



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>Strategic Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Leisure Transformation Programme – Capital Update</b>
<b>Date:</b>	19 June 2014
<b>Reporting Officers:</b>	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure Gerry Millar, Director of Property and Projects
<b>Contact officer:</b>	Cathy Reynolds, Estates Manager Caroline Wilson, Neighbourhood and Development Manager

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Relevant background information</b>
<b>1.1</b>	In January 2013 to inform future decisions SP&R adopted the following principles regarding leisure provision in the city: Quality; Focus on health and well-being outcomes; Value for money; Balanced investment and accessibility; Partnership; and Affordability.
<b>1.2</b>	Subsequently, at its meeting in June 2013, SP&R set a £105m capital expenditure affordability limit for the Leisure Transformation Programme. Committee agreed to the indicative phasing of capital transformation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Phase 1:</b> Investment Programme (Windsor/Olympia; Andersonstown; Girdwood)</li><li>● <b>Phase 2:</b> Reform of Local Government (e.g. Avoniel; Castlereagh; Lagmore/Poleglass/Colin)</li><li>● <b>Phase 3:</b> One Public Estate (e.g. Ballysillan; Ozone; Shankill; Loughside; Whiterock)</li></ul>
<b>1.3</b>	At its meeting in April 2014 SP&R agreed the affordability limit for Phase II projects at £23.5m. Members will recall in March 2013 that SP&R granted authority for officers to facilitate in depth engagement with strategic stakeholders to explore co-investment opportunities under the leisure transformation programme.

<b>2.</b>	<b>Key issues</b>
<b>2.1</b>	Following Committee's recommendation to engage with strategic partners, a number of pieces of work are being prepared to inform decisions to be taken by Committee over the coming months. Detailed design work is underway for phase 1 of the capital programme and engagement and scoping for phase 2, to identify strategic opportunities in east and outer west Belfast.  The following sections outline an update on discussions and actions to date in relation to

	Phase 2..
<b>2.2</b>	<p><b>Outer West</b></p> <p>Some initial high level discussions have taken place around the future of leisure provision in the Twinbrook and Colin areas, specifically around the potential redevelopment of Brook Activity Centre, transferring under Local Government Reform and the opportunities presented in the Colin Town Centre Masterplan. A survey is being completed on the Brook Activity Centre to determine its physical condition.</p> <p><b>Next steps</b></p> <p>A feasibility study has been commissioned to identify a range of options for future leisure provision in Outer West Belfast.</p> <p>The study will include: an analysis of current leisure provision (both local authority and private); redevelopment/refurbishment options; exploration of potential sites for redevelopment; and provide a critical path including a comprehensive funding strategy. The study should also make reference to the Colin Town Centre Masterplan, produced by the Department for Social Development.</p> <p>It is planned that Area Working Group representatives will be fully involved in this process, including the appraisal of options, prior to presentation to Committee for investment decisions. Following this, there will then be a period of consultation and proposal development.</p>
<b>2.3</b>	<p><b>Inner East Belfast</b></p> <p>Belfast Education &amp; Library Board (BELB) has facilitated engagement with elected members, community representatives and potential strategic partners. This is due to an imminent strategic opportunity in relation to the potential rationalisation and re-development of two primary schools in the inner East area.</p> <p>BELB are currently finalising an economic appraisal for the rationalisation of Avoniel and Elmgrove primary schools and one preparing a development proposal for the minister's consideration. Council officers have been working with BELB to identify potential linkages, community benefits and co-investment opportunities from any proposed development at the Avoniel Primary School site. BELB's economic appraisal is currently looking at a number of options including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do nothing</li> <li>2. Do minimum (essential maintenance at both existing schools)</li> <li>3. Extend and refurbish Elmgrove PS</li> <li>4. Extend and refurbish Avoniel PS either by: (a) using existing site; or (b) by partial use of the existing Avoniel Leisure Centre site</li> <li>5. New build on Avoniel Leisure Centre site</li> </ol> <p>BELB have recently advised that the Economic Appraisal is indicating that the preferred option is development of a new school on the Avoniel School site to facilitate pupils from the current Avoniel and Elmgrove schools. This preferred option is likely to include an area of Council owned land where the Council's Play Centre and playground are currently</p>

located. BELB's initial overall site layout proposals, which are very indicative at this stage, provide for relocation of these facilities. It should be emphasised however that these are schematic layouts only as prepared by BELB and if the current proposals do progress then this will need to be considered in much more detail.

