



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Proposed Disposal of Lands at Belmont Park
Date:	24 September 2010
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Property and Projects, Ext. 6217.
Contact Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Estates Manager, Ext. 3493.

Relevant Background Information

At a Special Meeting of the former Community and Recreation, Parks and Cemeteries Services, Sub-Committee, on 27 November 2006, the Sub-Committee agreed in principle to the disposal of an area of open parkland, at Belmont Park, to Strathearn School, subject to further advice on the most appropriate vehicle for such transfer. The land is intended to be incorporated within the school campus and it's initial use will be for playing pitch provision. The land is required by the school as part of a £13M scheme to rebuild much of the school and re-organise provision of facilities within their site. The scheme is being funded by the Department of Education and is one of the schemes which the Department are to part fund during the current financial year.

Members may be aware from the proposed disposal of the former Beechmount Leisure Centre site that transactions for proposed school use have many stages to pass through within the Department, and these can extend over a considerable time period. Most recent discussions with the Department of Education and their valuer (Land and Property Services) have been based around agreement of the disposal price of the Council's land (and other terms) for Economic Appraisal purposes. After lengthy negotiations with Land and Property Services, a disposal price of £350,000 has been agreed in respect of the 2.66 acres of land outlined red on the attached map (Appendix 1). This figure is going forward into the Department's Economic Appraisal and may well form the basis of disposal to the school if the EA process is concluded and the disposal proceeds before the end of the current financial year.

Key Issues

As well as discussions on disposal price the Council's Legal Services Department have prepared a draft lease which includes:

- i) Disposal of the land as shown in Appendix 1.
- ii) Use of the land restricted to Educational Purposes.
- iii) Provision of a 60 metre long storm sewer wayleave across adjoining Council land at Belmont Park to serve the whole of the school site.
- iv) As the school site sits in a traditionally high land value locality, the lease will include a clawback arrangement which would benefit the Council in the event that the School make disposals of land from the site for commercial/residential development.
- v) The school remain open to discussion with the Council on some form of community use of the proposed playing pitch facilities. Any arrangements would sit outside the lease and would be by mutual agreement.

It is intended to further refine the detailed lease terms in preparation for potential disposal in early 2011.

Resource Implications

Financial

Disposal would provide a capital receipt of £350,000 to the Council and a financial safeguard should the school, at some future date, dispose of any land for commercial/residential development.

Human Resources

Further inputs by Legal Services Department and Estates Management Unit will be required as progress is made towards potential disposal of the land.

Asset and Other Implications

The disposal will result in loss of a portion of parkland. It's development as playing pitches with associated high boundary fencing will detract from the visual amenity of the area for park users. The development of additional playing pitch provision could potentially assist in provision of sporting/recreational community use, subject to suitable arrangements being discussed and agreed between the school and the Council's Parks and Leisure Department. The disposal price is considered to be the best that can currently be obtained.

Recommendations

Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report and to comment on the proposed disposal terms if appropriate.

Decision Tracking

Further reference to Committee regarding the disposal is reliant on the timing and outcome of the Department of Education's approvals process.

Key to Abbreviations

EA – Economic Appraisal

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 – Map showing land for disposal (outlined red), proposed route of sewer wayleave (blue line) and the extent of the Council's land ownership (shaded yellow).