

Parks and Leisure Committee

Thursday, 10th February, 2011

Meeting of Parks and Leisure Committee

Members present: Councillor O'Reilly (Chairman);
the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Humphrey); and
Councillors D. Browne, Corr, Hartley, Kyle,
Mac Giolla Mhín, Mallon, McCabe, McCarthy, McKenzie,
G. Robinson, J. Rodgers, Stalford and Stoker.

In attendance: Mr. A. Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure;
Mrs. R. Crozier, Head of Parks and Leisure; and
Miss L. Hillick, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from the High Sheriff (Councillor Adamson) and Councillors Ekin, McVeigh and L. Patterson.

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 13th and 24th January 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 February, subject to the omission of:

- (i) the minute of the meeting of 13th January under the heading "Cemeteries and Crematorium Charges" which, at the request of Councillor Stoker, had been taken back to the Committee for further consideration; and
- (ii) the minute of the meeting of 13th January under the heading "Parks and Leisure Services – Scale of Charges 2011/2012" which, at the request of Councillor Stoker, had been taken back to the Committee for further consideration.

Cemeteries and Crematorium Charges

The Committee considered further the minute of the meeting of 13th January. An extract of the minute in that regard is set out hereunder:

“(Ms J. Wilson, Business Support Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

1. Relevant Background Information

Members will be aware of the ongoing work to secure adequate burial/cremation provision to meet future needs. A number of decisions have been made by the Committee at its meetings in September and November 2010. The main decisions being:

- *the Nutts Corner site is not suitable as a potential site for a new cemetery;*
- *site visits to the Dundrod sites to be organised for the Committee prior to initiating site investigations ;*
- *a robust plan to be developed for the provision of additional crematorium facilities;*
- *further work including a feasibility study be Pundertaken to investigate the provision of facilities for natural burials;*
- *any land acquisition for burial be on a voluntary basis; and*
- *burial and cremation charges should be reviewed.*

There is a need to review the current charges for Bereavement Services to ensure that the operating costs are covered, provision is made to cover future capital investments and to ensure that charges reflect the market norms.

The charges for burial and cremation services are normally reviewed in January along with the Department's other fees and charges. A 5% increase has currently been allowed for in the draft 2011/12 estimates.

2. Key Issues

A study was undertaken to:

- *identify the true costs of cemetery and crematorium services;*
- *review the current pricing options;*
- *benchmark against similar provision within the UK; and*
- *identify a series of pricing options and their financial implications.*

An economic appraisal of a new crematorium facility was also undertaken by BDO to explore the options for the development of a new crematorium facility and to ensure value for money would be achieved in such a new facility. Options will be presented to committee in February 2011 for the provision of additional cremation facilities.

Findings

- *In comparison to the rest of the UK, the Council was generally one of the least expensive for burial and cremation charges.*
- *In the UK the split of cremations verses burials differs from Northern Ireland: 18% cremations in NI ;72% in UK.*
- *Currently for Council residents burials are 440% more expensive than cremations. This provides an incentive for people to choose cremation over burials.*
- *Currently 30% of all burials are from non residents of Belfast.*
- *59% of cremations are from non residents of Belfast.*
- *There are different charges for residents and non residents with the latter subsidising the former.*
- *The crematorium is currently working at a high level of capacity which is 56% greater than the average UK crematorium which is unsustainable.*
- *BDO recommend that the rates charged for cremations to local ratepayers, to those from other NI Councils and beyond are assessed to ensure that 'market rates' are in place or introduced.*
- *As the Council's crematorium facility is the second cheapest in the UK an increase in the cremation rates could assist with the private sectors' willingness to engage in the provision of cremation services.*

Assessment of the financial pressures on the service has been analysed for both the crematorium and cemeteries as follows:

Capital pressures

Currently legislation is having an impact on the services provided by the crematorium and the cemeteries due to the requirements of the mercury abatement legislation and health and safety legislation regarding headstone safety. A pilot headstone safety project is currently underway in the City Cemetery and it is estimated that the project could cost up to £1m over the next 10 years. The 4 furnaces in the crematorium need re-bricked every 5 years and the cremators will need replaced in the next 10 years. Given these capital requirements, it is appropriate that users contribute to the future provision of these services and that a process is identified so that such contributions can be factored into the financing of future capital requirements.

Other cities are experiencing similar financial pressures. For example, burials in Scotland have recently seen a 70% price increase with a new burial in Glasgow increasing from £658 to £1079. A cremation in Glasgow has also increased this year from £348 to £521. The explanation given for these increases was that they were needed to provide for an upgraded crematorium for the city.

Revenue pressures

The maintenance of the grounds within cemeteries is being impacted on by the increased costs including supplies and fuel. The crematorium has felt the impact of the increased utility charges and with the 4 cremators working to full capacity pressure is on to ensure that they are adequately maintained to ensure business continuity.

3. Resource implications

Financial

The analysis of the current levels of demand and future projections indicate an increased demand on our burial and cremation services. To meet that demand investment is needed not only to maintain the current service but to address legislative issues such as headstone safety and mercury abatement.

Options to address the financial pressures on the services are as follows:

An assumption has been made that the Council will maintain a pricing structure for residents and non residents and this differential in pricing will be maintained and is reflected in the options.

Options

- 1. Do nothing - no price increases and continue to subsidise all of the bereavement services increasing costs; currently a net cost to the rate payer of £539,000 (excluding capital costs and internal charges.)*
- 2. Agree that the price must cover the full cost for both services i.e. move to breakeven price (full cost) in a phased approach for residents. An increase of 5% has already been included in the draft revenue estimates for 2011/12.*

3. **Breakeven price plus a contribution: a) to grounds maintenance for burials and b) capital and grounds costs for burials and capital costs for cremation implemented in a phased approach for residents**
4. **Comparable market rate for crematorium/burial charges analysis phased for residents***

Proposed new grave minimum charge against each option

~Based on current average charge

<u>Option 1</u> <u>As is - no price increase</u>	<u>Option 2</u> <u>Full cost</u>	<u>Option 3</u> <u>Full cost plus contribution</u>		<u>Option 4</u> <u>Comparable rate across UK*</u>
		a) grounds maintenance costs	b) capital and grounds costs	
Resident £491	£516 5% increase	£761 55% increase	£1085 120% increase	£818 66% increase
Non Resident £1497	£1548 5% increase	£2283 52% increase	£3255 117% increase	£2454 64% increase

*(local government average across UK)**

Proposed cremation minimum charge against each option

<u>Option 1</u> <u>As is - no price increase</u>	<u>Option 2</u> <u>Full cost Phased over two years</u>	<u>Option 3</u> <u>Full cost plus contribution to capital phased</u>	<u>Option 4</u> <u>Comparable rate across UK*</u>
Resident £198	£208 rising to £297 5% to 50% increase	£297 rising to £397 50% to 100% increase	£402 103% increase
Non Resident £397	£594 50% increase	£594 rising to £794 50% to 100% increase	£804 103% increase

Once an option is agreed the implementation of the new charges would have to be phased in over 2 years depending on the option agreed.

4. Equality and good relations implications

An equality impact assessment of the scale of charges within the service was previously carried out and all issues were addressed at that time. No changes have been made to the principles underpinning their rationale.

5. Recommendations

It is recommended that option 3a is agreed for the cemetery and option 3 for the crematorium charges for residents as a phased approach over two years. Non Resident charges should be increased automatically from 2011/12.

It is recommended that the Bereavement Service undertakes an analysis of the usage of the complex range of services as set out in the pricing schedule and puts forward a proposal for rationalising the range of services and the associated charges were relevant.

6. Decision Tracking

New pricing schedule implemented from 1 April 2011 with an in year uplift for the next 2 years as per the costing option attached and to be carried out by the Business Manager and reflected in the estimates going forward.”

After a lengthy discussion, it was

*Moved by Councillor D. Browne,
Seconded by the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Humphrey),*

That the Committee agrees to adopt option 3b in respect of the provision of new graves and option 3 in relation to the proposed cremation minimum charge.

Amendment

*Moved by Councillor Hartley,
Seconded by Councillor Maskey,*

That the Committee agrees to adopt option 1 contained within the report in respect of the Council's cemeteries and crematorium charges.

On a vote by show of hands six members voted for the amendment and nine against and it was accordingly declared lost.

Further Amendment

*Moved by Councillor Kyle,
Seconded by Councillor Mallon,*

That the Committee agrees to adopt option 2 contained within the report in respect of the Council's cemeteries and crematorium charges.

On a vote by show of hands three Members voted for the amendment and thirteen against and it was accordingly declared lost. The original proposal standing in the name of Councillor D. Browne and seconded by the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Humphrey) was thereupon put to the meeting when nine members voted for and seven against and it was accordingly declared carried."

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Stoker,
Seconded by Councillor D. Browne,

That the Committee agrees that:

- (i) in relation to the provision of new graves for Belfast residents, option 1 be adopted, that is, no price increase;
- (ii) in relation to the provision of new graves for non-Belfast residents, option 2 be adopted, that is, a 5% increase;
- (iii) in relation to those cremation charges applicable to Belfast residents, option 1 be adopted, that is, no price increase;
- (iv) in relation to those cremation charges applicable to non-Belfast residents, that a 10% increase be levied each year over the next four year period; and
- (v) a review be undertaken over the next six months in respect of all charges levied in connection the Council's provision of cemeteries and crematorium services.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Hartley,
Seconded by Councillor McCabe,

That the Committee agrees to defer consideration of the matter to enable further information to be obtained.

On a vote by show of hands four Members voted for the amendment and six against and it was accordingly declared lost. The original proposal standing in the name of Councillor Stoker and seconded by Councillor D. Browne was thereupon put to the meeting when seven Members voted for and four against and it was accordingly declared carried.

Parks and Leisure Services - Scale of Charges 2011/2012

The Committee considered further the minute of the meeting of 13th January. An extract of the minute in that regard is set out hereunder:

“(Ms. J. Wilson, Business Support Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Director of Parks and Leisure submitted for the Committee's consideration a report in respect of the Scale of Charges for the use of facilities within the Parks and Leisure Department for the financial year 2011/2012.

After discussion, the Committee approved the scales of charges for 2011/2012, copies of which were available for inspection on the Council's modern.gov website.”

After discussion, the Committee agreed to affirm its decision of 13th January, subject to the omission of those charges for the cremation of a stillborn child or a child under one year of age at the time of death.

Recruitment of Head of Parks and Leisure

(At this point in the meeting, at the request of the Chairman, all officers present, with the exception of the Director of Parks and Leisure and the Democratic Services Officer, left the room whilst this item was discussed.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1. Relevant Background Information

On 11 February 2010, the Parks and Leisure Committee approved the creation of a new Head of Service post; this was also agreed by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 19 February 2010.

On 13 May 2010, the Parks and Leisure Committee considered the most appropriate way to fill the permanent post and agreed that, given the uncertainty about the RPA timetable and whether or not the RPA Vacancy Control Scheme would be partially or wholly removed, the post should be filled on a temporary basis for a period of six months with the option to extend for a further six months. At that time, it was felt that once definitive guidance was received regarding the RPA Vacancy Control Scheme, the council would then be in a better position to know how it should fill the permanent post i.e. either through internal trawl as a result of continuing RPA Vacancy Control or external advertisement and public competition.

2. Key Issues

The RPA Vacancy Control Scheme has been officially suspended.

