

Parks and Leisure Committee

Thursday, 13th March, 2014

MEETING OF PARKS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor McKee (Chairman);
Aldermen Robinson and Rodgers;
Councillors Beattie, Convery, Corr,
Cunningham, Haire, Hanna, Hendron,
Hussey, Kyle, Mac Giolla Mhín,
McCabe, McNamee, Ó Donnghaile,
Mullan, Thompson and Verner.

In attendance: Mr. A. Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure;
Mrs. R. Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks
and Leisure;
Mr. B. Flynn, Democratic Services Officer; and
Ms. L. Francey, Democratic Services Section.

Apology

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor Mallon.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 13th February 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 March.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Committee Meeting in May

The Committee was reminded that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 21st February, had, given that elections were due to take place on 22nd May, agreed that all Committee meetings in May should be cancelled.

The Committee agreed not to hold any meetings in May and agreed further that authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Party Leaders and the Chairman of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and, if necessary, the Chairman of the Parks and Leisure Committee, to take any urgent decisions in accordance with the procedures which were routinely set in place during the recess month of July each year.

Reservoirs Bill

The Director reminded the Committee that the Assembly had introduced the above-mentioned Bill, the second reading of which had been heard on 14th February. The Bill, he reported, was at its Committee Stage and, as part of that process,

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interested parties had been requested to comment on the Bill's provisions. Accordingly, the Director reported that the Department had been requested to attend a meeting of the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee and, after consulting with the Chairman, the Assistant Director and the Senior Civil Engineering Officer had attended the committee on 25th February.

The Director outlined the contents of the Council's submission which had been presented to the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee, a copy of which was available on the Mod.gov website. He reported that, arising from the presentation, two questions had been posed by MLAs, which had required further clarification by the Council. The two questions, together with the Council's responses, are set out hereunder:

- What, if any, insurance does the Council hold in respect to the failure of a reservoir under its ownership?

The Council purchases presently commercial insurance protection for public liability risks arising from the ownership and use of all reservoirs that are located on council land or in council parks. This insurance covers the cost of claims arising from the failure of, or defects in reservoirs which cause loss, or injury to members of the public and/or damage to their property. The insurance only applies in so far as the Council can be held legally responsible for the loss, damage or injury so caused. The insurance protection is for £50M.

- What opinion, if any, does the Council have regarding the various appeals and dispute mechanisms in the Bill?

Reservoirs are designated as High, Medium or Low risk by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and within the proposed Bill, Clauses 17 to 21 allow reservoir owners to appeal against that designation. Council officers have considered the risk designation of Reservoirs owned by the Council and would categorise them all as high given the proximity to residential areas. Action plans are currently being developed in line with this designation. It is the view of officers that whilst the appeal mechanism is necessary this will not be relevant to the Council and will more likely be used by private owners.

The Committee agreed that the Council's responses, as set out, be submitted to the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee.

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Departmental Plan for 2014/2015

(Ms. C. Wilson, Neighbourhood and Development Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the departmental plan for 2014/2015, a copy of which was available on the Council's Mod.gov website. The Director indicated that the Plan set out the strategic direction for the Department during the forthcoming financial year and aimed to provide a framework for the effective leadership and management of the Department. He pointed out that the Plan would enable the Committee and senior managers to deliver projects and manage performance in line with the Corporate Plan and Investment Programme. He indicated that quarterly progress reports in respect of the Plan would be submitted for the Committee's consideration.

After discussion, during which the Director clarified a number of matters in respect of the Plan and answered a range of Members' questions in relation thereto, the Committee approved the Plan.

Antisocial Behaviour – Quarterly Report

(Mr. P. Murray, Antisocial Behaviour Officer, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“2. Key Issues

The comparative data outlined in Table 1 below shows an increase in the number of incident reports of ASB in parks between August to December 2012 and August to December 2013 within the 4 electoral areas of Court, Laganbank, Pottinger and Upper Falls. The data highlights a downward trend in the number of reports of ASB in parks within Balmoral, Castle, Lower Falls and Oldpark electoral areas. This trend can be attributed to a decrease in visitor numbers due to seasonal variance - less people visit parks in autumn and winter. The data also showed the following trends:

- **Increase in reports of groups of youths gathering; and**
- **Increase in reports of fire setting and drinking.**

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Comparison of the number incidents in facilities between August to December '12 and August to December '13			
August to December 2012		August to December 2013	
Electoral Area	Total ASB	Electoral Area	Total ASB
Balmoral	63	Balmoral	7
Castle	64	Castle	24
Court	33	Court	79
Laganbank	67	Laganbank	117
Lower Falls	20	Lower Falls	12
Oldpark	158	Oldpark	139
Pottinger	49	Pottinger	80
1Upper Falls	27	Upper Falls	142
Victoria	19	Victoria	22
Total	500	Total	622

The data presented in Table 1 illustrates a snapshot of ASB in parks between August and December 2013. The data details the three parks with the most incidents of ASB in each electoral area, the hotspot categories of ASB and where there were more than 20 incidents (these locations appear in bold type).

Citywide responses and interventions are implemented proportionately across all of the city's parks. This approach is used to tackle low level, re-occurring ASB incidents (parks with less than 20 incidents) and is delivered using existing and available resources.

