



Subject:	Park Run Update
Date:	8 September 2026
Reporting Officer:	Jim Girvan, Director of Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Claire Moraghan, Leisure Development Manager Lynne McCreery, Parks Outreach Manager

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes ☐ No ☒
Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.	
Insert number	
1. Information relating to any individual 2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) 4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter 5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained 6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction 7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime	
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	☐
After Council Decision	☐
Sometime in the future	☐
Never	☐

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes ☒ No ☐

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues																																																																
1.1	This paper provides members with an update on the activities around Park Run in Belfast																																																																
2.0	Recommendation																																																																
2.1	Members are asked to: - Note the achievements of ParkRun in the city and the supported activity to date - Approve officers to engage with the various Park Run groups across the city to establish if any additional support is required and report back to members in due course.																																																																
3.0	Main Report																																																																
3.1	Background Information At the meeting of the People and Communities Committee on 23rd June 2026, Officers had undertaken to bring a report back to Members in relation to Council’s potential support for park runs.																																																																
3.2	Members will be aware that Parkrun is a global initiative that promotes physical activity through free, volunteer-led 5km events held every Saturday and junior 2km events held every Sunday.																																																																
3.3	Currently, Belfast hosts 10 senior and 6 Junior Parkruns each week. Since the first Belfast parkrun was established at Waterworks Park in 2010 in partnership with North Belfast Harriers, more than 140,000 participants have completed a parkrun event in the city.																																																																
3.4	Table 1 below demonstrates the level of participation and volunteer support across Belfast parks since the first parkrun was held in 2010 with the Junior Parkruns highlighted. (Source Parkrun UK)																																																																
	Table 1. <table><tr><th>Park</th><th>Events Total</th><th>Volunteers</th><th>Finishers</th></tr><tr><td>Waterworks</td><td>764</td><td>1219</td><td>16385</td></tr><tr><td>Waterworks Junior</td><td>443</td><td>595</td><td>2180</td></tr><tr><td>Victoria</td><td>716</td><td>858</td><td>24327</td></tr><tr><td>Victoria Junior</td><td>401</td><td>426</td><td>2813</td></tr><tr><td>Queens</td><td>664</td><td>1244</td><td>15926</td></tr><tr><td>Falls</td><td>615</td><td>554</td><td>6064</td></tr><tr><td>Ormeau</td><td>599</td><td>1424</td><td>30981</td></tr><tr><td>Ormeau Junior</td><td>341</td><td>481</td><td>3370</td></tr><tr><td>Stormont</td><td>497</td><td>918</td><td>18034</td></tr><tr><td>Colin Glen</td><td>454</td><td>686</td><td>4830</td></tr><tr><td>Orangefield</td><td>348</td><td>695</td><td>7139</td></tr><tr><td>Paisley</td><td>89</td><td>189</td><td>2362</td></tr><tr><td>Belvoir</td><td>45</td><td>286</td><td>2597</td></tr><tr><td>Musgrave Junior</td><td>327</td><td>423</td><td>1684</td></tr><tr><td>YMCA Junior</td><td>90</td><td>89</td><td>318</td></tr></table>	Park	Events Total	Volunteers	Finishers	Waterworks	764	1219	16385	Waterworks Junior	443	595	2180	Victoria	716	858	24327	Victoria Junior	401	426	2813	Queens	664	1244	15926	Falls	615	554	6064	Ormeau	599	1424	30981	Ormeau Junior	341	481	3370	Stormont	497	918	18034	Colin Glen	454	686	4830	Orangefield	348	695	7139	Paisley	89	189	2362	Belvoir	45	286	2597	Musgrave Junior	327	423	1684	YMCA Junior	90	89	318
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	Woodvale Junior	53	121	232
3.5	This high level of participation is further reflected in a recent study by Strava (Feb 2026) that showed Belfast leads the UK cities that run the most, with the portion of runners 7% higher in Belfast (24%) than the national average of 17%. Financial Support			
3.6	Leisure Development Unit While the full value of Council support since 2010 cannot be quantified given it involves ongoing officer time and infrastructure investment, the Leisure Development Unit has directly provided £23,550 between 2015 and 2024 to support the establishment of parkrun events across the city. This has included covering the supply of a laptop, timer, barcode scanner and event management training.			
3.7	Parks Investment The Council has invested significantly in park infrastructure and improvement works that support parkrun activity, including pathway developments and park signage. Parks Outreach and Parks Operations officers also directly supported the establishment of these events across the city. As local volunteer teams became established, Council involvement transitioned from direct support to an advisory and facilitative role.			
3.8	Parkrun Development – Active Belfast In addition to council investment, Active Belfast has supported participation in running through the delivery of the Jog Belfast programme. This funded programme worked as an introduction to running, linking beginners with their local athletic and running clubs, creating a pathway to participation which culminates in graduating to a full Parkrun.			
3.9	In 2025/26 19 Jog Belfast programmes ran across the city with 413 of 656 registered graduating from the programme. 87% of participants were female, the majority aged between 35-64 years. 97% completed a 5km run after the programme and committed to continuing to run. This funding is ongoing as part of Active Belfast planning and programming.			
3.10	Volunteer Development The programme contributes to increased physical activity, volunteering opportunities, and community participation within Belfast parks			
3.11	The Leisure Development Unit have engaged many of the Parkrun volunteers to help at their annual Primary School Cross Country and relay events across the city. The volunteers provide support and contacts for opportunities to participate further in athletics and running.			
3.12	Future Support Volunteer teams maintain regular contact with parks outreach, park managers and wardens regarding the delivery of events. Groups have reported a shortfall in funding regarding the supply of high-vis vests and defibrillator replacement pads. Officers will undertake to engage with parkrun representatives to identify any additional support requirements and will report back to Members in due course.			

4.0	
4.1	<u>Financial and Resource Implications</u> There are no financial or resource implications within this report at this stage.
5.0	
5.1	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessment</u> There are no Equality or Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessments associated with this report.
6.0	Appendices - Documents Attached or None
	None