- The timeframe for filling the post on a temporary basis is nearing completion and, in the absence of an RPA Vacancy Control Scheme, the post should be filled through external advertisement and public competition.
- In accordance with Local Government Staff Commission (LGSC) guidance the selection panel should comprise the Chair and Deputy Chair (or their nominees) and another member of the committee, along with the Director of Parks and Leisure and another director, or Head of Human Resources.
- The entire panel needs to be representative of gender and community background with all panel members having attended recent training on the council's recruitment and selection procedures. An observer from the LGSC and a professional assessor may also be in attendance but with no voting rights.

3. Resource Implications

No costs in addition to the normal agreed recruitment process for a head of service post.

4. Equality and Good Relations Implications

The post will be publically recruited in accordance with statutory requirements and Local Government Staff Commission best practice guidelines.

5. Recommendations

It is recommended that the post of Head of Parks and Leisure be recruited on a permanent basis through external advertisement and public competition.

The proposed recruitment and selection schedule is as follows:

1. the vacancy will be publicly advertised on 3 and 4 March 2011 with a closing date of 18 March 2011;
2. the panel short-list will take place on 28 March 2011;
3. short-listed candidates will be invited to attend a full day assessment centre on 5 April or 6 April 2011;

4. **Members' briefing and panel approval of outcome of assessment centre will be held on 7 April 2011; and**
5. **panel interviews will be held on 13 April 2011.**

Finally, it is recommended, in the interests of making an early appointment, that the selection panel be given delegated authority to offer the post to the recommended candidate with the outcome being reported back to committee for notation.

6. **Decision Tracking**

The outcome of the recruitment process will be verbally reported to committee for notation on Thursday 14 April 2011 by the Director of Parks and Leisure.

7. **Key to Abbreviations**

SP&R: Strategic Policy and Resources
RPA: Review of Public Administration."

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor G. Robinson,
Seconded by the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Humphrey),

That the post of Head of Parks and Leisure be re-titled Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure.

On a vote by show of hands ten Members voted for the proposal and one against and it was accordingly declared carried.

After further discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations contained within the report and agreed also that the Director of Parks and Leisure liaise with the Party Groupings on the Council in order to appoint an additional member to the selection panel.

Water Damage to Parks Properties

The Committee agreed to note the contents of a report which had been submitted in relation to the damage which had been caused to Parks properties due to the severe weather conditions which had been experienced over the Christmas and New Year period. In addition, the Committee noted that a report in connection with the cost of damages to Parks dwellings would be submitted for its consideration at a future meeting.

**Safer Neighbourhoods Anti-Social Behaviour Programme –
People in Parks Update**

The Committee agreed to note the contents of a report which had been submitted in relation to the progress which had been achieved in respect to the Council's Safer Neighbourhoods Anti-Social Behaviour Programme.

Consultation Response - Review of Death Certification

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members that the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPNI) has commissioned a consultation exercise on a review of the current arrangements for death certification in Northern Ireland.
- 1.2 Appended to the report is the draft written response which is submitted for review and comment by Members. The deadline for submitting the response to the Department is 11 March 2011.
- 1.3 Current arrangements for death certification in Northern Ireland are being reviewed which is the first time since 1976 that a review has been undertaken.
- 1.4 The review follows changes in England, Scotland and Wales in the wake of the Shipman Inquiry and the Luce Review.
- 1.5 Both Shipman and Luce recommended the introduction of a single system for death certification, regardless of whether the deceased was to be buried or cremated. They also found that the scrutiny of medical certificates for cause of death fell short of what is required to provide adequate protection for patients.
- 1.6 Significant developments have taken place in England and Wales to implement the Shipman and Luce recommendations in respect of death certification processes and the Scottish Government has recently consulted on proposals to strengthen arrangements for death certification in Scotland.
- 1.7 It is important therefore that current practice in respect of certifying deaths in Northern Ireland be reviewed in light of these developments to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.

- 1.8 Registration of death here is governed by the Births and Deaths Registration (N.I.) Order 1976, but the process of registration itself has changed little since 1927. A death should normally be registered within five days, to allow funeral arrangements to be made. This is with the exception of deaths which have been reported to the coroner.
- 1.9 Registrars are based in district council offices, and each death is registered with the district in which the person died, or in the district in which the person normally lived, if this is within Northern Ireland. A Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD), signed by a registered medical practitioner, must be provided to enable the death to be registered.
- 1.10 Under current arrangements in Northern Ireland, differing levels of scrutiny apply depending on whether the body of a deceased person is to be cremated or buried.
- 1.11 In the case of a cremation, the certificates are then submitted to the medical referee appointed by Belfast City Council, who is required to satisfy him/herself that the certificates and all other necessary documents are in order before issuing an authority for the cremation to take place.
- 1.12 This second level of scrutiny does not apply in the case of a burial, where there is no opportunity for further challenge to the cause of death. The current arrangements mean in effect that there is disparity in the level of scrutiny applied to certification of deaths, depending upon the method of disposal.
- 1.13 For the majority of deaths in Northern Ireland burial is the preferred method of disposal, and therefore no further scrutiny takes place after the initial completion of the MCCD, unless the death is referred to the Coroners Service.

2.0 Key Issues

- 2.1 The government's response to the Shipman Inquiry in 2007 included the publication of a consultation document on Improving the Process of Death Certification, which outlined a programme of work to design, pilot and implement a rigorous and unified system of death certification for both burials and cremations in England and Wales.

- 2.2 Both Shipman and Luce concluded that it is unacceptable to have different certification processes according to whether the deceased was to be buried or cremated, and recommended the introduction of a single system for death certification.
- 2.3 This consultation sets out recommendations made by an Inter-Departmental Death Certification Working Group for Northern Ireland which was established in November 2008 to review local death certification processes, and to make recommendations for improvement.
- 2.4 The consultation document is 33 pages and poses 17 specific questions (copies of which can be provided to Members on request). It proposes 2 options neither of which propose that the current requirement in the cremation process for deaths to be registered before disposal be extended to all deaths:
- Option 1: The first option would see an enhancement of the existing assurance arrangements for death certification, with a view to strengthening and improving the current processes.
- Option 2: Includes the suggestions in option 1 along with the introduction of a new post of Medical Examiner (along with necessary support staff), with appropriate accompanying accountability and governance structures, with a view to strengthening existing assurance and clinical governance arrangements.
- 2.5 The Council's response focuses in the main on potential impact on future service delivery and the need for sustained public confidence in death certification. An officer group of bereavement service and administrative staff and including the medical referee met to review the document and develop the draft response. The consensus was that:
- The options provided did not have sufficient detail to make an informed decision or sufficiently connected key recommendations included in the report which were emerging in England, Wales, and Scotland or referred to in any of the inquiry reports.
 - There were discrepancies in how the information was presented in the main and summary documents.
 - Officers also believed there was opportunity to share learning on the council's provision to inform the options that were presented.

- 2.6 For these reasons there is no preferred option being confirmed in the draft response which does take the opportunity to highlight the council's interest from a service-delivery perspective, for example:

Time period for disposal - It is clearly presented in the council response that there should be no unnecessary delay caused from registration of death to disposal where possible.

Cost - general costs were provided in the consultation however it was difficult with the information available to fully appreciate whether or not they were value for money.

Public confidence - one of the drivers for change noted in the death certification review is to ensure another 'Shipman' situation does not take place. The method and level of scrutiny required to retain public confidence needs confirmed more clearly to enable it to ensure the process is fit for purpose. What is being proposed in both options provides retrospective scrutiny of patterns and trends experienced in the process of death certification; it is more likely to identify potential cases however not prevent them.

- 2.8 The complete and more detailed response is attached at Appendix 3 for Member review and feedback.

3.0 Resource Implications

None.

4.0 Equality and Good Relations Implications

- 4.1 The draft response makes reference to the need for the council to be able to manage requests for disposal of the dead within 24 hours – including the required levels of sign-off (scrutiny) - as this is preferred by some cultures now resident in Northern Ireland.

5.0 Recommendations

- 5.1 Members are asked to:

- (i) note the content of the report
- (ii) review and approve the draft response subject to any amendments or comments they may wish to provide.

Belfast City Council response to:
The review of death certification in Northern Ireland

Death certification impacts each citizen at some point in their lives and Belfast City council is a key agent in providing for the disposal of dead through both burial and cremation. The council is currently the only provider of Cremation services in Northern Ireland.

The council welcomes the opportunity as a key service provider to be consulted on the review of death certification in order to preserve and improve the quality of its bereavement service. It considers that it is timely for a comprehensive review of requirements to ensure effective future service delivery.

The Council's Bereavement services

The Council provides both burial and cremation services to the citizens of Belfast and the wider region, governed by Statutory Legislation i.e. the Burial Ground Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1992 for burials and Statutory Rules and Orders (N.I.) 1961 No. 61 Cremation, Northern Ireland for cremations.

- The Council is currently responsible for eight Cemeteries. Some of these Cemeteries were inherited from churches. The first Council owned Cemetery was Belfast City Cemetery which was opened for burial in 1869, followed by Glenalina Extension in 1915, Dundonald Cemetery in 1905 and Roselawn Cemetery in 1954.
- The City of Belfast Crematorium commenced operation in 1961.
- The Cemeteries/Crematorium Central Office in Belfast City Hall is responsible for overseeing all administrative processes for burials and cremations. This is managed centrally but is operated in conjunction with the Cemetery Site Offices and the Crematorium Office.
- The medical referee role – a requirement under the provisions of the Cremation (NI) Order 1961 – is an intrinsic element of the service and necessary for the Council (as the Cremation Authority). For over 25 years the medical referee service for Belfast Crematorium was provided through the remit of the Director of Public Health, Eastern Health & Social Services Board. From 1st July 2009 this service ceased. In May 2009 a quotation process was completed and a new medical referee service provider was appointed by the Director of Parks and Leisure, and commenced in June 2009.

Recent trends show that demand for burials is on the decline within the Council's cemeteries while cremation numbers are slowly increasing. The levels of burials in 2009 were 1051 and 1056 in 2010. The levels of cremations for the same period were 2685 and 2732. Total figures are 3736 in 2009 and 3788 in 2010.

In summary the council's response welcomes the opportunity to comment and seeks to continue to play a key role in the review of death certification. The main purpose of the council's response is two fold, to preserve and improve the quality of bereavement services and to promote and improve public confidence in the death certification process in the future.

The key messages in the council response are as follows:

- The Council recommends the need for greater detail on the options provided in order to be able to make the most informed judgement on the best option for change.
- The Council supports in principle greater levels of administrative and medical scrutiny being applied to ensure public confidence in death certification however requires greater detail on how this would be achieved.
- The Council considers that option 1 provides mainly 'better practice' suggestions which present minimal change to the current practice; although additional training would benefit the council's cremation service.
- In principle the additional scrutiny suggested in option 2 is welcomed however greater clarity is required on what is being proposed; timeframe and costs to make an informed decision. In option 2, it appears a discrepancy exists between information in the consultation summary and the full document with reference to the role of medical examiner.
- The medical referee considers there is potential for serious implications in terms of the time period from death certification to disposal; the level of suitably qualified staff to scrutinise cause of death and the likely costs involved if the medical examiner examines every cause of death as referenced in the consultation document.
- The council recommends greater review of other methods of scrutiny which could be considered and refers to its own cremation service for learning points.