Planned intensive interventions are designed and introduced for parks that have more than 20 ASB incidents. The planned interventions span across all 4 objectives of the ASB programme: education, enforcement, environment and partnership. Interventions will resource and schedule enforcement operations in partnership with existing council services or PSNI and interventions also involve the environmental and physical development of a site.

Table 2 outlines the parks that have had more than 20 incidents during August to December 2013 and the specific interventions planned for the coming months.

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Table 2: Specific interventions planned to tackle ASB in Parks with more than 20 ASB incidents	
Court	
Woodvale	The Park manager will ensure that damage is repaired and motorcycle use is reported to the PSNI.
Laganbank	
Botanic	A series of enforcement operations are planned for the spring to address reports of rowdy behaviour and drinking.
Oldpark	
Ballysillan PF	Temporary signage will be sited in the playground to inform drinkers of consequences and playground inspectors will report damage to be repaired.
Waterworks	Park Wardens will work with Community Safety officers and PSNI to tackle drinking. Individuals reported for drinking will face prosecution and if under 18 will be reported to the ASB forum
Pottinger	
Ormeau	Park Wardens will issue fixed penalty notices for dog control and dog fouling offences. They will work with Community Safety officers and PSNI to tackle drinking. Individuals reported for drinking will face prosecution and if under 18 will be reported to the ASB forum.
Avoniel PG	Playground inspectors will report damage to be repaired. Park Wardens will issue fixed penalty notices for dog control and dog fouling offences.
Upper Falls	
Falls Park	The Park manager will ensure damage is repaired and Park Wardens will work with Community Safety officers and PSNI to tackle drinking. Individuals reported for drinking will face prosecution and if under 18 will be reported to the ASB forum.
City Cemetery	A decorative arts project has been initiated to address graffiti in the cemetery. Park Wardens will work with Community Safety officers and PSNI to tackle drinking. Individuals reported for drinking will face prosecution and if under 18 will be reported to the ASB forum.

Alongside the intensive and citywide interventions planned to tackle reported incidents of ASB, a number of citywide ASB programme developments will be implemented during the coming months:

- Park Wardens will be deployed during St. Patrick's Day in support of the Councils safer city operations
- Park Wardens are currently deployed in parks as part of an ongoing enforcement programme. They will

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issue fixed penalties in relation to litter and dog fouling offences.

There also several steps that are being undertaken in the next stage of the development of the ASB programme which are outlined below. Detail on these will be brought to the Committee in the new Council term for consideration.

- **Refinements to ASB data collection and reporting methodologies will ensure that there is a consistent service delivered across the city.**
- **The department is developing processes to formally communicate with the District Policing and Community Safety Partnership (DPCSP) structure.**
- **It is intended that the ASB programme will establish sustainable synergies and interfaces with local area working groups that will develop more appropriate responses to ASB.**

3. Resource Implications

The development of the programme will be facilitated through the agreed ASB budget 2013-14 which is approximately £250,000.

4. Equality Implications

Much of the ASB programme work spans activities related to reducing interface tensions and bringing young people together to take part in positive programmes and activities. All of the programme work is delivered in line with the council's equality and good relations policies and procedures.

5. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.”

During discussion, the Members welcomed the progress which had been achieved to date in addressing antisocial behaviour within departmental properties. However, a Member referred to ongoing issues within the overall vicinity of the Falls Park, the City Cemetery and the Whiterock Leisure Centre. He suggested that the Council should endeavour to address the problems within those sites on a collective basis with a range of departments seeking to work together and share information which could assist in addressing the problems.

The point was made that the safety of Council staff should, at all times, be paramount and that reported instances of staff intimidation could not be tolerated. It was stated that there remained an onus on the Council to secure its own properties and that, in respect of the issues within the general Whiterock area, it would be prudent to

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seek to raise the ongoing issues on an official basis with the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

The Director indicated that there were working arrangements in place between officers from the Department and the Community Safety Team within the Health and Environmental Services Department. He pointed out also that the Department was investigating currently the feasibility of enhancing the working relationships among a range of partners which would complement the work of the District Policing and Community Safety Partnerships.

Councillor Hendron pointed out that she was the Chairman of the West Belfast District Policing and Community Safety Partnership and indicated that she would endeavour to raise the aforementioned concerns at its next meeting.

After discussion, the Committee noted the information which had been provided and noted further that the issue, in so far as it related to departmental properties in the general Whiterock area, would be raised at the next meeting of the District Policing and Community Safety Partnership for West Belfast.

Events in Parks

(Ms. C. Wilson, Neighbourhood and Development Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1. Background Information

1.1 At its meeting in August 2013, the Committee was provided with information on the number and location of events which had been held in Council parks over the past five years.

1.2 Members noted that large-scale commercial operators tended to favour a small number of locations, namely Boucher Road Playing Fields and Botanic Gardens. At that meeting, Committee agreed that a proposal be developed to establish a number of strategic arts partnerships, in order to build a commercial market for alternative locations across the city.

