of the proposal.

Recommendations

It is recommended that permission be granted for the construction of an interactive play area at Suffolk Community Centre. Permission is subject to all statutory approvals being obtained and Council having an acceptable input eg practical completion arrangements, handover/defects list.

It is further recommended that Committee commend the proposal to the Asset Management Group and the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 – drawing of proposed interactive play area at Suffolk Community Centre