



Belfast City Council

Report to: Strategic Policy & Resources Committee

Subject: **Proposed Disposal – Beechmount Leisure Centre**

Date: 11 December 2009

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Relevant Background Information

The proposed Disposal of the main portion of Beechmount Leisure Centre site to the Trustees of Coláiste Feirste has been the subject of several previous reports to the Parks and Leisure Committee and its predecessor Committees. In October 2006 a disposal price of £3.685 million was reported to the Community and Recreation Sub-Committee as agreed with the (then) Valuation and Lands Agency who acted for the scheme funder (Department of Education – DENI). In the interim there have been a series of discussions with the school Trustees, DENI and their advisers in an effort to agree the detailed arrangements including those associated with potential future public use of the Coláiste Feirste facilities.

A Special meeting of the Parks and Leisure Committee on 27 January 2009 set out a series of criteria for the proposed land transfer. These included proposals in relation to future public use and disposal of the land by way of a Freehold sale, but subject to the necessary review of the previously agreed disposal price in line with DENI requirements.

Current position:

A report on the current position has been provided to the December meeting of the Parks and Leisure Committee and the Director of Property and Projects will provide Members with an update in relation to the outcome from that meeting.

A revised disposal price has been agreed with Land and Property Services acting for DENI. The agreed price of £2.325 million is subject to approval by Council and DENI and incorporation of detailed terms in a legal agreement to be drawn up by the Director of Legal Services. The price reflects a downturn in the

market since the previous submission in 2006.

The disposal will be way of an outright sale rather than lease as agreed by the Special Parks and Leisure Committee on 27 January 2009.

The Council is close to agreement on the draft terms of a Service Agreement with the Trustees of Coláiste Feirste. The Agreement would provide for public use of a range of new facilities to be developed on the site, including a sports hall and Gaelic Athletic pitch. The public use would be available outside school hours and during school holidays. The arrangement would be reviewable after the first year of operation and every third year thereafter to ensure it remains viable. If the provision of public use ceases to remain viable the Council would have the option to either commence financial support of the public use or withdraw from the arrangement.

The provision of replacement ~~weight lifting facilities and~~ handball courts ~~and alternative long term arrangements for the weight lifting club~~ remains ~~an~~ issues which ~~are~~ being considered by the Parks and Leisure Committee. While it does not impact directly on the land disposal the provision of replacement facilities may be a notional draw upon the capital receipt. The provision of replacement facilities remains subject to Capital Programme Prioritisation and the Council's 'Gates' processes.

Key Issues

- Disposal price agreed at £2.325 million.
- Service Agreement for continued public use is close to finalisation. The Council will enter into a legal arrangement which would allow for commencement of the Service Agreement following completion of development on the site.
- Parks and Leisure Committee have previously ~~authorised a change of use of Andersonstown Leisure Centre handball court to a Strength and Conditioning suite with equipment and specialist staff to be provided by Sport NI (15 January 2009 Committee) and have also agreed that the preferred location for~~proposed the provision of replacement handball courts from Beechmount ~~to be locate~~is ~~thed~~ at Andersonstown Leisure Centre ~~site~~. (12 March 2009 Committee). ~~A figure of £655000 has been included in the uncommitted section of the capital programme for this purpose. The cost of this relocation is provisionally estimated as being in excess of £650,000???~~ ~~?~~.—These schemes remain subject to the Capital Programme Prioritisation and the Council's 'Gates' processes.

Resource Implications

Financial

The disposal provides a capital receipt. Disposal also provides some revenue savings associated with site security and grounds maintenance (the Leisure Centre ~~and site facilities?????~~ closed at the end of December 2008).

Human Resources

Human resource issues associated with the Centre closure have previously been dealt with by Parks and Leisure Committee. No Council human resources are to be utilised to provide the future public use associated with the proposed Service Agreement.

Asset and Other Implications

The site has been deemed surplus to Parks and Leisure requirements but subject to the preservation as far as possible of public use of similar leisure facilities at this location and within the locality. The proposed disposal relates to approximately 9.567 acres of a total site area of approximately 10.82 acres. The remaining 1.253 acres is being retained with a view to potential disposal to Forbairt Feirste whose proposals remain at an early stage of development.

Recommendations

Committee is recommended to approve disposal of approximately 9.567 acres of the Beechmount Leisure Centre site (as outlined red on the attached map) to the Trustees of Coláiste Feirste for the sum of £2.325 million subject to appropriate terms to be included in a legal agreement to be prepared by the Director of Legal Services and agreement on the detailed terms of a Service Agreement also to be prepared by the Director of Legal Services.

Decision Tracking

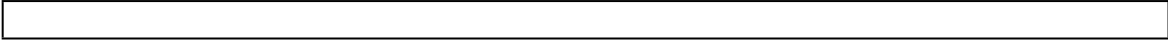
Director of Property and Projects to ensure the Council does not impede completion of disposal by 31 March 2009.

Key to Abbreviations

DENI – Department of Education, Northern Ireland
Sport NI – Sport Northern Ireland
LPS – Land and Property Services

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 – Map showing, outlined red, the 9.567 acres to be disposed of to Coláiste Feirste. The Council will retain a right of way over the portion of access road shaded blue in order to service the 1.253 acres, outlined blue, which will remain under the control of the Council's Parks and Leisure Committee for the time being.



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