

Parks and Leisure Committee

Thursday, 8th August, 2013

MEETING OF PARKS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

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

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

Apology

An apology was reported on behalf of Alderman Humphrey.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 13th June 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 July, subject to the following:

- the rejection of the decision of the Committee under the heading "Land at Black's Road", to provide that the Council agreed to acquire land at Black's Road for the purposes of developing a park in accordance with the terms as set out within the report; and
- the amendment of the decision under the heading "Dunville and Woodvale Parks – Update" to provide that the events scheduled to coincide with the reopening of both parks by the management bodies be supported fully by the Council independently of any funding commitments which had already been made.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Support for Sport

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

Development Grants

The Committee noted a schedule of Support for Sport applications which related to development and hospitality grants and which had been approved by the Director in

accordance with the authority delegated to him, information on which was published on the Council's Modern.gov website.

Independent Applications- Proposed Changes to Scheme

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 13th June, the Director had undertaken to submit a report which would clarify a range of matters associated with the management of applications under the Support for Sport scheme. In particular, he undertook to outline the steps which could be taken to address concerns which had been expressed regarding the submission of applications on behalf of groups by independent third parties.

The Director reminded the Committee that the Council's Good Relations Partnership, at its meeting on 5th November, 2012, had amended its own forms to address the issue of third party applications. Accordingly, the Director recommended that the following wording, similar to that which had been adopted by the Good Relations Partnership, be inserted within the scheme's forms to prevent third parties from submitting applications on behalf of groups:

"We require all applications to be completed in their entirety by group(s)/organisation(s) applying for funding, not using third party consultants/advice services. This is to ensure that the group(s)/organisation(s) are fully conversant with the information being detailed on the application(s) being made, which is required by the Council. The Council has a dedicated Sports Development Team, which will assist group(s)/organisation(s) in the development and completion of applications being made, to ensure that every opportunity to access the funding stream is afforded.

In addition, the Director recommended that the forms be amended to include the following declaration by the applicant:

***I confirm that this application form has been filled in by
(and not on behalf of) the group"***

Furthermore, the Director indicated that the Department would contact the person listed on the application form and compare signatures with other documents submitted. Should it be discovered that the application had been completed independently, it would be rejected. However, that would not preclude an organisation from submitting an application at a later date with, if necessary, prior support and assistance from the Department.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to amend the forms as recommended and endorsed the undertaking of the further checks as outlined. It was noted that a report in respect of the future management of the Support for Sport fund would be submitted in due course.

Financial Reporting- Quarter 1

(Mrs. J. Wilson, Business Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"2 Key Issues

The Current performance in quarter one for the Department shows a 5% variance against the year to date budget i.e. an over spend of £255k. There are a number of key reasons for the over spend within the department as follows:

Utility costs are currently over budget by £90k and are a concern for the department. Gas, Water and Combined Heat and Power (CHP) costs are all overspent within the department with CHP being an ongoing issue within Leisure. The connection to the water mains in the Zoo cost £22k in the first quarter which was not budgeted for however the borehole supply has now been restored so will not be a cost going forward.

Vehicle costs within Parks and Cemeteries are overspent by £183k against budget in Quarter 1 due to the timing of the procurement of fuel management systems and new machinery. However this issue should be resolved by quarter 2 and further expenditure managed within profiled budgets. Fuel budgets also remain under pressure due to increased costs and £40k over budget has been charged in the first quarter.

Compensation claims are £88k over budget in Parks and Cemetery Services i.e. 50% of the budget is spent in the first quarter. Again the timing of compensation claims is largely unpredictable but there is a high probability that this budget will be overspent by year end. The department continues to work with Legal Services to improve the reporting of incidents and ensuring these are managed effectively.

Income for the department overall is down 5% or £131k on budget. Leisure Centres are on budget despite losing £33k of income with the Avoniel pool closure. Promotional activities around summer campaigns have been running from April and the summer schemes have all been well received.

Income from fees and charges at the Zoo is down 23% or £124k against budget. This is largely due to the loss of income due to the closures associated with the snow over Easter. However the figures for May and June are up on the same time last year and the outdoor campaign 'passport to the world' is

well underway. Also the good weather has helped increase visitor numbers and on the basis of performance forecasts it is expected that this shortfall will be covered. Income at the shop is also down £36k but this is offset by a reduction on expenditure on supplies by £23k in the same period. This will continue to be tightly managed and a trading account is in place for the shop and regular stock takes are in place.

