

People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 9th January, 2018

MEETING OF PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Members present: Alderman Sandford (Chairperson);
the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Copeland);
Aldermen Rodgers and McCoubrey; and
Councillors Armitage, Beattie, Corr, Garrett, Heading,
Lyons, Magennis, Milne, McCusker, McReynolds,
Newton, Nicholl and Nic Biorna.

In attendance: Mr. N. Grimshaw, Director of City and
Neighbourhood Services;
Mrs. R. Crozier, Assistant Director; and
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor Corr Johnston.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 5th December were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 3rd January.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Restricted Items

The information contained in the following report is restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the Press and public from the Committee meeting during discussion of this item as, due to the nature of the item, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Section 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Revenue Estimates and District Rate 2018/19

(Mr. R. Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources, attended in connection with this item)

The Committee considered a report, which had been prepared by the Director of Finance and Resources, in relation to the establishment of the District Rate and the compilation of the Estimates of Revenue Expenditure for the year 2018/2019.

The Director outlined that the paper would not be subject to call-in as it would cause an unreasonable delay which would be prejudicial to the Council and the public's interest in striking the district rate by the legislative deadline of 15th February, 2018.

He explained the cash limit for the People and Communities Committee for 2018/2019, as recommended by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 5th January, and outlined the next steps in the rate setting process leading to the setting of the district rate by Council at its meeting in February, 2018.

Following consideration, the Committee:

- agreed that the report would not be subject to call-in, given that it would cause an unreasonable delay and would be prejudicial to both the Council and the public's interests in striking the district rate by the legislative deadline of 15th February, 2017;
- agreed a cash limit for the People and Communities Committee for 2018/19 of £76,027,990 and the individual service cash limits; and
- noted the next steps in the rate setting process.

Request for the use of Ormeau Park

The Committee considered a request seeking authority for Belsonic to hold up to 10 concerts at Ormeau Park from the period 4th June to 6th July, 2018.

Following a query, the Assistant Director answered a number of questions in relation to noise disturbance and confirmed that all events would finish by 11.00 p.m.

The Committee approved the request, subject to satisfactory terms being agreed with the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services and on condition that:

- the promoter resolves all operational issues to the Council's satisfaction;
- an appropriate legal agreement is completed, to be prepared by the City Solicitor; and
- the promoter meets all statutory requirements of the Building Control Service including the terms and conditions of the Parks Entertainments Licence.

Presentation

Monika Kosinska - Focal Point in the World Health Organisation (WHO) Europe for Healthy Cities

The Chairperson welcomed Ms. Kosinska, Focal Point in the World Health Organisation Europe for Healthy Cities and Ms. J. Devlin, Chief Executive, Belfast Healthy Cities, to the meeting.

Ms. Kosinska thanked the Committee for the opportunity to present. She commenced by advising that she was in Belfast for a site visit, as Belfast had been chosen by the World Health Organisation (WHO) to host its Global Conference of Healthy Cities in 2018, from 1st – 4th October, in the Waterfront Hall. She advised that the WHO anticipated that over 1000 delegates from around the world would attend the conference.

She informed the Members that the WHO had been established in 1948 as a UN specialized agency for health. She explained that 194 countries (Ministries of Health) collectively, together with WHO Secretariat, decide on global health priorities and actions to save lives and improve health. She advised that the WHO Headquarters was located in Geneva, with six regional offices and 151 country offices.

Ms. Kosinska explained that the WHO wished to address public health challenges and to strengthen health systems, as well as to provide assistance in emergency situations such as earthquakes, floods, wars and civil unrest.

The representative then provided the Members with an overview of The Healthy Cities Network. She advised that 1400 cities/165 million people were supported by National Cities networks in 30 countries. She informed the Committee that Healthy Cities worked in five year cycles and that the Phase VI Programmes (2014-2018) would continue to address health inequalities and challenges by building a healthy, equitable and sustainable future for all.

Ms. Devlin concluded by highlighting the important role that Belfast currently played within the Healthy Cities movement and she reiterated the importance of the forthcoming conference.

The representatives then answered a number of questions which were put to them by the Members and, having been thanked by the Chairperson, they retired from the meeting.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Matters Referred Back from Council/ Motions

Motion - Housing Provision in Belfast

The Committee was reminded that, at the meeting of the Council on 3rd January, the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Armitage and seconded by Councillor Nicholl, had been referred to the Committee for consideration:

“This Council notes that, with the Belfast Agenda and the Local Development Plan coming into reality, there will be a need for 66,000 new housing units by 2035. This will need an imaginative response by all, including the Council.

The Council calls upon all statutory bodies to review their land ownership and to determine if any such land is surplus and suitable for housing. Subject to legal requirements, the Council asks that consideration be given to making that land available to meet any identified housing needs and projected needs in terms of growth.

The Council is committed to a shared future and, therefore, is committed to shared housing. This shared housing should consist of community background, private and social housing.”

