

Parks and Leisure Committee

Thursday, 16th October, 2014

MEETING OF PARKS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor McKee (Chairman);
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Hendron);
Aldermen Robinson and Rodgers;
Councillors Attwood, Beattie, Convery,
Corr, Cunningham, Haire, Kyle,
Mac Giolla Mhín, McNamee, Mullan,
Ó Donnghaile and Verner.

Also attended: Councillor Craig
(Belfast District Council - Shadow).

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
Miss. L. Francey, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported on behalf of Councillors Hanna, Hussey, McCabe and Thompson.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 11th September were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st October, subject to the omission of the minute under the heading "Amateur Boxing Strategy - Start-up Club Funding" which, at the request of Alderman Stoker and with the permission of the Council, had been referred back to the Committee for further consideration.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Amateur Boxing Strategy - Start-up Club Funding

In the absence of Alderman Stoker, the Committee agreed to defer consideration of this item to its meeting in December.

City of Belfast Crematorium

The Director provided an update for the Committee on an article which had been published in a local newspaper and which had referred to cremation procedures at the City of Belfast Crematorium.

The Committee noted the Director's comments in respect of the matter.

Falls Park Pitch Development

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1. Relevant Background Information

The Committee is reminded that at its meeting on 12th June 2014 it received a copy of a report regarding proposed construction of a 3rd generation artificial turf pitch at Falls Park as part of the implementation of the Pitches Strategy which was adopted in March 2012. The report highlighted the concerns of some residents regarding the implications of the new facility. To help address those concerns it was suggested that an engagement exercise be undertaken with residents to identify the issues and agree ways in which these might be mitigated. The Committee Minute stated that:

After discussion, during which the Committee expressed concern regarding the cost of hiring external consultants to undertake a consultation exercise on behalf of the Council, it was agreed that an invitation be extended to representatives of the residents' group to attend the August monthly meeting in order to outline their concerns in respect of the proposed development, after which the Committee would give consideration to the best manner in which to undertake future consultation.

The Committee decision was amended at Council on 1 July 2014 to provide that an enhanced engagement process be undertaken between the Council and local residents in advance of the Committee in August.

The residents were unfortunately unable to attend the August meeting and asked that a deputation be received at the September meeting. The Committee subsequently received a deputation at its September meeting.

At its meeting in September the Committee was advised of plans to hold a public meeting on 23rd September. This meeting has taken place and was attended by around 120

people made up of residents and park users, including those involved with sporting clubs.

Those who were opposed to the development broadly confirmed the points made by the 'Love Falls Park' group who presented to Parks and Leisure Committee in September 2014.

The views expressed by those in support of the development emphasised the need in the area. Some general park users welcomed the extension to the opening hours and the safer environment provided by floodlighting and increased activity in the park.

Since the public meeting in September the Love Falls Park group has conducted a survey of park users and has written to the Chair of Parks and Leisure requesting a further meeting with Committee. Information from the survey has been made available to committee members.

A significant number of letters of support of the development from clubs and individuals has also been received emphasising the need for the facility in the area. Copies of letters of support have been provided to committee members.

Summation of the meeting and key issues

In essence the debate can be summed up as follows:

- There is opposition to the proposal to install a 3G pitch and its associated structures in Falls Park; the objections relate primarily to lack of consultation and the irreversible impact that the construction of the pitch and its associated fencing and floodlighting would have on the park and on the views of the Belfast Hills;
- There is support for the proposal on the basis that there is inadequate accessible playing field provision and facilities for young people in West Belfast and a consequent need for the facility;
- There are those who support the proposal but who have concerns around management of the facility post completion;

There appear to be three main options:

1. Reaffirm the original decision to install a 3G artificial turf pitch and associated structures as agreed in Falls Park to meet the need identified within the Pitches Strategy;

2. Reverse the decision and do not proceed with the construction of the pitch and re-invest in another site, identified within the pitches strategy;
3. Agree to a comprehensive consultation exercise across the whole of West Belfast.

2. Key Issues

In considering its position in respect of the above options, the committee may wish to reflect upon the following points:

Need for the facility

The pitches strategy has established a need for additional pitches across the city; in particular it identified a need for pitches to accommodate Gaelic Games. Whilst the pitches strategy was developed in part on the basis of a baseline survey from 2008, a recent review of this, whilst not yet complete, indicates that the situation has not improved.

The assessment has been challenged by those opposed to the proposal in terms of:

- a) The existence of alternative provision;
- b) The under utilisation of existing provision.

The baseline survey incorporates Council and other provision. The survey concludes that even when total provision is assessed there remains a short fall. In addition, the short fall excludes provision for training and casual use; it also assumes that all provision is accessible, which is not always the case.

The challenge has been made that usage is only 20-25% and therefore there is adequate spare capacity. However, this level of use must be viewed within the context of the opening times which are from 6:30 am through to 10 pm and peak and off peak usage.

The need for further consultation

It has been suggested that consultation and engagement has been inadequate and that further consultation is required across the whole of West Belfast.

This level of consultation would not be sustainable by the Council on a project basis. Views have been sought and have resulted in amendments to the original proposal. Through the consultation that has taken place we have established a range

of views on the proposal. In addition, the proposal remains the subject of a planning application, which is also subject to consultation, through which many of the issues have also been raised and will be considered in line with Planning Policy. It is difficult to see how further consultation would add further to the views already voiced. It is a matter for the Council to make a decision based on the information.

The impact on the park

There is little doubt that Falls Park stands out in an area which is densely populated and which has limited access to open space. Falls Park is intended to meet the needs of a range of people.

Members will be aware that a large section of the Park is devoted to playing field provision. It currently has 2 soccer pitches, 2 Gaelic Pitches and a small pitch used for training. In order to minimise the impact on the Park the proposal is to replace one of the natural turf Gaelic pitches with an artificial surface. It is proposed to surround the pitch with a 2.4m fence; floodlighting and ball stop nets. Planning approval has not yet been granted.

We believe that the proposal will have a minimal impact on the park and that it will still cater for the needs of a diverse user population.

Following a deferral by the Town Planning Committee in May 2014 and a meeting with residents, Planning service has requested further information on the proposed floodlighting scheme. The survey has now been completed and has been submitted to the Planning service for consideration.

Members are asked to note that any substantive change to the proposal at this time may result in the need for a new planning application and could result in a delay of up to 6 months. A change in location would essentially require the process to be recommenced with a delay of up to 18 months.

Management issues

Operationally the installation of the artificial pitch will increase use of the facility and will extend the opening hours of the park. Details around this will require further discussion with the operational managers.

During discussions with residents who are opposed, a number of concerns were raised. Some pointed to the increased noise

and lighting likely to result from the facility in the evening time. Floodlighting will be directed in such a way as to minimise impact on adjacent properties. Also a landscape plan to enhance tree cover can be prepared and implemented to further reduce the impact of the lighting and the noise. At this stage it is proposed that the facility will close at 10 pm.

However, the main issue of concern was that of on street parking. This is already an issue for local residents and there is concern that the intensification of use resulting from the artificial pitch will increase the problem.

Additional car parking will be provided as part of the Whiterock HUB project thus encouraging those with cars to access through Whiterock Close. However, it is evident that some users of the park whether those involved with using the playing pitches or indeed those who use the park for other passive recreation such as walking or jogging will still park in adjacent streets. It is proposed that this issue be addressed through a meeting with the Department for the Environment, the Council and residents from the adjacent streets the aim of which would be to establish options and then agree a set of measures to help mitigate this impact.

3. Resource Implications

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications at this time.

Resource Implications

There are no additional human resource implications at this time.

4. Equality Implications

There are no equality implications

5. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to consider the request from the Love Falls Park group to meet with Committee.

The Committee is asked to consider the options set out in the report and to reaffirm its original decision to construct a 3rd generation artificial turf pitch with associated fencing, floodlighting and changing pavilion, subject to statutory approvals and to direct officers to engage with residents to

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address concerns around management of the facility post completion.”