Income in relation to the Franchise agreement at the Castle and Malone House will continue to underperform as a new contract is now in place from June which reflects a reduced annual rate from that budgeted.

Income from Grants is also outstanding by £57k and officers are working with funding bodies to ensure all monies are claimed in a timely manner. Income from fees and charges in Parks is up by 6% or £44k which is mainly from the crematorium (£27K) and pitch hire.

The Department will continue to monitor the variance between actual and budgeted expenditure/income during quarter two of the year.

3 Resource Implications

There is a year to date over spend of £255k (5%) and a forecast over spend of approximately £165k by year end.

The Director and the Business Manager outlined the principal aspects of the report and answered a range of Members' questions in relation thereto.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

New Crematorium Feasibility Study- Update

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 18th February, it had considered six options which had been identified by Cogent Consulting for the establishment of a new crematorium. Those options had included a range of both public and private initiatives and it had been agreed that the Council would, in conjunction with Newtownabbey Borough Council, examine further the feasibility of developing a crematorium on a site which had been identified at Doagh Road.

The Director reported that the consultants were now undertaking the next stage of their work which would consider the range of financial and operational models which had been identified within the feasibility study. As part of that research, the consultants had arranged a number of study visits to crematoria in England, which would be attended by Members of both Councils. He added that the proposed visits were due to be undertaken during September and that, on completion of that exercise, a final report would be submitted to the Committee during the autumn.

In response to a Member's question, the Director indicated that the report, when submitted, would include consideration of the Council's options for future burial provision and how those might influence decisions around future cremations.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and agreed:

- to authorise the attendance on the study visits by a representative of each of the political parties; and
- to the holding of a special meeting to consider the consultant's final report on the feasibility study.

Facility Management Agreements Update

The Director reminded the Committee that a review of the Council's Facility Management Agreements had been ongoing since April, 2011. At its meeting on 15th November, 2012, it had endorsed a draft Parks and Leisure Playing Pitches Agreements' Policy and had authorised officers to progress the matter on the understanding that update reports would be submitted for the Committee's consideration in due course.

The Director reported that it was anticipated that consultations with Members, partners and stakeholders would be undertaken during August and September. In addition, further engagement sessions would be undertaken with the community, sporting and voluntary sectors with a view to presenting the revised policy for consideration by the Committee at its meeting in October.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Alexandra Park- Management Arrangements

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1 Background Information

- 1.1 Under the Peace III Programme, Groundwork NI was awarded funding to deliver the Reconciling Communities through Regeneration programme. In consultation with the Council and the local community, Alexandra Park was chosen as a specific project with a budget allocation of £50,000 towards physical regeneration work. Parks and Leisure Committee formally endorsed the project in June 2009.**
- 1.2 Following this, a Steering Group was formally established to improve usage and develop regeneration proposals for the park. The proposals were developed with representatives from the Council, the Department of Justice, the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister and the Police Service**

of Northern Ireland and subsequently approved by the Parks and Leisure Committee at its meeting in November 2010.

- 1.3 The Steering Group's action plan included a consultation process to gauge opinions and install an access point in the interface barrier running through Alexandra Park. In April 2011, Committee authorised the installation of a gate in the wall to be opened during the summer period for a pilot period, which was subsequently extended in January 2012.
- 1.4 Committee will recall at its meeting on 11th August 2011, further approval was granted for a funding agreement between Groundwork NI and the Council for the continued involvement of Groundwork NI in Alexandra Park up to December 2012. Groundwork NI continued to work with the Alexandra Park Steering group ensuring the delivery of a programme of activities which meets the Council and departmental aims with regards to good relations, anti-social behaviour and shared space.

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 Throughout the project, it has been acknowledged that the Steering Group, supported by the Parks and Leisure Committee, has developed a new vision for the park. This has attracted positive media coverage and, importantly, positive feedback from park users and local residents.

The 12-month agreement between Groundwork NI and the Council finished at the end of March 2013. Since then, the group have continued to meet chaired by Ciaran Shannon on an interim basis. The group continue to monitor the implementation of the development plan, based on the consultation exercise in 2010.