With the permission of the Chairperson, Councillor Armitage outlined the Motion to the Committee. He stated that he was hopeful that the Council was committed to ensuring improved housing for all residents of Belfast which would include shared housing schemes.

A Member stated that it was his understanding that much of this work was already being undertaken as part of the Local Development Plan process. He also highlighted that if this work was to be progressed that the zoning and development of any surplus Council land also needed to be taken into consideration.

The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services confirmed that other works were ongoing within the Council regarding housing provision in Belfast and city centre living and advised that an update report was on the agenda to be considered at the meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee meeting the following day. He suggested that, due to the potential overlap in respect of work which was already be progressed in relation to City Centre Living in terms of the City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (CCRIS), the Belfast Agenda and the Local Development Plan, that he would liaise with the other Council departments to ensure that there was no duplication of work.

The Committee agreed that the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services would liaise with officers from both the City Centre Development and Property and Projects Departments to ensure that there was no duplication of work and submit a report to a future meeting.

Motion - Sustainable Food Policy for Belfast

The Committee was reminded that, at the meeting of the Council on 3rd January, the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Mullan and seconded by Councillor Spence, had been referred to the Committee for consideration:

“Given the number of cities which have developed a sustainable food policy, this Council agrees to develop such a policy for Belfast, looking in particular at the opportunities which such an initiative could offer, including the employability potential.”

The Committee agreed that a report would be submitted to a future meeting which would include consideration of Food Banks.

Committee/Strategic Issues

Antisocial Behaviour in Parks and Open Spaces

(Mrs. A. Allen, Safer City Manager, attended in connection with this item)

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 Further to discussion at People and Communities Committee on 17 November 2017, Members requested that a report be submitted to a future meeting that would:**

- Detail proposals as to how the City's parks and open spaces could be better animated which might help act as a deterrent to vandalism; and
- Look at the best practice of other local authorities and include potential budget options.

1.2 Members will recall that Council provides ongoing operational preventative measures, the purpose of which is to address anti-social behaviour, namely mobile CCTV and front line staff resource (Safer Neighbourhood Officers, Park Wardens and Alcohol Enforcement Officers). These measures continue to be provided with a focus on weekend evenings and school holidays when anti-social behaviour can be most challenging.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to

- Consider the contents of the report and consider the recommendations.

3.0 Background

3.1 Members will recall that Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership commissioned a number of pieces of work in early 2017 with the aim of better understanding the emerging culture of large groups of young people gathering in parks/open spaces and moving around those spaces (transient young people).

3.2 The following work was undertaken:

- Consultation with 11 organisations across the city working with young people and those who have a knowledge or understanding of the issues surrounding 'transient youth'
- Consultation with 450 young people over 4 weekends across two locations known for having issues with anti-social behaviour i.e. Lagan Walkway and Falls Park
- Best practice review (local, national and international) on working with young people deemed at risk of getting involved in crime and anti-social behaviour and/or deemed 'transient'.

3.3 The following learning has been gathered from this work:

- Many of the young people want to gather in this way with their friends and socialise without the parameters of structured youth provision
- Young people say they feel safe socialising in this way

- Only a small number of the young people in any group are causing issues, however, the wider community are often intimidated by the size of the gatherings
- Whilst young people say they feel safe in these gatherings, there is evidence of their vulnerability to more serious offences e.g. drug dealers and sexual assault
- Drug and alcohol abuse is leading to the worst of the anti-social behaviour with contributory factors such as boredom or little for young people to do at the weekend
- Social media and the positive changes in the city in terms of ease of movement, make it easier for large gatherings of young people
- Diversionary activities are extremely limited in their long term impact and can actually geographically displace the issues. The focus needs to be on engaging young people in longer term developmental activities
- No youth work organisation can engage effectively with a young person who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol. The only focus at that point is harm reduction and keeping the young person safe
- The resource pressures on youth organisations trying to address these issues is having a detrimental impact on their ability to assist
- Parents need to be made aware of the impact of this behaviour on communities. This includes where young people are travelling from outside Belfast to participate in these gatherings
- Improvements need to be made in the partnership working required to address this issue to include; information sharing, operational co-ordination, communications and roles/responsibilities
- Raising awareness of the impact of these behaviours on communities should be done in as positive a way as possible so as not to demonise young people which would only serve to worsen the issues
- Youth ownership and empowerment in parks/open spaces is more likely to facilitate their positive engagement in the space
- The commissioning of youth based services should be outcome rather than output focussed.

Future context

- 3.4 Members will recall that whilst anti-social behaviour can be a concern at a range of parks/open spaces across the city, it is most persistent and prevalent in a smaller number.
- 3.5 Members will also be aware that Council's convening role in community planning, the learning from the locality planning

pilots, other localised interventions and the emerging work being developed around 'area working' can provide a platform for a more integrated, holistic and sustainable approach to addressing concerns around the most challenging parks/open spaces.