The Assistant Director outlined the principal aspects of the report and referred to the substantial number of letters which had been received by the Department, both in favour of, and opposed to, the development of the facility. Copies of the aforementioned letters were tabled for the Committee's information. In addition, she outlined the findings of a survey which had been undertaken by the objectors, that is, '#lovefallspark', copies of which had been tabled for information and which had been circulated to Members earlier that week. It was noted that a further request had been received from the objectors to address the Committee in respect of the findings of that survey.

During discussion, a number of Members pointed out that, whilst acknowledging the concerns of the objectors, the establishment of the 3G pitch within the park would provide tangible and wider community benefits. The Members indicated that the facility would enhance the amenity of the park and would act as a deterrent to vandalism since it would create a sense of civic ownership of the park. In addition, the point was made that sufficient consultation had been undertaken already by the Council and it was essential that the matter be resolved without delay.

Moved by Councillor Attwood,
Seconded by Councillor Mullan,

That the Committee agrees to delay proceeding with the development of the pitch at the Falls Park, for a further period of one month, to enable an additional public information session, which would be facilitated by the Council, to be undertaken with local residents.

On a vote by show of hands, two Members voted for the proposal and seven against and it was declared lost.

Accordingly, the Committee agreed to the following course of action:

- to note the contents of the survey as submitted by the objectors;
- not to accede to the request from the objectors to present the findings of their survey at a future meeting of the Committee;
- to endorse its decision to develop a 3G pitch within the Falls Park and to proceed forthwith with the project, subject to the granting of planning approval; and
- to facilitate a further public information session at which the wider benefits of the development would be emphasised to the local community.

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Support for Sport Development Grants

(Mrs. C. Moraghan, Sports Development Officer, attended in connection with this item)

The Committee noted a schedule of Support for Sport development grants, a copy of which was published on the Council's website, which had been approved by the Director in accordance with the authority delegated to him by the Committee.

Parks Events Small Grants Scheme

The Committee was reminded that approval had previously been granted to transfer the responsibility for the Parks Events Small Grants Scheme to the Central Grants Unit, with the Director being granted delegated authority to approve applications for funding. It was reported that, out of the 20 applications which had been received for support within the current tranche, 13 had met with the criteria and the Committee noted the schedule of grants which had been authorised by the Director under that scheme, a copy of which was published on the Council's website.

Active Communities – Correspondence from Sport NI

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1. Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 Active Communities (AC) is a Sport Northern Ireland (SNI) programme, delivered from April 2010 to March 2015, through 11 council groups/ consortia including BCC.**
- 1.2 In July 2014, SNI wrote to the Chief Executive asking BCC to make a formal response by the end of August, regarding our position on their proposal to seek a 30% financial contribution from Councils to AC programme costs from April 2015.**
- 1.3 Parks and Leisure Committee in August 2014 agreed the response to Sport NI's consultation and for officers to develop an affordable and value for money delivery model.**
- 1.4 Subsequently, Sport NI has written to the Chief Executive on 6 October 2014 advising that they were prepared to continue with an Active Communities investment from April 2015 for 12months.**

Their contribution will no longer provide support for management costs, which have been 10% of overall costs. They have asked that Council signals its intention to proceed on this basis no later than 07 November.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 The AC programme has proved to be a valuable coaching and community resource, which has led to high levels of participation in the city including under-represented groups, whilst providing opportunities for partnership working.**

From the period April 2010-March 2014, Sport NI has invested over £1.6m in the AC programme for Belfast. The Council annually contributes up to a maximum of £50,000. This is currently managed in one of 3 ways:

- Sub-contract to Belfast Community Sports Development Network;**
- Sub-contract to Disability Sport NI; and**
- Directly employing coaches through Leisure Services (participation).**

Quantifiable benefits include the delivery of 40,419 sessions, 44,500 coaching hours, involving 67,286 participants with 587,148 participations realised.

- 2.2 There are a number of options to be considered when reviewing the delivery of the AC programme going forward in the context of the Sport NI request including:**

Option 1: Do nothing and close the AC programme without 100% SNI funding;

Option 2: Continue 'as is' with Council providing 10% management costs to current delivery partners - £75,104 based on current Sport NI allowance;

Option 3: Continue 'as is' with no or reduced contribution for management costs to delivery partners, based on affordability within existing revenue budgets;

Option 4: BCC to co-ordinate in-house the management of the AC programme in partnership with sports governing bodies and community sports organisations which wish to directly employ the coaches, with no contribution to management costs.

As Sport NI have now agreed their position and clarified their offer of support, a full analysis of the risks and benefits of each option will now be undertaken and brought to Committee for its future consideration.

- 2.3 Issues to note in response to SNI offer of support**

Sport NI is seeking the Council's commitment to deliver the programme with funding for salaries, travel, training and equipment, as they consider options for the refresh of the programme. In a proposed response to SNI, there are a number of key issues to note:

- The programme is very positive and the Council supports its continuation;
- This is a timely opportunity to integrate and align the positive outputs and outcomes of the AC programme into the emerging community plan;
- Any contribution will be a growth area for the P&L budget and it is difficult to determine affordability at this stage in the estimates process. Currently, no allowance has been made for such a contribution.

2.5 It is proposed that the Council responds to Sports NI positively i.e. discounting option 1, indicating its intention to continue the programme in 2015-16.

However, further work is required to examine budgets with partners to determine which of options 2-4 the Council will be able to implement.

2.6 Officers will continue to work with Sports NI and determine a value for money option for consideration by Committee in due course. This will draw on the conclusions of the value for money and compliance report completed by Cavanagh/Kelly Chartered Accountants in July 2013, considered by the Parks and Leisure Committee in October 2013.

2.7 An affordable and value for money delivery model in light of the SNI offer of funding will be presented to Committee for its consideration in December.

3. Resource Implications

Financial: Option 2 has additional costs of £75,104 for management of the programme which is not allowed for in existing estimates.

Human Resources: Option 4 will involve the direct recruitment of up to 26 coaching staff on fixed term contracts

Asset and Other Implications: None

4. Equality Implications

There are no equality and good relations implications at this stage. Screening of any emerging proposal will be undertaken in the future.

5. Recommendations

Committee is asked to agree:

- That council advises Sport NI of its intention to continue the Active Communities programme on the terms of their offer**
- That officers undertake work to determine an affordable and value for money delivery model in light of the SNI offer of funding.”**

A number of Members indicated that it had been their experience that the community benefits which had been delivered through the Programme had not been spread equally across all parts of the City. It was suggested that the Council might re-examine its longer-term involvement in the Programme with a view to considering administering the scheme on an in-house basis.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Partner Agreements Delivery Framework 2014/2015

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1. Relevant Background Information

The Committee is reminded that at its meeting in August 2014 it received a report regarding proposals for a partner agreements framework for grass pitches. At that meeting the committee agreed to defer the report and requested party briefings.

2 Key Issues

As requested Party Briefings took place during September 2014 and Members welcomed the opportunity to discuss the proposals. They also made a number of comments on the draft proposals and these and how they will be addressed are outlined in the table below:

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Comment from Party briefings	How this will be addressed
Officers should continue to engage with existing FMA holders.	Engagement with current FMA holders has already taken place and officers will ensure that this continues throughout the process.
Future consultation will be extended to groups from incoming LGR areas and include a member's workshop.	The consultation process will include opportunities for groups from incoming LGR areas to respond. Information workshops will also be made available to all potential applicants to the new grant aid partner agreements programme, including those from incoming LGR areas.
Applicant support with sports development plans to be attached to the roll out of any new grant aid programme.	All applicants will be provided with appropriate levels of support with sports development plans attached to future programming. Details of how and when to access this support will be widely communicated. It is likely that this will be facilitated through a series of workshops across the city.
Future scoring criteria should be extended to include participation by groups from areas of socio-economic disadvantage.	The proposed assessment criteria and weighing allocates 60% to participation and social value as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Participation type – 25% · Participation – increased in usage – 15% · Demonstrate social value – 20%
Adequate notice to be given to existing FMA holders and sufficient time to be given to consultation on the new process.	Prior engagement meetings have already taken place with existing FMA holders and any future consultation will include them. The proposed timeframe for consultation accommodates league bookings for the 2014/15 playing season and a range of consultation opportunities and information workshops will be made available to all interested parties including current FMA holders.
It was requested that a report on demand/usage of council pitches as a means to factor in capacity for community based usage be brought to Committee.	A report which includes a review of the baseline study of demand for council pitches will be presented to this Committee in December 2014.

