



Subject:	Requests for the use of Botanic Gardens
Date:	Tuesday 08 th April 2025
Reporting Officer:	David Sales, Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Stephen Leonard, Director of Resources, Fleet and OSS

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

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No

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Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.

Insert number

1. Information relating to any individual.
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained.
6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction.
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Sometime in the future

Never

<input type="checkbox"/>
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Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

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No

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1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	The City and Neighbourhood Services Department has received two recent requests for the use of Botanic Gardens in June and July 2025. JKS Events has requested use of the park to host a food and drinks festival in July and CRD Live Ltd has requested use of the park to deliver a series of music events in June. The request made by JKS Events was received several weeks prior to the request made by CRD.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to grant authority to the applicants to host their events in Botanic Gardens and to delegate authority to the Strategic Director of City & Neighbourhood Services to ensure the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiate satisfactory terms and conditions of use via an appropriate legal agreement prepared by the City Solicitor, including managing final booking confirmation dates and flexibility around 'set up' & take down' periods, and booking amendments, subject to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The promoter resolving any operational issues to the Council's satisfaction. - The promotor carrying out appropriate resident & community engagement - The promoter meeting all the statutory requirements of the Planning and Building Control Service including the terms and conditions of the Park's Entertainment Licence.
2.2	The fee for the use of Belfast Parks is detailed in the departmental pricing schedule and is subject to change as part of the annual pricing review. However, where a fee is not detailed the Director will negotiate a fee which recognises the costs to Council, minimises negative impact on the immediate area and takes account of the potential wider benefit to the city economy, in conjunction with the Councils Commercial Manager
2.3	Please note that the above recommendations are taken as a pre-policy position in advance of the Council agreeing a more structured framework and policy for 'Events', which is currently being taken forward in conjunction with the Councils Commercial team.
3.0	Main Report
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.1	A cancellation earlier this year by Aiken Promotions has made the park available for these two events, however it s important to note that the timeframe for the approval and subsequent delivery for such sizeable events is extremely tight for Council officers. Input

	from other Council departments and sections is required and the timeframe for delivery will put pressure on resources. Input from other statutory agencies will also be required.
3.2	Members should also note that these events are in close proximity of each other which can be problematic in terms of disruption to regular park users and any potential ground reinstatement works. Members are aware that current decisions are made pre-policy position and in the absence of a more structured framework for events the department processes and approves event requests on a first come basis. If members were minded to only approve one of the events, then the food and drinks festival application was received first.
3.3	The Council wishes to promote the city and the use of its parks and open spaces by supporting promoters to deliver significant events in the city. Members are aware of the economic benefits large events bring to the city and these two events have the potential to support this and support local businesses at difficult times. Events of this nature help to promote and market the city internationally for investment.
3.4	Council has not previously worked with either promotor and therefore track record and previous experience can only be supported by information detailed in the event proposals at appendix i and ii.
3.5	<u>The Fire and Food BBQ Festival</u> will take place from 17 th of July until the 27 th of July. Food and drink are the key elements of the event. The site build will commence on the 7 th July, with derig and egress expected by 5pm on 31 st July. The organisers hope to keep disruption during build and derig to a minimum however partial closures may occur to ensure the safety of park users and event staff. The organisers seek to erect marquees and a VIP area on the Great Lawn, along with space for patrons to spread out on the grass, weather permitting. There will be cooking demonstrations and opportunity for local business to trade at the event. There will be live music and forms of entertainment throughout the week to enhance the experience. This will be a free to enter licensed event however there are certain costs to patrons when in attendance such as the food, drink and fairground attractions.
3.6	<u>Botanic Summer Sessions</u> will see the park play host to 3 music concerts on 26 th , 27 th and 28 th of June. The artists are all home grown talent. Ticket sales for each show are estimated at around 5000 patrons. Site build will commence on 23 rd June, with derig and egress expected by 5pm on 02 nd of July. The organisers hope to keep disruption during build and derig to a minimum however partial closures may occur to ensure the safety of park users and event staff. The upper part of the park will close from 4pm on the live show dates. This will be a ticketed and licensed event.

3.7	Considerable effort over the years has been made to keep residential and business properties fully informed and protected from nuisance behaviour of concert and event attendees. These organisers will be required again to engage with local stakeholders including residents. This ongoing work is also supported by elected representatives.
3.8	Noise complaints continue to be an issue with regards concerts and events especially where there is a heavy bass element to the music noise. The Council's Environmental Protection Unit (EPU) (night time noise service) have for many years responded to complaints about concerts and events and where possible monitoring is carried out. Going forward EPU have introduced procedures to proactively monitor concerts and events which are assessed as being higher risk due to their size, profile and music genre/crowd profile.
3.9	As part of EPU's site specific guidance an emphasis is placed upon promoters to engage specialist consultants to ensure that music noise levels are adequately managed to reduce the impact upon receptors, especially where there is a likelihood of low frequency noise being present.
3.10	In addition, new Good Practice Event Guidance for Noise Control at outdoor events is being developed by professional bodies and when it comes available, it will be used to determine any additional measures and controls for noise management at events.
3.11	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>Council will collect a fee for the hire of Botanic Gardens in line with the hire charges detailed in the pricing policy. Where required the organisers shall further pay to the Council a Social Contribution Fee which shall equate to 10% of the overall site fee received. The Council will use this Social Contribution Fee by way of investment back into the local community.</p> <p>A reinstatement bond will be required to be paid to the council before each event to cover any reinstatement of grounds after the event.</p>
3.12	Council officers will liaise with promoters in relation to any potential environmental impact from the events.
3.13	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>There are no known implications with these requests.</p>
4.0	Appendices - Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1 - The Fire and Food BBQ festival proposal</p> <p>Appendix 2 - Botanic Summer Sessions proposal</p>