- 3.6 It is important to consider that, whilst the park/open space may be the core area of concern, there are wider areas of influence around that core area that need to be considered. This is particularly important in ensuring wider community assets (physical and people) are given their place in the partnership response. It is important that any work we take forward in our parks and open spaces allow us to integrate those services that can demonstrate the potential to operate more effectively at a local level in the context of our change programme being undertaken through the City and Neighbourhood Services Department.
- 3.7 Members should also note that Council is not the only stakeholder in this discussion and whilst it is important that in the short term Council demonstrates leadership in integrating its services and investment around this issue and that the significant opportunities available through other partners and programmes of work are capitalised on. For example:
- PEACE IV is planning for significant capital and revenue investment in some key public spaces across the city with key objectives being children and young people and shared space.
 - Urban Villages has already committed and is planning for more capital and revenue investment designed to mobilise communities for positive civic stewardship, with some of the investment focussed on young people.
 - The Fresh Start Executive Action Plan and associated budgets provides an opportunity to commission services designed to prevent vulnerable young people becoming involved in paramilitary activity and examining the systemic issues contributing to this.
- 3.8 As part of any work that is being taken forward, we should also be mindful of wider programmes that are being delivered in the immediate vicinity of our parks and open spaces. Where there are current opportunities within current resources, the Council can play a lead role in working with partners, including community and voluntary sector and residents, to align what is already on offer in local areas.
- 3.9 As well as developing this approach in our parks, to further help achieve our goals identified in the Belfast Agenda, we are also availing of the opportunities that currently exist through current and planned capital and revenue investment

in specific areas. Members have approved that we develop this approach initially in the Springfield area, to lead on developing an emerging area planning model for delivering against the priorities identified in the Belfast Agenda by integrating a range of programmes and services and associated staff resources.

3.10 Officers are currently working up more details around this work and will come back to Members to further consider how this work can be developed in other areas across the city by aligning Council revenue and capital programmes and, where possible, partners' programmes to maximise opportunities and inform how we develop a coordinated area planning approach.

3.11 It is important to note that this will be resource intensive for the Council in terms of co-ordination and alignment of resources, therefore we must ensure that both this area planning work and the offer to address issues in parks and open spaces through integration and animation is resourced in a meaningful way and we do not dilute what is on offer because we try to cover all areas.

3.12 Recommendation

Taking all of the above in to account as well as developing the Council and wider response to these issues in a sustainable way but delivering meaningful outcomes for communities the following actions are recommended between January 2018 and December 2018.

3.13 Members are asked to consider prioritising a park in the East and West of the city to build this way of working as it will require both internal and external change. Additionally, this way of working will help inform structure and governance as the wider community planning and area working conversation develops with Elected Members and longer term approaches can be considered in this context.

3.14 Animation/Programing

- A year-long schedule of animation and programming to be developed to encourage positive use of the selected parks/open spaces.
- This would primarily but not exclusively focus on weekend evenings and school holidays in the first instance and would prioritise use of existing council assets in the parks/open spaces e.g. bowling pavilions or as close to the parks/open spaces as possible
- Council services to align in populating this schedule in the first instance (Community Services, Good

Relations, Community Safety, Sports Development, Parks Outreach etc)

- Local community and youth providers to be encouraged to populate the schedule with their existing programming
- Education Authority to be encouraged to populate the schedule with their existing programming
- Gaps in the schedule to be filled by further commissioning of services. That commissioning should focus on services that can demonstrate the ability to engage the young people in longer term developmental work

3.15 Operational Co-ordination

- Consultation with stakeholders to clarify roles/responsibilities and final clarification issued to wider group of stakeholders
- Commitment to effective inter-agency tasking and co-ordination needs to be secured at both a citywide/local level as well as reactionary/future proofing
- The existing East Belfast Youth Providers Forum to test how local and community youth organisations can support more effective tasking and co-ordination and how resources can be maximised
- Further development in the emerging Youth Providers Forum around Lenadoon to include the Falls Park and wider West Belfast area.
- Initiation of Youth Providers Forums in North Belfast and South Belfast

3.16 Awareness Raising

- Further development of partnerships with post primary schools across Belfast seeking co-operation with communication with parents and pupils regarding wider community impacts and risks of anti-social behaviour
- Inter-Agency correspondence on this issue to be issued through schools/youth groups to parents and pupils
- Engagement with organisations who advocate and lobby for young people in the development of messaging to maximise impact e.g. Children's Commissioner
- Further development of the emerging integrated community safety schools programme for consistent and clear messaging to young people. This programme is already in development through Belfast PCSP and is intended to be ready for roll out in 2018.

3.17 Strategic Horizon Scanning

- Mapping exercise of all strategic capital and revenue opportunities around the selected parks/open spaces to facilitate better alignment and maximise investment, using opportunities where there is similar work being undertaken as part of the development of our area planning model.