Members are reminded that a report will be brought to Committee in December 2014 outlining the proposed grass pitches that will be included in any future expression of interest for discussion and agreement by Members.

They are also reminded that the Committee decision to defer the report in August 2014 has resulted in an amended timeline

and that the consultation process on the new partner agreements framework, subject to Member approval, will now commence in November 2014. If Members agree that the next steps in the consultation process commence a final report outlining the consultation findings and seeking final agreement on the new partner agreements framework, will be brought back to Committee in January 2015.

3 Resource Implications

Financial

Resources required for independent facilitation of the consultation already included in revenue budgets. Existing FMA payments will be re-distributed in the form of grant aid for active sports development plans. The total figure available is being finalised.

Human Resources

Ongoing officer time from a range of officers across the department will be dedicated to implementation and ongoing management in the medium to long term.

Asset and Other Implications

The draft policy and new partner agreements will impact on the future management of assets. Legal services will continue to provide advice on this for Committee's consideration.

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

The policy will be screened in line with the Council's existing equality screening process.

5 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- Note the report and the comments from party briefings; and
- Approve the next steps in relation to the consultation on the partner agreements policy and process as set out in the Committee report (August 2014)."

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Antisocial Behaviour Programme - Update Report

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

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1. Relevant Background Information

The purpose of this report is to:

- Provide an overview of antisocial behaviour (ASB) incidents across parks and leisure facilities and electoral areas; and
- Update committee on the activities, interventions and future developments of the ASB programme.

Members are reminded that the objectives of the ASB programme are to:

- enhance the environment around Parks and Leisure facilities;
- develop education initiatives involving creative or supportive interventions to model acceptable behaviour around Parks and Leisure facilities;
- define enforcement as a deterrent against infraction of bye-laws or legislation; and
- develop sustainable interagency and inter-departmental networks and leading a partnership approach to reducing antisocial behaviour.

2. Key Issues

Trends in the available ASB incident data

The ASB Coordinator prioritises action and expenditure by collating evidence gathered through ASB incident reports.

The comparative data outlined in Table 1 below, shows a decrease in the total number of ASB incident reports in parks between May and August 2014 in comparison to May to Aug 2013. This is especially significant within parks in the five electoral areas of Balmoral, Castle, Laganbank, Oldpark and Victoria.

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Table 1: Comparison of the number of ASB incidents in Parks and Leisure Facilities across electoral areas between May to August 2013 and May to August 2014			
May to August 2013		May to August 2014	
Electoral Area	Total ASB	Electoral Area	Total ASB
Balmoral	111	Balmoral	17
Castle	108	Castle	34
Court	77	Court	95
Laganbank	959	Laganbank	276
Lower Falls	21	Lower Falls	29
Oldpark	290	Oldpark	93
Pottinger	151	Pottinger	195
Upper Falls	172	Upper Falls	262
Victoria	32	Victoria	21
Total	1921	Total	1022

The data identified a decrease in reports of:

- Litter
- Animal problems
- Street Drinking
- Criminal Damage, fire starting
- Rowdy and Nuisance behaviour, gangs gathering
- Soccer teams using pitches without booking or paying
- Off road motorcycling

This trend can be attributed to development of site specific displacement and diversionary activities; high visibility enforcement operations across the City; Park Wardens issuing fixed penalty notices for litter and dog fouling and working in partnership with PSNI to tackle street drinking. The programming of enforcement operations is planned in relation to evidence gathered from ASB incident reports.

The evidence available highlights a slight upward trend in the number of reports of ASB in parks within Court, Lower Falls, and more significantly within Pottinger and Upper Falls electoral areas.

The data identified an increase in reports of:

- Rowdy and nuisance behaviour: drunken behaviour, youths causing annoyance.
- Criminal and Environmental damage: throwing missiles, broken glass.
- Street Drinking.

The majority of incidents can be attributed to youths being attracted to contractors sites and causing damage during the development of the Connswater Community Greenway. The Greenway is comprised of a number of individual parks which may not merit an intensive response, however, resources will be allocated consistently throughout the Greenway to minimise the emergence of ASB.

An increase in incidents at the City Cemetery can be attributed to drinkers, burning fires, causing damage and breaking glass bottles.

ASB in park and leisure facilities

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).

Intensive Interventions

Planned intensive interventions are designed and introduced for parks that have more than 20 ASB incidents (see Table 2). The planned interventions span across all 4 objectives of the ASB programme: education, environment, enforcement and partnership. Interventions will resource events to stimulate community ownership and appropriate use (education) or involve the environmental and physical development of a site or schedule enforcement operations in partnership with existing council services and PSNI.

Table 2 outlines the parks that have had more than 20 incidents during May and August 2014 and the specific intensive interventions planned for the coming months.

Table 2: Specific interventions planned to tackle ASB in Parks with more than 20 ASB incidents	
Court	
Woodvale	The majority of ASB incident reports indicate Criminal damage and Vehicle nuisance. The Park manager will ensure damage is repaired and Park Wardens will work with Community Safety officers and PSNI to tackle inappropriate vehicle use.

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Laganbank	
Botanic	ASB incident reports indicate significant Rowdy/Nuisance behaviour, Street drinking and substance misuse. Using data from ASB reports a series of successful family fun days were programmed to displace ongoing ASB. This will continue using appropriate seasonal activities. Park Wardens will intervene to address rowdy behaviour and work with Community Safety officers and PSNI to tackle drinking and substance misuse
Oldpark	
Alexandra	ASB incident reports indicate issues of Rowdy/Nuisance behaviour such as fighting and throwing missiles. Following a range of successful events and interventions during the summer; the Outreach Manager and Park Manager will continue to engage with community groups to identify diversionary activities for young people. Park Wardens will report all incidents of rowdy behaviour to the PSNI.
Waterworks	ASB incident reports indicate issues of Rowdy/Nuisance behaviour such as drunken behaviour. Park Wardens will report all incidents of drunken behaviour to the PSNI and will work in partnership with Community safety resources to tackle public drinking.
Pottinger	
Ormeau	ASB incident reports indicate issues of Rowdy/Nuisance behaviour such as Fighting and drinking. Park Wardens will report all incidents of Rowdy behaviour to the PSNI and will work in partnership with Community safety resources to tackle public drinking.
Clara Street	ASB incident reports indicate issues of Rowdy/Nuisance behaviour such as verbal abuse and youths causing annoyance. Park Wardens will report all incidents of Rowdy behaviour to the PSNI. The Outreach Manager and Park Manager will continue to engage with community groups to identify appropriate diversionary activities for young people.
Orangefield	ASB incident reports indicate issues of Rowdy/Nuisance behaviour such as throwing missiles; Criminal Damage such as breaking fences and breaking locks. Park Wardens will report all incidents of Rowdy and criminal behaviour to the PSNI. The Outreach Manager and Park Manager will continue to engage with community groups to identify appropriate diversionary activities for young people.

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Upper Falls	
Falls Park	ASB incident reports indicate issues of Rowdy/Nuisance behaviour such as groups and gangs gathering, youths causing annoyance and drunken behaviour. Park Wardens will report all incidents of Rowdy behaviour to the PSNI. The Outreach Manager and Park Manager will continue to engage with community groups to identify appropriate diversionary activities for young people.
City Cemetery	ASB incident reports indicate issues of Rowdy/Nuisance behaviour such as groups and gangs gathering, youths causing annoyance, throwing missiles and drunken behaviour; Criminal damage such as setting fires; Littering such as broken glass. Park Wardens will report all incidents of Rowdy and criminal behaviour to the PSNI. The Outreach Manager and Park Manager will continue to engage with community groups to identify appropriate diversionary activities for young people. A decorative arts project has been initiated which will challenge ASB in the cemetery. Park Wardens will work with Community Safety officers and PSNI to tackle drinking.

