

Title of Report: St Columb's Park – Disk Golf	Officer Presenting: Head of Environment Author: NW Greenways Programme Manager
---	---

1 Purpose of Report/Recommendations

- 1.1 To advise and seek Members approval with regard to an approach from St Columb's Park House to develop a Disk Golf Course in St Columb's Park as part of their Peace in the Park programme.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Peace in the Park initiative was developed in response to an increase in anti-social behavioural and sectarian issues within St. Columb's Park.
- 2.2 St Columb's is used by all sections of the community as a recreational and social space within the heart of the City. Activities occurring within the Park include unique sports like Parkour, Ultimate Frisbee, Disc Golf and an inclusive monthly cycle get together. Social and heritage events are available for local residents and park users, and a youth forum has been developed to give local youth a voice bringing about change in the park.
- 2.3 Disc Golf is played in countries all around the world. Permanent Disc Golf courses are found in both private and public parks across North America, Canada, Europe and the UK.
- 2.4 There is no dedicated Disc Golf course within NI at present with the large and growing local Disc Golf community having to travel in order to play the sport. This involves building and dismantling temporary courses every time they want to play.
- 2.5 St. Columb's Park House is therefore of the view that the opportunity exists for the park to host the first permanent site within Northern Ireland and to provide the community with a much needed resource, decrease anti-social behaviour by increasing foot-traffic in rarely used areas of the park, and provide a healthy outdoor activity for intergenerational use.

3 Key Issues

3.1 There are a number of key considerations listed as follows:

Insurances: The Disc Golf course will fall under St. Columb's Park House's insurance.

Location and Design of Proposed course: The proposed course has been designed in collaboration with park users, Disc Golf NI, and Council officer. It is comprised of nine baskets, three of which will be located within the environs of St. Columb's Park House. The course has been designed to provide minimal disruption to any pedestrians or park users. The start and finish of the course is at St. Columb's Park House. All baskets will be strategically placed in areas of the park with currently minimal foot traffic (i.e. behind the tennis courts). This serves three purposes: (a) to reduce the impact upon current park users, (b) to decrease areas for congregation for those intent on anti-social behaviour, and (c) to increase the enjoyment of Disc Golf players, as baskets which are concealed are more challenging to play.

Health & Safety + Risk Assessments: A comprehensive risk assessment and safety statement has been carried out with support from Disc Golf NI. Whilst the activity carries some element of risk, the risk to the public can be mitigated through careful planning. Clear and concise information about rules and safety will be provided by St Columbs Park House to Disc Golf users prior to play. Clear signage in the garden of St. Columb's park and attached to the scorecards will inform all users of the course map and rules for playing. The final course has been designed to cause park users minimal disruption.

Nature of the Course: Peace in the Park has secured the necessary materials (including baskets and poles) for a semi-permanent course. The baskets and poles are stable enough to remain in the Park for year-round play, but can easily be unlocked and removed if needed. St. Columb's Park House will be responsible for the maintenance of the course, including materials and baskets.

4 Financial, Equality, Legal, HR, Improvement and other Implications

4.1 St Columb's Park House will charge Disc Golf users a nominal charge to rent equipment. At the point of rental, users will receive the necessary discs to play the course, as well as a score card, course map and instructions. A charge and deposit will be issued, to ensure that the discs are returned. All proceeds from the disc golf rentals will go towards maintenance of the baskets and course.

4.2 Council will enter into a formal agreement with St Columbs Park House for the trial period of 1 year. The success of the scheme will be measured and reviewed at this period with a view to extending or terminating the arrangement.

5 Recommendations

- 5.1 Members' approval is sought to support St Columbs Park House to develop a Disk Golf subject to a 1 year trial period subject to confirmation of insurances and final sign off on technical detail and course layout from a management & maintenance perspective.

Background Papers