Financial & Resource Implications

3.18 Staff Resources

Whilst the benefits of partnership working are acknowledged and evident, the above approach will still require significant changes in ways of working both internally and externally. It is therefore suggested that Members consider this approach in a small number of parks/open spaces initially (potentially East and West) to allow for a focussed and meaningful approach in the first instance, with the intention of widening the approach at a future date.

3.19 Financial Resources

All of the above recommendations can be accommodated within existing Council and (D)PCSP revenue budgets. The recommendations are intended to maximise existing resources, reduce duplication and facilitate joined up decision making and resource allocation in the selected parks/open spaces.

3.20 Equality or Good Relations Implications

There are no equality or Good Relations implication at present, however, this will monitored on an ongoing basis.”

A Member referred to ongoing antisocial behaviour at the location of the Lagan walkway and highlighted safety concerns given its close proximity to the river.

The Safer City Manager concurred and she advised the Member of ongoing interagency initiatives in the area.

A further Member referred to the ongoing antisocial behaviour at the Falls Park/City Cemetery and the cost of vandalism to the Council and he reiterated the need for parents and guardians of young people to know the whereabouts of their children.

Following a query regarding the opening hours of the Council's Community Centres, the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services confirmed that this was being considered within the context of the Change Programme and he undertook to keep the Committee updated.

The Safer City Manager concluded by advising that the proposed initiative in the two selected areas would be in addition to the existing work currently undertaken at the Council's other parks and open spaces.

Following consideration, the Committee welcomed the proposed initiative and agreed:

- to prioritise the Falls Park/City Cemetery in the West of the City and the Avoniel/Orangefield corridor on the Connswater Greenway in the East of the City between the period January and December 2018. During this time the Council would attempt to develop a wider response to the many ongoing antisocial behavior issues by delivering meaningful outcomes for communities; and
- agreed to the recommendations, as set out in paragraphs 3.14, 3.15 and 3.6 of the report in relation to Animation/Programming, Operational Co-ordination and Awareness Raising;
- noted that this initiative would require both internal and external change;
- noted that it was anticipated that the approach would help inform both structure and governance as the wider community planning and area working works streams progressed;
- noted that, if successful, it would be the Council's intention to widen the approach to other parks and open spaces at a future date; and
- noted that the proposals would be accommodated within existing Council and (D) PCSP revenue budgets.

Minutes of the Strategic Cemetery and Crematorium Development Working Group

The Director advised that, at the meeting of the Strategic Cemetery and Crematorium Working Group held on 7th December, the following key items had been considered:

- update on the charity nomination process for the distribution of money received from the recycling of metals;
- update in respect of the increasing levels of funeral poverty and the initiatives being undertaken by local authorities elsewhere to help alleviate it;
- notification of the cessation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (LCCC);
- update in respect of the Permanent Memorial to mark PlotZ1 in the City Cemetery; and
- update in relation to the water infrastructure at Roselawn Cemetery issues with the water supply standpipes used by the public (for flowers and cleaning of headstones etc.) in Roselawn Cemetery.

A Member highlighted to the Committee the current problems being experienced with the water network at Roselawn Cemetery. He specifically referred to the 16 standpipes in sections R, S and T which were dry due to chronic leaks and airlocks and explained that members of the public now had no access to running water. The

Member stressed the urgent need for the required capital works to be progressed in order to ensure that the water supply was reinstated as soon as possible.

Another Member advised the Committee that he had been contacted by a constituent regarding the burial charge of £900.00 for a non-resident of the City versus £300.00 for a resident. The Member provided the Members with the specific details of an individual case and asked the Committee to consider a one-off reduction in this fee due to extenuating circumstances.

A Member advised that, whilst he had the deepest sympathy for the family involved, it was his understanding that this would contravene Council Policy and furthermore it might set a precedent.

The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services concurred that it was his understanding that this would be a breach of Council Policy.

The Committee:

- approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Working Group held on 7th December 2017;
- agreed that officers would work to identify the capital expenditure from the Council's capital programme budget that was required to progress the urgent works to the water infrastructure at Roselawn Cemetery; and
- noted the request of a Member that sought the Committee's permission for the reduction of the burial fee by £600.00 of a non-resident of the City (as a result of extenuating circumstances) and agreed 'in principle' to investigate the request further, subject to a legal opinion being obtained.

Physical Programme and Asset Management

Partner Agreements Quarterly Update

The Assistant Director reminded the Committee that the Council had previously agreed to enter into Partner Agreements at seven sites and she then provided an update on the progress in relation to the Agreements for July – September 2017.

She explained that, in line with the Council's objectives, the diversification of use and improved sports development impact were priorities at the partner agreement sites. She advised that, so far, the programme delivery had led to significant positive achievements across the seven sites and she reported that full payments had been made to all the seven partners.