Citywide ASB programme development

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

- **Ongoing development of family friendly activity programmes. These programmes are designed to draw in legitimate park users and displace rowdy groups.**
- **Ongoing site specific displacement, diversionary and engagement activities such as midnight soccer and sports coaching will be programmed in a variety of Parks, 3G facilities and in Avoniel LC.**
- **Park Wardens will issue fixed penalties in relation to litter and dog fouling offences in parks as part of an ongoing enforcement programme.**
- **Park Wardens will also work in close partnership with PSNI and Community safety officers during planned operations to tackle alcohol consumption and substance misuse in parks.**
- **Park Warden operations planning will support the ongoing Community safety joint operations with PSNI. It is intended that the opportunities for joint working in Park areas will also be shared with the DPCSP.**

3. Resource Implications

It is proposed that additional temporary resource is deployed for a period of up to 6 months to address issues in the Pottinger and Upper Falls areas and to provide local support for specific sites such as Woodvale and Dunville. The cost of the additional support using a combination of Attendants / Wardens would be in the region of £30,000.

The development of the programme and the additional resource will be facilitated through the agreed ASB budget 2014-2015 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 update report.”

The Director outlined the principal aspects of the report and answered a number of Members' questions in respect of the information which had been presented. He advised the Committee that the overall trend for antisocial activity within departmental properties remained downward. He added that the Department proposed, for a six-month period, to allocate additional resources to address an increase in antisocial behaviour within the Pottinger and Upper Falls areas.

Members paid tribute to Council staff who had been involved in initiatives designed to address antisocial behaviour. The Director stressed that the statistics, as presented, referred to incidents which had occurred within the period from May till August, and that recent occurrences referred to by Members, particularly those within the Cavehill Country Park, the Ormeau Park and the Orangefield Park, would be reflected within the next report. However, he indicated that officers would, in the mean time, investigate the incidents which had been referred to.

After further discussion, the Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Update on City Cemetery Decorative Arts Project

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 11th April, 2013, it had agreed to contribute a sum of £15,000 to enable the provision of decorative artwork within the City Cemetery. That decision had been taken on the understanding that the

groups which had proposed to undertake the work would seek to secure additional funding from other bodies and agencies and, should there remain a shortfall in the finance secured from other sources, the Committee would be requested to reconsider the matter. Accordingly, the Committee considered the following update in respect of the project:

“2 Key Issues

In November 2013 the Council submitted a Stage 1 application to the Arts Council of Northern Ireland’s Re-Imaging Communities fund (ACNI). The application was successful and ACNI agreed to contribute £3,400 to overall project costs of £4,170. Stage 1 of the process was to commission an artist facilitator to carry out community consultation around the siting of a decorative arts piece in the City Cemetery. The findings of the consultation will be used to inform an ACNI Stage 2 application for up to £50,000 to install community agreed art piece(s) in Belfast City Cemetery.

To oversee the process, a steering group was established and its members include: Aidan Crean, Cairde Páirc na Bhfál, Bobby Foster, Spectrum Centre, Tom Hartley, noted local historian and former Councillor and Billy Drummond, Greater Shankill Alternatives. Two officers from ACNI also sit on the steering group and officers from the Parks and Leisure Department act as secretariat.

The Steering Group commissioned an artist facilitator to undertake initial consultation around the proposed siting of public artwork within the City Cemetery. The consultation took place between May and September with a wide range of individuals and organisations including the relatives of those buried in the cemetery, staff, visitors, local schools, youth groups, history groups, community, political and religious organisations and arts and cultural organisations.

The consultation included the facilitator conducting interviews, leading group discussions, hold and attending events and through the use of comment cards available in the Cemetery.

On the whole, attitudes were positive and the majority of participants who raised questions about the siting of artwork within a cemetery, had specific types of artwork in mind, that they saw as not being fitting, or respectful. The concerns around artwork that would not be in keeping with the cemetery, were mainly focused on the following:

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- **Bright, garish colours, or colour/design that is out of keeping with site**
- **Murals, painted walls**
- **Artwork that isn't recognisable or identifiable**
- **Anything that can be damaged easily**
- **Big, shiny, cold steel structures**
- **Artwork that is not inclusive of the range of people represented within cemetery**
- **Overtly religious or political, excluding of some sections of the community**
- **Anything that can be climbed on, or encourage young people to sit around, or climb**
- **The Stage 1 consultation report has been finalised by the facilitator and presented to the Steering Group and the Arts Council. Based on the findings of consultation the Steering Group has agreed a theme of Life & Time for the artist's brief. This theme extends a welcome to all the people of Belfast and the world, of all faiths and none, to reflect on what has passed and celebrate what is to come.**

Location

Whilst the focus of this project to date has been the wall within the City Cemetery the public consultation has found that 'murals, painted walls' is not what is considered appropriate for the Cemetery.

The Arts Council has also raised concerns that the potential budget available (approx £64k) for this project is not sufficient to undertake a decorative arts project on the wall and that there will be ongoing maintenance issues.

Based on the feedback received through the consultation process the Steering Group are of the view that whilst dealing with the anti-social behaviour occurring at the wall remains a priority the Arts Council funding should be used to locate a decorative arts piece at a suitable location within the City Cemetery as it will add to the overall development of the site.

It is acknowledged that there are constraints on where a decorative arts piece can be located within the Cemetery and it is proposed that relevant officers consider the restrictions and select the most appropriate location.

Whilst there is not a requirement for the Council to provide match funding the Arts Council has indicated that our application for Stage 2 funding is looked on more favourable if we do so. A budget of £15,000 has been committed to this

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project and approximately £1,000 has been spent to date. It is proposed therefore that the remaining £14,000 be allocated to the decorative arts piece giving a total budget of up to £64,000.

It is proposed that alternate solutions are examined for dealing with the anti-social behaviour issues at the wall such as a planting scheme. It has been proposed the Steering Group that they work with the Council to identify possible funding sources to undertake this work.

Next steps and timescales

The next stage of the process is to move to Stage 2 and the potential granting of up to £50,000 to install community agreed art piece(s) in the City Cemetery. There is a very tight timescale around the process and the deadline for expenditure is 30 June 2015. The indicative timescale is:

Event	Day & Date
Advert for expression of interest	1. Tuesday 14th October 2014
Deadline for receipt of Expression of interest	2. Tuesday 11th November 2014
Shortlisting of artists based on expressions of interest	3. W/C 10th November 2014
Invitation letters to shortlisted artists to move to Stage 2 (and letters to unsuccessful artists)	4. Monday 17th November 2014
Deadline for detailed design phase of short listed artists	5. Friday 12th December 2014
Presentation of detailed design proposals e.g. maquettes to selection panel & artist interviews	6. W/C 15th December 2014
Anticipated delivery of project (normally 6 months)	7. By Monday 24th May 2015

Given the tight timeline it has been necessary to commence the process, although at this point no decisions have been made or commitments given. It is proposed that the Committee authorise the Director under delegated authority in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Committee

to, based on the recommendation of steering group, appoint the artist. If Members are inclined to do this, it is proposed that an update report will be brought to Committee early in 2015.

3 Resource Implications

Financial

£15,000 has been allocated to this project and approximately £1,000 has been spent to date. The remaining budget will be spent in Stage 2 and up to £50,000 will be awarded by ACNI for this stage.

Human Resources

There are no human resource implications at this stage.

Asset and Other Implications

This project will result in a piece of public art being located within one of our sites.

4 Equality and Good Relations Implications

The project has been equality proofed and we will ensure that potential artists are aware of the equality and good relations implications that they need to consider.

5 Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- (i) Note the update provided on the project;
- (ii) Agree that the scope of this project be amended so that the focus is not solely the wall and that the art piece be situated at a suitable location within the City Cemetery and the budget previously allocated for the wall be used for this art piece.
- (iii) Authorise the Director under delegated authority in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Committee to, based on the recommendation of steering group, appoint the artist; and
- (iv) Agree that officers continue to explore other sources of funding in relation to potential solutions for the anti social behaviour associated with the wall.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Probation Board for NI - Community Service Projects in Parks

The Assistant Director submitted for the Committee's consideration the undernoted report:

"1. Relevant Background Information

Members will recall the SP&R Committee report on 'Work Experience for Ex-Offenders' 22 August 2008, seeking approval to widen the scope of the council's work experience scheme, to include the provision of unpaid work experience placements for ex-offenders serving out community service orders which range from 40 to 240 hours.