2. Key Issues

2.1 Following analysis, there are a number of perceived barriers deterring commercial operators from holding events in parks and open spaces:

- Capacity is a primary determinant in deciding where a promoter will stage an event. For example, events such as Tenants Vital require capacity in excess of 45,000 – only available at the Boucher Road Playing Fields.**

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Capacity operates on multiple levels; audience capacity; car parking for audience and participants; accessible /egress capacity;

- **Neighbourhood: the prospect of having to deal with potential complaints about noise or event disruption issues can be off putting for commercial operators;**
- **Facilities: These can be within the park itself in terms of toilet provision but this can be addressed with additional temporary facilities being provided. Car parking can be more difficult to address at times;**
- **Security: This in relation to perceived safety of audience members arriving/leaving events and potential vandalism to property such as cars;**
- **Financial cost coupled with misconceptions about public accountability i.e. 'bureaucracy' can deter commercial operators from using a council facility.**

2.3 It is acknowledged that the issues listed above also relate to hosting city centre-based events and that working with the community, the relevant parks/outreach managers have delivered many successful events in neighbourhoods across the city.

2.4 Examining best practice from other local authorities, the issues are not insurmountable and the promotion of commercial events in parks across the city may be supported by the following:

- **The development and targeted distribution of a commercial prospectus for distribution to a range of event promoters and organisers positively promoting the use of Belfast Parks for events e.g. corporate prospectus containing details on capacity of all parks and support available.**
- **Delivering large-scale (5,000+) demonstration arts/cultural events as high-quality, family-orientated cultural events across the city (N, S, E and W), showcasing the range of opens spaces to attract commercial operators.**
- **Engagement with Translink to encouraging sustainable modes of transport such as the provision of park and ride facilities**

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- **Incentivisation/promotion of particular parks outside of city centre e.g. reduced hire rates or grant-aid to commercial operators. Potential for joint promotion with the City Events Unit of the availability/suitability of parks and open spaces for events that move between major cities.**
 - **Develop the criteria for the park grants funds to enable events to be sustainable year on year and more evenly spread across the city e.g. a higher score for working with partners; using under-used parks.**
- 2.5 In line with the commitments outlined within the Investment Programme 2012-2015, it is proposed that further discussions are undertaken with the City Events Unit, Development Department to develop a corporate prospectus to bring forward some of these proposals.**
- 2.6 In advance of this, it is suggested that Committee considers the potential to financially support a number of strategic arts demonstration events for the delivery of high-quality, large-scale (5,000+), family-orientated cultural events across the city. The purpose of this would be to build capacity across a diverse range of sites for these large-scale events, as well as demonstrate to commercial operators the viability of these locations.**
- 2.7 The Council established successful arrangements with the Belfast Festival at Queen's and Mela in 2013. These operate at minimal cost to the public. Both events were well-received by audiences and significantly add to the attractiveness of the Council's parks and open spaces.**
- 2.8 To assist Members' ambition to spread large-scale events across the city, and as a condition of financial support, it is proposed that Mela 2014 is requested to develop a programme of outreach events whereby they deliver 'taster' events in 3 other parts of the city. Transport would be made available to these parts of the city to allow people to travel to Botanic Gardens for the main event in August at no cost. Similarly, it is proposed that officers engage with the Belfast Festival at Queen's to encourage them to consider using an alternative venue to Botanic Gardens.**
- 2.9 As part of an agreement with the two groups, a series of targets for participation, outreach and sponsorship would be set. The evaluation of these events will be used to inform the development of a corporate prospectus for commercial operators. It is anticipated that both of these initiatives will**

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contribute to build a commercial market for alternative locations across the city.

3. Resource Implications

Financial

A fund of £40,000 has been provided for large-scale cultural events within revenue budgets for 2014/15. There may be overtime required by staff to assist with the management of the proposed events which would be met by the Council.

Asset and Other Implications

The Legal Agreement will include a Bond Of Reinstatement (£1000) to ensure minimal impact on Council property, provided by the partner organisations

4. Recommendations

- To authorise officers to initiate discussions with Mela 2014 (Artsekta) and the Belfast Festival at Queen's to agree the conditions of financial support for 2014, as outlined above
- Agree to support Mela 2014 (Artsekta) and the Belfast Festival at Queen's up to £20,000 each, subject to conditions agreed
- Agree to receive a future report on a 'corporate prospectus' for parks and opens spaces."

The Committee adopted the recommendations, subject to the Department undertaking discussions with organisations which delivered festivals in Belfast with a view to enhancing their involvement in the outreach initiatives associated with the Mela and the Belfast Festival at Queen's. It was noted that a further report in respect of the development of this approach with other arts and culture organisations across the City would be submitted in due course.

Cyclists Touring Club - Review

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1. Relevant Background Information

As the UK's national cycling charity, CTC (Cyclists Touring Club Charitable Trust) works to protect and promote cycling to create a healthier, cleaner world. In March 2010, the Parks and Leisure Committee approved the provision of office space for a Cycling Development Officer, funded by CTC and agreed to provide in-kind support for a Cycling Development Officer. The purpose of the partnership was to introduce people to leisure and utility cycling for the associated health, wellbeing

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and environmental benefits and use cycling to engage disadvantaged, hard to reach and under-represented groups.

