



Subject:	ESRC Open Call project proposal: 'Beyond the (Peace) line: Re-defining the value of urban parks as socially inclusive spaces in Belfast'
Date:	9 January 2018
Reporting Officer:	Nigel Grimshaw, Director of City and Neighbourhood Services Department
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Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to seek Committee support to become a project partner and provide full support in an <i>Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Open Call project proposal: 'Beyond the (Peace) line: Re-defining the value of urban parks as socially inclusive spaces in Belfast'</i>, which has been developed by the project lead Dr. Ian Mell from the University of Manchester in conjunction with a consortia of research partners including University of Ulster.</p> <p>As a project partner, the Council's contribution would consist of indirect/in-kind support to the</p>

1.2	<p>project over three years, with submission of the proposal to the ESRC early this year and, if successful, the project would commence towards the end of the year. A summary of the project proposal is attached in Appendix 1.</p>
1.3	<p>The project aims to investigate how different people in Belfast use and value the cities formal parks (as opposed to informal green and open spaces), what they like and don't like about the parks and what can be done in the future to improve these spaces.</p>
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Note the contents of the report, approve the in-kind officer support commitment and agree to the Council developing a letter of support to accompany the research proposal, subject to Council ratification.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p>In June 2017, officers from the City and Neighbourhood Services (C&NS) Department informally met with Dr. Ian Mell, signalling our interest in being involved in the ESRC research project, pending review of the detailed project proposal, which has now been sent to BCC for consideration. Other project partners involved in the proposal and offering in-kind support include: Connswater Community Greenway representatives, Belfast Partnership Boards (just South and East), PLACE and Community Places.</p>
3.2	<p>The estimated project commitment expected from BCC is outlined on page 3 of Appendix 1. In summary the expectation would be that BCC would contribute 30 - 40 hours of officer time over the 36 months of the project, by facilitating connections with the community and city stakeholders in Belfast, attending consultation events and public meetings to enable the project team engagement. In return for BCCs commitment, the lead partner is willing to make some reciprocal contribution to BCC i.e. 1-hour project/ strategy support for every hour provided by BCC. In the interim, the project will require support from the C&NS, including senior management direction and the involvement of a lead park officer/ manager to co-ordinate the work internally and externally with communities, with local knowledge and experience.</p>
3.3	<p>The project proposal has been reviewed with the benefits, implications and risks being considered - see pages 3 - 4 in Appendix 1. Some stated benefits of the project include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the provision of rich community baseline data to feed into city and local area planning;

3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ spatial analysis that could be used to identify areas of division as well as good practices in terms of engagement; ▪ inclusive social behaviour to direct future development and management of planning/ green space policy and practice; and ▪ linkages to the Peace IV programme and the work carried out by the Smart Cities team. <p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The indirect ‘in-kind’ contribution for this research project requires a total of 30 – 40 hours of senior management direction and officer time from within the C&NS Department.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p>
3.5	None
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1: Summary of the ESRC Research Proposal for BCC.