Through the North Belfast DPCSP, the Parks and Leisure Departments ASB Coordinator has been asked by the Probation Board for NI (PBNI) to support the rehabilitation and re-integration of offenders by offering suitable unpaid Community Service (CS) work experience placements for ex-offenders within parks in North Belfast.

PBNI wish to use North Belfast parks on a pilot basis, for supervised CS projects. This pilot is part of a wider programme to tackle anti social behaviour in parks.

2. Key Issues

The role of the PBNI is to reduce crime and the harm it does by working with the courts, other agencies and partners to reduce re-offending and assist in integrating offenders successfully back into the community.

During the development of this pilot, PBNI have confirmed that:

1. PBNI officers will supervise and escort CS workers to and from the placement (under normal circumstances). Attendance on a CS project will likely involve working for one day per week between the hours of 10am to 4pm to carry out a defined programme of work.
2. PBNI will be solely responsible for managing the CS workers while on the park placement. They are contracted as part of their Court order to behave in a reasonable fashion and any breaches result in sanctions, including removal from placement, formal warnings, and in some circumstances a return to Court.
3. In addition to the Public Liability cover which the Council have in place, PBNI will be responsible for dealing with any claim from a CS worker resulting from

an accident directly attributable to carrying out CS tasks. CS workers are provided with Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and clear instructions on how to carry out tasks from trained PBNI Officers.

4. Appropriate and low risk tasks such as litter picking, painting, planting and any other environmental work can be carried out by CS teams. These tasks will be agreed prior to the start of the work programme with BCC Park Mangers and the ASB Coordinator.
5. PBNI clients will be under PBNI supervision at all times while working in the park. The PBNI supervisor will ensure that CS workers do not enter any previously agreed areas.
6. PBNI will undertake all risk assessment in relation to CS workers assigned to a park project including all activities undertaken while on park placement.
7. PBNI will ensure that all CS workers on park placements are not considered to present a significant risk of harm to others. Where an offender with a past history of violence is being considered for a placement, a discussion will take place with the ASB Coordinator to establish if their participation is appropriate.
8. Offenders convicted of any sexual offence will not be considered for park placements.

3. Resource Implications

Financial

As CS placements are unpaid there is no direct financial implication although there is a potential financial risk from any accident occurring in parks during the CS pilot. This risk will be managed through the development of a legal agreement between BCC and PBNI and through stringent risk assessments being carried out by PBNI.

Human Resource

There are no human resource implications as the CS projects are supervised by PBNI officers.

Asset and Other Implications

There are no assets and/or other implications contained within this report.

4. Equality Implications

There are no adverse equality or good relations aspects to this report. A focus on providing placement opportunities may assist in re-integrating offenders successfully back into the community and potentially reduce the risk of reoffending.

5. Recommendations

Members are asked to note the request from PBNI and the proposed use of North Belfast parks for Community Service projects on a pilot basis.”

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Tendering Exercise

The Director sought and was granted approval to initiate a procurement exercise for the provision of a catering service at the Belfast Castle, the Malone House and the Stables Restaurant. The anticipated duration of that contract, it was noted, would be for one year, with an option to extend that arrangement for an additional year.

It was noted that the tenders would be evaluated on both a cost and quality basis and awarded by the Director, under the Scheme of Delegation, to the most economically advantageous tenders which had been submitted.

Belfast Zoo – Funding Model

Arising from discussion, a Member suggested that the Council might wish to re-examine its future funding models to ensure that further savings could be identified and achieved. He referred particularly to the Belfast Zoo and pointed out that it was a unique facility which was used by people from across Northern Ireland. As such, a case might be made to central government that the facility, given its regional importance, might be entitled to direct government funding.

Noted.

Pitch Refurbishment Programme

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Relevant Background Information

The purpose of this report is to let members know about the successful achievement of the Pitch Refurbishment Programme and the proposed work to be carried out 2014/15.

We have 125 grass sports pitches in the department. During periods of wet weather the quality of the surface of these grass pitches deteriorates leading to pitches being cancelled when the drainage can no longer remove the water from the surface fast enough.

The purpose of the Pitch Refurbishment Programme was to improve the quality of drainage of our grass pitches and as a result their quality of play. It was also intended to undertake

the works in planned and structured manner to avoid the need to close pitches; to maintain quality and to make the most efficient and effective use of resources.

A survey of all our grass sports areas including Football, Gaelic, Cricket, Rugby, and Golf was carried out. From this survey a prioritised improvement programme was produced and drainage work was carried in order within each year's available budget.

2.0 Key Issues

The Committee is asked to note:

1. Works which have been completed in 2013/14
2. A list of works to be undertaken in 2014/15

It is intended that annual surveys will be conducted to establish the condition and to inform the programme in future years;

In addition, it is intended to extend the condition survey to include existing artificial turf surfaces with a view to future replacement and ensuring that adequate resources are put in place. 2013 saw the first year of the programme with the following drainage works being carried out:

- City of Belfast Playing Fields No 2 Cricket area, outfield drained.
- Clarendon Playing Fields pitch No 1 drained.
- Grove Playing Fields pitch No 8 and area to the back of pitches 1 and 2 drained.
- Blanchflower Playing Fields Stadium pitch and pitch number 2 drained.

This year's programme has started and the following sites will have drainage improved:

- Clarendon Playing Fields pitch No 2 drained.
- Blanchflower Playing Fields the top level is being drained and a new synthetic cricket wicket has been installed on the lower level between Pitches 2 and 3.
- Alderman Tommy Patton Playing Fields Pitch No 4 is being drained.
- Orangefield Playing Fields the top half of the playing area is being drained.
- Victoria Park the area between 6 and 7 Pitch is being drained.
- Wedderburn Park pitches 3 and 4 are being drained.

- Suffolk Playing Fields the training area next to the changing rooms is being drained.
- City of Belfast Playing Fields pitches 1 and 2 in the cricket outfield of the No 1 table are being drained.
- Lenadoon pitch to be drained.

Members are asked to note that the work on specific sites will normally be phased to enable some matches to continue to be played.

This drainage work will improve the quality of the pitches, make them more resilient to wear, and will reduce the number of times they will have to be called off due to wet weather conditions and increase the revenue from the pitches.

The new synthetic cricket wicket replaces the cricket table at Blanchflower that was no longer fit for purpose. This will allow summer football and cricket to be played on the site at the same time increasing the utilisation of the site and the service provided to the public.

Members will be aware that the Council has agreed a Pitches Strategy which will see the delivery of 5 new artificial turf pitches and 5 replacement changing pavilions at a number of sites across the city. The combined efforts of the pitch development plus the drainage programme will result in a much improved service to those who wish to take part in pitch based sporting activities.

Discussions are held with the Project Team implementing the pitches strategy to minimise disruption to facilities owing to works.

Discussions are also held with the Project Team implementing the Multi User Games Area (MUGA) Programme to ensure that projects are aligned, such as Playing Fields at Clarendon.

3.0 Resource Implications

Financial

A budget of £125,000 has been allocated from the non recurring capital fund to carry this work out per annum for a 5 year programme.

Human Resources

There will be no additional human resources required.

Asset and Other Implications

None at this stage

4.0 Equality Implications

There are no implications at this stage.

5.0 Recommendations

Committee is asked to note the works carried out to date and the proposed priorities for 2014/2015.”

In response to a Member's question, the Director confirmed that a second baseline survey had been undertaken and that, together with its implications for future phases of the Pitches Strategy, would be presented to the Committee in due course.

In response to further Members' questions in respect of drainage problems which had been reported at pitches within the Ballysillan Playing Fields and the Northlink Playing Fields, the Director indicated that he would update the individual Members in respect of the plans to address the issues raised at those sites.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Multi User Games Areas

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1. Relevant Background Information

The Committee is reminded that at its meeting on 13 February 2014 it received an information report regarding the Multi User Games Area (MUGA) Programme. This programme had previously been agreed through Strategic Policy & Resources (SP&R) at its meeting in January 2014.

