



<b>Subject:</b>	Belfast City Airport Request – Bird Strike Management at Victoria Park: Implications to Air Safety
<b>Date:</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> December 2021
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Ryan Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Stephen Leonard, Neighbourhood Services Manager (South)

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
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"/>

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of the report is for Members to consider a request from The George Best Belfast City Airport (GBBCA) to <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>gain access to Victoria Park to continue habitat modifications to mitigate the risk of bird strike; and</li><li>extend the existing annual licence agreement to carry out pricking of greylag geese eggs from end of May to the end of June.</li></ul>
1.2	This is part of an ongoing control programme in line with their Wildlife Hazzard Assessment and the Civil Aviation Authority licensing requirements.

<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>Members are asked to agree to the request from George Best Belfast City Airport to grant them access under licence to Victoria Park to facilitate;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The removal of old rook nests by Mid-January 2022;</li> <li>2. Any necessary thinning of sheltering pines, structural pruning of preferred nesting trees, and reducing shelter from ivy;</li> <li>3. Extension of the annual BCC licence for egg pricking of greylag goose eggs to the end of June to align with the DAERA, NIEA licence.</li> </ol>
2.2	<p>Members are advised that any decision to grant this permission is subject to legal agreement that would be developed by the Councils Legal Services Department and will include a requirement to ensure that any works are permissible and the required NIEA licence and consents are in place.</p>
2.3	<p>Any licence would be progressed under the Directors delegated authority, taking into consideration Members views.</p>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.1	<p>Members should be aware that control of birds in the flight path to the airport is a requirement of the airport's Civil Aviation Authority licence. In line with GBBCA's national aerodrome license requirements and associated guidance material presented in CAP772: Wildlife Hazard Management at Aerodromes, the airport are required to identify sources of risk and to reduce and maintain risk to an acceptable level in compliance with the Civil Aviation Authority licensing requirements.</p>
	<u>Rooks</u>
3.2	<p>Members are reminded that in January 2021 the airport removed 12 old rook nests and undertook structural pruning of trees and ivy at Victoria Park. These works were completed due to the recent establishment of a rookery at Victoria Park with an increased frequency of rook occurrence around the airport.</p>
3.3	<p>Following the works rook nests and total rook numbers were monitored from 28<sup>th</sup> February to 15<sup>th</sup> April 2021. Nest building was lowered by 35% with reductions in both average flock size, down from 27 to 14, and the maximum flock size from 30 to 17.</p>

3.4	As suitable nesting habitat is prevalent throughout the park, the airport remains concerned there is potential for this rookery to re-establish and expand unless further habitat modifications are implemented.
3.5	GBBCA are seeking to carry out continued remedial actions which would involve the removal of old nests – outside of the breeding season – and selective pruning of branching forks and other potential anchor points in trees to further inhibit nest building attempts in 2022. Appendix ,1 GBBCA Report provides more detailed supporting information.
3.6	In addition, the airport wish to remove circa 4 pines along the eastern edge of the rookery and reduce the shelter provided to nesting trees behind. Permission to remove these pines was granted in the last licence but not actioned then. GBBCA also wish to continue to reduce shelter provided by ivy, if required.
3.7	GBBCA will appoint a suitable contractor with previous experience to undertake the work.
3.8	<p>If members are content, officers will review the submitted risk assessment and insurance certificates in line with procedure and work with Legal Services to issue the requested licence. The licence will include relevant conditions to ensure that the airport confirm that all works is permissible and any required licences are in place to allow work to take place within the required timescales. The licence will also place an onus on the airport to ensure that health and safety measures are implemented, essential signage is assembled, one-way systems are established where necessary, and any COVID specific mitigations are in place.</p> <p><u>Greylag Geese</u></p>
3.9	<p>In 2021 GBBCA recorded a goose laying and hatching a clutch of eggs in June. The current annual greylag goose Licence Agreement between BCC and GBBCA extends to the end of May and the airport are requesting this be extended to the end of June to address any future late laying. This will align the BCC legal agreement with the DAERA, NIEA licence.</p> <p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p>
3.10	GBBCA will be responsible for any costs associated with the request.

3.11	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u> None
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	Appendix 1: George Best, Belfast City Airport Report – Management Recommendations Victoria Park 2021 – prior to 2022 Breeding Season.