Since then, the partnership has delivered the following:

- Over 4,000 young people engaged in Belfast through Bike Club, a community focused project called Bike Club (target beneficiary range 10 – 20 years) in partnership with the ASDA Foundation and the youth charity organizations UK Youth and ContinYou.
- Worked with over 30 groups, including West Belfast Area Youth Project; Glencairn Youth Initiative; Challenge for Youth Bike Club; and Park School and Education Resource Centre
- Demonstration of a delivery model proven to encourage more people to cycle within deprived areas and hard to reach groups across the city which has been adopted by other Councils in the region
- Operated a small grants scheme £52,000 within Belfast City Council area which funded 26 Bike Clubs to buy bicycles and train staff.
- 60 Bike Club Leaders and Volunteers trained to run the 26 clubs. The Bike Club Development Officer (BCDO) facilitated capacity building and cycle leader network.
- Created employment opportunities resulting in the first CTC National Standard and Mountain Biking trainers in N.Ireland
- Direct and advisory support for a range of initiatives including annual Belfast Bike Week, programming support on Barnett's Mountain Bike Trails, development of Active Communities cycling work programmes, delivery and legacy programmes for Giro d'Italia, specialist advice on the Belfast Cycle Hire scheme, development support for club and community cycle groups.
- Development and delivery of Active Belfast active travel strategy and action plans.
- 400 young people engaged in the first 4 months of delivery by the Shankill Area Project and Glencairn Youth Initiative Bike Clubs, providing up to 15 hrs of mountain bike activities per week.

The impact of these Bike Club initiatives include:

- Increased learning opportunities for young people beyond school day
- Increased levels of physical activity

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- Identification and creation of instructor/trainers to deliver road and mountain bike training to instructors locally
- New partnerships created with training providers: Belfast Activity Centre and Tricycle
- Bike Club and Leader network established
- Promotion of cycling to school

As one small example, one beneficiary reported that her son, who was in foster care, had Asperger's syndrome. She was anxious about him cycling around the city. However, once she knew he was training to do Bikeability, she was happy for him to continue. This led to him being confident enough to cycle independently from his foster home to regularly visit his mother.

The Active Belfast project work delivered on 2 core themes: Active Travel and Active Workplaces. The outputs from this work include:

- 178 staff trained at 3 large public sector employers to cycle on city roads using the national standards for cycle training, tackling real or perceived fears of cycling on city roads
- 249 staff from 23 employers completed an online cycle challenge to encouraged to cycle for more journeys more often.
- 72 employees received bike maintenance training to help them deal with basic repairs whilst commuting.

2. Key Issues

Given the impact and success of the project to date, CTC would like to continue the existing partnership with Belfast City Council until the end of March 2015.

It is a key time to focus on the progression of cycling development in Belfast and a continued partnership would allow the Council to maximise the impact of a number of major cycling developments, namely:

- Belfast's annual bike week
- Giro D'Italia Big Start 2014
- Public Bike Hire scheme
- Barnett's and Mary Peter's Mountain Bike Trails.

Future developments

There is potential to develop Community Cycle Clubs, which use cycling to tackle health, social and economic inequalities.

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The community cycle clubs, improve access to bikes for those without, skills training, leader capacity building and pathways to employment.

In addition, the following objectives will be integrated into future work programmes:

- Enhance existing Bike Clubs through continued development and wider community engagement.
- Develop Bike Clubs as a community wide resource in Council Parks
- Target the creation of Community Bike Clubs at Interface areas in Belfast
- Develop pathways to employment for trained volunteers and leaders
- Develop an inclusive cycling resource in Belfast Parks, serving people with limited mobility.
- Provide access to bikes coaching and led rides for the public at Barnet's and Mary Peter's Mountain Biking Trails.

Potential funding

The funding for the Cycling Development Officer ends in May 2014.

It is anticipated that funding will be available under the Active Belfast Partnership and potentially Sport NI. Similarly, the Giro D'Italia legacy programme is being developed by DCAL. It is likely that this will include community engagement activities around the Belfast Cycle Hire scheme, e.g. on road cycle training to encourage active travel within the city centre.

DRD has recently launched a Cycling Unit and there are plans to partner on active travel and active workplace revenue-based initiatives.

Officers are actively pursuing a number of funding bids to continue the partnership arrangement and are currently engaged with Sport NI, OFMDFM and other agencies to secure funding for the next period.

3. Resource Implications

Financial

Core costs for the Cycling Development Officer are £34,000, to be secured from external funding. In-kind support from the Council will include: office space; access to computer and office equipment; and use of communications and promotional channels to disseminate information.

Human Resources

The Cycling Development Officer will be located within the Leisure Development Unit.

4. Equality Implications

No equality or good relations impacts have been identified.

5. Recommendations

Committee is asked to agree to the continuation of the partnership arrangements with CTC, subject to external funding being secured.”

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Development of Land at Slievegallion Drive

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1. Relevant Background Information

In June 2013 Committee considered a request from De La Salle School for the development of land at Slievegallion Drive. The school approached the Council with a proposal for the redevelopment of the Council’s land at Slievegallion Drive to provide a school/community facility potentially comprising a full size GAA pitch, a smaller training pitch and a pavilion/small stand for use by the school and its three feeder primary schools during school hours and by the local community out of school hours.

The school indicated that they were seeking a long lease (25-50 years) for the land at Slievegallion Drive from the Council in order to secure the funding required for their proposals.

Committee agreed to officers progressing discussions with De La Salle school with a view to exploring the most appropriate arrangement (including leasing options) for the redevelopment of the informal open space at Slievegallion Drive, with a further report to be brought to Committee. Discussions were to include:

- Details of the schools business model in terms of costs and income producing capacity
- Public access arrangements
- Partnership or leasing arrangements to ensure ongoing wider community use
- Sources of funding to redevelop the site.

The site does not form part of the Pitches Strategy and there is currently no identified funding in the Capital Programme for the development of this land.