The report highlighted that a MUGA is suitable for a variety of informal sports and that due to their nature the majority are accessible and free to use.

The report outlined that a number of refurbishments had been completed under Phase 1A of the programme; and outlined proposals for Phase 1B; these included Springfield Avenue (New Build); Annadale (New Build); and Clarendon Playing Fields (New Build). Members are asked to note that Navarra Place, located off the Whitewell Road was subsequently added to the list as a potential new build.

The report referred to the development of a refurbishment programme comparable to the Playground Improvement Programme; it also referred to the need to develop a policy framework which would form a basis for decision making regarding new build proposals.

The purpose of this report is to update the Committee in respect of:

1. Phase 1B;
2. The refurbishment programme; and
3. The development of a policy framework

2. Key Issues

Update on Phase 1B

Development work on Phase 1B is continuing. The current position in respect of each is as follows:

Annadale: A planning application has been lodged and work is continuing to regularise the land ownership. The land ownership matter will need to be resolved prior to work commencing.

Clarendon Playing Fields: Ground surveys have been commissioned and are underway. A design team has been appointed and detailed design work will now commence on the project;

Navarra Place: A survey has been carried out to establish the extent of underground services in place and the implications for development work. It is intended to facilitate a workshop with local residents to establish a concept plan for the site. This plan will inform the development of the project.

Springfield Avenue: Following representations from community representatives a meeting will be scheduled to discuss the nature of the facility required at this location. Members are asked to note that there is planning approval in place although there is a restrictive condition in place and further consultation with residents will need to take place regarding this.

MUGA Refurbishment Programme

A condition survey of existing MUGAs has been completed and a preliminary list of projects has been presented to the Oversight Board for consideration. A report will be submitted

to SP&R for approval and an information report will be brought to the Parks and Leisure Committee to outline the Programme.

Policy Framework

This is work in progress in terms of the technical elements around provision and construction. However at this early stage it is felt that Members should be given an opportunity to direct this work. At this stage the Committee is asked to consider its views on the following high level parameters of a MUGA:

- 1. A MUGA is a hard-surfaced space set out for ball games such as football, basketball, tennis etc. The facility is accessible without booking and free to use.**
- 2. It is intended primarily for informal use as kick-about areas or for other informal recreation, (with the opportunity for some programmed activities) and are not primarily developed for training purposes for local football teams.**
- 3. It is acknowledged that a MUGA may not meet the needs of the local community in so far as there may be demonstrable demand for 3G surfaces to facilitate match play or training. It was proposed that where such a case is made consideration for investment should be in line with the Pitches Strategy and the accompanying baseline profile. It was proposed that these requests be subject to Capital Programme process.**
- 4. MUGAs are typically managed by Council staff and opened, closed and inspected in a way comparable to playgrounds.**
- 5. In order to ensure wide community use it is proposed that in future proposals for new builds that the business case should include a programme of activity which would:**
 - Promote its use to meet a range of health and well being indicators and encourage use by a wider demographic profile than anecdotally may be the case; and**
 - Encourage greater community ownership of and involvement with the investment.**

6. Consideration is given to establishing a minimum standard for a MUGA in terms of size, surface, fencing and lighting.

7. Consideration is given to establishing a catchment / hinterland area to help establish potential gaps in provision and inform investment decisions.

3. **Resource Implications**

Financial Implications

This report is for noting and has no financial implications.

Resource Implications

There are no additional human resource implications at this time.

4. **Equality Implications**

There are no equality implications

5. **Recommendations**

The Committee is asked:

1. To note the update in relation to Phase 1B;
2. To note the current position regarding a draft refurbishment programme; and
3. Comment on the high level parameters sets out above;
4. Agree that Officers continue to work towards the development of a policy framework to inform future MUGA development.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Draft Allotment Policy

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

The Committee considered the following report and associated appendix:

“1 **Relevant Background Information**

Belfast City Council has a long history of designing, delivering, managing and facilitating allotment provision and currently provides 290 plots across seven sites in Belfast: Annadale, Ballysillan, Belmont, Blythefield, Musgrave, Whiterock and Woodvale allotments. However, demand for allotments in Belfast council areas outweighs supply with 373

people currently on site waiting lists and evidence from Local Government Reform (LGR) boundary extension indicates that this is likely to increase.

The purpose of this report is to:

- Update members on improvements to the internal co-ordination, management and administration of allotments
- Present updated draft policy, process and procedure for:
 - allotment allocation;
 - reviewing and streamlining current allotment waiting list; and
 - the guidelines and requirements for use of allotments in Council property - code of conduct.

The draft policy, process and procedure have been developed in consultation with key officers from within the Parks and Leisure department and advice and assistance has been sought from other key sections across the council, including Health & Safety Unit and Legal services.

2 Key Issues

An operational management working group was set up to review, recommend and implement improvements to the internal co-ordination, management and administration of current allotment processes, policies and procedures used. These will be subject to review and evaluation over time and as relevant criteria arise on a case by case basis.

Allotment allocation process

An effective and efficient process map has been developed that is focused on customer requirements and delivered via a single point of contact i.e. the Open Spaces and Active Living (OSAL) Unit, who will be responsible for the co-ordination and administration of this process, which was agreed by the Parks and Leisure Committee on the 13 September 2012.

The allotment allocation process has been broken down into three distinct processes: allotment request; recurring payments and review and inspection.

Operational on-site responsibility for allotments will still reside with the Community Parks Managers, including regular site inspection schedules. Initial and recurring payment for allotments will remain with business support. The allotment

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allocation process will rely on close liaison and communication between OSAL, Community Parks Managers and business support staff.

As part of the allotment allocation process map new criteria for accepting applications for allotment plots has been introduced with applications accepted from Belfast residents only.

A standard application form has been developed with on-line capabilities.

Allotment waiting list procedure

In light of long waiting lists for allotments, with minimal turnover and the likely increase in demand for allotments from residents of incoming areas as part of Local Government Reform (LGR), to best meet the needs of the council an updated streamlined draft allotment waiting list procedure has been developed.

Current allotment waiting lists have been reviewed and cleansed. Initial results reveal that as part of stage 1 of the allotment waiting list procedure, the council is proposing to write out to potentially 35 people to inform them that they have been removed from our waiting list due to limited availability and increased demand.

Table 1: Allotment waiting lists

Site	Belfast	*LGR	Outside New Belfast	Total
<i>Annadale</i>	164	10	21	195
<i>Ballysillan</i>	9	0	1	10
<i>Belmont</i>	120	2	11	133
<i>Blythfield</i>	3	0	0	3
<i>Musgrave</i>	29	1	2	32
Total	325	13	35	373

**LGR extended boundary residents will be included in the final Belfast list.*

Guidelines and requirements for use of allotments – code of conduct

The council has no statutory duty to provide allotments. However, the Allotments Act (NI) 1932 does enable councils to provide, at its discretion, allotments for use by residents in their areas. Where the council does provide allotments it is

required, under the legislation, to make regulations regarding their management and control.

The current guidelines and requirements for use governing the operational management and control of allotments have been updated based on good practice research, legal and health & safety advice (see updated regulations in Appendix 3). Clause 3.7.1 and 3.7.2 of the new guidelines and requirements for use state that:

- Pets (except for Guide Dogs) and livestock (Livestock refers to any breed or population of animal kept by humans for a useful, commercial purpose for example cattle, pigs, horse, poultry etc.) must not be brought/ kept on site; and
- Beehives are not permitted on site.

This is something that will be reflected in the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2011 in respect of dog control issues for the council. All current and new allotment ploholders will be asked to sign, date and return the guidelines and requirements for use of allotments and returns kept on file.

3 Resource Implications

Financial

No financial implications have been identified.

Human Resources

Delivery of the improvement activities associated with allotments will require dedicated officer time which will be reflected within annual service plans, area plans and separate unit level plans.

Asset and Other Implications

None.

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

The updated process, policies and procedure will be subject to the council's equality screening process.

5 Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note improvements to the internal co-ordination, management and administration of allotments;
- Agree the updated draft process and procedure for:
 - allotment allocation;

- reviewing and streamlining current allotment waiting list; and
- Review and agree policy guidelines and requirements for allotment use.

