

## **Mitigation Plan – Strategic Review of Belfast City Council owned Indoor Leisure Facilities.**

### **1.0 Background**

1.1 In the EQIA Report on the Strategic Review of Belfast City Council owned Indoor Leisure Facilities adopted by the Council on 1 April 2004, a commitment is given in the consultation report to the implementation of a mitigation plan. The purpose of this plan is to make every reasonable effort to accommodate the existing users of Maysfield within existing Leisure facilities. This plan however is only one of a range of measures that are being taken by the Council to address possible differential impacts arising from the implementation of the strategic review of Leisure for the following Section 75 groups; elderly people; young people; ethnic minority groups; persons with a disability and those with dependents.

### **2.0 Aim of the Mitigation Plan**

The aim of the mitigation plan is to facilitate existing customers of Maysfield Leisure Centre to avail of continued leisure opportunities – between the closure of Maysfield and opening of the replacement South Belfast Centre.

### **3.0 Existing Customer Groups**

#### **Schools**

3.1 All the schools which currently use Maysfield have been facilitated in an alternative Centre which is acceptable to the group.

#### **Five-a-side Football Groups**

3.2 Extensive research has been undertaken into indoor and synthetic pitch availability. There is very limited availability in either the sports halls or synthetic pitches at peak times. Each of the displaced groups has been advised of what is available and requests for alternative arrangements facilitated where possible.

All of the groups that use the facilities at peak times have been written to and advised of alternative facilities and who to contact to make alternative arrangements.

### **Non-Sports Hall Groups**

- 3.3. Availability of facilities elsewhere has been checked. The groups have been advised of alternative arrangements and have been facilitated.

### **Events**

- 3.4. A list of all special event hirers over the last twelve months has been compiled. The hirers have been written to showing all Belfast City Council facilities in terms of space and other alternative facilities outside of BCC control. The groups affected may now use the contact details provided to make alternative arrangements.

### **Members**

- 3.5. All direct debit members (in excess of 500) who have signed up in Maysfield, have been written to and advised they are members of Belfast Leisure Services and that their membership entitles them to continued usage of any BCC Leisure Facilities (with the exception of the indoor tennis arena).

### **Summer Scheme**

- 3.6. The summer scheme will run during July 2004 and all groups who normally use Maysfield will be facilitated this year.

Further research will need to be undertaken and arrangements put in place from 2005 until the replacement Leisure Facility is operational.

Discussions are also ongoing regarding summer scheme provision throughout the City and this matter will be taken into account as part of these discussions.

#### **4.0 Options for those not dealt with in terms of finding accommodation elsewhere.**

##### **4.1 Local Alternatives for Selected Activities**

A supply and demand analysis of what is currently happening, mainly in the area of Fitness Classes, has been completed and consideration given to relocation that can be facilitated within approved arrangements.

#### **5.0 Consultation on the Plan**

5.1 A two stage approach is recommended in relation to consultation on this plan. Initial consultation through targeting the umbrella groups representing the range of Section 75 groups who may be subject to adverse differential impact in the short term arising from the closure of Maysfield.

Following discussion with members there would be more detailed discussions with the same targeted groups on the implementation of the mitigation plan.

#### **Equality Impact Assessment Report**

5.2 This report focuses specifically on the measures to mitigate in relation to the potential for adverse impacts through the closure of the Maysfield part of the Strategy and the issues arising from access to facilities during the period of closure specifically.

#### **Principles adopted in this Plan.**

5.3 The principles outline in this plan set the template for the members and will apply where similar circumstances arise in the future in relation to closure of Leisure Centres and rebuild of new Centres.