



Subject:	Blanchflower Preferential Use Agreement
Date:	09 November 2021
Reporting Officer:	Ryan Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Cormac McCann, Lead Officer Community Provision

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 the report is to seek approval to offer a Preferential Use Agreement to Glentoran Football Club at Blanchflower Playing Fields for limited access to the site for a period of two years.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: (i) Grant approval for a preferential use agreement to be developed with Glentoran Football Club, for a term of two years, in relation to the synthetic surface pitch at Blanchflower Playing Fields. (ii) Agree to afford priority use of the pitch, at limited times, as detailed in the report and subject to Glentoran FC continually providing a programme of use which demonstrates significant inclusive use of the facility specifically for women and girls and people with a disability.

3.0	Main report
	<p data-bbox="240 206 400 237"><u>Background</u></p> <p data-bbox="169 255 1473 539">3.1 Strategic Policy and Resources committee of March 2018 directed officers to undertake research into the provision of suitable and convenient pitch facilities for Glentoran Football Club, including its youth academy. Committee further accepted the East Areas Working Group recommendation that a proposed capital programme to install a 3G pitch with floodlighting at King George V playing fields be replaced on the capital programme with a 3G pitch at Blanchflower playing fields.</p> <p data-bbox="169 607 1473 741">3.2 People and Communities committee of March 2019 agreed to upgrade the facilities at King George V Playing Fields and offer a Preferential Use Agreement for five years to Glentoran Youth Academy.</p> <p data-bbox="169 808 1473 1144">3.3 King George V Playing Fields are subject to a Deed of Covenant with Fields in Trust. Council is advised that local residents have written to Fields in Trust in opposition to the planned development of the site and management of bookings. Local residents have approached council officers both formally and informally protesting the proposal on a number of grounds including traffic management, Fields in Trust requirements and floodlighting. Northern Ireland Water also have advised that they will require a section of the site for a prolonged period in relation to works on their water treatment plant nearby.</p> <p data-bbox="169 1211 1473 1447">3.4 Significant investment in the football facilities in east Belfast has taken place over this time. In particular at Blanchflower Playing Fields where Council has developed two full size floodlit synthetic surface football pitches. Committee will be aware that one of these sites will be directly managed by Harland and Wolff Welders Football Club and one of these pitches will be managed by Council.</p> <p data-bbox="169 1514 1473 1895">3.5 The committee decision of March 2019 regarding the upgrade works at King George V Playing Fields has not yet been fulfilled. The availability of a new synthetic surface pitch at Blanchflower is imminent. Glentoran FC have written to Council seeking approval for the previously approved Preferential Use Agreement at King George V Playing Fields to be transferred to Blanchflower PF. Members are reminded that in March 2018 officers were directed to present research into the provision of suitable and convenient pitch facilities for Glentoran Football Club, including its youth academy. This report presents an option which was not available to officers at that time and can be considered on that basis.</p> <p data-bbox="169 1962 1473 2051">3.6 Council is currently completing development of synthetic surface pitches in east Belfast including the pitches at Blanchflower playing fields and Avoniel Leisure Centre. It will likely take</p>

two years to understand the impact of these developments and how demand will be balanced across greater east Belfast. For this reason the proposed preferential use agreement should be of an interim nature and restricted to a maximum term of two years.

3.7 Officers negotiated with Glentoran Football Club representatives to agree a proposed timetable of priority use at limited times for Glentoran Football Club for the duration of the agreement. The pitch will be available for booking at all other times. This timetable is reflective of Glentoran Football Club's commitment to growing the game in an inclusive way with significant usage by groups under-represented in sport.

Day	Times
Monday	6:00pm – 7:00pm 7:00pm – 8:00pm
Tuesday	6:00pm – 7:00pm 7:00pm – 8:00pm
Wednesday	6:00pm – 7:00pm 7:00pm – 8:00pm
Thursday	6:00pm – 7:00pm 7:00pm – 8:00pm
Friday	n/a
Saturday	n/a
Sunday	n/a

Table 1. Timetable of priority use for Glentoran Football Club

Financial & Resource Implications

3.8 There are no additional resource implications from this decision.

Equality Impact/Rural Needs Assessment

3.9 The recommendation within this report will likely increase usage by two groups which are reported to be underrepresented in sport, specifically women and girls and people with a disability.

4.0 Appendices – Documents Attached

None