2. Key Issues

- Officers have engaged with De La Salle School to discuss their proposal and arrangements for use of the land. This has not progressed to the point where officers can report on the business model, access arrangements, leasing arrangements and sources of funding.
- De La Salle School undertook the community consultation and engagement for the project.
- Following the initial engagement with residents, proposals were changed by the school and further consultation was then undertaken by them.
- Local residents have approached the Council with concerns about the proposed development and the level of consultation to date.
- Residents were concerned that a Planning application has been submitted for the development of the site.
- Residents raised particular concerns about why the Council, as land owner, has not consulted the local community about the use of the land.
- Concerns were raised about the nature and extent of the consultation with a view that it was not inclusive of all residents and that feedback on issues raised has not been provided by the school.
- Residents were concerned about the loss of amenity as this is the only open space available to them in a densely built up area.
- Residents have formed a Residents Group in October 2013 around the issue.
- Residents were seeking assurance from Council that formal consultation would take place with the local community about the use of the land.

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3. Resource Implications

Financial

No financial implications at this stage.

Human Resources

None

Asset and Other Implications

None at this stage.

4. Recommendations

Members are asked to consider the request by residents representing the Slievegallion/Glassmullan area that Council undertakes a consultation with the local community about the use of the land at Slievegallion Park.”

A Member indicated that the Member of Parliament for West Belfast, Mr P. Maskey, was in the process of facilitating a community consultation in order to resolve outstanding issues in respect of the proposal. Accordingly, the Member suggested that it would be prudent to defer consideration of the matter to enable those consultations to be concluded.

The Assistant Director indicated that work had commenced corporately on the development of a formal framework which would be used to oversee future community consultations and which would be presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in due course. A Member suggested that a Committee site visit might be required in order to acquaint Members with the layout of the site and the impact of the proposal.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to defer consideration of the matter to enable the local Member of Parliament to facilitate the community consultation process as outlined.

Acquisition of Land at Black's Road

The Committee was reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 1st July, 2013, had agreed to acquire land at Black's Road for the purposes of developing a park in accordance with the terms which had been set out in the Committee report of 13th June. Accordingly, the Committee considered the undernoted update report in this regard:

“1 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 The site extends to approximately 4.49 acres and comprises derelict land which has been identified as an area of anti-social behaviour. There is a proposal by Groundwork NI to transform the site into a park for the use of the local community. The park is currently within the boundary of Lisburn City Council**

but will fall into Belfast City Council revised boundary post local government reform in 2015.

- 1.2 Members will recall that the site is owned in part by DoE NIEA and in part by DRD Roads service. The DoE NIEA site was to be transferred at nil cost, and DRD Roads site to be transferred at market value, to be determined by LPS. Prior to acquiring, a number of planning and title issues were to be resolved and terms were to be agreed with LPS and reported back to committee for approval.
- 1.3 As it relates to an acquisition of land, the terms will also require to be reported to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 It was previously intended to acquire the sites in two separate lots however it is now considered that it is more straightforward for DRD Roads to transfer their site to DoE NIEA. The Council will acquire the assembled site in a single lot from NIEA. NIEA has ministerial approval the whole site to the Council at nil value.
- 2.2 The deadline for construction of the park within the timeframe for 'Sharing our Space' Peace III funding has been extended to December 2014. Our investigations in advance of acquisition are largely complete however there is a complex title, which Legal Services is investigating.
- 2.3 Planning permission was granted in February 2014. Groundwork NI requires to begin construction as soon as possible, in order to meet the funding deadline of December 2014.
- 2.4 It is proposed that NIEA grants a temporary licence to Groundwork NI to undertake the construction once the transfer of the DRD Roads site to NIEA completes. Following the construction works, the Council will acquire the assembled site from NIEA, estimated to be January 2015 (just a few months in advance of falling within the Council boundary). This approach allows Groundwork NI to undertake the works within the timeframe while our title investigations proceed.
- 2.5 In order to draw down the funding, Groundwork NI is required to enter a Partnership Agreement with NIEA. As part of this, NIEA requires to confirm that maintenance arrangements are in place for the park. In view of this it is proposed that Heads of Terms for the acquisition be entered now with NIEA, which

will include an assurance on maintenance. NIEA are prepared to accept Heads of Terms on a 'subject to satisfactory title' basis.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 Financial

- No acquisition cost would be payable to DoE NIEA for the acquisition of the assembled site.
- The maintenance and operational cost of the park is estimated to be in the region of £31,000 per annum. This amount is not currently budgeted for Area South West and would need to be taken into account in the next budgeting round.
- NIEA has agreed to fund or treat Japanese knotweed, however this is not substantial, estimated to be in the region of £100 per annum.

3.2 Human Resources

Continued resource from Estates and Legal Services is required to complete the acquisition. Thereafter Parks and Leisure staff resource will be required for ongoing management.

3.3 Asset and Other Implications

A 4.49 acre site will be added to the Council's assets. The site will be held by Parks and Leisure.

4 Recommendations

4.1 The Committee is recommended to approve the acquisition as outlined above on the basis that:

- DRD Roads Service transfers its site to DoE NIEA who then permit Groundwork NI access to the site by a temporary licence for carrying out the works;
- The Council and DoE NIEA enter Heads of Terms to: agree to the acquisition on completion of the works; give assurance on maintenance; and on other such terms as agreed by the Estates Manager and Head of Legal Services.
- On completion of the works, the Council acquire the site (estimated to be January 2015) at nil cost, subject to satisfactory title."