The Assistant Director also drew the Members' attention to details of an Assurance Review of Facilities Management Agreements and Partner Agreements that had been undertaken by the Audit Governance and Risk Services section in July 2017. She reported that, based on the audit opinion, officers were now seeking the Committee's permission to review the management and reporting arrangements for both types of Agreements to regularise standards and ensure that the appropriate levels of control were implemented in a timely fashion.

The Committee:

- noted the quarterly progress to date at Partner Agreement sites; and
- approved a review of management and reporting arrangements for Partner Agreements and Facilities Management Agreements.

Finance, Procurement and Performance

Everybody Active 2020

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 To advise committee on delivery of Sport NI’s investment programme called Everybody Active 2020 Strand 4. Sport NI approved an amount of £183,018 for delivery of the programme in Belfast to the end of March 2018. This allowed Council to offer small grants in Belfast to support the existing Everybody Active participation programme currently being delivered by our range of preferred partners.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the significant level of uptake of this scheme which enhances participation opportunities in Belfast with specific focus on females, people with disabilities and people living in areas of high social need.
- Approve continued delivery of the Everybody Active Strand 4 programme by the Leisure Development Unit to 31 March 2020, subject to funding being approved for release from Sport NI.

3.0 Main report

Sport NI programme

3.1 Sport NI has commissioned Belfast City Council, along with the other Council areas, to deliver the participation strand of Every Body Active 2020. The aim of the programme is to increase quality opportunities for targeted groups to develop and sustain participation in sport across key life-course transitions. Specific targets for each of the Strands of the Programme will be confirmed by Sport NI.

- 3.2 Through Strand 4 of the Every Body Active Programme, Sport NI has offered Belfast City Council £183,018 with approximately £15,000 of this supporting a part time temporary grants assistant post. This programme allows Council to enhance the sustainability of participation alongside the existing Everybody Active Opportunities Programme which has been developed to support the objectives of the Belfast Agenda. Our existing Everybody Active Programme has specific targets which identify women and girls, people with a disability and people living in areas of high social need as priority. Participation evidence highlights disparities and inequalities within those sectors. We have commissioned a blend of providers through a public process who are successfully developing and delivering programmes which prioritise participation for our target groups.**
- 3.3 Design of Belfast's Strand 4 programme has ensured complementary benefits linked to other investments including Belfast City Council's existing Support for Sport small grants. An anticipated programme titled EBA 2020 Strand 2 Workforce Development will further improve the outcomes within the Belfast Agenda. The small grants scheme has prioritised support to groups which can deliver programmes in support of our prioritised Everybody Active 2020 Strand 1 programmes as listed below.**

Partner Organisation	Main Target Group
Ulster Rugby - Disability Participation	Disability
Ulster Rugby - Female Participation	Women and Girls - Areas of High Social Need
Colin Glen Trust	Areas of High Social Need - Disability
Irish Football Association	Women and Girls - Areas of High Social Need
Ulster Branch Tennis Ireland	Women and Girls - Disability Inclusion
Ulster Squash	Women and Girls
Athletics Northern Ireland	Women and Girls - Areas of High Social Need - Disability Inclusion
Disability Sport Northern Ireland (North and West)	Disability - Areas of High Social Need
Disability Sport Northern Ireland (South and East)	Disability - Areas of High Social Need
Irish Athletic Boxing Association	Women and Girls - Areas of High Social Need
Netball Northern Ireland	Women and Girls - Areas of High Social Need
Basketball Northern Ireland	Women and Girls - Areas of High Social Need

Irish Bowls Federation	Women and Girls - Areas of High Social Need
Ulster Badminton	Women and Girls - Areas of High Social Need
Disability Sport NI- Girdwood Sports Hub	Disability - Areas of High Social Need

Programme Delivery against Targets

- 3.5 As a result of an open call for applications which closed on Friday 17th November. A total of 67 applications were received and 65 of these were successful. These applications leave an under allocation of £32,982.**
- 3.6 The table below indicates the performance of the grant scheme against the Programme’s Key Performance Indicator targets as set by Sport NI.**

Key Performance Indicators	Target	Output (variance from target)
KPI 1 - Participants	6,269	8,145 (+1,876)
KPI 2 - Women and Girls	3,135	5,233 (+2,098)
KPI 3 - Participants from areas of High Social Need	1,881	4,715 (+4,527)
KPI 4 – People with a disability/long term illness	1,432	586 (-846)

- 3.7 Whilst application for the programme have significantly exceeded the target in the first three KPIs, applications have not achieved the target for participation by people with a disability/long term illness. The scheme will reopen with immediate effect with applications being sought specifically from groups demonstrating an ability to work with people with a disability/long term illness.**
- 3.8 Financial and Resource Implications**

In the 2017 – 2018 financial year Sport NI has offered £183,018 for this scheme. Approved awards indicate an under allocation of £32,982. By reopening applications for groups which will increase participation for people with disabilities/lifelong illnesses, it is envisaged that this finance will be fully allocated by year end.

