

Parks and Leisure Committee

Thursday, 14th June, 2012

MEETING OF PARKS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor McCabe (Chairman);
Aldermen Humphrey and Rodgers;
Councillors Corr, Haire, Hartley, Hendron, Kelly,
Kyle, Mallon, McKee, McNamee, Mullan, O'Neill,
Thompson, Garrett, and Spence.

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

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillors Mac Giolla Mhín, A. Newton and Ó Donnghaile.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 10th May 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 June.

Declarations of Interest

In respect of item 8, viz., Stadia Report - Upgrades of Windsor and Casement Parks, Councillor Mullan indicated that her husband was an employee of Edmond Shipway Construction, consultants to the project.

Councillor S. Corr

The Chairman, Councillor McCabe, thanked Councillor Corr for the work he had undertaken during his time as Chairman and welcomed all new Members to the meeting.

Deerpark/Ballysillan Residents

The Committee was advised that a request had been received from the above-mentioned residents seeking permission to address the Members in relation to the

increase in antisocial behaviour and sectarian related incidents at the Ballysillan Playing Fields.

After discussion, during which the Members requested, in order to help prevent such incidents occurring over the Summer period, that meetings be held between the relevant Council officers and the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the Committee agreed to receive a deputation from the residents at its meeting scheduled to be held on 9th August.

Notice of Motion - Soccer Coverage on Ulster Television

The Committee was reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 1st May, in accordance with Standing Order 11(e), had referred to the Committee the undernoted Notice of Motion which had been proposed by Alderman Rodgers and seconded by Councillor Spence;

“This Council acknowledges that Association Football is one of the most popular sports for both participants and spectators in the City of Belfast and throughout Northern Ireland. Therefore, the Council expresses its concern at the decision of Ulster Television (UTV) to stop showing highlights of Irish Premier Division football games as part of its news coverage from the beginning of the next soccer season.

The Council calls upon UTV to reverse this decision in the interest of sport in Northern Ireland.”

At its meeting on 10th May, the Committee had agreed that the Director of Parks and Leisure write to Ulster Television seeking clarification on its position. In this regard, the Director reported that correspondence had been received from Mr. M. Wilson, Managing Director, Ulster Television which clarified that Company's position as follows:

- UTV had written to the Chief Executives of Football, Rugby and the Gaelic Athletic Association stating that the company was no longer willing to pay for news access to sporting events due to the fact that no other broadcaster, newspaper or photo agency in the United Kingdom or Ireland had to pay for this type of access;
- UTV's contract for rugby and Gaelic Athletics had ended over the previous two years. However, it had been agreed that coverage would continue for both sports;
- UTV's contract with the Irish Football Association would run until the end of the current season. The company had had a number of meetings with representatives of the Irish Football Association to ascertain whether a sponsorship partnership, or arrangements similar to those which had been agreed with rugby and the Gaelic Athletic Association could be put in place. To date, those discussions had been unsuccessful; and
- Ulster Television had indicated that it wished to continue to cover football on the same terms as it covers all sports in Northern Ireland.

Noted.

Draft Parks and Leisure Departmental Plan 2012/2013

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

Members will be aware that departmental estimates were considered on 6th January of this year by Strategic Policy and Resources Committee alongside key actions for 2012/13 for each department. These were subsequently agreed by Council at its meeting in February.

Since then, Chief Officers have been finalising their departmental plans based on these approved estimates and actions and this report presents, the final draft of the departmental plan for the Parks and Leisure Department for 2012-13.

The plan, once approved by Committee, will also provide Chief Officers with the delegated authority to deliver the key actions contained in the plan subject to regular monitoring and reporting to both CMT and Committee.

2 Key Issues

The content of the plan reflects the key supporting actions identified through the Corporate Plan and the Investment Programme.

The appended plan for the Parks and Leisure Department sets out:

- the key actions within the corporate plan and investment programme that the department has responsibility for delivering in 2012/13
- key departmental actions in 2012/13
- the departments key performance indicators for 2012/13
- financial information relating to the estimates for 2012/13.

