



Subject:	Waterworks Pitches (Westland)
Date:	6 August 2019
Reporting Officer:	Ryan Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Ryan Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	Members are reminded that a new changing pavilion was built at the Westland pitch adjacent to the Waterworks in North Belfast as part of the Pitches Strategy investment. This development made the site more attractive to teams playing in the Northern Amateur Football League (NAFL).
1.2	The annual process of pitch allocations facilitated by League Secretaries subsequently saw a significant increase in interest for use of the site from clubs in the area. The issue of pitch allocation was not resolved for the Westland site and was raised with Council by the League Secretaries.

1.3	The purpose of this report is to update members of the progress to date in regards to pitch allocation at Westland and to agree the arrangements to bring this pitch into use for the 2019 and subsequent football seasons.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Agree to enter into a ground share agreement with both Westland Young Men's & St Patrick's Football Club for the Waterwork pitches (Westland). (ii) Agree that this arrangement will be in place for up to 5 years and will be reviewed annually as part of the pitch allocation process.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>Members are advised that over the past number of years officers have been working with football clubs, who had initially expressed an interest to League Secretaries and then confirmed this through a formal expression of interest process, for the use of the Westland pitch for Saturday fixtures, with a view to reaching a suitable agreement that would bring the pitch into use</p> <p>3.2 Of the 6 teams from 4 clubs who had originally expressed an interest in utilising the pitch over the course of the discussion, 3 teams (2 clubs) have formally withdrawn their interest leaving only Westland Young Men's (1st & 2nd teams) and St Patrick's Football Club (2nd team) with a formal interest.</p> <p>3.3 Since that time officers have also been advised that the Westland Young Men's Club have further redeveloped to now only include 1 team and a new Westland Football Club has now formed.</p> <p>3.4 By way of context, Members are also asked to note that Council does not directly provide 'home grounds' for sports clubs, however, there are two ways in which clubs have been able to meet the requirements of the Northern Amateur League to enter into the higher leagues.</p> <p>3.5 Firstly, in the past, the Council entered into Facilities Management Agreements and more recently through Partner Agreements with sports clubs and organisations. These agreements were secured through publicly advertised expressions of interest. Successful applicants have used this process to provide preferential use of pitches for clubs and have, through the erection of signage, displayed the impression that these facilities are the home</p>

	<p>of specific clubs. This ability to manage the allocation process has led to a number of clubs being able to demonstrate control of the site in order to satisfy the requirements of the IFA for entry into the higher levels of the Northern Amateur League.</p>
3.6	<p>Secondly, the way in which clubs have secured use of facilities is by bringing investment to the asset, such as the Ulster Council of the GAA, Clarendon Development Association, Suffolk FC etc. Depending on the source of the funding, it is usual for terms and conditions to be attached to the funding / investment. Normally one of the requirements will be to have security of tenure, i.e. the funding body will seek to ensure that the funding will be used for the purpose for which it was intended and will seek to ensure that the applicant (recipient of the funding) will secure the benefit of the funding. Therefore sports clubs have sought to secure funding from a variety of sources and have used this to upgrade Council facilities and in return they have sought security of tenure which effectively enables them to secure use of the pitch for their own use and meet the requirements of the IFA for entry to higher levels of the Northern Amateur League.</p>
3.7	<p>In an attempt to bring the Waterworks (Westland) discussion to a resolution, officers have hosted a collective meeting with all 3 teams in an attempt to reach an agreement around a potential ground share arrangement.</p>
3.8	<p>At this meeting a suggestion for a 3 way ground share arrangement was discussed and it was agreed that the viability of this would be further explored with league secretaries, who are responsible for the development of the fixtures which includes pitch allocation.</p>
3.9	<p>A meeting with a representative from the league secretaries and the N.I Amateur League was facilitated on 13th May 2019 and it was confirmed that a 3 way ground share arrangement was not a workable solution in terms of the requirement for 'home & away' matches on alternative weeks, however they did confirm that a 2 way ground share arrangement was a workable solution, which already existed across other Council pitches.</p>
3.10	<p>As discussed and agreed at the North Area Working Group in February 2019, if no agreement could be reached then a recommendation should come forward that would enable the pitch to be brought into use for the 2019 football season.</p>
3.11	<p>In an attempt to bring this matter to a conclusion officers have referred back to the original expression of interest process and the 2 remaining clubs that had formally expressed an interest at that stage (i.e. Westland Young Men's & St Patrick's Football Club). Given that the Westland Football Club is essentially a new club, their interest has not been formally</p>

3.12	<p>registered as part of the initial expression of interest process and therefore was not being further considered as part of this process.</p> <p>As a result of the above it is recommended that the Council proceed to enter into a ground share arrangement for the Westland Young Men's and St Patrick's Football Club to utilise the Waterworks (Westland) pitch beginning with the 2019 football season for a period of up to 5 years, to be reviewed annually as part of the pitch allocation process.</p> <p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p>
3.13	<p>None.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p>
3.14	<p>A formal expression of interest process was carried out which was open to all football clubs in the area. Over time a number of clubs/teams have withdrawn leaving Westland YM and St Patrick's FC as the only clubs remaining from the original list.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None.