3.9 Equality or Good Relations Implications

The programme is an opportunity for the Council to deliver against its equality and good relations objectives. These would be integrated into the performance frameworks for provider.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Operational Issues

Economic and Social Research Council - Open Call Project Proposal

The Assistant Director advised that officers were seeking Committee support for the Council to become a project partner and provide full support in an Economic and Social Research (ESRC) Open Call project proposal: ‘Beyond the (Peace) line: Re-defining the value of urban parks as socially inclusive spaces for Belfast’.

The officer reported that the project aimed to investigate how different people in Belfast used and valued the City’s formal parks, to identify likes and dislikes and establish what could be done in the future to improve the spaces. The project had been developed by the project lead Dr. Mell from the University of Manchester, in conjunction with a consortia of research partners including the University of Ulster.

The Assistant Director advised the Committee that, in June 2017, officers from the City and Neighborhood Services Department had met informally with Dr. Mell to signal the Council’s interest in becoming involved in the ESRC research project, pending a review of the detailed project proposal. She reported that the project proposal had since been reviewed and the benefits, implications and risks had been considered.

The Committee noted some of the potential benefits of the project, as follows:

- the provision of rich community baseline data to feed into City and local area planning;
- spatial analysis that could be used to identify areas of division as well as good practices in terms of engagement;
- inclusive social behavior to direct future development and management of planning/green space policy and practice; and
- linkages to the Peace IV Programme and the work carried out by the Smart Cities Team.

The officer advised that, as a project partner, the Council’s contribution would consist of indirect/in-kind support to the project over three years. It was estimated that Belfast City Council would contribute 30 – 40 hours of officer time over the 36 months of the project, by facilitating connections with the community and city stakeholders in Belfast, attending consultation events and public meetings to enable the project team engagement. She reported that, in return for the Council’s commitment, the lead partner would be willing to make some reciprocal contribution, that is, one-hour project/strategy support for every hour provided by Belfast City Council. In the interim,

the project would require support from the City and Neighbourhood Services Department, including senior management direction and the involvement of a lead park officer/manager to coordinate the work internally and externally with communities, with local knowledge and experience.

The Committee was advised that other project partners involved in the proposal and offering in-kind support included, Connswater Community Greenway representatives, the Belfast Partnership Boards (South and East), PLACE and Community Places.

Following a query from a Member, the Assistant Director confirmed that the project would be citywide.

The Committee approved the in-kind officer support commitment and agreed to the Council developing a letter of support to accompany the research proposal, subject to Council ratification.

World Health Organisation Healthy Cities Invitation to attend Event

The Committee was advised that the Lord Mayor had been invited to attend the World Health Organisation European Healthy Cities Mayor's Summit which would take place in Copenhagen on 12th and 13th February but unfortunately the Lord Mayor was unable to attend.

The Committee agreed that, in the absence of the Lord Mayor attending, the Deputy Lord Mayor (or the Chairperson) be granted authority to attend the WHO European Healthy Cities Mayors' Summit, in Copenhagen, on 12th and 13th February.

Appointment of Public Analyst

The Committee approved the appointment of the following suitably qualified person as Public Analyst to the Council under Article 27(1) of the Food Safety Order (Northern Ireland) Order 1991:

- Lillian Emma Jane Downie MChem, MChemA, CChem, MRSC

Request for the use of the Cathedral Gardens for Christian Aid "Refugee Solidarity Sleep Out" Event

The Director advised that a request had been received from Christian Aid seeking permission to use Cathedral Gardens from 12 noon on Friday 11th May til 12 noon on Saturday 12th May 2018. He explained that the event aimed to show solidarity with refugees across Europe and the Middle East who were forced to sleep out every night.

The Members were advised that this event would require the closure of all or a substantial proportion of the site and would involve Christian Aid supporters erecting tents and sleeping out overnight on-site. In addition to the small camp, a larger tent would be erected. This would contain an exhibition highlighting Christian Aid's work with refugees in Lebanon, Iraq, Greece and Serbia.

In addition, as this event was now held annually, the Committee was asked to consider granting approving for similar event requests from Christian Aid for the next three years.

The Committee approved the Christian Aid event at Cathedral Gardens from 12 noon on Friday 11th May to 12 noon on Saturday 12th May 2018, and for the subsequent three years, subject to the completion of the appropriate Event Management Plans, the availability of the site and satisfactory terms being agreed by the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services and on the condition that the Event Organiser:

- meets all statutory requirements including Public Liability Insurance cover, Health and Safety and licensing responsibilities; and
- consults with adjoining public bodies, the local community and the PSNI as necessary.

Request for the use of Ormeau Park – XMTB Spring Series 2018

The Director advised that a request had been received from XMTB seeking permission to hold a series of Cross Country Mountain Bike events in the wooded area at Ormeau Park on 25th February, 4th and 25th March 2018 from 7.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. daily.

