

5. SHELDON PARK, BELFAST RUGBY CLUB, CHANGING ROOM REQUIREMENTS

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The purpose of this report is to consider an application by the Belfast Rugby Club for an extension to their present lease area on Sheldon Park, to enable them to enlarge their present changing room facilities. The reason for this is that presently there are only four changing rooms to service the four senior rugby fields, and one intermediate field, which are located upon Sheldon Park. The Board has delegated authority to make this decision on behalf of the Council.

PRESENT SITUATION

The Belfast Rugby Club is a large club, fielding nine senior teams in the competition (both town and country) this year, one of which is women, and 21 junior teams. Of the four senior rugby fields, three are used for night training, thereby spreading the load over the fields so as not to overuse them. Games are played throughout the Christchurch area twice on a Saturday afternoon, that being 1.00pm and 2.30pm. Senior rugby teams ideally require a changing room for each team playing at the park, the changing room needing to be large enough to accommodate the players, reserves, coaches and medical staff supporting the team. Therefore to service the 4 senior fields, ideally at least 8 changing rooms are required. The Club's present changing pavilion has two good sized changing rooms in it adjacent to a large showering area. The Club proposes to add three more changing rooms to the facility, two of which will be fully self contained, the third having access to the present showers, and a self contained referee's changing room (**see attached plan**). The two other changing rooms on the park that the club use in the winter are the Council owned swimming pool changing sheds. The club has installed hot water showering facilities in these sheds, although the long term future of the swimming pool is not certain at this time. The changing sheds could be retained for future sports field use, although not purposefully designed for this use.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Belfast Rugby Club require more changing rooms at Sheldon Park to optimise the use of the 4 senior rugby fields, located at the Park. The Club provides two changing rooms on the park in their present facility, and utilises the two swimming pool changing rooms in the winter.

The Club proposes to add a further 3 changing rooms onto their complex, two of which will be built first. Staff are recommending that the Council grant a lease over a further 155 m2 of Sheldon Park to enable the club to build the additional changing sheds.

The Council proposes to alter the former tennis clubrooms to accommodate a further 2 changing rooms to service the sports fields, and tennis/netball courts which are located at the south end of the park. Vehicle entry to the southern end of the park is off the Main North Road into a sealed 28 space car park. The Council has set aside \$125,000 in the 2005/06 financial year with which to undertake the necessary alterations. Staff are recommending that the Board endorse this budget provision.

CLUB HISTORY

The Belfast Rugby Club is a long established club in the Belfast area having modern club room facilities which include 2 bars, restaurant, meeting room, offices and a gymnasium located on their own land adjacent to Sheldon Park. Car parks to service their facilities, which are located off March Place is also located on their land.

The Club presently use their gymnasium, as a changing room for teams, and on club days, the former cricket clubrooms (without showers) now used for storage, and bring containers onto the park temporarily, to use for changing sheds. Often because of the lack of changing sheds, teams are required to take their gear out of the changing shed during the game so other teams can use them. This gear is placed beside the rugby field the team is playing on, which is not ideal, especially in inclement weather because of the need to cover it with tarpaulins to keep it dry.

The Belfast Rugby Club is presently investigating a name change to the Belfast Sports Club in recognition of the clubs facilities being used as clubrooms by the Belfast Touch module, and Cricket, and Netball Clubs. The Clubs Executive believes that the proposed name change will better represent where the club wants to position itself in the community. The Executive of the Rugby Club actively supports other Belfast sporting organisations becoming affiliated to their club so as to enable the clubs facilities, which are excellent, to be fully utilised. Staff applaud this philosophy, because it minimises the need for separate clubrooms to be built on parks in the Belfast area, thus maximising the use of current resources.

BACKGROUND

Belfast is a growing suburb of Christchurch with the huge subdivision of Northwood being built presently, and further subdivisions pending on the former Applefields block to the north of Johns Road. Sheldon Park is presently the only large major sports park in Belfast, and therefore it is important to ensure that its use is able to be maximised to cater for people wishing to play sport in the growing suburb. The Council in association with the sports clubs in the area therefore need to keep abreast of this growth by ensuring that there are enough changing rooms located at Sheldon Park to enable its use to be maximised. There are other sports parks in the area, however they are much smaller than Sheldon Park.

BELFAST TENNIS CLUB

The Belfast Tennis and Netball clubrooms were built in 1989 adjacent to the five asphalt tennis courts on which four netball courts are located. The Belfast Netball Club has since become affiliated to the Belfast Rugby Club, using their facilities. The Belfast Tennis Club, because of dwindling numbers, which for some years now have been below the 15 required for incorporated society status, finally relinquished their ownership and rights to the clubrooms on 1 March 2004. The Tennis Club has arranged for the Belfast Rugby Club to store the tennis club's equipment so that in years to come if there is a resurgence of interest in restarting the club, the equipment will be available.

The Tennis Club over the past seven years of operation, has put up a set of poles and nets on court five for community use during the tennis season (October – March) which has been well supported by the community. They have indicated they would like to see this practise continued in the future and are happy to provide this service. Staff looked at the possibility of assisting the few members left in the club to revitalise it, however these members had worked with this possibility over a number of years, without success, and consequently wished to move on. A number of the former members have joined other clubs in adjacent areas. Should a group of residents within the enlarged Belfast community wish to start a tennis club in the future, ideally a new club should be based at Sheldon Park, the facilities already being there. The court surface may need to be upgraded to enable senior grade competition tennis to be played, on the courts. The Belfast Rugby Club have offered their social facilities for club member use, and suggest that if a Tennis Club starts up in the future, that it becomes affiliated to the Rugby Club, for this purpose.

