



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Response to Notice of Motion re: Joby Murphy
Date:	25th April, 2012
Reporting Officer:	Mr. Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager (extension 6414)
Contact Officer:	Mr. Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager (extension 6314)

1.0	Relevant Background Information
1.1	<p>The Council at its meeting on 1st March, 2012, agreed the following Notice of Motion:</p> <p>“This Council expresses its support and solidarity with the family and friends of former Belfast City Council Youth Forum Member Joby Murphy following his sad loss at the footbridge over the River Lagan in January.</p> <p>The Council recognises the increased role of the river front in the life of the City and the need to ensure that is a safe environment and that standards of provision are reviewed in light of this tragedy and the sad loss for the Murphy family.</p> <p>The Council also expresses its opposition to the practice of inappropriate and dangerous drinks promotions in pubs and clubs and calls upon the Minister responsible to continue to engage with appropriate authorities, including representatives of local licensees, to develop an action plan to put an end to such practices.”</p>

2.0	Key Issues
2.1	Correspondence has been received from the Minister for Social Development, Mr. Nelson McCausland, MLA, indicating that the Department shares the Council's support for the family and friends of the late Job Murphy.
2.2	In addition, with regard to the provision of safety along the riverfront at Laganside, the Department had commissioned an immediate health and safety review audit in order to reassure the public that the safety measures within the area fully complied with current bridge design and safety codes.
2.3	The Audit, which had been completed by RPS Consultants, has identified a number of recommendations in relation to further preventative measures to reduce the risk of deliberate entry into the water. A copy of the Audit is attached at Appendix 2.
2.4	The Minister has welcomed the Council's opposition to irresponsible drinks promotions and has indicated that the Department for Social Development is committed to banning such promotions and is working currently with representatives of the drinks trade to develop a code of practice on drinks promotions. The Department has launched a public consultation on the introduction of regulations to ban these promotions and looks forward to receiving the Council's response thereon. The Council's response will be considered by the Health and Environmental Services Committee at its meeting on 2nd May.
2.5	The Department is committed to ensuring the area around the Lagan Weir is a safe environment for all those who use it. The River Manager and Operational Staff will continue to work closely with the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service, PSNI and Harbour Commissioners to maintain a safe environment along the River Lagan.

3.0	Resource Implications
3.1	There are no Human Resource or financial implications associated with this report.

4.0	Recommendations
4.1	The Committee is asked to note the receipt of the correspondence.

5.0	Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 – Response from the Minister for Social Development Appendix 2 – Assessment of Existing Safety Arrangements at the Lagan Footbridge