The plan provides a mechanism to enable committee and senior managers to performance manage the key work of the department in line with the Corporate Plan and Investment Programme. It should also assist managers and officers in the department to make decisions and allocate resources in line with the agreed objectives and activities.

The Parks and Leisure Department will provide regular updates to Committee on the progress of their plans and key work as

part of the performance management framework previously agreed by Members.

Members should be aware that we have made some minor changes to the existing performance indicators and we are holding a workshop over the summer months to define new and more relevant indicators. An update report on progress in doing this will be brought to the Committee in August or September.

3 Resource Implications

Financial

Section 7 (page 23) outlines the Department's budgeted net expenditure for 2012/13.

Human Resources

Delivery of most of the programmes and projects planned for the year ahead will require dedicated officer time which will be recorded and reflected within annual service plans, area plans and separate unit/centre level plans.

Asset and Other Implications

Many of the projects and activities listed in the draft plan refer to the physical regeneration of the department's assets and physical improvements to our facilities.

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

There are no equality or good relations implications at this stage. However all activities and programmes contained within the plan will be subject to equality screening in line with the Council's process.

5 Recommendations

Members are asked to note and agree the draft departmental plan attached at appendix 1."

Following discussion, the Committee approved the Parks and Departmental Plan 2012/2013. A copy of the key actions and performance indicators is set out hereunder:

"1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Corporate Plan embodies what the council intends to achieve from 2012-15. It is ambitious yet realistic and demonstrates how Members' are committed to improving quality of life for everyone who lives in, works in and visits

Belfast. It is based upon an assessment of need in the city, the views of residents on what the council's priorities should be and a commitment to strong political and executive leadership at both a city wide and neighbourhood level.

1.2 While the Corporate Plan focuses on issues which cut across Council departments, it also reflects the importance of the quality of the vital services that we provide on a daily basis.

1.3 The corporate plan showing our key priorities for the city over the next 3 years are:

- Leadership
- Environment
- Economy
- People and Communities
- Improving our Services
- An Organisation fit to Lead and Serve

1.4 This Departmental Plan describes how the Parks and Leisure Department's actions and targets for 2012/13 complement the Corporate Plan. This Plan sets the strategic direction for the department and will ensure focused and effective management of the department by the Committees and senior managers. It provides explicit links between core departmental activity and corporate strategy.

1.5 Under the council's Scheme of Delegation, the Director of Parks and Leisure has been given the delegated authority to undertake the activities as outlined in section 5. Progress update reports will be submitted to the Parks and Leisure Committee twice yearly.

1.6 The Council's Scheme of Delegation (Part 2, Section 2.6) gives authority to the Director to *"implement those actions, initiatives and events which are planned for the relevant forthcoming year provided that the Departmental Plan has been approved by Committee prior to any decision being taken."* For the 2012-13 period, the Director of Parks and Leisure intends to use this authority to implement all the activities outlined in section 6 (Pg 20-27) and as well as any additional related activities. In particular the Director intends to use delegated authority to;-

- implement those actions derived from the improvement programme;
- authorise unforeseen or reactive events in any parks or leisure facility;
- engage any relevant consultancy expertise required to deliver the actions outlined in Section 5 of the plan subject to adherence to the Council's procurement protocols and

- the necessary budgetary allocation having been made;
- set nominal entrance fees or charges or waive fees for the Department's activities or events in those cases where an appropriate case has been made – e.g. summer schemes and interface programmes.
- approve charitable collections and fund raising activities of partner organisations who contribute to the achievement of the council's vision and objectives in Parks and Leisure facilities.

1.7 In Parks and Leisure our vision is that:

The people in Belfast will be active and healthy and everyone will use leisure, parks and open space facilities across the city. They will participate in local events and play an active part in community life.

