



Subject:	Coláiste Feirste: Review of Public Access to Sports Facilities
Date:	9 th November, 2021
Reporting Officer:	Ryan Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Alison Allen, Neighbourhood Services Manager (West)

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	The purpose of this report is to advise Committee of a request to provide financial support to An Spórtlann, Coláiste Feirste to enable the continued provision of leisure and recreational services on the site of the former Beechmount Leisure Centre, Falls Rd and ask for Members' consideration in undertaking a review as detailed in the unexecuted SLA.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	Members are asked to consider if they wish to give authority for the post first year of operating review of public use provision at An Spórtlann, Coláiste Feirste (in the spirit of the unexecuted SLA) to take place to determine the scope of any financial consequences arising from public use provision at the facility and to make recommendations to the Council as to the legal liability of the Council for those consequences.
3.0	Main report
3.1	Background In 2009, following a strategic review of Council indoor leisure facilities, completed in 2004, the transfer of the site at Beechmount Leisure Centre to Coláiste Feirste/Fobairt Feirste was agreed,

subject to detailed terms, which included public use. The transfer was initially to be at no charge, but officers subsequently negotiated a price 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 level agreement also to be prepared by the Director of Legal Services. The proposal was developed on the basis that the Council would not incur operating costs following transfer.

3.2 The terms of a service level agreement (SLA) in respect of the public use were negotiated with the trustees at the time, to provide for the provision of public use by the trustees at the agreed times, however, that SLA was not signed by either party meaning it has not been legally executed. Following concerns about the financial viability of sustaining the public use expressed by the trustees at the time, Committee agreed the SLA should include a clause providing for a review after the first year of operating, and every three years after. The SLA was drafted to provide that should the public use prove to be uneconomical for the trustees after the review, the Council would have the option to either provide financial support to the trustees to safeguard the public use, or to release the trustees from their obligation to provide it. It did not commit the Council to the provision of any funding. The SLA was not signed by either the Council or the trustees and has not, therefore, been legally executed.

3.3 Despite early discussions in relation to an SLA, sale of the site was only agreed in 2011, with redevelopment commencing in 2017 and completing in 2018. The sporting facilities comprise of:

- one full sized 3G GAA floodlit pitch;
- one 3G floodlit pitch for soccer and GAA sports;
- 3 no. MUGA [multi use] areas, suitable for 7 a side soccer and basketball, etc.
- Two indoor handball courts with changing room facilities;
- One large indoor hall, suitable for basketball, indoor soccer, indoor hurling, etc
- One minor hall, suitable for group exercise sessions: Pilates, circuit training, etc
- One equipped gym
- One lecture room for video analysis, etc.
- Male and female changing facilities

3.4 Coláiste Feirste state that the facilities are open to the public for a total of 48 hours per week over the year as follows:

Mon – Friday 4.00 – 10.00 pm

Saturday 9.00 – 5.00 pm

Sunday 9.00 – 3.00 pm

They have provided a list of groups who use the facilities on a regular basis, which includes 24 GAA groups, 9 handball bodies, 11 soccer groups and 10 community initiatives.

3.5 Coláiste Feirste wrote to the Council on March 5th, 2019 (six months after the site became operational) seeking financial support to assist with the provision of public use of the Spórtlann

3.6	<p>facilities, which, it was stated, was being carried on at an unsustainable cost to Coláiste Feirste. Progress to resolve matters was delayed by the COVID pandemic and in October 2020, representatives of the Coláiste Feirste advised that the annual deficit associated with running the sporting facilities was estimated at £53,000 per annum.</p> <p>Key Issues</p> <p>As stated in 3.2 above, the unexecuted SLA as drafted, provides that, should the provision of public use be financially uneconomical to the trustees, the Council will have the option to either provide financial support to the trustees to safeguard the public use or to release the trustees from their obligation to provide that public use. Coláiste Feirste's letter of 2019 and subsequent correspondence confirms that this point has now been reached.</p>
3.7	<p>Members are asked to consider whether they wish to give authority for the first review to take place as detailed in the unexecuted SLA.</p>
3.8	<p><u>Financial implications</u></p> <p>The cost of undertaking the review can be met from existing departmental budgets.</p>
3.9	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>Officers will engage with colleagues to take forward any Equality or Good Relations implications.</p>
4.0	<p>Appendices – Document Attached</p>
	<p>None</p>