The Members were advised that XMTB was a Mountain Bike Racing Club which had been organising races for a number of years and had produced some of the most successful riders in Ireland.

The Committee approved the XMTB Spring Series at Ormeau Park on 25th February, 4th and 25th March 2018 and all subsequent annual “XMTB” Cross Country Mountain Bike events at this location, subject to the completion of the appropriate Event Management Plans and satisfactory terms being agreed by the Director of City & Neighbourhood Services and on the condition that the Event Organiser:

- resolves all operational issues to the Council’s satisfaction;
- meets all statutory requirements including Public Liability Insurance cover, Health and Safety and licensing responsibilities; and
- consults with adjoining public bodies and the local community as necessary.

Cregagh Green Peace Fields - Twinning Request

The Committee was advised that a request had been received from community representatives from the Cregagh area in East Belfast seeking approval to participate in the National Children’s Football Alliance (NCFA) Peace Fields Project.

The Director advised that the NCFA was a coalition of agencies and organisations that safeguarded and advanced the rights of children in football.

He explained that the Peace Fields Project (PFP) was an extension to the Heritage Lottery Funded 2014 Football and Peace Project that had been inspired by the Christmas Truces of 1914. He explained that it considered how a symbolic moment of First World War history could relate to the contemporary mission of the NCFA. A number of NCFA projects had engaged children and young people from vulnerable

groups which had been outside the radar of structured football and these had provided them with an opportunity to research their heritage in the First World War through the medium of sport. The PFP provided teachers with the opportunity to engage pupils in subjects across their school's curricular, using sport as a vehicle. It had also engaged local primary schools, families and members of the community who participated in research and activities. All participants pledged to twin their designated areas of play with Flanders Peace Field, Messines, Belgium. The Director advised that it was anticipated that this commitment would help create a legacy for commemorating the First World War and celebrating peace through play on every anniversary.

The Committee noted that the proposal to designate the Cregagh Green as a Peace Field was at an early stage, however, it was anticipated that the project would involve significant numbers of local children and up to twenty local children travelling to Messines for the twinning ceremony.

The Committee agreed to support the proposal 'in principle' and granted authority for the sum of £1,500 to be allocated (from existing budgets) to support the costs associated with developing the initiative.

Pride of Place Competition 2017

The Committee was reminded that it had previously nominated four groups for the Pride of Place Awards, as follows:

- Lower Oldpark Community Association (in the under 1,000 population category);
- The Hanwood Trust Company Limited (in the over 2,000 category);
- College Park Avenue Residents Association (in the Community Environmental Initiative);
- Upper Springfield Youth Team (in the Community Based Youth Initiative).

The Director advised that the Gala Awards Ceremony had been held in the Mount Errigal Hotel in Letterkenny, Co. Donegal on 2nd December 2017 and reported that two of the nominations, Lower Oldpark Community Association and the Upper Springfield Youth Team had been awarded the overall winners in the respective categories. In addition, the judges had been impressed with the level of work, commitment and the standard of all of the Council's nominations.

The Committee welcomed the awards and noted the update provided.

Consultation Response - Forest Services' Proposal to Manage Ash Dieback Disease

The Committee was advised that the Forest Service was seeking views on its proposals to manage Ash Dieback Disease.

The Director of City and Neighborhood Services reminded the Committee that Ash Dieback had first been detected in Northern Ireland in 2012 on imported ash trees and since then, the Department had been closely monitoring for any presence of the disease. Despite the Department's best efforts to contain and eradicate the disease, it had been detected at widely dispersed locations across Northern Ireland. The Department had spent over £0.5 million locating and destroying infected trees but, as

the disease was still spreading, it now considered that containment and eradication no longer to be a practicable option.

The Department was consulting on a change of approach to discontinue the issuing of Statutory Notices requiring the destruction of ash trees affected by the disease. In addition, it would no longer seek Protected Zone Status against Ash Dieback disease.

The Committee was asked to note that the Department was proposing that it would implement the following measures to assist the relevant stakeholders with the management of Ash Dieback:

1. provide guidance on Ash Dieback, available on the DAERA website [here](#) .
2. provide funding support for the removal of infected plants and replanting through the Forest Protection Scheme. The Forest Service would provide additional grant support to manage woodland affected by the disease;
3. promotion of the Tree Check app, available to download [here](#) .This would allow for the reporting of suspect tree pests and diseases to the Forest Service;
4. the retention of legislative controls on ash plants for planting under the Plant Health Amendment Order (NI) 2012; and
5. additional scientific research, on Ash Dieback and its environmental impact in Northern Ireland including research to identify trees that were tolerant to Ash Dieback.

The Committee agreed:

- to endorse the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Consultation on its proposal to manage Ash Dieback Disease and to support the discontinuation of issuing Statutory Plant Health Notices in favour of a voluntary approach; and
- to seek further guidance from the Department on the best practice management of ash trees woodlands where Ash Dieback had been confirmed.