FUTURE USE OF TENNIS CLUB BUILDING

The rugby training/playing field to the south of the former tennis club pavilion was added to Sheldon Park as a result of the Pentlands subdivision, south of the park. Staff have investigated the future use of this building, and believe that it would make an ideal changing room facility for this part of the park, there already being public toilets in the existing building. The conversion of the former Tennis Club clubroom, and the addition of a further changing room to the western end of the building will enable two good changing rooms to be situated at this end of the park. **(See attached plan.)** There is a 28 bay car park in the park by the kindergarten, which has entry directly off the Main North Road to service this end of the park. Staff have estimated that it will cost approximately \$65,000 to make the required alterations and additions to the building to bring it up to changing room standard, a further \$9,000 for building consent and professional fees being required. A new link path from the car park to the small cricket pavilion which is situated pasted the former tennis club building would cost approximately \$7,500 with a further \$2,500 being allowed for landscaping. A contingency fee of \$6,000 has been allowed for the work. The total cost therefore to undertake this work is approximately \$90,000. The new lighted field at this end of the park, is used four nights a week during the winter for training, which supports the alteration of this building to changing rooms to be used by rugby and, if required, netball, during the winter season. The Council has allowed \$125,000 with which to undertake the alterations/extension to the existing building and associated works in the 2005/06 budget.

There has been discussion about the possible use of the building as a base for the Belfast Community Network, a Council initiated project for youth in the area. Staff have discussed this possible use with Lynda Goodrick, the co-ordinator for the project. The use of these buildings for such an activity would

require a change to the classification of that part of the park that the buildings are situated upon, from Recreation Reserve to Local Purpose (Community Buildings) Reserve. It also became apparent

during discussions that because the building is tucked away in the back of the park its location is less than ideal, for youths frequenting the area after daylight hours.

There is an identified need for further changing facilities in the park to enable optimum use of the park to be made in the future. The Council does not currently provide changing facilities, other than the swimming pool changing sheds on Sheldon Park although it has been general practice for the Council to contribute towards the provision of changing facility capacity on district sports parks throughout the city. In relation to Sheldon Park, the option to convert the Tennis Club building to changing rooms is consistent with this practice. Taking all matters into consideration it has been agreed that the best use for the former Tennis Club Building is for changing facilities to service the south end of the park.

CONCLUSION

The addition of a further three changing rooms to the Belfast Rugby Club's existing changing room facility, coupled with the conversion/addition of the former Tennis Club facility at the south end of the park to provide a further 2 changing rooms will enable optimum use to be made of Sheldon Park for winter sport, this being important in light of the anticipated growth of the clubs based in the park as a result of the growing suburb of Belfast.

Staff

Recommendation:

1. That the Board, under delegated authority of the Council, grant the Belfast Rugby Club an extension to their present lease area at Sheldon Park of approximately 155 m² making a total lease area of 284 m² on which to build three additional changing rooms and referee's changing facility pursuant to Section 54 1(b) of the Reserves Act 1977 for a period of up to 33 years subject to the following conditions.
 - (i) Public notification of the Council's intention.
 - (ii) Approval by the Minister of Conservation.
 - (iii) The terms being negotiated by the Facility Assets Manager in consultation with Greenspace Policy and Leasing Administrator, subject to the following condition:
 - (a) The initial lease term being for a period of 20 years with the club having the right to renew the lease for a further 13 years, subject to the Club being in a viable position, and the land not being required for any greater community recreational need.
 - (iv) Belfast Rugby Club is to be responsible for all costs and maintenance associated with the building and proposed extension, to be built on the site.
 - (v) The colour scheme for the existing and proposed extensions to the building are to be ratified by the Greenspace Manager or her designate, prior to the commencement of construction on the site.
 - (vi) Before any tenders are let or work commences on the site, discussions are to be held with the Greenspace Manager's designate, the Parks & Waterways Area Advocate – Papanui Service Centre to ascertain the Council's requirements through the development phase of the construction of the facility.

- (vii) The Belfast Rugby Club is to pay a bond of \$2,000 to the Christchurch City Council via the Shirley/Papanui Parks and Waterways Area Advocate, prior to commencing construction on the site. This bond, less any expenses incurred by the Council, will be returned to the payee upon satisfactory completion of the building.
 - (viii) The changing rooms are to be made available to other park users, when not required by the Belfast Rugby Club for their use. The Belfast Rugby Club is not to unreasonably withhold permission for the changing rooms use by third parties.
 - (ix) The Belfast Rugby Club may make a reasonable charge for this use by third parties, which may include utilities use cost, fair wear and tear, depreciation costs, and a small percentage added to cover the cost of administration. All such charges, or change of charges shall be approved by the Greenspace Manager.
2. That the Board support the provision of \$125,000 in the 2005/06 budget with which to alter and add to the present tennis club pavilion to enable it to be used for changing rooms and the associated pathway and landscaping work.

**Chairperson's
Recommendation:**

That the Staff recommendation be adopted.