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The Director reported that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee would, at its meeting on 21st March, in accordance with Standing Orders 46 and 60, be requested to approve formally the acquisition of the land.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Flooding at Properties Adjacent to the Cherryvale Playing Fields

The Assistant Director drew the Committee's attention to a flooding incident, which had occurred on 14th February, and which had affected a number of properties in the Knockeden Park area, adjacent to the Cherryvale Playing Fields. She indicated that one of the contributory factors which had been suggested by the local community was 'run-off' rainwater from the playing fields. She reported that officers from within the Department were investigating the matter and drew the Committee's attention to the following:

- there existed a differential level between the playing fields and the private gardens at Knockeden Park;
- there existed an outlet pipe, which, as far as could be established, was in working order; and
- there was a possibility that the water from the pitches was not being fed into the outlet pipe;

The Assistant Director indicated that further investigations would be required to ascertain whether there was a need for additional drainage to be installed to ensure that rainwater was fed into the outlet pipe. She indicated that, should such work be deemed necessary, the installation of additional drainage at the site could prove to be costly. Concern was expressed that the flooding incident had, potentially, a significant impact on the proposals which had been formulated for the development of a 3G pitch at the site. It was pointed out that the Council should assure itself that all issues which could have related to the flooding should be addressed prior to any work being carried out on the site in respect of the pitch.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and agreed that a further report in respect of the matter would be considered at the earliest opportunity.

Northern Ireland Commonwealth Games Council

The Director reported that a request had been received from the Northern Ireland Commonwealth Games Council seeking financial support to assist in the costs associated with sending the Northern Ireland team to the 20th Commonwealth Games, which would be held in Glasgow in July and August. He pointed out that over seventy countries would be participating in 2014 and reminded Members of the significant achievements of Belfast competitors at previous Games.

The Director reminded the Committee that the Council had, in 2002, 2006 and 2010, agreed to provide financial assistance to the Commonwealth Games Council to offset the costs associated with bringing the team to the Games. Such expenditure had been authorised under the specialised expenditure powers as set out within Section 37

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of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. Accordingly, he recommended that the Committee agree to make a contribution of £5,000 to the Commonwealth games Council.

Accordingly, it was

Resolved – That the aforementioned expenditure in respect of the Council's contribution to the Commonwealth Games Council be approved under Section 37 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, it being the opinion of the Council that the expenditure would be in the interest of, and would bring direct benefit to, the District and the inhabitants of the District, with the Committee being satisfied that the direct benefit so accruing would be commensurate with the payment to be made.

Dundonald Cemetery - War Graves Centenary Event

The Director advised the Committee that the Lagan Village Somme Society had been awarded a sum of £7,800 from the Heritage Lottery Fund which would be used to carry out research on those individuals who were buried within Dundonald Cemetery's 77 war graves, together with the two war graves contained within the Knock Burial Ground. In addition, he reported that the Society had received funding which would enable the refurbishment and upkeep of the aforementioned graves, permission for which had been granted by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. It was anticipated that the work associated with the refurbishment would be completed by July.

Accordingly, the Director reported that the Society had requested:

- permission to hold an event to mark the refurbishment of those 79 war graves, on a date to be determined; and
- permission to hold a Drum Head Remembrance Service on 3rd August, which would be attended by approximately 200 participants.

The Director indicated that the Society would be requested to adhere to the principles which had been established in 2011 to oversee the holding of commemoration events within Council properties and, accordingly, he recommended that the Committee accede to the request as outlined.

The Committee authorised the holding of the two events, subject to the following conditions:

- that there would be no displays of paramilitary emblems or regalia;
- that the Council's Events Policy would be complied with fully;
- that appropriate working methods would be used at the historical war graves;
- the Society would agree to adhere to an appropriate grave restoration and events schedule;

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- that the event and working practices would resolve all operational issues to the Council's satisfaction;
- that appropriate legal agreements were put in place;
- that the Society would meet all statutory requirements; and
- that sensitivities and respect for the graves would be observed.

Belfast City Cemetery - War Graves Commission

The Director reminded the Committee that the Council maintained two war grave areas within the City Cemetery. He indicated that representatives of the War Graves Commission had requested permission to plant a range of colourful plants along the edges of the graves to enhance the general amenity of the area. He outlined the benefits which the introduction of the plants would bring to the area and indicated that this proposal was, initially, for a pilot period of approximately one year. Accordingly, he recommended that the Committee grant approval to the War Graves Commission to landscape and maintain the graves, subject to the drafting of an appropriate legal agreement with the Town Solicitor, and that any further proposal to extend the arrangement would be considered after the pilot project had concluded.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

World War I - Commemorative Events

The Committee was reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 1st November, 2011, had endorsed a set of principles which would be used to oversee the management of events on Council properties to mark the centenaries of historic events which had occurred between 1912 and 1922. A copy of those principles had been circulated previously to the Committee and the Director outlined their principal aspects.

The Director indicated that the Department had received a number of enquiries from community groups seeking permission to host commemorative events to mark World War I, which took place between 1914 and 1918. He reminded the Committee that the Council's Events Policy stated that there was no requirement to seek prior approval for events which, amongst other things, did not last for more than three days; did not require the closure of all or a substantial proportion of the facility; would not involve the sale of alcohol; and would not be deemed to be controversial.