Update in respect of Jubilee Gardens

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

1.1 Members will recall that benches in Jubilee Gardens were removed temporarily on 30 November 2017 in attempts to minimise the impact of high levels of anti-social behaviour in the area.

1.2 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the background to that decision and the subsequent reinstatement of the benches.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to consider the contents of the report.

3.0 Background

- 3.1** Members will be aware that a number of city centre locations have had long standing issues with crime and anti-social behaviour, in particular on street drinking and criminal damage.
- 3.2** Jubilee Gardens has been impacted significantly by these issues in the last 12-18 months in addition to evidence of drug consumption, associated drug litter and public urination/defecation in the area.
- 3.3** These issues have been identified by Council Officers in the normal course of their daily duties, but there has also been regular contact from organisations in the area about the detrimental effect these issues are having on their users/clients.
- 3.4** PSNI had also raised concerns with Council regarding these issues in Jubilee Gardens and after a site visit with Council Officers a number of design out crime measures were identified, one of which was the temporary removal of the benches.
- 3.5** It was then arranged to have the benches temporarily removed to see if it would minimise the impact of the crime and anti-social behaviour taking place in the area and this took place on 30 November 2017.
- 3.6** Following concerns raised by some Elected Members about the decision and its potential impact on vulnerable people, particularly rough sleepers; a subsequent decision was taken to reinstate the benches and this took place on 14 December 2017.
- 3.7** Members may wish to note that Officers are working daily in the city centre with organisations supporting vulnerable people and at no point was Jubilee Gardens identified as an area where individuals were sleeping rough in the city. Following the concerns raised on social media with the removal of the benches, council officers consulted further with partner agencies, Belfast Chamber and Belfast City Centre Management who indicated their preference that the benches should not be replaced.
- 3.8** Members may wish to note that Officers have received one complaint about the reinstatement of the benches from an individual significantly affected by the issues. The complainant disagreed with the decision to reinstate the benches.

Partnership Working to Support Vulnerable People

- 3.9** Members may wish to note in recent years, highly effective partnership working has developed between a range of organisations operating in the city centre supporting vulnerable people including NIHE, Extern, Welcome Organisation, De Paul, Salvation Army etc. ‘Virtual Inter-Agency Teams’ are working together operationally on a daily basis sharing information on vulnerable individuals and attempting to encourage those people in to support services.
- 3.10** The inter-agency working has resulted in a reduction in the number of people sleeping rough in the city centre. The 2016 Street Needs Audit identified an average of 11 people sleeping rough compared to a recent update on that Audit in December 2017 which identified 5 people sleeping rough.
- 3.11** NIHE who have statutory responsibility for homelessness have stated publicly that there are services, accommodation and support for anyone who finds themselves homeless in Belfast. Support organisations continue on a daily basis in their attempts to encourage individuals to avail of the services available for them and to move to a place of safety. However, some individuals chose not to avail of that support.
- 3.12** Members will also be aware that Belfast City Council and Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership have participated proactively in recent years in efforts to support vulnerable people and reduce homelessness and this work continues. Some examples of this are:
- Following the tragic deaths of rough sleepers in the city centre, a number of Lord Mayor’s convened regular meetings with our city partners to give a priority focus to issues around homelessness.
 - A number of Lord Mayors have hosted a Christmas Dinner in City Hall for vulnerable and homeless individuals in the city, supported by NIHE and Council for the Homeless NI
 - Belfast PCSP provided funding to allow the Welcome Centre to provide extra outreach hours
 - Belfast PCSP part funds in partnership with the Public Health Agency a dual diagnosis addiction and mental health worker (Extern/Welcome Organisation) to assist vulnerable individuals in the city centre who have more complex needs

Environmental Improvements

- 3.13 Members may wish to note that the design out crime recommendations were being considered as part of wider options for environmental improvements to Jubilee Gardens. The purpose of considering these improvements is to encourage positive use and activity in this area as part of the Council's wider approach to open spaces in the city centre.
- 3.14 Options are currently being developed and will be brought to Members for future consideration along with financial implications.

Financial & Resource Implications

- 3.15 Costs associated with the removal and reinstatement of the benches in Jubilee Gardens were minimal and were covered from within existing City and Neighbourhood Services revenue budgets.
- 3.16 Any financial implications associated with options for environmental improvements at Jubilee Gardens will be presented to Members at a future meeting.

Equality or Good Relations Implications

- 3.17 There are no equality or Good Relations implication at present, however, this will be monitored on an ongoing basis as environmental improvement options are further developed."

The Committee noted the update provided in respect of Jubilee Gardens and agreed that, where possible, future operational decisions which officers felt might have the potential to be of a sensitive or contentious nature should be submitted to the Committee for its consideration.

Chairperson