- Greater scrutiny is the preferred option however both options do not provide a feasible advance on the current position in terms of immediate scrutiny.
- The council is not in a position with the level of information provided to comment or support a death certification fee being applied as there is no detail on what added value the two options will bring to the quality of service and public confidence.

The council does not feel there is sufficient information provided around the options and costs to make an informed recommendation however believes option 1 does not go far enough to realise the full benefits that a review of death certification could deliver. The council would like the review to consider more fully recommendations from the Scottish model to move towards electronic administration as a way to create consistency and potentially improve levels of administrative scrutiny. Greater clarity on how option 2 would be achieved is required to understand its full impact on the council's services and the general public.

The council believes its current cremation service may provide a unique example of how levels of scrutiny could be built into any future change. For this reason the council recommends the suggestion in question 5 is a further option worth exploring which is a graduated process of change to transform the current system with greater levels of scrutiny both administratively and medically. The council seeks further involvement in the review of death certification in particular when forms and processes are considered before being committed to new legislation.

ANNEX 1

REVIEW OF DEATH CERTIFICATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND

CONSULTATION RESPONSE QUESTIONNAIRE

OPTION 1

Q1. *Is Option 1 your preferred model?*

- The council considers option 1 and the actions summarised within it to be standards that should be applied to the current system as a matter of course.
- There is a need for further information to be supplied to fully understand the impact of this option.

- The council considers there may be a demand for clarity or change to current legislation applicable to death certification to enable future administration to embrace new technologies. For example this option could have included the review of the administration system and introduction of electronic systems (referred to in the Scottish approach and in place in the Republic of Ireland) as an opportunity to improve methods of administrative scrutiny and efficiency of service.
- This may become more prevalent if the medical examiner role is adopted to alleviate any potential delays from an additional level of scrutiny.

Q2. *What do you view as its potential advantages over the present arrangements?*

- Through the sampling of statistics retrospectively the Medical referee will not prevent another case similar to Shipman however the role may be more likely to detect patterns or trends of concern more quickly.
- The sampling of data would be welcomed to ensure effective data management.
- It may create an environment whereby it may prevent others from repeating the crime as the fear of being caught may increase.
- Improved training is welcomed as form completion is a key challenge for the council's cremation service.
- The tasks listed in option 1 are all considered standards that should be in place for such a significant process as death certification.

Q3. *What do you view as potential disadvantages?*

- The disadvantage to option 1 is that with most aspects of training it is in the application and enforcement where variation can occur and therefore quality is affected.
- Similarly in sample data analysis of medical certificates success is more likely to be achieved in how poor performance is addressed.
- The main disadvantage of option 1 is that there is no immediate scrutiny of the cause of death applied.
- The option does not confirm whether or not the administration involved in the disposal of bodies can embrace new developments like electronic forms etc which is in place in the Republic of Ireland and under consideration in Scotland.

Q4. Do you think it offers value for money?

On the basis of the figures provided it is difficult to understand if the costs will realise any added value.

It may have been useful to provide different cost options for option 1 and 2 to see if a different way would bring about potential savings.

Q5. Do you think Option 1 should be introduced as a transitional measure, with a view to subsequently introducing a more comprehensive system of scrutiny?

It is considered that this option is the one most suitable for the current climate and local setting however further information is required to make an informed decision on what difference to managing the identified risks detailed as the drivers for change.

The council would welcome a more comprehensive system of scrutiny which effectively minimises the risks involved and would be at minimal cost to citizens. However the Council does not feel there is sufficient information provided to make an informed choice at this stage of the review.

OPTION 2

Q6. Is Option 2 your preferred model?

The council would welcome a greater level of scrutiny which effectively minimises the perceived risks and balances where possible the level of scrutiny for disposal.

Option 2 in its current form provides insufficient information for council to support where it will add cost but has not confirmed the added value to the death certification process.

The queries the council seeks further clarity on are:

- It appears there are two explanations of what a Medical Examiner role involved - reviewing all deaths to viewing all bodies as presented in the consultation documents.
- Secondly does the Medical Examiner scrutinise the administration of all deaths and/ or causes of death.

Retrospective scrutiny is not considered as a deterrent for cases like Shipman and the viability of an immediate scrutiny is detailed below.

The medical referee considers the scrutiny of all causes of death will present serious issues to be overcome, in particular ensuring there are no delays to the time period from death certification to disposal. This is a key issue for council to ensure this traditional norm is not affected by the proposals.

Similarly the medical referee would consider there are issues in relation to the number of suitably qualified medical practitioners who can scrutinise the cause of deaths and the costs involved in one hundred per cent verification of all causes of death.

The only way the council believes there is viability in the option is if a partial verification process is introduced which includes one hundred per cent verification of all bodies for cremation however we would suggest further detail is provided to scrutinise the potential in the option further.

The council realises the need to build scrutiny into the administration and medical elements of death certification and is willing to share the lessons it has learned over the years of managing a burials and cremation service.

Q7. *What do you view as its potential advantages over the present arrangements?*

A further tier of scrutiny has been beneficial for the cremation service.

It will depend on how it is rolled-out as to whether it will minimise the risk that has been noted through the current local death certification.

Q8. *What do you view as potential disadvantages?*

The cost of a 100 per cent verification of all causes of death would be considered difficult to manage and to afford. In order to pass the cost on as a death certification fee there would need to be clear added value the customer can recognise.

Q9. Do you think it offers value for money?

It is not possible for the council to comment on whether the costs in the consultation are value for money as there is not sufficient detail to make an informed decision.

The council can provide detail on the cost of its administration service which may present other opportunities to develop administrative verification as part of the death certification process.

LOCATION OF MEDICAL EXAMINER

Q10. Do you agree that these options (ie, the Health and Social Care Board or the Public Health Agency) are the most suitable locations for the role of Medical Examiner?

For over 25 years up to the formation of the Public Health Agency the medical referee service was provided through the remit of the director of Health, Eastern Health & Social Services Board.

From the information provided it is not possible at this point for the council to determine the advantages or disadvantages of either location.

Q11. If yes, do you think the Medical Examiner role would be more appropriately located in the Health and Social Care Board or the Public Health Agency? Please explain.

No further comment.

Q12. If no, where do you think the Medical Examiner role should be located?

No further comment.

FEES

Q13. Should bereaved families or the deceased's estate pay a fee to cover the costs associated with introducing a system of improved scrutiny of death certification?

The council would not be in support of additional costs being transferred to its citizens. In particular if added value was not realised to the quality of the existing service.

Both options still do not provide enough evidence to appreciate whether or not they will improve the current situation and as such it would be unfavourable to pass on costs for no greater value for money; improved service or safeguards in death certification.

- Q14. *If such a fee were introduced, should it be standardised, regardless of the method of disposal employed?***

It would have been useful for the consultation to breakdown the different costs it felt would be applied for an informed decision to be made.

- Q15. *If a fee were not introduced, can you suggest any other ways of funding these improvements?***

It is not known whether any of the cost can be written-off by adding a duty for medical practitioners to verify deaths as well as certify deaths. The Department could consider separating administrative and medical tasks to reduce costs similar to the council's cremation service.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- Q16. *Are any of the options presented likely to have an adverse impact on any group of people correlating to one or more of the nine distinctions made in Section 75(1) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998?***

The council considered the reference to generating a balance in certification for both disposal through burial and cremation. It would appear at first glance that three signatories is burdensome, however due to the finality and level of discrepancies in forms completed by medical practitioners, it is considered essential.

The council encourages the review to be mindful of the potential implications of applying scrutiny to the management of requests for disposal within 24 hours (dictated by some cultures now resident in Northern Ireland).

- Q17. *Please provide any general comments or evidence on the possible health, economic and social impacts of the proposed changes, whether adverse or beneficial.***

Adding a cost for death certification will not be a popular move and be considered as having a detrimental impact initially for families and individuals.

Socially the impact of any change on the traditional norm for funeral arrangements caused by an increase in administration or medical scrutiny would not be welcomed in particular where delays to the time period for disposal are created."

After discussion, the Committee approved the contents of the response and agreed that it be forwarded to the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety as the Council's official response thereon.

Obesity Consultation

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform members that the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPNI) has commissioned a consultation exercise on the Obesity prevention framework for Northern Ireland 2011 -2021 entitled ‘a Fitter Future for all’ the aim of which is to prevent and address obesity within Northern Ireland over the next 10 years.
- 1.2 Appended to the report is the draft written response which has been submitted in order to make a return to the Department within the timeframe allocated. The Department is aware that this may be amended by the Committee.
- 1.3 The consultation was received in November and officers across three departments have provided input for the draft response – Health & Environmental Services, Development and Parks & Leisure.
- 1.4 The format of the consultation document was a 109 page report accompanied by a 13 page questionnaire. Copies of either of these documents can be made available to Members on request.
- 1.5 The framework focuses action on three main pillars: food and nutrition; physical activity; and data and research, and within the context of three life course stages: early years; children and young people; and adults. This approach is consistent with the responses being undertaken by a number of countries, following the Foresight Report¹

2.0 Key Issues

- 2.1 In the draft response the need for the obesity framework to be fit for purpose to address the scale and complexities involved in obesity and its presence citywide is emphasised.

¹ The 2007 Foresight Report 'Tackling Obesities: Future Choices', highlighted the importance of tackling the growing obesity trend in a coherent and comprehensive manner. Early in 2008, the IDeA's Healthy Communities Programme commissioned Sheffield Hallam University to analyse the implications of the report for local government. This report examines where councils can use their local leadership role to positively change obesity levels and create healthier environments.

- 2.2 The response starts by outlining the strategic position the council has in the city, having the democratic legitimacy to lead key partners to work together in tackling the prevalence of obesity. One of the key themes in the council's corporate plan is to enable 'Better Support for People and Communities' under which the council provides support and services to generate health and wellbeing and active lifestyles across the city. The council is in a unique position to influence and enable many of the factors relating to obesity and seeks within the response to reinforce its primary role in the future development of the framework.
- 2.3 The response also refers to the fact that the obesity prevention framework aligns with the strategic assumptions the council is forming as it develops its new 'Active Belfast and Open Spaces' strategy.
- 2.4 The response also highlights council's lead role in working in partnership and the recent formation of the Belfast Health Development Unit (March 2010) which has been driven through city wide collaboration to address health inequalities in the formation of a single health partnership for the city.
- 2.5 The response also outlines the support and services the council offers to address obesity which should be used as a foundation on which to focus and co-ordinate prevention and intervention. The response makes specific mention of key council projects such as:
- (i) Healthy Families
A citywide whole family pilot intervention approach for up to 25 participating families, combining weight management, education and physical activity.
 - (ii) Renewing the Routes
Developing the arterial routes enables more aesthetically appealing routes within neighbourhoods to be attractive as methods of travel across the city for pedestrians and cyclists alike.
 - (iii) Chinese Nutrition Project
A partnership project between Belfast Health & Social Care Trust and Belfast City Council to assist Chinese takeaways in Belfast to develop, display and maintain a healthier choice menu whilst reinforcing traditional Chinese good cooking practices.