Appendix

Allotment waiting list allocation procedure

1. All non-Belfast residents on existing allotment waiting lists will be contacted in writing by the department to advise that the council cannot consider applications for allotments from non-Belfast residents and therefore they are being removed from the waiting list.
2. All remaining Belfast residents⁽ⁱ⁾ on the waiting lists will be contacted in writing asking them to confirm either, that:
 - a. they wish to remain only on the waiting list for a plot at their preferred site;
 - b. they are willing to prioritise from 1 - most preferred to 3 - least preferred site location from those sites that are currently in existence;
 - c. they are no longer interested in a plot; or
 - d. the named applicant no longer resides at the address.
3. Following receipt of replies by the date specified (6 weeks) all responses are amalgamated and a single prioritised master allotment waiting list is compiled and managed centrally within the Open Space and Active Living (OSAL) Unit of the Parks and Leisure Department. If a response isn't received within the specified time the resident will be automatically removed from the waiting list.
4. Those residents who have been on waiting lists for a preferred site will retain their position for that site until a plot becomes available. If they are offered and accept a plot at their alternate preferred site location they will automatically lose their position at their preferred site location.
5. Allotment sites that have received external funding⁽ⁱⁱ⁾ and are subject to meeting specific funding criterion, will be excluded from the prioritised list of allotments outlined in number 2 above.
6. No new applications will be accepted from the date of committee approval until after the closing date for receipt of replies from those currently on the waiting list.

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7. **If the council develops a new allotment site, which is not confined to meeting external funding criterion, in the first instance those people on the waiting list the longest will be contacted to ascertain their interest in taking a plot at this site before new names are added to the master list for this site. If they accept a plot at the new site, they will automatically lose their position at their preferred site location.”**

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- ii** **Belfast residents include LGR extended boundary residents currently on the waiting list**
 - iii** **Whiterock and Woodvale externally funded allotments**

In response to a number of Members' questions, the Neighbourhood and Development Manager provided clarification on a range of issues. In addition, she undertook to re-examine the Council's eligibility process which enabled individuals to be placed on the waiting list and indicated that she would consider the Council's Pricing Policy insofar as it related to allotments.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Comber Greenway Proposed Bridge

The Committee considered the under noted report

“1. Relevant Background Information

The Committee is asked to note that Council Officers have been made aware of a proposal by Castlereagh Borough Council to construct a bridge which will connect Dundonald Leisure Park and the Greenway. This is part of a larger development planned for the Leisure Park. There have been discussions with Council Officers from Castlereagh and these are continuing.

Castlereagh has managed to secure funding for this project however it is time bound and the work must be at least underway by the end of March 2015 in order to secure the funding. A Planning application has been lodged and a procurement exercise has been undertaken.

The project remains at risk owing to the time constraints and the outstanding planning consent. However, the project does impinge on an element of land owned by Belfast City Council. Essentially the proposed bridge will be suspended above the Council's land and will require foundations to be installed on Council land.

As previously noted discussions are ongoing and the detail needs to be clarified. However, the implications for the Council are as follows:

- Council consent is required to carry out ground survey;
- The area is mostly made up of trees and thick hedging, it is possible that some of this will need to be removed to facilitate ground surveys and subsequent construction (Council officers are working with Castlereagh Council to minimise the impact
- The area below the bridge will need to be maintained post construction to ensure that it does not interfere with the bridge structure or bridge users and to remove any litter which may be dumped from the bridge;

Clarification and agreement with Castlereagh has yet to be achieved on a number of issues around the terms of proposed legal agreements associated with the works, future use of the land and the creation of rights over the land.

Normally it would be premature to bring this report to Members, however, given the time restrictions it is considered prudent and appropriate to inform members of the proposal and to seek their agreement in principle to work with Castlereagh Borough Council, subject to detailed arrangements to be agreed and approval through Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

2. Resource Implications

Financial Implications

This report is for noting and has no financial implications at this stage.

Resource Implications

There are no additional human resource implications at this time.

4. Equality Implications

There are no equality implications

5. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

1. note the report;
2. agree in principle to authorise officers to enter into further detailed discussions with a view to agreeing terms which would minimise the impact on Belfast City Council land and budgets while allowing Castlereagh's project to proceed subject to:

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- Approval by SP&R of the agreed terms .
- The necessary legal agreements being prepared by the Town Solicitor ; and
- The necessary statutory approvals being in place in relation to the bridge installation and associated works.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Connswater Community Greenway

The Committee considered the undernoted Code of Conduct for the Greenway:

“Connswater Greenway - Code of Conduct

Cyclists

Cyclists should keep left and pass right at a safe distance and slowly enough that pedestrians can be avoided if they suddenly change direction.

Cyclists must give way to pedestrians at all times. Always cycle with respect for other users and acknowledge those who give way to you.

Cyclists must have a bell to warn others of their approach. Two polite tings are recommended.

Cyclists should not ride at speed and should ride in a manner that is appropriate to the conditions of the path, taking care to slow down near blind spots, corners etc.

Be seen – it is recommended that cyclists wear high visibility clothing which will assist with making their presence known to users with visual and hearing impairments. It is also recommended that British Standard approved lights are used in low visibility conditions.

Off track cycling is not permitted unless on a specific designated cycle track.

Cycle events - are not permitted unless prior approval has been agreed and granted.

Pedestrians

Walkers should keep to the left and allow others to pass easily on the right.

Walking and running groups should be aware of the shared space and should not obstruct other users.

Dog Owners

Dogs must be kept under control at all times.

Extended leads should not be allowed to impede other users.

Dog walkers must remove dog excrement and dispose of the waste appropriately i.e. take home or deposit in the nearest litter bin. Failure to do so may result in an £80 fixed penalty notice being issued. Do not throw bags anywhere along the walkway

Dogs should not be allowed to enter any waterways

All Users

Please be polite and considerate to other users. Thank other users who allow you to pass or overtake. Give way to others and allow them to pass safely.

Pedestrians should be given priority on the walkway.

All users should keep to the left and allow others to pass on the right.

All users should be mindful of ease of access for disabled users and avoid blocking the walkway when stopping. Consideration for elderly and disabled users should be shown at all times.

Children must be supervised and kept safe at all times.

Please dispose of litter appropriately i.e. deposited in the nearest litter bin or take it home with you.

Help protect wildlife. Do not leave debris anywhere on the walkway or disturb nesting sites. Do not disturb, damage or interfere with trees, flora and fauna.

All users should adhere to any signage or walkway markings.

Consumption of alcohol is not permitted.

Limitations of use

Motor vehicles/motor cycles are not permitted on the walkway with the exception of mobility scooters for the use of disabled or elderly people and essential maintenance vehicles.

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Swimming and entering of waterways is not permitted.

Horse riding is not permitted on the walkway.

Shooting is not permitted.”

The Committee agreed, subject to further consultation with the local community:

- to endorse the introduction of the Code of Conduct in support of the existing byelaws; and
- to authorise the development of future byelaws to oversee Phase 2 of the construction of the Greenway which would be applicable also to any future development at the site.

‘Projectsfb’ Food and Drinks Festival

The Committee was informed that a request had been received from Project Street Food Belfast for the use of the Cathedral Gardens for a three-day and two-night food and drinks festival, which was scheduled to take place from Friday 31st October till Sunday 2nd November, 2014. ‘Projectsfb’ would be seeking the free use of the Gardens from 12:00 noon till 1.00 a.m. on both Friday and Saturday, with the event running from 12 noon to 6 p.m. on Sunday. It was reported that the preparation and dismantling operation for the event would be carried out between 27th October and 3rd November.

The Committee acceded to the request for the free use of the Gardens, on the conditions that:

- the event organiser resolves all operational issues to the Council’s satisfaction;
- that all health and safety requirements are met, including the submission of an event management plan, risk assessments and the obtaining of sufficient public liability insurance; and
- the event organiser meeting with all statutory requirements including entertainment licensing.

The Committee agreed further that specified parts of the Gardens would be closed to the public to enable construction and dismantling work to be undertaken.

