



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Temporary rental of accommodation at City of Belfast Playing Fields and Danny Blanchflower Stadium for Contingency Planning for Epizootic Disease
Date:	14 January 2010
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Fiona Holdsworth, Principal Parks and Cemeteries Service Manager

Relevant Background Information

The Committee will be aware of ongoing global concerns surrounding the risk of health epidemics such as Avian Influenza, Newcastle Disease or Foot-and-Mouth disease. While such outbreaks of epizootic diseases are difficult to predict they remain a risk and as such contingency plans must be put in place.

The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD), Veterinary Service, has written to the Council with the aim of entering into contingency rental agreements with us for areas of Danny Blanchflower Stadium and the City of Belfast Playing Fields. The intention is to establish Delivery Operations Centres (DOC) in the event of an outbreak of epizootic disease. The car park areas of these two sites are seen as suitable by DARD for such purposes. The Department has proposed that we enter into these rental agreements in advance with the intention of activating them as and when required i.e. upon the confirmation of a disease outbreak. As part of its contingency planning arrangements the Department is committed to taking all possible measures in order to contain future outbreaks of se and thereby minimise the economic impact on our community.

Key Issues

The key issues for the Committee to note are;

- Only specified parts of the sites are required as the DOC, it is intended that 'normal' activities may continue on in the other parts of the site, including the pitches, thus reducing the impact.
- The Department will pay for rent and associated costs.
- The proposed agreement will be for a 5 year period.

- The Department will be required after use of the site to ensure that all the appropriate cleansing/disinfecting is undertaken throughout the premises.

Resource Implications

Financial Implications

A rent will be paid to Belfast City Council for the premises; the amount will be assessed by the District Valuer at the time, to cover any period of occupancy. The Department will also undertake to meet ancillary costs associated with the occupancy, for example in respect of heating (if appropriate) and electricity charges.

Human Resources Implications

At this time human resource implications are not known however any additional staff time will be recouped from the Department.

Assets and other implications

A specified section of the sites will be unavailable for a period of time however it is in the interest of the wider community that such disease outbreaks are controlled effectively. The Department will be expected to reinstate any damage to the premises arising from their occupancy.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee grant authority for the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development to use part of the premises at Blanchflower Stadium and City of Belfast Playing Fields as Delivery Operations Centres during an outbreak of epizootic diseases. An appropriate licence agreement will be prepared by the Director of Legal Services to protect the Council's interests and to meet all statutory requirements.

Decision Tracking

Principal Parks and Cemeteries Services Manager responsible. Actions to be completed by March 2010.

Key to Abbreviations

DOC – Delivery Operations Centres

Documents Attached

None.