- 2.6 The framework is a starting point to focus a joined up approach to obesity however the council's draft response suggests the aim; objectives and actions should be more compelling and there are also improvements sought in how this could be managed and measured.
- 2.7 In relation to the more 'indirect' services that the council provides and that impact on obesity and the factors linked to the prevalence of the obesity on a daily basis, the response suggests that the framework needs to revisit the aim and action to provide a greater balance of health, physical activity and environmental outcomes to fully address the complexity of obesity.
- 2.8 It is suggested in the draft response that - due to the scale of the challenge, the number of stakeholders and factors that require intervention on obesity - the inclusion of a statutory duty may more effectively underpin accountability across all agencies and service provision as well as focus the results in tackling obesity.
- 3.0 Resource Implications
- Officer time may be required for further support and development of the framework but no further implications are evident at this time.
- 4.0 Equality and Good Relations Implications
- None.
- 5.0 Recommendations
- Members are asked to:
- (i) note that the draft response was submitted to the Department subject to future committee and council approval; and
 - (ii) review and approve the draft response subject to any amendments or comments they may wish to provide.

Appendix 2

Belfast City Council response to:
Northern Ireland's Obesity Prevention Framework 2011-2021

Introduction

Over the past year Belfast City Council has outlined its position on obesity as part of the DCAL Obesity inquiry. The council welcomes this latest opportunity to incorporate its initial recommendations and further develop its position in the response to the Northern Ireland Obesity Framework.

The main messages within the council's response are:

- In principle, the council supports the co-ordinated development of an obesity framework focusing on prevention and intervention.
- The council would be keen to use its leadership and advocacy role in tackling obesity through quality service provision;
- In the response, the council will reinforce the point that in order to address obesity which is considered to be at 'epidemic' proportions worldwide, locally the level of response needs to reflect the scale of the challenge in hand.
- The council would emphasise the need that the investment in addressing the prevalence of obesity is proportionate to the scale of the challenge. This needs to be evident through:
 - the research base developed;
 - public attitudinal awareness raising;
 - partnership service delivery and;
 - integrated resources, proportionate to the scale of the challenge.
- The measurement and management of the response and result of tackling obesity should be effectively established.

What follows is a brief overview of the council's position relevant to the overall consultation and development of the framework.

Belfast City Council's current position

Strategic position

Belfast City Council's overall purpose is to improve the quality of life now and for future generations. One of the key themes in the Council's Corporate Plan is to enable 'Better Support for People and Communities' under which the council provides support and services to generate Health and Wellbeing and active lifestyles across the city. Council is in a unique position to influence and enable many of the factors relating to obesity and seeks to reinforce its primary role in the future development of the framework.

Support and services to address obesity is a growing priority area of work within this theme. The Council has the democratic legitimacy to lead key partners to tackle the prevalence of obesity.

The council welcomes the development of the framework as a foundation on which to focus and co-ordinate prevention and intervention.

In principle the Obesity Prevention Framework aligns with the strategic assumptions the council is forming as it develops its new 'Active Belfast and Open Spaces' strategy. The council recognises the significant role and opportunities it has to 'rise to the challenge' (as noted in the 'Tackling obesity: Foresight report and implications for local government report' 2008). Within the council's current strategic priorities there is a key focus on:

- Improving health outcomes for children and young people
- An integrated 'Active Belfast and Open Spaces' strategy for the city.

Foresight referred to these two key items within the report as 'areas of influence and responsibility'. The council seeks therefore to reinforce its prime position to enable and influence societal and individual life choices through the services it delivers and its other partnerships.

Partnership working together

The council has recently reflected its commitment to driving city wide collaboration to address health inequalities through the formation of a single health partnership for the city. In response to changes in Health and Social Care and recommendations from the Minister for Health, the Council has joined with the Public Health Agency and the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust informing the Belfast Health Development Unit (BH DU) in March 2010. The key aims of the Unit are to improve the health and well-being and quality of life of citizens in Belfast and specifically reduce inequalities between those that live in deprived areas of the city and those that live in the most affluent neighbourhoods. Consolidating existing and building new connections to ensure resources are targeted towards agreed priorities for the city.

The council continues to provide leadership and support at different levels through existing partnerships and through developing arrangements such as the evolving Active Belfast Partnership. Partnership working is embedded within the council and we acknowledge that Council cannot have enough impact working on its own.

Service Delivery

The council provides a range of services and assets which directly impact on obesity and the factors related to the prevalence of obesity. The council provides what Foresight report (2008) terms 'focused initiatives'; 'enablers'; and 'amplifiers' within its services and assets. The examples provided also reflect where prevention, intervention or both are being targeted.

Examples of current Belfast City council intervention services Focused (intervention) initiatives;

Healthy Families – a citywide whole family intervention approach for up to 25 participating families, combining weight management, education and physical activity. It is a pilot programme with up to 30 teenagers at risk of obesity focussing on healthy choices and the benefits of good nutrition and physical activity. Researching the effectiveness of the different approaches to obesity projects. This is being conducted by the University of Ulster and will be the first Belfast specific research comparing a range of interventions to tackle obesity, including the family approach.

This is pioneering pilot project for the council to consider the challenge of obesity and how future services should be shaped to directly impact on the prevalence of obesity in individuals; families and the wider community.

Enabler intervention

Renewing the Routes

Belfast's arterial routes radiating from the city centre are key gateways and the lifeblood for the social and economic functioning of the city. Previously these once thriving locations supported their surrounding neighbourhoods but now require investment to tackle problems of economic, social, physical and environmental decline. The Renewing the Routes Initiative represents an innovative approach developed locally to enhance the areas and the vitality of the routes. By developing and implementing local regeneration plans the actions or interventions have secured local ownership and helped link wider regeneration activity. The actions have been carried out under general themes of commercial improvements; developing gateway sites; celebrating diverse heritage and working towards cleaner, greener and safer neighbourhoods.

Developing the arterial routes is enabling more aesthetic appealing routes within neighbourhoods to be attractive as methods of travel across the city for pedestrians and cyclists alike.

Amplifier intervention

Chinese Nutrition Project

This project assists Chinese Takeaways in Belfast to develop, display and maintain a healthier choice menu whilst reinforcing traditional Chinese good cooking practices. It is a partnership project between Belfast Health & Social Care Trust and Belfast City Council that commenced in 2008 with a multi- agency group. Three years funding was received for the project from Fit Futures totalling £30,500 from 2008 to 2010. Some key highlights over the three years include training 80 Chinese chefs in nutrition and marketing of healthier options; production a nutrition toolkit in both hard copy and on disc in English and Chinese; promotional materials to assist premises to advertise their healthier options and to publicise the project to the public; Chinese master chef competition and an awards ceremony. The project is ongoing and has been subject to an interim evaluation with a full evaluation to be completed after the end of this financial year.

This project incentivises local business to invest more in nutrition as part of the overall quality food standards they seek in Belfast.

In terms of delivery, the Council currently provides a wide range of services within communities that impact or have the capacity to impact on obesity. These include leisure services, community services, environmental health, good relations, community safety, city development, parks and open spaces, services for children and young people and older people, economic development, regeneration, culture and arts, etc.

The council also provides other services which influence factors relating to obesity or have an indirect bearing on the prevalence of obesity. Examples are included within the council's transport policy and sustainable development action plan. Connswater Community greenway is one example of the council's determination to integrate the health and wellbeing of its citizens in the development of new projects and initiatives across the city.

Over the past year an Interdepartmental Group on Health and Wellbeing led by Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure has developed a Healthier city framework and plan to co-ordinate its activities that improve health and wellbeing.

The council seeks to outline in the next section its position and recommendations for inclusion in the final iteration of the Obesity framework.

Belfast City Council's Formal consultation questionnaire response

Question 1: Do you agree that (a) the rising prevalence of obesity must be addressed and relevant action taken and do you agree (b) that addressing obesity is the responsibility of a wide range of Departments, sectors and agencies?

The council supports the suggestion that the rising prevalence of obesity must be addressed, relevant action taken and that this must involve a wide range of stakeholders from central, local government and agencies to local people and communities.

The Council welcomes the framework and recognises its importance in improving health and wellbeing whilst targeting health inequalities across Northern Ireland. We agree preventing obesity requires a long term strategy for co-ordinated action which could be achieved through adoption of the obesity framework across government and all sectors. We also agree with the entire life course approach with particularly emphasis on the early years and the young.

(a) the rising prevalence of obesity must be addressed and relevant action taken

The council is in agreement that the prevalence of obesity needs to be addressed. Further to this it recommends that:

- The level of response and investment needs to be proportionate to the scale of the challenge - evident in the investment in the research base developed; public attitudinal awareness raising; partnership service delivery and in integrated resources.
- The aim makes a more compelling statement and the objectives and targets are realigned to reflect this.
- The action plan is revisited to balance the outcomes and actions to equally address the aim of targeting the population, environment and physical activity.
- Greater inclusion of action is required to co-ordinate focus and action on the factors which compound the challenge. Further commentary on the outcome 'action' plan is included in the response to question 10.

- Communication, in particular public awareness raising needs the levels of investment dedicated to previous approaches which are considered at epidemic proportions e.g. smoking cessation.
- The approach needs to build on lessons learned from other key campaigns with the same scale of challenge and apply social marketing techniques to drive a positive cultural change towards a healthy and active lifestyle.

(b) that addressing obesity is the responsibility of a wide range of Departments, sectors and agencies?

The council agrees that the responsibility to address obesity lies with a wide range of departments, sectors and agencies.

It is recommended that a statutory duty is considered as the basis of the framework to enable consistent, integrated and an effective approach to addressing the challenge obesity presents.

An improved approach to gathering; managing and evaluating accurate and relevant data to track the true picture of obesity and impact of efforts made.

Question 2: Are you aware of any other statistics not included in this document which could inform the development of the Framework?

In the previous response to the Obesity Inquiry the council highlighted key statistics which are generally listed in the bibliography.

The council does not have additional statistics which directly inform the framework however does recommend other benchmarking sources for best practice including Finland; Scotland and Liverpool in terms of their impact on tackling obesity. Further recommendations related are for:

- A co-ordinated approach to measuring, monitoring and evaluating the issue of obesity and factors relating to it.
- To include the development of an effective measurement tool as a priority action to build a consistent body of evidence for informed decision making in the future. The measurement tool would include data collection and breakdown for gender, socio economic groups, health inequalities, the determinants ill health and vulnerable groups etc. It may enable a greater understanding of the historical pattern specific to Northern Ireland, more localised neighbourhood data or particular obesity health linked issues.

- The priority areas to be measured would be firstly the scale and scope of the challenge locally and also on early years as the priority target area for prevention and immediate intervention.
- Data on the availability or accessibility of healthy/unhealthy foods and related risk factors e.g. deprived areas or school gates etc. was also considered useful.

Question 3: We would be grateful if you could provide details of any work you are currently taking forward on this issue, work you plan to undertake, or how you feel you/your organisation can be involved in the implementation of this framework

Below is a summary of the work; resources and services the council has developed or seeks to develop to achieve its vision of a healthy and active Belfast.

The council currently provides a range of assets across the city to encourage active lifestyles. These include:

- 10 leisure centres across the city
- 48 parks and open spaces
- 74 playgrounds
- 120 sports pitches
- 12 bowling pavilions
- 1 golf course
- Belfast Zoological Gardens
- 1 adventure playground
- 34 community resources including council or community managed facilities or play facilities.