‘Row on Row’ Remembrance Events

The Director reported that the Department had received requests from the Dr. Pitt Park Centenary Committee and the Royal British Legion to hold memorial events in the Pitt Memorial Park and the Shankill Memorial Garden respectively. Both events would commemorate the 100th anniversary of the commencement of World War One and would take place from 1st November until the anniversary of Armistice Day on 11th November. The community-based ceremonies would seek to remember the various battles of the War and those individuals who had died during that period.

Resolved – that the Dr. Pitt Park Centenary Committee and the Royal British Legion be granted permission to hold the events as outlined, subject to both organisations adhering to all health and safety requirements, to the submission to the Council of an event management plan and risk assessment and to the securing by the organisers of adequate public liability insurance.

Active Belfast – Provision of Cycle Education

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1. Relevant Background Information

Members will be aware that the Council has been leading on the development and implementation of the Active Belfast approach, as part of the Belfast Strategic Partnerships work to address inequalities within the city.

The Active Belfast approach is also a key strand of the Council’s Leisure Transformation Programme, providing significant opportunities to work collaboratively with a range of partners, with the outcome of improving the health and wellbeing of people in Belfast.

A key area of work within the Active Belfast approach has been to support the development of ‘every day activities’, which encourage increased levels of physical activity, while being simple to incorporate into daily routines, activities such as walking and cycling.

The introduction of the Belfast Public Bike Share scheme represents an opportunity to build on this work, by addressing some of the practical barriers to cycling within the city, including bike ownership and knowledge of bike maintenance.

However, to unlock the full potential of the Belfast Public Bike Share scheme, and to reach individuals who currently cycle infrequently or consider cycling but do not, action is required on other key barriers, such as cycling skills, confidence and route knowledge.

2. Key Issues

- The main barrier preventing people from cycling is the ‘subjective safety’ problem; the perception that our roads are too dangerous, largely due to the volume and speed of motor traffic. This view is significantly higher with females, who currently only make up 1 in every 6 cyclists on the road.**

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- For any enhancement of the cycling infrastructure to be successful, it has to be accompanied by training, information and education programmes. The provision of adequate cycle training is vital to encourage greater uptake of cycling. Training helps to develop cycling skills and confidence, but also supports the development of responsible on-road cycling.
- The Department for Regional Development have agreed to meet the full amount of the capital costs for the Belfast Public Bike Share scheme, £1,140,000. There is no provision for revenue costs including the cost of cycle training.
- Stakeholder consultation on the Belfast Public Bike Share scheme has highlighted cycle training as essential in supporting individuals who lack of the confidence or skills to cycle on the streets of Belfast, to sign up to the scheme.
- Active Belfast is currently supporting the Public Health Agency in the development and implementation of an Active Travel (walking and cycling) Workplaces programme, focusing on a small number of large city centre workplaces. There is scope to extend the cycling element of this work to other employers within the area covered by the Belfast Public Bike Share scheme.
- Through the 'Support for Sport' scheme, Council provide funding towards training and education programmes around the areas of sport and physical activity. The aim of this work is to enable more people to become active. Currently, there is an under allocation within this scheme, following two separate calls for applications.
- It is proposed that the Committee agree to the re-allocation of £20,000 from within the current Support for Sport revenue budget, to the Active Belfast Partnership, to provide cycle training and education programmes, which will support the implementation of the Belfast Public Bike Share scheme.

3. Resource Implications

Financial

The provision of £20,000 from the Support for Sport scheme to the Active Belfast Partnership, to support the Belfast Public Bike Share scheme. This represents a re-allocation of provision within existing revenue budgets.

Human Resources

There are no human resources implications.

Asset and Other Implications

None.

4. Equality Implications

None

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that Committee note the content of the report and agree to the provision of funding to the work of the Active Belfast Partnership, as outlined in the report.”

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Land Adjacent to Finlay Park

The Committee was reminded that the Council had undertaken significant refurbishment work at the Finlay Park, which was situated off the Whitewell Road. The Director reported that, subject to funding, it was anticipated that further improvement work would be carried out at the entrance to the park. However, to enable that work to take place, he reported that the Department would be seeking to acquire a small plot of land at 93 Whitewell Road and to resolve an encroachment matter onto Council land by the resident of 95 Whitewell Road.

The Director reported that the encroachment issue related to the use, for storage purposes, of approximately 28 square metres by the owner of a shop at 95 Whitewell Road. He pointed out that, since that encroachment had been ongoing for a number of years, the occupier could possibly stake a claim for possession of all or part of the land. Accordingly, the Committee was advised that it was being proposed that the occupier of 95 Whitewell Road would be compensated, for storage purposes, with a small portion of Council-owned land to the rear of his property, adjacent to Finlay Park. Such a measure would enable the Council to repossess the land adjacent to 95 Whitewell Road.

The Committee agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that, in accordance with Standing Order 60, it would agree to endorse the following course of action:

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- to acquire the land adjoining 93 Whitewell Road for a consideration fee of £500, together with meeting all reasonable costs, subject to legal agreement; and
- to transfer, for storage purposes, a small portion of Council-owned land adjacent to Finlay Park into the ownership of the occupier of 95 Whitewell Road. It was agreed also that the Council would provide a fence at the transferred land and pay all reasonable legal costs.

Tree Planting Ceremony at the Mary Peters Track

The Committee acceded to a request from the Woodland Trust to plant a number of trees at the Mary Peters Track to commemorate Dame Mary Peters tenure as Lord Lieutenant of Belfast, subject to the contractor providing sufficient public liability insurance.

Centenary Fields Programme

The Director reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 12th June, it had agreed to participate in the Centenary Fields Programme. That programme, which was overseen jointly by the Royal British Legion and the Fields in Trust organisation, sought to create a living legacy to commemorate the sacrifice of those who gave their lives during World War One. It was reported that, after consultation with the political parties on the Council, both the Belmont Park and the Strangford Avenue Playing Fields had been nominated for consideration. However, the Committee was advised that a restrictive covenant precluded the use of the playing fields for any other purpose and, therefore, the facility would not be eligible for consideration.

Resolved – that the Belmont Park be dedicated as a Centenary Field as part of the Centenary Fields Programme.

Deed of Dedication - Orangefield Playing Fields

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 12th January, 2012, it had agreed to formulate a Deed of Dedication for approximately 35 acres of land within the Orangefield Playing Fields. That land would be redesignated as part of the Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge, which was administered by the National Playing Fields Association. The minute of that meeting had noted that a further report would be submitted in due course which would clarify a range of outstanding legal issues.

Accordingly, the Committee considered a report which outlined the Council's legal position in respect of the proposed redesignation of the land and recommended that the Deed of Dedication with the National Playing Fields Association be submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for its approval and thereafter to the Department of the Environment.

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Private Patrick Carlin – Victoria Cross Recipient

The Director reported that a request had been received from the Ulster Historical Society seeking permission to place a marker in the Friar's Bush Cemetery on the site of the burial of Patrick Carlin. The Committee was informed that Patrick Carlin, who was interred within an unmarked grave at the Cemetery, had been awarded the Victoria Cross for bravery during the Indian Mutiny of 1858.

Resolved - that permission be granted to the Ulster Historical Society to place a marker at the grave of Private Patrick Carlin, subject to that organisation satisfying all legal, health and safety and public liability requirements.

Cancellation of Committee in November

The Committee was reminded that the Shadow Strategic and Resources Committee had, at its meeting on 26th September, agreed that it would be necessary for two party briefings to be provided during November for each political party. Those briefings would enable the parties to consider in detail the future governance arrangements for the Council and the rate-setting process for 2015/2016. Accordingly, in order to free-up Members' time, it had been proposed that meetings of the Principal Committees of the City Council be cancelled in November.

The Members were informed that Chief Officers had been requested to defer until December any business which would have been submitted to Committees in November. Should any urgent decisions be required during November, the Chief Executive would be requested to exercise her delegated authority. However, such decisions would be taken only after consultation with the Party Leaders, in conjunction with the relevant Committee Chairman. Alternatively, should it be deemed appropriate, the matter would be referred to the appropriate Committee in December, or, if necessary, to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in November.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and agreed to cancel its scheduled meeting in November.

Chairman