



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	City of Belfast Golf Course – Proposed Land Exchange
Date:	18th March 2011
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Property and Projects, Ext. 6217.
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Relevant Background Information

At its meeting on 13 December 2007 the Parks and Leisure Committee approved an exchange of lands with Mr Harold Montgomery at City of Belfast Golf Course. An extract from the Committee Minute is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

Since that time there have been further discussions with Harold Montgomery's representatives to improve the sight-line provisions at the new entrance. This has culminated in agreement on improved sight-lines provisions of 6.0 metres x 215 metres. Mr Montgomery will carry out all the works associated with provision of the new vehicle access. This arrangement maximises the prospect of the Council being able to utilise this access point for future commercial/residential development in the medium to longer term.

The attached map (Appendix 2) shows updated land exchange proposals. Land shaded blue is to be disposed of to Mr Montgomery and land shaded red to be acquired from Mr Montgomery. This slightly modifies and refines the proposals previously presented to Parks and Leisure Committee although the overall thrust of the arrangements remains unchanged.

Key Issues

The key elements approved by Parks and Leisure Committee in 2007 remain unchanged although the proposals have been refined to give improved sight-line provision. Detailed terms will be incorporated in an appropriate legal agreement to be drawn up by Legal Services.

Resource Implications

Financial

The Council will be in receipt of a modest capital sum (£35,000) on completion of the land exchange. No known additional costs to the Council.

Human Resources

No additional human resources required.

Asset and Other Implications

Vehicle access to the golf course car park will be much improved and the provision of improved sight-lines will greatly assist in any future planning application the Council may make for commercial/residential development on this site.

Recommendations

Committee is recommended to approve the exchange of lands as shown in Appendix 2 to this report subject to payment by Mr Harold Montgomery (or his relevant property Company) of the sum of £35,000 with all site works associated with provision of new access arrangements to also be borne by Mr Montgomery, and all elements, including the preservation of agreed sight-lines, to be incorporated in a legal agreement to be prepared by Legal Services.

Decision Tracking

The Director of Property and Projects to liaise with the Director of Parks and Leisure to ensure completion of the proposed exchange of land within six months of this decision being ratified by Council.

Key to Abbreviations

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 – Extract from the Minute of the Parks and Leisure Committee of 13 December 2007.

Appendix 2 – Map showing lands to be disposed of to Mr Harold Montgomery (shaded blue) and lands to be acquired from Mr Montgomery (shaded red). The land shaded yellow illustrates the extent of the Council's ownership in adjoining lands.

APPENDIX 1

City of Belfast Golf Course

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

The former Parks and Amenities Sub-Committee at its meeting in August 2002 authorised the Estate manager to enter into discussion with Mr Harold Montgomery in respect of a proposed land exchange at the City of Belfast Golf Course. The proposal is that the existing access to the Golf Course owned by Belfast City Council be transferred to Mr Montgomery, an area which extends to 0.4139 acres. In turn, M. H Montgomery will transfer a portion of his land to Council which extends to c.0.059 acres.

In addition to the transfer of land, Mr Montgomery will pay Belfast City Council £35,000 (thirty five thousand pounds) and construct a new entrance to the Golf Course at his cost.

It is the view of Officers that the relocation of the Golf Course entrance, together with the land from Mr Montgomery, will improve the sightlines for vehicles emerging from the Golf Course car park onto the Antrim Road. This could also facilitate future development of the site (subject to planning permission) which could increase the value of this property asset in the longer term.

The current access does not have sufficient sightlines to support any form of alternative development.

In the short term the creation of a new entrance would provide a safer, more visible access point to the Golf Course and would help raise the course's profile.

Key Issues

The Committee is asked to note the following points:

- Discussions with Officers from Parks and with representatives from the management committee of the Golf Course support the proposals;
- Entrance to the Golf Club can be secured from the Antrim Road;
- Additional car parking spaces will be required,
- 0.4139 acres of land will transfer from Belfast City Council to Mr Montgomery;
- 0.059 acres of land will transfer to Belfast City Council from Mr Montgomery resulting in a 0.35 acre reduction in Council lands at this location;
- Mr Montgomery will pay Belfast City Council £35,000;
- Mr Montgomery will construct a new entrance to the site at his cost;
- The new entrance will incorporate sightlines of 4.5m x 160m which will provide the possibility of releasing future development potential at this location in the long term;
- Current access will not facilitate future development of this site.

Resource Implications

Financial

- Belfast City Council will receive £35,000 consideration.
 - No expenditure required by Council for construction of new access and sightlines. Mr Montgomery to bear costs;
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- The Council will be required to remove a small area of green to retain the existing car parking; this can be facilitated through the revenue estimates;
- Each side to bear own legal costs.

Human Resources

No additional human resources required.

Asset and Other Implications

- Reduction in Council land holding by 0.35 acres at this location.
- Potential to release future development value from entire holding.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee accede to the request for the land exchange and the associated works at the City of Belfast's Playing Fields, subject to appropriate terms being incorporated into a suitable legal agreement by the Director of Legal Services."

The Committee adopted the recommendation, subject to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee being notified, in accordance with Standing Order 60, of the acquisition and disposal.

APPENDIX 2