We will have pride in our work and be passionate about our purpose. The city and its neighbourhoods will be attractive and vibrant places to live in, work in and visit. We will continue to engage with local people and partners to make sure that people are offered the best possible facilities and services in a safe environment.

We will protect the natural environment of Belfast and educate people on the importance of a green city. With our partners, we will work hard to connect the city and integrate our services. The range and quality of our facilities and services will be accessible and valued by citizens and visitors alike. Those who use our services and participate in programmes and events will be very satisfied with their experience.

We will be flexible and efficient. We will prioritise community involvement, customer focus and value for money. We will strive to understand the city and identify innovative possibilities and creative solutions to deliver excellent services.

We are about people, places and possibilities.

2.0 Values and purpose

2.1 The Department adheres to the council's values which state that we will:

- focus on the needs of customers, have a 'can-do' attitude, be problem solvers,
- provide value for money and improve services,
- work together,

- respect each other, be fair, promote equality and good relations,
- act sustainably,
- ensure the highest standards of health and safety, and
- value our employees.

2.2 In particular the Parks and Leisure Department will adhere to the values outlined below. These values will underpin everything we do:

We are proud, passionate and professional:

<u>Values</u>	<u>What we mean</u>
Proud	Having pride in our work, the city and our environment. Being open and transparent and developing trust by doing what we promise. Having a 'can do' attitude and being empowered to deliver.
Passionate	Being positive, active and helpful in working things out. Celebrating success and promoting our achievements. Treating each other with respect and dignity.
Professional	Learning and developing as employees. Being willing to accept responsibility for our work and performance. Communicating openly about expectations and decisions taken.

3.0 Challenges in internal and external environment

3.1 This plan seeks to contribute to the council's vision in a context of severe financial austerity. It aims to be both relevant and realistic by meeting rate-payers needs in a fashion which demonstrates flexibility and value for money. Additional economic pressures are likely to arise in 2012/13 and beyond, for example from increasing landfill tax and reduced income levels. The key activities listed in the plan reflect the need to prioritise and to find efficiencies through cooperating internally and externally in the delivery of key services.

Internal

- 3.2 The Parks and Leisure Department faces the following internal challenges:

The financial environment

- Increasing pressure on current budget allocation
- Need to improve links between financial and business planning
- Improving efficiency and value for money (VFM)
- Need to maximise commercial income set against the external environment including the challenge of setting realistic fees and charges
- Succession planning, right sizing and associated costs
- Recommendations from the Improvement, Collaboration and Efficiencies working group and the Organisation Development panel

Strategic focus

- Increasing focus on a strategic approach to service delivery, for example through the emerging Active Belfast and Open Spaces, Pitches, Boxing and Allotments and Community Gardens strategies
- Further developments in neighbourhood and thematic working
- Progress in strategic partnership working, delivering projects on an inter-departmental basis and with the Belfast Health Development Unit
- Support the Manager and Officer Development programme ensuring that it is fit for purpose and transferable to departmental needs and requirements

Departmental improvement and structural change

- Managing change and influencing behavioural and cultural change
- Keeping staff, management and trade unions informed, involved and engaged
- Maintaining service delivery following ongoing organisational review and developments
- Re-organising operational management and planning processes to include new and expanding areas of responsibility for example the Connswater Community Greenway and the North Foreshore
- Increased community and customer focus brought about through the departmental improvement programme

External

- 3.3 The Parks and Leisure Department faces the following external challenges:

Implications of RPA

- The need to work with neighbouring councils for example with Lisburn and Castlereagh to review leisure provision

The financial environment

- The continuing difficult external financial environment including limited capital investments
- Focus on public spending and providing VFM and efficient services
- Growing utilities costs
- Pressure on rate base within the city