In facilitating the Alexandra Park development plan, parks management made arrangements to open the pedestrian gate on Alexandra Park Avenue. Following reports from local representatives of incidents of anti-social behaviour in the park, the gate was closed again in order to facilitate dialogue and find a mutually agreeable way forward.

In subsequent consultation with local elected representatives, a compromise position was agreed in which the gate would be opened at the same times as the gate in the interface barrier. Parks management would continue to review this arrangement with the Police Service NI, and allocate additional warden resource as deemed necessary. This arrangement has been in place throughout July and there has been no unusual spike in anti-social behaviour reports.

In the context of feedback from Members, as well as the conclusion of the agreement with Groundwork NI, it is suggested that it is now timely to undertake an independent review and examine the next steps for the Steering Group. Whilst acknowledging the important and positive work undertaken by local communities in the regeneration of the park to date, there is also a need to regularise the arrangements within the Council's business planning processes. This is particularly important in the context of the management pilots at Woodvale and Dunville Parks as well as wider area/community planning developments.

The terms of reference for the independent review are proposed as:

1. To independently review with relevant stakeholders the successes and areas of improvement for the Alexandra Park regeneration process
2. To scope a management structure, business planning and management approach, which balances community ownership and public accountability, based on good practice elsewhere
3. To make recommendations going forward (partnership principles; resourcing; terms of reference; etc.) for consideration by Parks and Leisure Committee.

The stakeholders for the review would include:

- Local elected representatives
- Existing steering group members
- Groundwork NI
- Parks and Leisure officers

To supplement the review officers will assess the options for the pedestrian gate in Alexandra Park Avenue including the current location. In addition the conditions of the fence adjacent to the Orange Hall will be reviewed and repairs carried out as necessary. The recommendations from the review would be brought forward to Committee in October for its consideration.

3 Resource Implications

Financial

Up to £3,000 for an independent facilitator to support the review process. Provision has been made for this within existing budgets.

4 Recommendations

The Committee is requested to agree the terms of reference for the review and to agree to the pedestrian gate at Alexandra Park Avenue remaining open in line with the arrangements for the opening of the gate in the interface barrier until the review is completed.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Barnett Demesne Mountain Bike Trails

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

The project has been delivered in partnership with Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland (ORNI). A legal licence agreement has been entered into between BCC and ORNI with ORNI responsible for a number of tasks, the most prominent being the marketing, promotion, events management and ensuring that all data required is returned to the funders.

All of the new mountain bike trails in Northern Ireland are marketed as a NI package by ORNI and the trail at Barnett Demesne is part of this. This maximises the promotion of the Barnett Demesne trails and incorporates BCC’s product within the ORNI’s brand ‘Mountain Bike NI’ and associated marketing platforms, thus increasing the awareness levels and in turn visitor numbers. To further enhance this potential we are keen to enter into 3 further agreements with ORNI, namely Volunteer Mountain Bike Trail Ranger Programme for NI, Annual Mountain Biking Permit and the Application Process for Mountain Biking Events. This will allow us to follow best practice and it replicates what is being done with the other trails in NI.

The cost to BCC will be approximately £2,400 per year to run the Volunteer Programme plus £800 per annum payable to ORNI. This covers ORNI’s costs for recruiting and maintaining the volunteers, communicating information to volunteers, assisting BCC in setting up a programme of trail maintenance days, publicising any material connected with the programme, securing external funding or sponsorship for the programme and organising ‘Volunteer Reward Scheme’ for participants.

Annual Mountain Biking Permit

Organisations wishing to lead mountain biking coaching or guiding on either a commercial or non commercial basis must apply for a permit. This will entitle the holder to deliver coaching or guiding on the trail and or jumps and promote their services via the designated trail page on the official website. This allows BCC to monitor the quality of coaching being delivered and it will ensure that trail conduct is delivered to new users. Whilst it is appreciated that this is not all encompassing it is existing best practice and history has shown that over time permit holders come to know each other and it becomes self-policing. The cost for an annual permit will be in line with other trail centres and set at £80. It is envisaged that this income will offset the cost of the volunteer ranger scheme.

Mountain Biking Events

In order to satisfy the funders requirements ORNI have assumed responsibility for organising all events on the trails and jumps park as they have the responsibility to oversee outcomes. In order to monitor this, an application process has been established to allow the trail to be managed in a responsible and effective way. The application incorporates our legal requirement with ORNI and our 24 point plan for events taking place in BCC parks.