Accordingly, he sought the Committee's approval to delegate authority to him to consider and, if deemed to be in keeping with the principles which had been agreed by the Council at its meeting on 1st November, 2011, to grant approval for events taking place in departmental properties to mark centenaries associated with World War I.

The Committee acceded to the request and granted delegated authority to the Director as outlined.

Request for the Use of the Ormeau Park by 'Holi One'

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1. Relevant Background Information

The Director has been approached by a commercial company, Big Cat Group, to request the use of one of our parks to stage a 'Holi One' event, as part of a proposed 17 city tour of the UK and Ireland in 2014. Following consultation between the event organiser, City Park Managers and Officers from Building Control, Ormeau Park was identified as a possible location to stage this proposed event.

The proposed Holi One is a one day festival of colour and dancing. It is an over 18's only event with a site capacity of 5,000. The event is inspired by the Hindu Holi festival and involves the throwing of non-toxic, environmentally friendly powder paint in the air to celebrate diversity and equality. The admission fee is based on a scale of charges from £24.99 - £42.99. The festival has previously run successfully in Europe, Israel, South Africa and has previously been held at Battersea Power Station August 2013 and Manchester Heaton Park, August 2013.

2. Key Issues

- The festival is proposed to take place on Saturday 16 August 2014 at Ormeau Park. Gates will open at 10.00am with music starting and bars opening at midday. Bars will close at 22.00, music will turn off at 22.00 with the site closed and cleared of guests by 22.30.
- The site build for the event would begin 14 & 15 August, and the take down would be on 17 August.
- In addition to DJs, the event would include food and drink sales, performance art, visual stimulation, a stage and a large area for dancing and for throwing the powder paint.
- A section of the park would be used to house the festival village, this would comprise of a stage, marquee structures and back of house production area and toilet facilities.
- The event would be ticketed with adequate numbers of security staff present to ensure all persons present have purchased a ticket.

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- The event organiser would provide a full Event Safety Management Plan to Belfast City Council prior to the event.
- Following the conclusion of the festival, the event organiser will instigate a thorough cleaning of the park to remove the coloured powder.

3. Resource Implications

Financial

Big Cat Group would pay Belfast City Council for the hire of the hard surface at Ormeau Park at a cost of £1,175. In addition a fee of £5,000 will be charged for the event, based on the expected number of attendees. A Bond of Intent of £1,000 will be required to confirm the booking on approval of the event.

Human Resources

It would be proposed to have a duty Community Park Manager present on site on the day of the actual event from 10.00 a.m. until midnight – at a cost of £330. The cost of this will be added to the total fee.

Asset and Other Implications

A Reinstatement Bond of £5000 will be required to be put in place to cover the need to repair pitches.

5. Recommendations

If permission is granted for the event it will be subject to the Development of an Event Management Plan and satisfactory terms being agreed by the Director of Parks and Leisure and on condition that :

- The event organiser resolves all operational issues to the Council's satisfaction
- An appropriate legal agreement is prepared by the Town Solicitor
- The event organiser meets all statutory requirements including Health and Safety and licensing.
- The timely payment of the agreed charges and fee as required in the legal agreement.”

The Committee agreed to grant permission for the event subject to the conditions outlined.

Proposed Change of Use – Ballysillan Bowling Green

The Committee deferred consideration of a report in respect of a proposal to convert a bowling green to a putting green at the Ballysillan Park to enable further information to be provided in respect of extent of community consultation which had been carried out in this regard.

Ormeau Park and Falls Park – Welcome Art Signs

The Committee was advised that the Council's former Artist in Residence, Ms. E. Wheeler, had requested permission to erect two artistic 'welcome signs' – one at the Ormeau Park and one at the Falls Park – which had been produced by pupils at two Educational Resource Centres, that is, Park School, Ravenhill Road and St Gerard's School on the Upper Springfield Road. The Director indicated that the artist had been working with the pupils on a project which had been funded by the Shared Education Programme. He pointed out that the signs, images of which had been circulated for the Committee's information, would enhance the overall amenity of the parks and the associated erection costs would be £400.

The Committee granted authority for the art pieces to be installed in the Ormeau Park and the Falls Park.

Knocknagoney Linear Park – Art Project

This Director reminded the Committee of the extent of work which had been undertaken in conjunction with the local community to address antisocial activity at the Knocknagoney Linear Park. He reported that the Arts Council for Northern Ireland had awarded the Knocknagoney Area Forum a sum of £5,000 to oversee an arts project which would seek to enhance the appearance of the two lookout towers in the park.

He reminded the Committee that the towers had been the subject of vandalism in the recent past and the project would seek to work with the local community to explore issues associated with identity, wildlife, nature and the environment within the local park.

The Director outlined the plans which had been formulated to oversee the delivery of the project. He indicated that the aim of the project would be to tackle antisocial behaviour and to ensure that the park would become a central part of the community.

The Committee expressed its support for the project and agreed that the Council, in conjunction with the Knocknagoney Area Forum, should seek to secure additional funding to enhance the scope of the project. In addition, it agreed in principle that the finished art piece would be installed at the park's lookout towers.