There are support services available in the council to develop more active lifestyles. In Parks and Leisure there is the leisure development unit along with all the staff teams at each of the leisure centres; outdoor leisure; and the Active Living and Open Space team which all contribute to providing services or resources to promote active lifestyles. In Health and Environmental services there are the Food Standards team and staff dedicated to the Belfast Health Development Unit. In the Development Department the staff teams are all involved in managing the community resources and activity programmes. This list is not exhaustive as there are further staff are dedicated to services which influence factors linked to the prevalence of obesity.

The Council has a Healthier City Framework and Plan 2010-2011. Many of the actions within the council's framework and plan provide prevention or intervention opportunities for obesity within the population: The council provides 'focused initiatives', examples of these within ongoing service provision and departments are listed below with a full outline is provided in appendix 1:

- Healthy Families
- Chinese Nutrition Project
- Chinese Master Chef
- Nutrition Interventions
- Healthwise programme in partnership with Public health agency:
- FRESH programme:
- Health and Environmental Services Department have been working with businesses to improve the nutritional composition of foods on offer.
- Development Services provide economic and social development support and funding to generate safer and healthier communities
- Community gardens; peace funded initiatives - Community planning
- Cycle initiative development
- Role in regeneration - active into the environment ; greenways
- Connswater community greenway
- NI Healthier Eating Award Scheme (PILOT)

The Council is also considering piloting a peer education intervention programme with young women adopting a similar approach to that of Healthy Families. We are also exploring the use of the council's free 'Choose N Move' programme which shows children how their diet and exercise regime affects their weight and provides tips on how they can make easy to adapt, positive changes to their lifestyle as a preventative tool for combating obesity.

With effective planning; resources and evaluation there is opportunity to develop further streams of work in partnership with other statutory and voluntary agencies and local businesses.

There are a range of council services which have the capacity to enable intervention with obesity. Regeneration initiatives like the 'Streets ahead' city centre project integrates pedestrian and cycling access to the city which in turn provides a more positive impact on the environment and therefore provides greater impetus for individuals and the community to choose to be more active.

Council is in a position to 'amplify' the opportunities available to challenge obesity. The Recreation and Youth service order (1986) enables the council to provide leisure and play activities to be available that can lead to participative and preventative programmes. Council remains committed also to playing its role in the implementation of appropriate measures aligned to the Play and Leisure Policy Statement (OFMDFM, 2008) and the Implementation Plan that will accompany the Policy Statement upon finalisation. The Council's emerging pitches strategy reflects the need for increasing the provision for team sports activities and the future Active Belfast Open Spaces Strategy will also reflect the priority the Council gives to this issue.

Question 4 – Do you agree with the Overarching Aim, Target and the long term objectives of the Obesity Prevention Framework?

Aim

The council concurs with the general intent in the aim of the framework however does not feel it sufficiently reflects the scale of the challenge in tackling the prevalence of obesity. For example the overall aim of reducing levels of obesity could be more directly referenced in the aim of the framework.

Further recommendations to improve the focus of the framework include:

- An examination of the current statutory powers is recommended to consider the possible extension or introduction of to provide the accountability and focus the efforts of all agencies to invest in tackling the prevalence of obesity. Finland uses a legislation to enable healthy life choices in targeting obesity and appear to be developing positive outcomes from this approach.
- It is suggested the aim is revisited for a more vigorous statement of intent which reflects the scale of the challenge, includes the significance of ensuring all stakeholders provide consistent support and integrated services to enable an environment in which the general population can choose healthier lifestyles.
- It is preferred that the aim presents a more balanced view on the need to enable individual; societal and environmental change and action to ensure that it does not reinforce the misconception that people 'choose' to be obese (Foresight report 2007)

- Foresight believes that for a strategy to be successful in targeting obesity it should firstly ensure 'an environment that supports and facilitates healthy choices' and in complement enable individuals need to 'desire, seek and make different choices... as part of families or groups and that individual behaviour'. Therefore the council considers there is opportunity to align the aim more closely to the recommendations in the Foresight report.
- The aim could benefit from a greater reference to investment of resources; knowledge and expertise in tackling obesity especially in the research base and evaluation; public attitudinal awareness raising on nutrition and being active to be generated; and for effective partnership service delivery.
- The need for integrated resources proportionate to the scale of the challenge would also be an addition that is recommended in the framework.

Targets

It is suggested that the targets are revisited to address the issues the council is reflecting on in the context of the overarching aim. The overarching target is recommended to focus on slowing the rate of obesity; stopping the levels of obesity and reducing the levels of obesity.

It is suggested the targets would also benefit from:

- a full baseline exercise undertaken to understand the current levels rather than the reliance on estimated data captured 2005/06 in the consultation.
- A more appropriate target to be selected which is not susceptible to a population increase and may present an inevitable increase in the levels of obesity.
- As recommended in the Council's response to the Obesity inquiry performance targets that are expanded to focus on, for example, gender differences or socio-economic groupings.
- A greater focus on targeting and measuring impact on prevention and intervention at an individual, family and community level.
- An integrated target on the effectiveness of the resourcing and financial management approach to prevention, intervention and further action by all statutory agencies involved.
- Targets set to reflect the three pillars and life course stages, along with tasks within all of these categories clearly targeted and linked to the anticipated outcomes.

Objectives

Council believes these need further development to match the recommended aim and targets in the council's response. For example objectives should set out to focus on:

- Slowing; stopping and reducing obesity
- Prevention route that is agreed
- Developing an agreed intervention approach (e.g. determining the scale and level of intervention being applied)
- Focus on target groups
- Objectives set for the three pillars: food & nutrition; physical activity; and data and research
- Realising opportunities for activity
- The environment – physical and social objectives relating the factors which impact on the prevalence of obesity
- Education and awareness raising with a one message approach
- Integrated resourcing and financial management of tackling obesity
- Monitoring and evaluation

It was also considered that some objectives could be improved; e.g. the nutrition objective does not focus specifically on a reduction in calorie or energy intake which may be a more rounded objective when targeting obesity and other sections required greater development to ensure actions link to the targets set e.g. impact of social determinants on obesity.

In summary the council support and welcomes the intent captured in the original aim however believes it should be extended and enhanced to reinforce more fully the scale of the challenge in tackling obesity and the principles and values captured in the framework. This is also the position for further progression of the targets, objectives and action plan.

Question 5 – Do you agree with the values and principles?

The council generally supports and agrees with the principles in the framework reinforced the need to ensure the earlier aim; target and objectives matched the intent in these principles and values.

Question 6 – Do you agree with the life-course stages and settings?

There is general support for applying the life course model; there is however a number of areas the council would like to reflect upon namely:

- For caution to be applied with the focus on the priority stages focused of Early Years; Children and Young People; and Adults. Caution as different age ranges within these age ranges will require a different approach or intervention and that not all may respond to a single approach. There may also be priority areas within the age ranges in each life course stage where there is greater opportunity or need for resources or action.
- The council supports a priority focus on nought up to sixteen years as early intervention is recognised in reducing future dependency (Journal of American Medical Association 2010). This research piece illustrated that 5% normal weight adolescents presented as obese in comparison to 51% of women and 37% of men who where obese as adolescents.
- There is a key role in generating education and awareness in adults and older people especially where they fulfil parenting roles.
- The council in its response to the obesity inquiry recognised that parental involvement is a primary driver to affect change in lifestyle choices and the onset of obesity.
- In terms of physical activity across the city the target groups emerging where participation is at its least can be addressed in the life cycle however the life cycle does not provide enough opportunity to target the variance in need of the age range categorised as the sixty plus target group.
- Traditionally it is noted that there is a reduction in active lifestyle at 16 years + into adulthood and for adults (e.g. 40-55 years) where activity levels have been recorded as lower than for other age groups and this would also determine a need for focused intervention.

Outcomes

The presentation of this section in the consultation document was considered confusing as many of the outcomes referred to in the plan are in effect actions. The council considers there is a greater benefit to stakeholders to revise the format and planning of the achievement of outcomes – short medium or long term than in the original document.

Other suggestions made which to this section are:

- To establish generic outcomes which apply to all of the three pillars and life course stages at the beginning of the outcome plan. For example education and awareness raising is a feature throughout and therefore the relevant short term actions can fall from this.
- Similarly exploring the example of care pathways the outcome plan outlines the requirement is to signpost those at risk whereas a more relevant outcome is for the completion of care pathways which ultimately lead to the reduction in obesity in individuals.
- To reflect the council's thinking the outcomes could be presented to reflect individual; societal and environmental outcomes and within that the life course breakdown may be applied.
- The plan needs to be rebalanced as there appears a heavy presence of short term 'actions' to provide a heavy health related focus and highlights the need for greater active actions to be incorporated.
- It is recommended the council is more actively involved in the development of the final outcome plan due its unique position in enabling a positive change to addressing obesity in partnership across the city.
- Add and expand further references to councils as providers in the delivery of outcomes.
- Training of local authority staff and other partners to promote the approach needs included and costed accordingly to bring about a change in the culture of delivery.
- Access to opportunities is an issue that may require a more focused outcome.
- The council would encourage greater utilisation of its resources. Equally it encourages its staff and resources to work in partnership sharing expertise on activity and participation to train relevant staff from schools and in the education or health sector and vice versa.
- Consideration should be given to extending the outcomes in relation to urban planning to consider for example the accessibility of takeaways to schools or the accessibility of healthier food outlets in certain areas.
- There is a need to confirm the indicators which relate to some of the outcomes in this section.

Examples of specific issues relating to actions within this section are:

- **Life course stage: Children and young people** - There is an opportunity to focus on an outcome for referrals at this stage and to widen it to incorporate all stakeholders in a position to refer e.g. health professionals; crèche staff etc
- **Life course stage: Adult and general population** - There is an opportunity to widen the range of referral organisations in this section to include private charitable or voluntary organisations.
- **Outcome 7 Targeted healthy food initiatives in place** - The recommendation is for the reference to reflect the current work being carried out by councils e.g. introduce a Healthier eating award for local caterers and reflect the council as the lead delivery partner.
- **Outcome 13 Pre-packed foods labelled with simple, easy to understand, front of pack nutritional information, to allow consumers to make an informed choice.** There is support for this outcome however responsibility for enforcement will rest with Environmental Health Officers. Councils are not mentioned as delivery partners in the document. It will also have a resource implication for local councils to progress.
- **Outcome 15 Improved nutritional content of menu choices including regulation of portion sizes and provision of appropriate nutritional information for consumers by caterers.**
- **Outcome 16 Public sector facilities provide healthier, more nutritionally balanced food** - Councils are the only partner that can deliver this outcome on the ground and this role as lead partner should be reflected in the delivery partner's column. This will also have a resource implication for local councils.
- **Outcome 18 Nutritional education/ qualifications - incorporated** into training programmes for those who work in food and hospitality sectors through the relevant sector skills council. The council agrees with this but feel that this will only apply to those training to work in the food industry and will not cover those already working in it. Programmes should be made available to do this and councils could be given the responsibility to deliver these programmes with adequate resources to achieve the expected outcomes. This sector is difficult to reach and it is recognised that Environmental Health Officers are best placed to engage with them. This will however have a resource implication for local councils.