An event application is required when:

- the event is organised by a commercial organiser
- a large event is planned, i.e. more than 20 applicants
- the trail is to be closed to members of the public
- the event is to be held at night

Any events deemed to be sensitive in nature will be brought before Committee for approval. The charges are in line with other trail centres in NI. It is envisaged that this income will be used to help maintain the trails. Officers will liaise with Legal Services to draft appropriate documentation.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Committee grant approval for the agreements to be entered into. Officers will liaise with Legal Services to draft appropriate documentation.”

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Village Open Space- Land Acquisition

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

1. Relevant Background Information

The purpose of this report is to inform Members of a request by the NI Housing Executive and Fold Housing Association, that the Council consider accepting the transfer of a portion of land and its associated management and public liability in the Village Area of South Belfast.

The Housing Executive has completed a comprehensive review of the Village area of South Belfast and the project is now entering its final phase which includes 27 new dwellings. A planning application is scheduled to be submitted in the coming weeks and an element of the proposal will be for an area of public open space. This is a requirement by Planning Service owing to the lack of open space in the general area.

The development will be delivered by Fold Housing Association who is the strategic housing provider in the area. The open space will be overlooked by dwellings on all sides and will be functional and usable by all in the wider local community and not exclusively Fold HA tenants. The proposal is to integrate the existing play area and pitch at Moltke Street into the new area of open space. The road junction at Moltke Street/Nubia Street and Kitchener Drive will be removed. This will further benefit users of the open space by diverting traffic away from it. The Housing Executive is taking forward this aspect of the proposal with Road Service.

The costs of providing the open space as required by Planning Service, based on a grassed area with paths throughout, surrounded by dwarf walls and railings, has been estimated at £225k. The Housing Executive and Fold Housing Association have asked that the Council undertake the maintenance and public liability of the open space. This would involve the transfer of the land to the Council.

2 Key Issues

In considering its position on this matter the Committee may wish to reflect on the following points:

The Council owns and maintains the existing play area and pitch which will be integrated into the new area and open space. The additional maintenance of the grassed area is considered to be relatively minor;

The Council has in the past looked favourably on requests from organisations to take on the maintenance and public liability responsibilities;

As highlighted in previous reports, the cumulative impact of the additional maintenance and public liability responsibilities could potentially place an increased burden on the Council at a time when budgets are constrained;

This particular request comes from a housing body, whose primary duty may not relate to the management of open space, however, as members will be aware the provision of open, recreational and leisure space is often a planning requirement and planning may be withheld unless provision is made; Members should be mindful that this may set a precedent for similar housing developments and may result in future requests;

3 Resource Implications

Financial

The financial cost of the ongoing revenue maintenance is not known at this time. However, it is anticipated that as the facility is mainly grassed, the maintenance should be relatively minor.

Human Resources

This will increase the workload of staff in the area.

4 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to accede to the request to accept the transfer of land and its associated maintenance and public liability in the Village Area of South Belfast, subject to approval at Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.”

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Belfast Boxing Ring - Sculptures in Parks

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 15th November, 2012, it had received a presentation from representatives of the Belfast Boxing Ring regarding its proposals to erect three statues in Council parks to acknowledge the contribution which boxing had made to the City. It was reported that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 21st June, had agreed to support the proposals to erect statues, as a Stage 1 Emerging Project within the Capital Programme, at the following sites:

- the Cathedral Gardens – statue to John ‘Rinty’ Monaghan;
- the Dunville Park – statue to John Caldwell; and
- the Woodvale Park – statue to the Shankill boxing fraternity.

The Director reported that work was ongoing on the preparation of a strategic outline case in order to progress the project to the next stage and that a report in this regard would be considered by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in due course.

Noted.

Expression of Interest - Coffee Shop at Cherryvale

The Assistant Director reported that the Department had received an enquiry relating to the feasibility of opening of a temporary coffee shop within the grounds of the Cherryvale Playing Fields. She indicated that the proposal received had been for the opening of a temporary outlet and, if deemed successful, might lead to a more permanent structure being established, perhaps within the existing cricket pavilion. She outlined the advantages which such a facility might provide to enhance user experience within the playing fields. However, she cautioned that there existed a number of issues in terms of Council policy, management arrangements, planning, technical and legal matters, which would require further clarification prior to permission being granted.