Friends of Belmont Park – C.S. Lewis Art Proposal

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1. Background Information

2013 was the 50th anniversary of CS Lewis, his anniversary was celebrated very extensively with festivals, art projects, and community projects and involved a wide range of community and statutory bodies, in particular East Belfast Partnership Board. The Friends of Belmont Park are very eager to acknowledge Belmont Park’s importance in Lewis’ life by creating a permanent art installation which would be based on the Chronicles of Narnia. Lewis’ family home was in close proximity to Belmont park, Belmont Park is the area where we imagine he would have played and taken inspiration for his wonderful and fantastical stories.

The Friends of Belmont Park was formed by passionate individuals who reside locally and who see the further potential for enjoyment, inclusion and interaction within their park. Parks staff have worked extensively with Friends of Belmont Park over the past number of years and developed the park significantly with their help and guidance. The purpose of this report is to outline the proposed programme of art installations and to seek Committee support to explore funding opportunities.

2. Key Issues

The Friends of Belmont Park along with council officers’ aim to celebrate the heritage of the past through the link between CS Lewis’ well known literary works and the locality, to create a unique experience in the present that has longevity through the legacy it will leave for future park users.

This proposed programme will consist of a number of large art installations, to include:

- **Public art piece at Belmont Playground**
Friends of Belmont and council officers hope to generate discussion, interest and ownership of this large art project. Their aim is to develop a project within the playground that will engage with park users and children, allowing the local community to input ideas with a visual artist to create a mural.

Estimates Costs - Project £3000 - £5000

- **Carved wooden sleigh and wicker reindeer**
The sleigh first appeared in *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe* when Edmund found his way through the back of the wardrobe and stumbled upon a sleigh being drawn by two reindeer, driven by a small dwarf, whose passenger was Queen Jadis.

*Estimates Costs - Carved Wooden Sleigh - £3500
- Wicker Reindeer - £2000*

- **Vintage solar powered Lantern, bronze umbrella and parcels**
The lantern first appeared in *The Magician's Nephew* when it grew from an iron bar from a London lamppost. The fully grown lamppost was a feature in *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe* when Lucy met the Faun, Mr Tumnus for the first time as he pitter pattered through the snow carrying his umbrella and parcels.

*Estimates Costs - Vintage Lantern - £1000
- Bronze umbrella, small and large parcels - £5700*

- **Small sculpture art trail**
The development of 8-10 small scale sculptures to culminate in the creation of an arts historical trail within Belmont park. These small sculptures can take the form of many significant aspects of the chronicles, for example; Mr and Mrs Beaver (*The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*); Atlantean box containing uncle Andrew's rings (*The Magician's Nephew*) ; Aslan shaped as the small cat that saved and accompanied Shasta (*The Horse and his boy*).

Estimates Costs - £300 - £3000 per sculpture

- **Stone cast lion**
The Lion will symbolise Aslan, who with a song created Narnia. When the grass had rolled over the hills like a wave, arms of the trees rose from the earth like spikes and animals appeared from swollen humps in the ground Aslan exclaimed 'Narnia, Narnia Narnia, awake. Love. Think. Speak. Be walking trees. Be talking beats. Be divine waters.'

Estimates Costs - Stone lion £3000 - £10000

This programme will involve the local community, schools and park users to create art pieces that enhance the natural environment and are of benefit to park users, promoting and developing a visitor experience that is unique to our local parks.

3. **Resource Implications**

Financial

The estimated cost for this project is £45,000. The project costs will be finalised when funding is applied for.

Human Resources

There are no human resource implications attached to this report.

Asset and Other Implications

The life span of the final art pieces will vary and be dependent on the materials used and the effects of outside elements over the years.

4. **Recommendations**

Committee is asked to support, in principle, the proposed programme of art installations in Belmont Park subject to funding being secured for the programme.”

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

The Reverend Robert Bradford Memorial Park

The Committee was advised that the Council had been approached by South Belfast Alternatives seeking permission to erect three pieces of artwork, together with a welcome sign, at the Reverend Robert Bradford Memorial Park. The Director reported that the artworks had been prepared by a group of young people as part of a rehabilitation programme which had explored the culture and history of the wider Donegall Road area. He added that the costs of erecting and securing the pieces to the fences of the multi-use games area at the park would be £400.

The Committee reviewed the content of the artworks and granted permission for them to be erected at the park.

Requests for the use of the City of Belfast Playing Fields

Youth Soccer Tournament

The Committee was advised that a request to hold a soccer tournament at the City of Belfast Playing Fields had been received from Youth Soccer Tournaments Northern Ireland. The Assistant Director reported that the tournament would take place between 15th and 17th August. She pointed out that the dates requested would impinge

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upon the 'resting period' for the pitches and there could be a detrimental impact on the quality of the pitches ahead of the forthcoming season.

The Committee deferred consideration of the matter to enable further information to be ascertained in respect of the potential damage to the pitches, together with the feasibility of the tournament being relocated to another departmental property.

Irish Football Association

The Assistant Director reported that the Irish Football Association had requested the free use of the City of Belfast Playing Fields in order to host the inaugural Schoolgirls' Soccer Festival Day on Wednesday, 11th June. The Assistant Director indicated that the event would be attended by approximately 1600 pupils representing 22 Belfast schools. She indicated that the loss of revenue to the Council would be in the region of £1,150.

The Committee acceded to the request and granted the free use of the Playing Fields for the purposes outlined.

Chairman