- In some areas whilst the outcomes are clearly important to health it is not clear how relevant they are to tackling obesity e.g. reducing salt, or early years' outcome 10 regarding the safe prep and storage of formula milk.
- In relation to diet and the early years, caution is necessary when promoting healthier eating to help people understand the nutritional needs of the child which are different than an adult, there is some evidence emerging that in nursery schools pressurised to adopt healthier options by parents that children are in some instances under nourished.
- Regarding nutrition indicators there are a lot of indicators around five a day or healthier options but no indicators relating simply to calorie intake or saturated fat intake which may be a more direct indicator of the "energy in" side of the obesity problem.

In addition to the above there are a number of outcomes for which the district councils could potentially be able to contribute and further discussion may be required around actions and roles.

In summary the council considers that the outcome section could be revisited and welcomes the opportunity to more fully shape this area of work in the framework.

Question 10 – Data & Research

The overarching comments on data and research are that a relevant and accurate baseline is required. A key action to be considered is for the development of a measurement toolkit which leads to a clear picture being formed on the true picture of obesity in Northern Ireland.

The council welcomes the prospect of a standardised and integrated data research and evaluation approach on obesity and is willing to contribute to the development of a toolkit which would compliment the monitoring and evaluation systems and processes it has in place.

Question 11 – What are the priorities within this Framework which need to be delivered to effectively address obesity?

The council considers the priorities to be addressed through the development of a framework are:

- The scale of the challenge to be effectively captured in the aim, targets, action and overall response.

- The investment of resources is proportionate to the scale of the challenge and through integrated partnership working is reinforced and a pre requisite.
- The unique position and legitimate role of councils is captured fully in the shaping of the aim and actions developed through the framework.
- The framework is supported through with formal legislative foundation to ensure the wider environment enables healthy life choices to be made and sustained;

Within the framework the priorities are to:

- prevent obesity as early as possible in the life cycle;
- intervene through education and awareness raising and effective programmes of activity to slow obesity; stop and reduce levels of obesity in the future.
- Incorporate the recommended legislative basis in the aim
- Revision of the outcome plan to address the items detailed in the council's response.

Question 12 – Is the Framework likely to have an adverse impact on equality of opportunity on any of the nine equality groups identified under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1988

It is not anticipated there will be an adverse impact at this stage.

Question 13 – Have the needs of the Section 75 categories been fully addressed within the Framework?

The life cycle appears to be a way to address health inequity at each stage throughout and it is difficult to note how any category cannot be addressed within the framework.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the consultation exercise. The council welcomes further opportunities to expand and develop the obesity framework. For further clarification on the response the contact officer is Elaine Black on 90270445 or black@belfastcity.gov.uk

After discussion, the Committee approved the contents of the response and agreed that it be forwarded to the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety as the Council's Official Response thereon.

Re-Purchase of Land at Dunville Park

The Director reported that, during 1984, the Council had disposed of a small portion of land at the Dunville Park to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive in order to facilitate the provision of a vehicle turning area at Dunville Street. He pointed out that the Council had received the sum of £230 in this regard and that the Housing Executive

had paid the Council's legal fees. However, the Housing Executive had never utilised the land for its intended purpose and it had remained within the park's boundary. He stated that, in order to facilitate the proposed redevelopment of the Dunville Park it was considered that the repurchase of the land from the Housing Executive would be appropriate and the Council's Estates Management Unit had entered into discussions with Housing Executive representatives and its valuer in order to progress the matter. Accordingly, the Housing Executive had indicated that it was willing to sell the land back to the Council and a sale figure of £1,400, plus all reasonable expenses, had been agreed with the District Valuer, subject to formal approval being received from the Board of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

The Director recommended that the Committee approve the acquisition of approximately 93 square metres of land at the Dunville Park from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive on the above-mentioned terms subject to the approval, in accordance with Standing Order 60, of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and to the completion of an appropriate legal agreement to be prepared by the Assistant Chief Executive.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Draft Playing Pitches Strategy

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1. Relevant Background Information

Members will be aware that the council is in the process of developing a playing pitches strategy. The draft strategy has been developed and was approved by committee at a Special Meeting on 13 December 2010.

Following council approval the first phase of the public consultation exercise commenced on Monday 10th January 2011. This is an 8 week exercise which will conclude on Friday 4th March 2011.

2. Key Issues

Officers are currently doing some preliminary work regarding potential sites for investment. This work will include a narrative on deliverability within the first three years of the life of the strategy. This work can only be finalised once the outcome of the consultation process and the rate setting process are known.

To enable work on design etc. to commence by the Summer of 2011, time to complete this work and engage parties will be extremely tight. Therefore it is proposed to organise party group briefings and to convene a special meeting of the committee in March 2011.

As part of the ongoing consultation process, two requests have been received from elected Members for officers to attend meetings arranged by those Members with a range of sports clubs. The purpose of the meetings is to present the draft pitches strategy to assist clubs in preparing their consultation responses. While this would not normally be an issue, I have however taken advice given that the Local Government elections are to be held in May 2011.

The 'Purdah' period will come into operation from the date of the publication of the Notice of Election which will be on 25th March and, under the Council's Election Protocol, it would not be appropriate for officers to be involved in such public meetings from that date until after the election on 5th May. In the period from now until 25th March, I have been advised that direction should be taken from the Committee regarding such requests. If the Committee is content for officers to be involved in these types of meetings in the period up until 25th March, then this facility would need to be offered to all political groups on the Council.

3. Resource Implications

None further at this stage.

4. Equality and Good Relations Implications

An independent consultant has been appointed to externally verify the equality dimensions to the development of the strategy. They will continue to offer advice and feedback to the council throughout the consultation and EQIA process.

5. Recommendations

It is recommended that Committee:

1. Agree to hold party group briefings and to convene a special meeting of the Parks and Leisure Committee in March 2011; and
2. Provide guidance to officers regarding their involvement with Members in public meetings during the period from the commencement of the consultation exercise up until the start of the 'Purdah' period on 25th March.

6. **Decision Tracking**

The actions will be completed by the Director of Parks and Leisure by end of March 2011.

7. **Key to Abbreviations**

None.”

The Committee adopted recommendation 1 contained within the report and agreed that officers be permitted to attend public meetings with sports clubs in accordance with the proposal outlined.

Stadia Proposals

The Director of Parks and Leisure reminded the Committee that a financial commitment of £110 million over the period from 2012 to 2015 had been made from the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure in respect of the development of regional stadia at Casement Park, Windsor Park and Ravenhill Rugby Grounds. The Director pointed out that the closing date for the public consultation on the proposed draft budget had been 9th February, with the Council's response in respect of the draft Departmental budgets having been considered by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 4th February.

The Director stated that it was imperative that the Council continue to engage with the Department, sports governing bodies and other stakeholders in this regard. However, it was proposed that, in the first instance, the discussions be held with Sport Northern Ireland in order to examine how the Council could contribute to the Stadia proposals and to ensure that the project would achieve maximum regeneration and community development impacts. In addition, it was proposed that, at the appropriate time, a delegation from the Council meet with Sport Northern Ireland in order to explore various issues in respect of the Stadia Development. Accordingly, he recommended that the Committee agree that officers continue to engage with Sport Northern Ireland and other stakeholders in relation to the project and agree also that representatives of Sport Northern Ireland be requested to meet with an All-Party delegation in order to discuss how the Council could best contribute to its proposals.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Green Graves

The Director of Parks and Leisure reminded the Committee that a number of decisions had been taken in recent months in relation to the Council's future burial and crematorium provision. He pointed out that the Council continued to examine new and innovative solutions to future burial needs and reported that the former Chairman of the Parks and Leisure Committee (Councillor Stoker) and himself had met with representatives of a local company, Green Graves, which, with support from the University of Ulster, had been developing an innovative pre-formed cemetery system. That company had been trialling the system at the new Blaris Cemetery and had requested an opportunity to present its findings to the Council. Accordingly, he recommended that a meeting of the Cemeteries Working Group be convened at the appropriate time in order to meet with representatives of Green Graves.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

**Parks and Leisure Improvement Programme –
Review of Management Arrangements for Leisure Services**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1. Relevant Background Information

The strategic review of leisure has highlighted the need to examine the cost of leisure provision and to challenge us to use resources more effectively to engage our communities in healthy activities.

A review of management arrangements including roles and responsibilities and an expression of interest for voluntary redundancy (VR) were considered to be priorities in the first phase of the leisure improvement programme. Other work streams include a review of opening hours, pricing and programming.

Outcomes from this first stage were presented to committee in January 2011 in the form of a management side position on a Leisure Services management structure. This included the rationale for allowing three members of staff to be released through VR. The committee agreed to adopt the proposed organisational structure subject to agreement by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and approved the recommendation for the deletion of four management posts and release of three staff through voluntary redundancy. This was supported at the Strategic Policy and Resources committee in January 2011.

The review has given us an opportunity to develop job profiles that enhance the delivery of leisure services; supporting staff development and providing increased flexibility whilst reducing operational cost.

The proposed structure reduces the number of tiers in Leisure Services management from four to three:

<u>Current structure</u>	<u>Proposed structure</u>
Leisure Operations Manager	City Leisure Manager
Leisure Centre Manager	Area Leisure Manager
Assistant Leisure Centre Manager	Neighbourhood Leisure Officer
Recreation Officer	

In the proposed structure the roles of Area Leisure Manager and Neighbourhood Leisure Officer would be generic to allow for dedicated staff to work across the areas of operations (facilities) and participation (outreach). This is a critical element of the new roles and responsibilities and will provide greater flexibility to enable Leisure Services to meet the needs of the community and deliver on the vision of an Active Belfast.

The new role of the Neighbourhood Leisure Officer is a hybrid of the current Assistant Leisure Centre Manager and the Recreation Officer, which was identified as having very similar type roles in the current operation.

2. Key Issues

Consultation with Stakeholders and Trade Unions

Throughout the Leisure Services Improvement programme extensive consultation has been ongoing with staff and trade unions.

Since the January committee meeting further meetings have taken place with the People Group, the Assurance Panel which was established to scrutinise recommendations from the People Group and a number of peer groups representing Leisure Services Managers, Leisure Services Assistant Managers and Recreation Officers.

The meetings have been focussed on developing further job descriptions and testing the operational fit of the proposed structure.

There have also been weekly meetings with the leisure trade unions.

Current Position

At this time the proposed leisure management structure remains unchanged.

There are still ongoing negotiations with trade unions on a number of issues. These are mainly about clarifying the Participation Officers' role, the split between operation and outreach and how we get the balance right, and the grade of the Neighbourhood Leisure Officer post.

The engagement with staff representatives and trade unions has been constructive and issues that have been raised are considered by management not to be insurmountable.

All staff and trade unions have agreed that further work needs to be done to refine job descriptions and address all issues raised. It has also become clear that whilst this work has concentrated on the management tiers, engagement with all other leisure staff needs to begin to assess the impact on other posts and to develop mechanisms to support the management structures.

3. Resource Implications

Financial

None

Human Resources

Consultation with postholders, Human Resources and the Trade Unions is ongoing.

Asset and Other Implications

None.

4. Equality and Good Relations Implications

None.

5. Recommendations

It is recommended that Committee agree to implement the Leisure Services management structure to support the continuation of work on refining roles and responsibilities and their implementation, and to sustain the release of three staff from the current structure.

6. Decision Tracking

Responsible Officer – Head of Parks and Leisure.
A progress report will be brought to April 2011 committee.

7. Key to Abbreviations

VR: voluntary redundancy.”