Strategic focus

- The delivery of key projects in the Investment Programme 2012-215 including:
 - investment in capital projects such as new pitches, refurbishment of playgrounds and development of community gardens
 - delivery of health and well-being programmes through the Active Belfast Partnership
 - delivery of the £3million upgrade to the Mary Peters Track
 - the refurbishment and regeneration of Dunville and Woodvale parks
 - the maintenance and enhancement of vital community facilities and assets, including parks and multi-use game areas (MUGAs)
 - ongoing investment of over £600,000 in site development and extensions at Roselawn Cemetery
 - investment of £1.8m in new cremators and mercury abatement at the crematorium
- Improvements in strategic partnership working, such as the education sector, the Public Health Agency, sports governing bodies and the Community and Voluntary sector

Increased Central government focus on health and wellbeing

- Central government policy focus on promoting active, healthy lifestyles and tackling obesity

New legislation

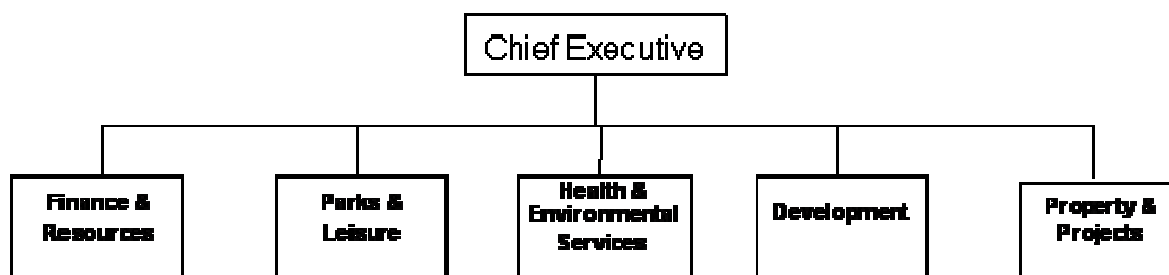
3.4 In terms of regulation, there are a number of new pieces of legislation which are likely to have implications for the Department during 2012-13. These include:

- High Hedges Act (Northern Ireland) 2011
- Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011
- Reorganisation Bill (Local Government Reform Bill)

4.0 Departmental structure

4.1 The Parks and Leisure Department is one of 6 departments which make up the officer structure of the council. The various departments are shown in Figure 3 below and Figure 4 sets out the Department's service structure.

Fig 1: Council Departments



4.2 The Parks and Leisure department is responsible for approximately 20% of the council's annual expenditure. The department is responsible for parks and leisure centre provision, leisure and sports development, conservation, landscaping, Malone House and Belfast Castle, crematorium and cemetery services, Belfast Zoological Gardens, events and extensive partnership working.

The department employs 701 staff, or 611.80 FTEs (full time equivalent, as many staff are part-time or casual employees). The organisation chart on Figure 2 is the high level outline of the structure operating within the department:

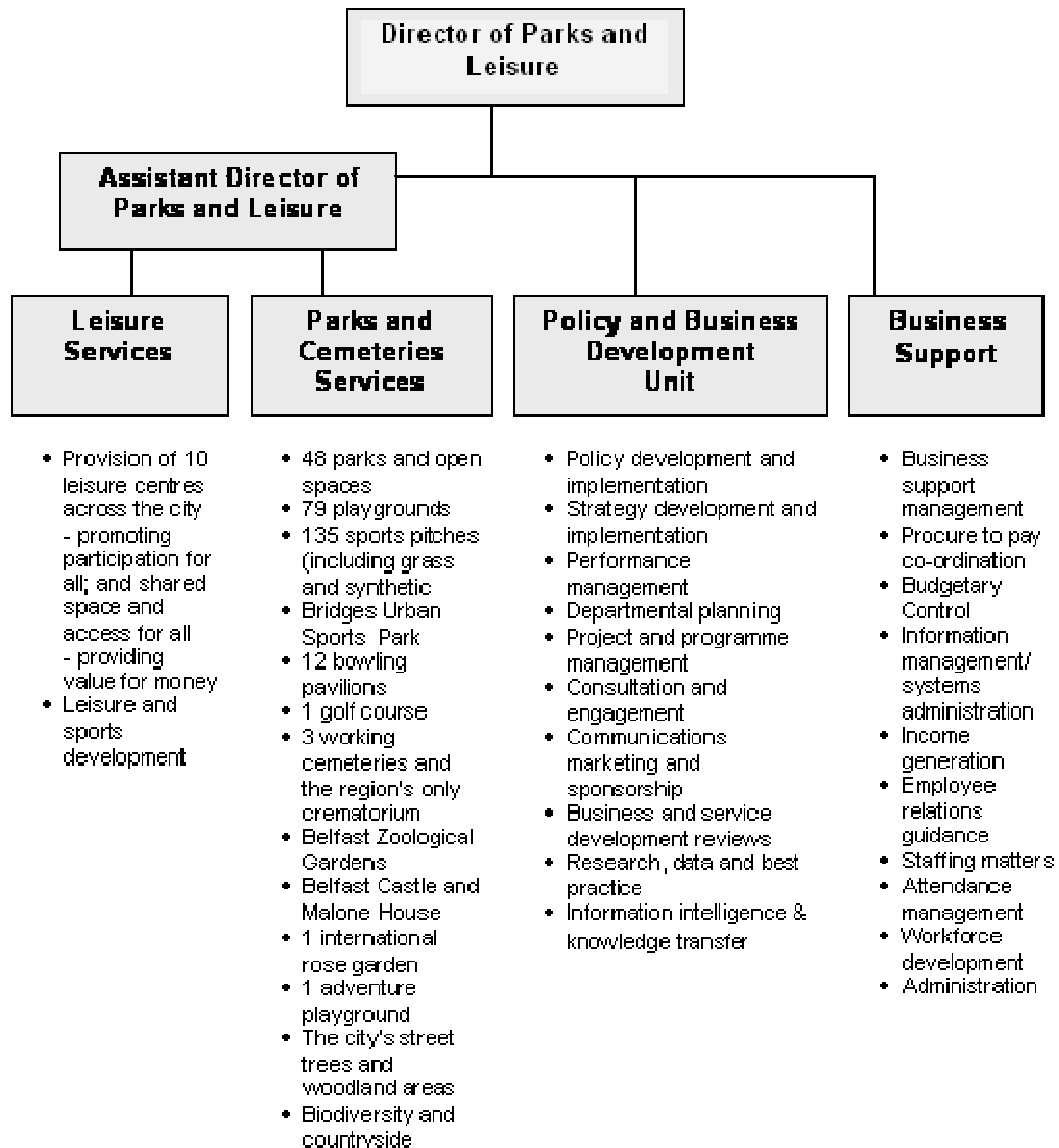


Fig 2: Parks and Leisure Department

4.3 Our departmental assets are spread across the city and the majority of our staff are based in outlying areas either in our leisure centres, parks, pavilions, depots, and open spaces i.e. Malone House, Belfast Castle, crematorium and cemetery services and Belfast Zoological Gardens.

5.0 Key actions for 2012/2013

The Department's key actions have been defined against the background of the value creation map. Each key task has a

relationship with one or more of the themes described in the departmental VCM. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the main outcomes expected are included at section 6. More comprehensive details of tasks, performance indicators and targets which contribute to the outcomes sought are contained in supporting Service Plans.

5.1 Investment Programme

The following actions represent the department's direct contribution to the delivery of the Council's Investment Programme.

Leadership

In working towards improving the quality of life and wellbeing of citizens and encouraging healthy, safe and active lifestyles, the department will look to engage and work in a leading role with partner organisations and communities to realise the city's full potential as outlined in our recently-launched Investment Programme 2012-15.