It is suggested that BELB's proposals offer a potential strategic opportunity for the Council to maximise its investment in the future provision of a fit-for purpose leisure estate for Inner East Belfast, and the wider benefits it could have in terms of improved health, education and social inclusion outcomes.

#### **Next steps**

The Council is currently undertaking a feasibility study for future leisure provision for Inner East Belfast. Should the current proposals be the preferred option for both BELB and the Council, detailed design and development work to maximise synergies and co-location opportunities would be undertaken.

In order for BELB to complete their EA and secure money from the Department of Education for their proposed development, they have asked the Council to consider the disposal to them of the area of land as shown edged red on the attached plan at Appendix 1.

Officers have advised BELB that a recommendation cannot be made to Members at this stage for disposal of the land in the absence of more detail on the Council's own proposals for future leisure provision in Inner East Belfast. The feasibility study that is currently underway will consider the options available to the Council but until these have been considered the Council would not wish to place itself in a position whereby they agree to dispose of land that may potentially be required for continued leisure or community provision on the Avoniel site.

However, in order to inform both the BELB and BCC decision making process, a valuation of the subject land and assessment of the costs for relocating the play-centre and playground could now be obtained. This will be used for the purposes of the BELB Economic Appraisal but **on the basis that no decision has yet been made by the Council as to whether or not to dispose of the land**. Upon completion of the Council's feasibility study the Council will be better placed to make a decision on whether any of the land is surplus to Council requirements.

#### **2.4 Castlereagh**

Preliminary discussions have taken place with Belfast Metropolitan College regarding their planned re-development of the campus at Montgomery Road. Given the proximity of the Robinson Centre, due to transfer to the Council on 1 April 2015, officers have explored the potential of integrating leisure provision into the new college campus. There would be advantages to this, particularly as a large number of sports studies students are located at the campus currently. Belfast Metropolitan College has proceeded with the development of an Outline Business Case, presented to the Department of Employment and Learning in February 2014. They are seeking authority to proceed to the next stage and to identify funding streams for the development in the

	context of the next <b>Comprehensive Spending Review</b> . In the Outline Business Case, they have included an option which includes the potential for leisure provision. This allows the Council a future opportunity to formally consider a decision to co-invest in an integrated campus. However it should be noted that this scheme is at a very early stage of consideration. A survey is being completed on the Robinson Centre to determine its physical condition, as well as examining the contractual arrangements currently in place for gym provision.
<b>2.5</b>	<b>Conclusion</b> Each of the capital proposals, as outlined above, give the Council the opportunity to fulfil its strategic objectives for the Leisure Transformation Programme, as outlined at 1.1. Officers will continue to proactively engage with partners over the coming weeks, with the intention to bring feasible proposals for Members' consideration in late summer/early autumn, within the affordability limits established by the SP&R Committee.

<b>3.0</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
	<b>Financial Implications:</b> A valuation and assessment of costs will determine the financial implications associated with the BELB proposals that include Council lands. <b>Asset Implications:</b> Unknown at present – to be determined as part of the feasibility studies underway and <b>Human Resource Implications:</b> Staff resource from Parks & Leisure and Property & Projects.

<b>4.0</b>	<b>Equality Implications</b>
	To be screened when Phase II capital programme is considered by Committee

<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
	Members are requested: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) To note the update as outlined above in relation to Phase 2 of the Leisure Transformation Programme; and</li> <li>(ii) Authorise officers to obtain a valuation of the Council's land adjoining the Avoniel Leisure Centre site, as referred to above, and an assessment of the costs for relocation of the Council facilities currently located on the subject lands. This is subject to the valuation and assessment of costs being used to inform the BELB Economic Appraisal process but on the basis that no decision has been made by the Council as to whether or not to dispose of the land.</li> </ul>

<b>6.0</b>	<b>Appendices</b>
	<b>Appendix 1:</b> Estimated land required by BELB for the extension to Avoniel Primary School. <b>Appendix 2:</b> High level concept drawing of BELB's preferred option for the proposed

development, incorporating a new leisure centre at Avoniel Leisure Centre