Accordingly, it was

Moved by Councillor McCabe,
Seconded by Councillor Hartley,

That the Committee agrees to adopt the recommendations contained within the report, subject to the support and agreement being obtained from the relevant Trades Unions.

On a vote by show of hands three Members voted for the proposal and eight against and it was accordingly declared lost.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to adopt the recommendations contained within the report.

Employment Through Fitness - Fit for It

The Committee agreed to note the contents of a report in relation to the Council's participation on the 'Fit for It' Programme, which would be delivered in partnership with the Belfast Metropolitan College. Thirty trainees, who were in receipt of job seekers allowance, would gain access to training, assessment and mentoring support at the Shankill and Falls Leisure Centres.

Irish Football Association Grassroots Development

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1. Relevant Background Information

1.1 In 2006 Belfast City Council entered into a partnership with the Irish Football Association (IFA) to employ two Grassroots soccer development officers. One was based in Ballysillan to cover North and East Belfast and the other was in Andersonstown to cover South and West Belfast.

The officers were initially employed for two years. In February 2008 this partnership was extended until 6th March 2009.

A further extension was granted in February 2009 to extend the partnership until 6 March 2011

It was agreed that for the period between 7th March 2009 and 6th March 2011 Belfast City Council would meet 50% of salary costs for these two posts to a maximum of £60,760.

2. **Key Issues**

- 2.1 The IFA has informed Belfast City Council that the financial future of the Grassroots Soccer Development Programme has been secured in agreement with the Executive Board of The IFA.

This means that from 7 March 2011 Belfast City Council is no longer required to make a financial contribution to the Grassroots Soccer Development Officer posts. However given the success of the partnership between Belfast City Council the IFA wishes that Belfast City Council remains as a lead council within the IFA National Grassroots Programme.

The IFA want their Grassroots Development Officers to continue to work with the Belfast City Council sports development officers to deliver a city wide grassroots soccer programme.

To continue this partnership the IFA has asked that Belfast City Council provide a hot desk within our leisure centres for the two Belfast grassroots development officers. The remit in terms of the areas supported by the two officers will also change with one now having responsibility for North and West Belfast and the other will have responsibility for South and East Belfast.

3 **Resource Implications**

3.1 **Financial**

The new arrangements will see the IFA absorb the financial risk and cover total salary, pension and travel costs relating to the delivery of the IFA Grassroots Programme.

The only cost to Belfast City Council will be the provision of a workstation at each of the two sites. This will require a telephone and internet access.

3.2 **Human Resources**

The IFA will be the sole employers of the two Grassroots Development Officers.

4 **Equality and Good Relations Implications**

- 4.1 There are no equality or good relations issues associated with this issue.

5 Recommendations

5.1 It is recommended that the Committee accept the offer from the IFA under the terms set out above to host the two grassroots soccer development officers from 8 March 2011.

6 Decision Tracking

Officer responsible: Sports Development Officer to work with the IFA to implement the new partnership arrangements.

7 Key to Abbreviations

IFA: Irish Football Association.”

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor G. Robinson,
Seconded by Councillor J. Rodgers,

That the Committee agrees to adopt the recommendation contained within the report and, in order to develop the sport of soccer, officers investigate the feasibility of expanding the programme to include four coaches.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Mac Giolla Mhín,
Seconded by Councillor Hartley,

That, in order to develop other sports, the £60,000 be allocated to the Gaelic Athletic Association.

On a vote by show of hands four Members voted for the amendment and five against and it was accordingly declared lost. The original proposal standing in the name of Councillor G. Robinson and seconded by Councillor J. Rodgers was thereupon put to the meeting with six Members voting for and four against and it was accordingly declared carried.

Events at Upper Botanic Gardens

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

1.1 The Committee is asked to note that the council has received a request for the use of Botanic Gardens for two events on the Great Lawn from Connie Cunningham, Cunningham Events. Both events would offer food and music entertainment with the public being charged fees to gain admission.

The proposed events are as follows:

Belfast Sizzle

1. Event date 27 – 30 May 2011, with hours of operation 1.00pm to 10.00pm daily
2. Total proposed duration of event to include set up and take down would be 7 days on location.
3. Potential audience size over four days in the region of 10,000.

As stated by Cunningham Events, 'Belfast Sizzle is new to Northern Ireland's summer celebratory calendar; this exciting event features a line-up of top local chefs who will present summer barbecue favourites and 'cool summer sides'. Along with fabulous live musical entertainment...all in Belfast's most famous garden...this new event will be a great way to 'kick off the summer!'

Belfast Taste and Music Fest

1. Event date 4 – 7 August 2011 with hours of operation 1.00pm to 10.00pm daily
2. Total proposed duration of event to include set up and take down would be 9 days on location.
3. Potential total audience size over four days in the region of 15,000

As stated by Cunningham Events, 'With four glorious days of fabulous food and entertainment, this annual event has earned its mark as Northern Ireland's premier summer blockbuster. Its boulevard of top local chefs will tantalize the taste buds with dozens of 'signature' recipes. With a full stage of live musical entertainment, this event is a 'must' for 'foodies' and music lovers of all ages!'

Statistics are provided by Cunningham Events from the Belfast Taste and Music Fest in 2010.

2. Key Issues

2.1 The key issues for the committee to note are:

- 1. The council wishes to promote the use of its parks and open spaces and where appropriate will permit the use of these facilities for events;**
- 2. The event organiser is aware of the need for the payment of a bond of intent which must be completed prior to written confirmation that the venue shall be available;**
- 3. The event would be subject to the preparation of an event management plan which would cover all aspects of management including health and safety and access.**
- 4. The events should generally permit access to Botanic Gardens for all users.**
- 5. The event promoter shall consult with all local communities and adjacent organisations.**

2.2 Cost implications for the event organiser are as follows:

For the Belfast Sizzle:

- 1. a bond of intent to the value of £300 to be paid within 28 days of request; and**
- 2. a fee of £2,500 to be paid within 28 days of request.**

For the Belfast Taste and Music Fest:

- 3. a bond of intent to the value of £600 to be paid within 28 days of request; and**
- 4. a fee of £5,400 to be paid within 28 days of request.**

With respect to both events

- 5. a reinstatement bond of £3,000 to be paid for each event within 28 days of request**
- 6. an appropriate legal agreement prepared by the Assistant Chief Executive and Town Solicitor is completed;**

7. the event organiser meets all statutory requirements including entertainment licensing; and
8. all fees and Bonds must be paid before any event takes place.

2.3 Connie Cunningham, the events organiser, has written to committee and the Director of Parks and Leisure to request that the event fees as stated in points 2 and 4 totalling £7,900 are waived. This is on the basis of the history of the Taste and Music event and its considerable benefit to the city; the scale of cost in delivering the events against a low profit margin which would risk their viability.

3. **Resource Implications**

3.1 **Financial**

The fees with bonds of intent and reinstatement identified in section 2 are intended to cover all costs incurred by the council.

3.2 **Human Resources**

There may be overtime required by staff to assist with the management of the proposed event which would be met from the fee charged.

3.3 **Asset and Other Implications**

The Promoter shall ensure minimal impact on council property.

4. **Equality and Good Relations Implications**

4.1 There are no equality implications.

5. **Recommendations**

5.1 It is recommended that the committee accede to the two requests to hold the events as outlined above, subject to satisfactory terms in line with the above being agreed with the Director of Parks and Leisure and the event organiser meeting the council's operational requirements and complying with all statutory requirements.

Committee is asked for direction on the request to waive the event fees totalling £7,900.

6. **Decision Tracking**

The Park Manager will ensure that all actions are completed by the end of August 2010.”

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor McCabe,
Seconded by Councillor Mallon,

That the Committee agrees to accede to the request to hold both events at the Botanic gardens but not to waive the associated event fees.

On a vote by show of hands four Members voted for the proposal and six against and it was accordingly declared lost.

Further Proposal

Moved by the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Humphrey),
Seconded by Councillor McKenzie,

That the Committee agrees to accede to the request to hold both events at the Botanic Gardens but that, should a profit be made from the holding of both events, an appropriate clawback be recouped from the organisers.

On a vote by show of hands six Members voted for the proposal and three against and it was accordingly declared carried.

Parks Events Small Grants Scheme

The Committee was reminded that £60,000 had been allocated in the 2010/2011 Revenue Budget to support a grant scheme for groups wishing to stage events in the Council's Parks during Summer, 2011.

The Director of Parks and Leisure reported that, in response to a public advertisement, thirty-three applications for grant-aid had been received. All of the applications had been assessed in accordance with the pre-agreed criteria. Accordingly, the Committee approved the award of grants to the undernoted applicants:

**Parks and Leisure Committee,
Thursday, 10th February, 2011**

**C
1245**

Please refer to Agenda Item 17 in Reports Pack

C
1246

**Parks and Leisure Committee,
Thursday, 10th February, 2011**

Please refer to Agenda Item 17 in Reports Pack

The Director reported that the following two applications had failed to meet or had achieved low scores against the criteria:

Please refer to Agenda Item 17 in Reports Pack

Belfast Zoological Gardens Mountain Tea House

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1. Relevant Background Information

The Committee is reminded that the Zoo’s Mountain Tea House was destroyed in a fire in June 2009. Since that time a number of reports have been presented to committee and at its meeting in August 2010 it was agreed to proceed with a like for like replacement facility. This decision was ratified by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

In subsequent discussions between council officers and the design team it was noted that the mountain tea house was constructed at a time when zoo visitor numbers were in the region of 190,000 annually however, as members will be aware, the annual number of visitors is now in the region of 300,000.

While the proposed replacement facility can cater for up to 48 guests seated inside the building, it has been suggested that an extension to the external patio area could provide additional picnic type bench seating for an additional 30 guests. Given the location of the facility and the unobstructed views of the lough, the cityscape and the hills, it is believed that this additional area would be popular and well used, of course there would be an element of weather dependence.

The design and procurement process for the replacement building is underway and the expenditure costs (less a £10,000 excess) will be met through our insurers. The insurance policy permits only minor changes to the structure, hence the decision to replace like for like.

However, the opportunity exists to consider the option to increase capacity at a reasonable and competitive cost.

Sufficient ground is available in the area immediately adjacent to the current tea house footprint. While the ground slopes quite steeply, and is currently a heavily planted area of mature shrubs, our design team has established that the work is feasible. This would allow for an additional 18 tables, and thus 108 seating spaces (covers) which would extend the current planned cover provision (48 inside and 30 outside) of 78 covers to 186 covers (ie an increase of 140%).

The estimated cost for this option is approximately £58,000.

2. **Key Issues**

The key issue for the committee is whether it wishes to support these additional works.

Since the end of 2005 (210,830 visitors) there has been a significant increase in visitor numbers to 304,085 (at end of 2009), which represents an increase of 44% in 4 calendar years.

There is a window of opportunity which would enable us to undertake the additional construction work to provide a patio area which would facilitate increased customer use at the facility;

It is estimated that, given the anticipated increase in sales and income generation (estimated at £10,000 per annum additional income), the payback period will be 5.8 years

The committee is asked to consider two options:

1. agree to the proposal to extend the patio area at the mountain tea house and commend it to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration subject to the Gates process, with the additional cost to be met from within the capital programme; or
2. reject the proposal and proceed with the like for like replacement facility only.

3. **Resource Implications**

Financial

The estimated cost for this option is approximately £58,000. Agreement for funding via the Council's capital programme will be sought from the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Human Resources

None.