Key actions

We will:

- Deliver year two actions in the playing pitches strategy including the following:
 - Work with colleagues in other departments to begin construction of the following 3G pitches and changing rooms:

3G hybrid pitches	Changing facilities
Woodlands	Ballysillan (new)
Cherryvale	Waterworks (new)
Cliftonville playing fields	Musgrave Park (new)
Falls Park	Dixon Park (upgrade)
Ormeau Park	Victoria (upgrade)

- Develop a Memorandum of Understanding with DENI, BELB and CCMS regarding the development of recreational facilities at schools
- Deliver the £750,000 available to enhance educational facilities to enable increased community usage

- Provide leadership to the Active Belfast Partnership for the development of an Active Belfast Action Plan to develop joint initiatives and projects to improve the health and wellbeing outcomes for people in the city
- In line with the Investment Programme 2012 – 2015 review options for renewing the leisure estate, including:
 - Work with Castlereagh and Lisburn to strategically review the leisure estate
 - Issue quotation for work to be undertaken in May 2012
 - Receive final report in August 2012
- Prepare a final departmental strategic approach which will outline the direction of the partnership working between all organisations in the city in the areas of active, participation, wellbeing and maximising the use of the outdoors
- Develop and deliver a robust plan for the development of cemetery and crematorium provision in Belfast including:
 - Proceed with discussions around the potential development of the Dundrod site
 - Work with Newtownabbey Borough council on developing a feasibility study on a sub-regional approach to crematorium facilities
 - Develop a feasibility study on the provision of natural burials
- Work in partnership to develop strategic capital enhancement and programming projects as part of our delivery of the Investment Programme 2012-2015, including:
 - Complete the upgrade of the Mary Peters Track by January 2013 in order to facilitate the 2013 World Police and Fire Games
 - Source funding for the re-development of the Floral Hall in Belfast Zoological Gardens
 - Progress the application to the HLF for the re-development of the Tropical Ravine in Botanic Gardens, including:
 - Procurement of design services and associated consultancy
 - Development of architectural design work to RIBA Stage D
 - Interpretive, activity and financial planning

- Detailed research including botanical aspects and historical research
- Consultation

- Implement arrangements for managing and maintaining the Connswater Community Greenway

- Work with colleagues in Property and Projects to ensure the completion of the development works in Dunville and Woodvale parks, including:
 - Award tenders in May 2012 and commence work in June 2012
 - Refurbishment work will be completed in March 2013 and a diversionary programme will be in place from June 2012 – January 2013
 - A revised management approach will be in place by October 2012

- Together with the Belfast Health Development Unit and other partners deliver the operational plan of the Active Belfast Partnership

- Deliver the annual playground refurbishment programme

- Manage the Support for Sport and Parks Small Grant schemes

5.2 Additional Corporate Priorities

The following actions detail the additional tasks the department will carry out in support of the delivery of the corporate plan.

Leadership

Key actions

We will:

- In addition to those projects confirmed in the Investment Programme explore funding opportunities with communities and interested parties to regenerate key assets such as the Gate Lodge in Falls Park, Fox's Lodge in the City Cemetery and Wilmont House

5.3 Environment

In protecting our sites which are important for biodiversity, we will help to deliver a cleaner and greener environment for the

city's ratepayers. We play a key role in protecting and linking the city through our parks, open spaces, greenways and leisure centres. Throughout the year, we will be committed to a sustainable approach to service provision.

We will work towards delivering educational programmes for members of the public, groups and schools on topics such as biodiversity and conservation.

Key actions

We will:

- Continue to retain Green Flag, a quality accreditation for parks and open spaces that are well kept and have good community links, in those parks that currently have it and apply for Green Flag for three additional sites – Lagan Meadows, Grove Playing Fields and Victoria Park, as part of our commitment to improve the quality of our parks and open spaces
- Complete the review of departmental environmental management processes
- Put in place a governance structure for managing physical projects
- Deliver arboricultural (trees) and minor horticultural (landscaping) works for the DRD Roads Services throughout the city and the Eastern Division
- Deliver improvements in dog services and dog control in our parks, taking account of the new Clean Neighbourhoods legislation

5.4 Economy

We believe all parts of Belfast should benefit from investment and growth and we will ensure that we contribute to neighbourhood renewal and regeneration initiatives across the city through our delivery of the Investment Programme 2012-15. We must continue to develop means of using facilities and open spaces, including cemeteries, to enrich the city's cultural, tourism and heritage offering.