The Assistant Director outlined the Committee’s options and suggested that, should it be minded to explore the proposal further, it might be prudent to consider extending the provision of such outlets to additional parks across the City. She explained that the Council could opt to undertake a procurement exercise to run such facilities, or it could seek expressions of interest through public advertisement. Accordingly, she indicated that the Committee might wish to adopt one of the following options:

- 1) refuse the request at the Cherryvale Playing Fields;
- 2) accede to the request at the Cherryvale Playing Fields and seek expressions of interest from other potential providers through public advertisement; or
- 3) agree to establish pilot projects at four sites by way of an expression of interest exercise.

She added that, should the Committee endorse the third option, a review of the pilot project would be undertaken after a one year period. Thereafter, a report in respect of the success of the project, together with a range of options to extend its scope, if appropriate, would be submitted for the Committee’s consideration in due course.

The Committee adopted option three as set out.

**Relocation of Temporary Changing from
Cliftonville Playing Fields to Marrowbone**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

The Committee is asked to note that a project to deliver a 3rd generation synthetic turf soccer pitch at Marrowbone Millennium Park is progressing and is scheduled to be complete in early 2014. The funding for this comprises capital expenditure from Belfast City Council plus funding from both the Department for Culture Arts and Leisure / Sport NI and the Department for Social Development.

The facility will be a council asset upon completion and will provide a much needed resource for the local community and the various soccer clubs from the area. In addition, the facility will be able to meet a range of other needs including increases in participation in physical activity and sport across a range of groupings and will help to support diversionary intervention programmes in tackling anti social behaviour in the area.

Normally, 3rd generation facilities are accompanied and supported by ancillary structures such as changing pavilions, however, there is insufficient funding available at this time. Discussions with the Ardoyne Youth Providers Forum have indicated that there is a proposal to attract funding to support the development of a community building which would incorporate changing facilities. At this time the proposal is at an embryonic stage and is likely to take considerable time to realise.

There is an opportunity to provide an interim measure which would help to realise the full potential of the new facility and at the same time reinforce confidence in the local community through further investment.

Members may be aware that a temporary changing pavilion has been situated in Cliftonville Playing Fields for the past several years. As part of the ongoing redevelopment of this site, which will include a preschool building, a primary school building and a 3rd generation synthetic turf pitch, the existing temporary changing pavilion is to be removed. There is an opportunity to relocate this pavilion to the provide support to the proposed new pitch at Marrowbone.

This is an interim measure in advance of a more permanent future solution. The relocation of the pavilion will require

planning approval and installation will cost an estimated £50,000 to take account of its removal, storage, transportation to the site and installation at a future date, subject to the necessary statutory approvals being in place.

2 Key Issues

The key issue for the Committee is to consider whether it wishes to consent to the relocating of the existing pavilion from Cliftonville Playing Fields to the Marrowbone Millennium Park to support the provision of the new 3G synthetic pitch.

The Committee is asked to note that should permission be granted, the facility when removed from its current location, possibly in September 2013, it will be stored until planning approval has been received.

If Committee does not consent to the relocation of the pavilion to Marrowbone Park, the pavilion will still need to be stored or disposed of.

3 Resource Implications

Financial

The preliminary estimated cost of the installation and associated removal, transportation, planning application and installation is £50,000 subject to review pending ground surveys. The cost of moving the pavilion to storage is estimated to be £2,500 and storage itself in the region of £100 per month. The original cost of the temporary unit was £40,000.

Human Resources

There are no additional human resource implications at this time.

Asset and Other Implications

The decision to relocate the changing pavilion will enhance the proposed pitch at the Marrowbone Millennium Park.

4 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to consider the report and to agree to the relocating of the changing pavilion to Marrowbone Millennium Park and to meet the associated costs.”

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Green Flag Awards- Update

The Assistant Director reminded the Committee that the Green Flag Awards, which were overseen by TidyNI, sought to acknowledge excellence in the management of sites and recognise the steps which had been undertaken by local authorities to enhance community involvement in site development. In 2009, the Cavehill Country Park had become the first Council property to receive a Green Flag Award and, subsequently, nine further sites had been awarded accreditation under the scheme.