Asset and Other Implications

The development would significantly enhance the property, increase customer use and potential for increased income.

4. **Equality and good relations implications**

None.

5. **Recommendations**

The Committee is requested to approve the extension to the patio area at the Zoo's mountain tea house facility and to commend it to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration as a variation to the proposal currently included in the capital programme subject to the gates process.

6. **Decision Tracking**

The Zoo Manager will report back to the Committee towards the end of the construction phase of the replacement tea house facility, currently programmed to be during the summer of 2011.

7. **Key to Abbreviations**

None.”

The Committee adopted the recommendation contained within the report.

Christian Tent Easter Mission

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1. **Relevant Background Information**

The Committee is asked to note that the Council has received a request from Eglinton Presbyterian Church to hold a Christian Tent Easter Mission at Ballysillan Open Space. The event will be attended by approximately 300 people from Monday 18th April 2011 through to Saturday 23rd April 2011. A programme of activities throughout the week will target primary school children, teenagers and adults. The organiser intends to erect a 20 metres x 30 metres marquee for the main events along with a medium sized tent for counselling and prayer and enough port-a-loos to cope with the expected numbers. There are no plans to prepare food, although weather permitting there may be a bar-be-que outside some evenings.

The Committee is asked to note that the site periodically suffers from antisocial behaviour and any intention to use the space for a diversion to antisocial behaviour is welcomed.

2. **Key Issues**

Although the event runs from Monday to Saturday the organisers will occupy the site from Friday 15th April 2011 to begin set up and envisage that de-rig will be completed and the site vacated by Sunday 23rd April 2011.

Car Parking

This is a local event and given the time of year the organisers hope that most people will choose to walk to the event. Car parking will be on the main Ballysillan Road, Kilcoole Park, Old Ballysillan Road and possibly in the grounds of the Boys Model School although not yet confirmed.

Security

The organisers plan to hire a security firm to stay at the marquee each evening. The PSNI will be notified of the event and any advice from them welcomed.

Power

Power will be provided via a silent generator.

Consultation

The organisers have engaged and consulted the local residents living adjacent to Ballysillan Open Space. The organisers will ensure that the event does not cause a nuisance or inconvenience to the local residents and have confirmed in writing that no key objections to the event were recorded.

Event Management

The event organisers will complete the agreed event management plan. The organisers will also be required to resolve all operational, safety, statutory and reinstatement issues to the satisfaction of the council, entering in to an appropriate agreement based on advice from the Assistant Chief Executive and Town Solicitor.

3. **Resource Implications**

Financial

There are no financial implications for the Council.

Human Resources

There will be no human resource implications as the event will be set up, stewarded and de-rigged by the event organisers and a team of volunteers.

The event organisers will carry out a daily litter pick and general tidy of the site and on completion of the event will leave the area as they found it.

Asset and other implications

It is anticipated that some damage to the grass areas will occur during the event from the marquee and the increase of footfall. The proposed legal agreement and bond will guarantee that the site is suitably reinstated at the organiser's expense if damage occurs.

4. Equality Implications

It is expected that there are no equality implications to run the event.

5. Recommendations

It is recommended that the committee grant authority for the Easter Mission to take place at Ballysillan Open Space from Friday 15th April 2011 to Sunday 23rd April 2011 subject to satisfactory terms being agreed by the Director of Parks and Leisure and on the condition that:

- (i) the event organisers resolve all operational issues to the council's satisfaction;
- (ii) an appropriate legal agreement, to be prepared by the Assistant Chief Executive and Town Solicitor, is completed; and
- (iii) and the event organisers meet all statutory requirements."

The Committee adopted the recommendations contained within the report.

**Invitation to Dublin City Council to
Play Gaelic Football Matches**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

1. Relevant Background Information

In October 2009, Belfast City Council accepted an invitation from Dublin City Council to play a Gaelic football match. The match took place in Dublin.

By way of reciprocation it is proposed the Council now seek to invite Dublin City Council to travel to Belfast to play a return fixture. A date for the match will be set if approval is given by the Council to go ahead, but it is anticipated that this will be in April or May 2011. The invitation is for Belfast City Council to field two teams, a men's team and a ladies team.

2. Key Issues

Advice was previously sought from the then Director of Legal Services in regard to meeting the associated costs. His advice was to the effect that under the provisions of Section 115 of the Local Government Act (NI) 1972 (the provision which deals with the expenditure for special purposes), Council may make any payment for any purpose which in its opinion is in the interests of, and will bring direct benefit to:

- A. the council
- B. its district or any part of its district
- C. the inhabitants of its district or any part of the district

In accepting the invitation to play both the ladies and men's matches, in total there would be approximately 30 officers involved.

Committee is being asked to meet the costs of hosting the teams from Dublin. In terms of staff time, playing kit and a reception and meal for both teams after the games, it is estimated that the total cost will be in the region of £2,250.

There are benefits to the Council from staff's involvement in representing the Council as well as the effect on staff morale and motivation. There are also wider benefits in terms of the profile of the Council to be gained from the Council's involvement in this event.

3. **Resource Implications**

Financial

A breakdown of estimated costs is outlined below;

Playing kit (30 players)	£1,250
Reception for all teams	£1,250
Estimate total cost	£2,500

Human Resources

In agreeing to this report Committee members are agreeing that officers be allowed time off to participate, outside of normal annual leave. The games are planned to take place after normal working hours but time off may be required for some shift workers.

4. **Equality and Good Relations Implications**

There are no equality issues as the Council already has a men's team. Members of this team were recruited via an article on Interlink. The ladies team for the Dublin game will be recruited in the same fashion.

5. **Recommendations**

Committee is asked to consider issuing an invitation to Dublin City Council to send both a men's and women's team to take part in a Council challenge Gaelic match and to meet the associated estimated costs of £2,250. Should the Committee agree to issue the invitation it should resolve that the expenditure be approved under Section 115 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972, it being the opinion of the Committee that the expenditure would bring benefits to the Council and that the direct benefits would be commensurate with the payment made.

6. **Decision tracking**

Finance and Systems Manager to implement Committee decision.

Match to be played before 31 May 2010."

After discussion it was

Moved by Councillor Hartley,
Seconded by Councillor Mac Giolla Mhín,

That the Council agrees to extend an invitation to Dublin City Council in respect of Gaelic matches for both men's and women's teams and approves the associated costs in accordance with Section 115 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972.

On a vote by show of hands five Members voted for the proposal and six against and it was accordingly declared lost.

Accordingly, the Committee agreed that an invitation be not extended to Dublin City Council.

Fields in Trust - The Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1. Relevant Background Information

The National Playing Fields Association (Fields in Trust) has launched the Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge. The challenge is an officially endorsed legacy initiative to mark the two landmark events scheduled to take place in the UK in 2012; The Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the London 2012 Olympics. The programme aims to permanently protect 2012 playing fields, parks and other open space in communities all across the country ensuring access to outdoor sport, play and recreation both now and for future generations.

Fields in Trust are asking local authorities to consider nominating a number of outdoor recreational spaces in their area that they would be happy to see protected as a Queen Elizabeth II field. These nominations will then be put to a public vote in 2011 to allow people in Belfast to decide which site should be chosen. The eventual winner will be protected and designated a Queen Elizabeth II field.

2. Key Issues

There is no financial incentive to be involved in the Fields Challenge.

There is significant potential that the protection and redesignation of an existing space could enhance the developing 2012 programme of events and activities in the city.

Premises that are nominated are locked in until an unknown date in 2011 when the result is announced and the council cannot effectively do anything with these properties until the result is known.

Many of the council's properties have already been gifted to the council with restrictive use clauses contained within the title deeds to those properties which effectively create a trust which the council is required to adhere to.

There are many other council properties held under deeds of dedication with the Millennium Commission signed in 2000 for a period of 99 years and these could not be nominated.

Other properties gifted to the Council such as Dunville Park and Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park were named after their benefactor(s), in accordance with specific requests by those benefactors.

If the Council chooses to nominate any of its properties the title would first need to be examined to ensure that the property is not already subject to a Deed of Dedication, or to alienation provisions within the title (i.e. restrictions on assignment, or parting with possession) or certain use covenants.

The Deeds of Dedication issued by the Fields in Trust and which the Council would be required to sign are stringent and constrain what the Council can do in terms of disposal or any building works/changes of use affecting any nominated property. A Burden is required to be registered against the title of the nominated property. Any dealings with the property or works to same in the future would require the consent of Fields in Trust, and once successfully nominated this remains the case in perpetuity.

When selecting sites to go forward, the range is broad and includes gardens, children's play areas, nature reserves, sports pitches, etc.

The Fields Challenge is an opportunity to be part of a high profile national campaign that has impact and benefit to local communities and will help mark the Diamond Jubilee and the Olympics in their area whilst also securing a platform to achieve key targets around increasing physical activity and promoting the sustainability agenda.

If the challenge is supported by committee, Members are asked to nominate sites for consideration.

Members will be aware that the contract for the development of the Connswater Community Greenway has been let and work has commenced. It may be appropriate to nominate sites along the Greenway to further enhance the community engagement with the process.

However there may be other sites across the city that might benefit from involvement in the fields challenge.

Nominations will have to be submitted in early March 2011 at the latest.

3. Resource Implications

Financial

None.

Human Resources

None.

Asset and Other Implications

The title of nominated properties would need to be examined to ensure that they are not already subject to deeds of dedication or subject to alienation provisions or certain use covenants.

The chosen site would be subject to a deed of dedication which would constrain council's use of the property in the future.

4. Equality and Good Relations Considerations

There are no equality implications.

5. Recommendations

Committee is asked to consider supporting the Queen Elizabeth II challenge as outlined and to nominate sites as appropriate.

Nominations will be subject to meeting the Fields in Trust criteria for submission and satisfying council's legal commitments."

After discussion, during which the Members expressed concern that a list of the Council's Open Spaces had not been submitted for its consideration, the Committee authorised the Director of Parks and Leisure to seek nominations from the Party Groupings in relation to those sites which could be eligible to participate in the initiative.

Northern Ireland Local Government Association Awards 2010

The Committee was advised that the Local Government Awards aimed to showcase the best examples of service provision, new initiatives and personal commitment from both Councillors and officers. The Director pointed out that, during December, the Parks and Leisure Department had submitted two entries in relation to the 2010 Awards, namely, in the category of Best Local Authority Service Team and in the category of Best Business Improvement Project.

He reported that the Department had been selected as one of three finalists in the category of Best Business Improvement Project, which had highlighted the aims of the programme, the extensive work which had been undertaken to date by the Task Groups and Reference Panels, the communication mechanisms used in keeping staff informed, as well as the range of benefits to all stakeholders involved. As a finalist at the Awards, the Department had been allocated two free places at the Awards Ceremony Dinner which would be held at the La Mon Hotel and Country Club later that evening. Accordingly, he recommended that the Chairman (Councillor O'Reilly) and the Head of Parks and Leisure (or their nominees) be authorised to represent the Committee thereat.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

**Support for Sport - Small Development
and Hospitality Grants**

The Committee noted a schedule of Support for Sport applications in relation to Small Development and Hospitality Grants which had been approved by the Director of Parks and Leisure in accordance with the authority delegated to him. A copy of the Schedule was available on the Council's Modern.gov website.

Chairman