The Committee was informed that, after the latest assessment round, all of the previously accredited sites had retained their Green Flag Award. In addition, two further Council sites, viz., the Grove Playing Fields and the Lagan Meadows, had received accreditation under the scheme. It was pointed out that the Council now held twelve of the twenty Green Flag Awards within Northern Ireland and that the Knocknagoney Linear Park, together with the Dunville and Woodvale Parks, would be considered for accreditation in 2014.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and agreed that letters be forwarded to staff congratulating them on their achievements.

Events in Parks 2010 to 2013 - Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

At its meeting in June 2013 the Committee requested information on the number and location of events which had been held in Council parks over the past five years.

2 Key Issues

Over the course of the past five years a large number of events have been held in parks and open spaces across the city. This includes a number of large-scale, well attended cultural events that have since become an established part of the annual calendar of events in Belfast. Park events are related to the Council’s objectives in regards to the environment and creating vibrant neighbourhoods across the city. They are also beneficial for local communities as they attract visitors and boost the neighbourhood’s economy.

To provide a better understanding of the type of events that are held in our parks, the department developed an events database in late 2009. The information in this paper provides a summary of the events recorded in this database in the period January 2010 (when the database was introduced) to the end of June 2013.

It should be noted that this type of data collection is still in its first phase and work is ongoing to ensure that the data captured across the city is accurate, timely and useful for planning purposes. Officers are still developing the formats for this information to be presented to Members.

During the period January 2010 – June 2013 a total of 327 events were recorded as being held in our parks and open spaces. The following summarises this data:

Breakdown by year:	
2010	13
2011	137
2012	122
2013	55 (to date)
	327

Of these 327 events, nearly half (161) were facilitated by external organisations and a significant number (114) were events held by external organisations who receive funding from Belfast City Council. Events hosted by the Council only account for 16%. The locations for these events are spread across the city:

Breakdown by Parks Service operational area:	
North	70 (21% of total events in parks)
East	87 (27%)
South/West	144 (44%)
Multiple areas	26 (8%)

Most popular sites:	
Ormeau Park	62 (19% of total events)
Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park	30 (9%)
Botanic Gardens	25 (8%)
Falls Park	19 (6%)
Barnett Demesne	15 (5%)
Victoria Park	12 (4%)
Bridges Urban Sports Park	12 (4%)
Cave Hill Country Park	9 (3%)
Alexandra Park	8 (2%)
Waterworks	8 (2%)

There is a wide range of events held, that fit well across the Council's strategic objectives, particularly related to addressing health inequalities and creating attractive, vibrant neighbourhoods:

Most popular types of events:	
Fun Day	29
Cross Country	23
Sports Tournament/Activity	22
Fun Run	18
Cycling	17
General Event	17
Nature-Themed Event	17
Watch this Space	16
Sponsored Walk	15
Picnic/BBQ	13
Others (cultural events; conservation; orienteering; community; fairs; rambling; photography; etc.)	140

These events are organised by a range of charities, community groups, schools and sports clubs. The Department will continue to develop the events database to ensure that the full range of events that are held in our parks and open spaces are recorded and to help us develop events across the city.

Next steps

Commercial events located in our parks and open spaces, such as Tennents Vital, Polo in the City and Funderland, are not captured on this database. In the past, commercial operators have tended to opt for locations in the south of the city, mostly Boucher Road Playing Fields and Botanic Gardens.

In order to strengthen and diversify the range of events, as well as build a commercial market for alternative locations, it is proposed that the Council proactively establishes a number of strategic arts partnerships, to deliver high-quality, large-scale (5,000+), family-orientated cultural events. This would allow the Council to showcase a range of its open spaces to attract commercial operators to parks and open spaces across the city. A proposal on this will be brought to Committee later in the autumn, in order that it is in place for the budget planning cycle for 2014/15.

4 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note this report.”

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Parks Events- Small Grants Scheme

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 15th November, 2012, it had delegated authority to the Director to award grants under the above-mentioned scheme. It was reported that eight applications had been submitted for consideration within the latest tranche, five of which had met the pre-agreed criteria.

Accordingly, the Committee noted the following grants which had been authorised by the Director under the scheme:

Donegall Pass Events Committee	10 August	Rev. Robert Bradford Memorial Park	Summer Fun	£2,945
St Andrew's Community Action Group	31 August	Michelle Baird Playground	Forthriver Community Fun Day	£1,450
An Droichead	25 August	Botanic Gardens	Feile an Droichead	£3,000
HERE NI	25 August	Ormeau Park	Summer LGBT	£3,000
Star Neighbourhood Centre	8 August	North Queen Street Playground	New Lodge Festival	£3,000

**Shankill and Ballysillan Leisure Centres –
Wet Room Repairs**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1. Background Information

Previous corporate funding was allocated for upgrade works within leisure services. To date, the changing rooms within Andersonstown, Shankill (dry side) and Avoniel Leisure Centres have been upgraded although the latter was as a result of a general refurbishment following an enforced pool closure. Presently, as part of the corporate programme, plans are underway for the provision of a new playing surface which will be laid in the Indoor Tennis Centre although this does not form part of the present report.

Facilities Management colleagues have identified an appropriate contractor to undertake the upgrade works in both Shankill and Ballysillan Leisure Centre wet changing rooms and have requested a closure of those areas at the following times:

Shankill – September and October 2013
Ballysillan – November and December 2013

2 Key issues / events

Given the facilities available within both centres it will, unfortunately, not be possible to maintain access to the swimming pools whilst the changing rooms are being upgraded. Therefore the respective swimming pools will be required to close during the refurbishments.

Ballysillan operates with one set of changing rooms covering both wet and dry functions and management will therefore source temporary changing units to accommodate fitness suite, main hall, squash and coached activity users. Due to the proposed location of temporary changing rooms at Ballysillan (outside the rear of the facility, south facing) it would not be possible to maintain swimming pool access as customers would still be required to enter the pool using the current changing rooms which would not be accessible.

The timing of the repairs has been organised to minimise the potential disruption to both facilities and to ensure that the centres are fully functional during January 2014 which traditionally represents the busiest month for leisure facilities. Consideration has been given to closing one changing room at a time in order to maintain a reduced service although the schedule of contractor works has made this not possible to achieve.

It is proposed that, where permitting, Ballysillan will provide access to the displaced schools / groups / clubs of Shankill during the period of upgrade and this process will be reversed upon works commencing at Ballysillan during November.

3 Resource Implications

Financial

Projected income losses will be estimated at £10,000 for Shankill and £12,000 for Ballysillan.

Human Resources

Appropriate staff will be afforded the option of using the reduction in service as an opportunity to avail of annual leave. Alternatively additional training will be offered and deep cleaning around the wet side of the centre can be undertaken. No additional overtime is anticipated during this

time and staff may, upon request, be temporarily located within other leisure facilities.

Asset and Other Implications

Alternative swimming availability at Falls Leisure Centre & Grove Wellbeing Centre remains during these short closures.

4 Recommendations

It is recommended that Members approve the proposed closures to facilitate changing room repairs.”

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Request for Use of the Waterworks Park

The Director reported that a request had been received from the Ashton Community Trust for the free use of The Waterworks Park for the hosting of the ‘North Belfast Lantern Parade and Magical Evening’ on Wednesday, 30th October, from 6.00 p.m. until 9.30 p.m. He indicated that the family-orientated event would attract approximately 5,000 participants and would be attended by a wide range of community groups from across the City. The event, which would commence with a Lantern Parade from the Crumlin Road Gaol to the Waterworks, would include outdoor performances, stage entertainments and would conclude with a fireworks display in the park.

The Committee was informed that work to enable the hosting of the event would be undertaken between Tuesday, 29th and Thursday, 31st October, during which times it would be necessary to close the park to the public. The organisers had confirmed they had, in order to manage the event in a professional manner, hired a security firm, professional contractors and established a ticketing system to manage the numbers attending. In addition, consultations had been undertaken with local residents and steps would be implemented to minimise disruption caused by the event.

Accordingly, the Director recommended that the Committee grant the free use of the Waterworks Park for the holding of the event as outlined, on the condition that the organisers:

- liaise with the Council to ensure that all health and safety requirements were met to its satisfaction and that event management and risk assessment plans were submitted prior to the event;
- resolve all operational issues to the Council’s satisfaction; and
- enter into an appropriate legal agreement and meet all the statutory requirements, including entertainment licensing.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Chairman