Sustaining revenue generation in the difficult financial climate will be a key challenge for the department's commercial venues (Belfast Castle, Malone House and Belfast Zoo), but ongoing development of bereavement services presents opportunities for delivering new income streams.

Key actions

We will:

- Implement the recommendations of the reviews regarding improving business operations at Belfast Zoological Gardens
- Commission an examination of the current business model and recommendations for improvements for Malone House and Belfast Castle
- Identify sponsorship opportunities to enhance relevant projects, assets and initiatives

5.5 People, Communities and Neighbourhoods

In Parks and Leisure, we are working hard to encourage more people to use our services and to have healthier, more active lifestyles. We want to make best use of our assets to contribute to creating safer, healthier, engaged and more active communities. Our new participation officers will support these objectives.

Key actions

We will:

- Work with other departments to develop our integrated approach to neighbourhood working to maximise the impact of existing and emerging neighbourhood and community development work
- Take consideration of neighbourhood level information during 2013/14 business planning cycle
- Improve parks and open spaces by implementing local area programmes linked to capital projects at Connswater Community Greenway, Dunville Park and Woodvale Park
- Develop a plan to deliver a range of programmes and activities with friends groups, community groups and other partners to improve social and well-being outcomes
- Develop a boxing strategy for the city by the end of 2012/13
 - Undertake a baseline assessment by May 2012
 - Develop a draft strategy by October 2012 and undertake a 12 week period of public consultation

- Deliver the Safer Neighbourhood Antisocial Behaviour plan and programme including physical works and joint operations
- Deliver and evaluate the Community Park Wardens pilot
- Deliver the Belfast Outreach Programme (BOP), a youth engagement initiative, in conjunction with the Community Safety Unit
- Deliver programmes to increase participation in connection with 2012 Olympics to maximise the Olympic legacy
- Deliver sports development activities at the Bridges Urban Sports Park
- Agree and implement the Growing Communities Strategy together with the Belfast Health Development Unit, the Public Health Agency (PHA), Belfast Health Cities and the other partners of the city wide steering group
 - Launch the new community garden and allotments developed in partnership with the PHA in June 2012
 - Launch the draft strategy in June 2012 and undertake a 12 week period of public consultation
- Agree and implement the process around new 'partnership agreements' which will enable partner organisations such as sports clubs to manage Parks and Leisure sites and facilities
 - Present the draft principles to the Parks and Leisure Committee in June 2012
- Develop and deliver the new parks educational programme
- Support the development of existing and new Friends Groups and encourage volunteering
- Review the parks events programme to make it more accessible to local communities
- Implement the Clubmark and Coachmark schemes
- Deliver coach education programmes across the city

- Deliver the Active Belfast consortium work programme, including:
 - Active Communities
 - Sports Development Conference
 - Belfast Sports Awards
 - Belfast Sports Forum
- Deliver a range of health and wellbeing programmes and activities including:
 - Parent and toddler swim classes
 - Make a splash swim programme
 - Summer schemes
 - Healthwise exercise referral scheme
 - Cardiac rehabilitation (Phase 4) programme
 - Work for health
 - Health for life scheme
 - Activ8 programme
 - Healthy families
 - Teenage Kicks
 - Senior games
 - School cross country completion
 - Toddler to teenager programme, and
 - Programmes for seniors and women.

5.6 Better Services

As we improve the structure and alignment of parks and leisure services through our departmental improvement programme, we continue to improve our services. Our new customer-focused agenda and our new customer charter will help us to ensure that we deliver to the highest standard and we will develop mechanisms for assessing our performance in this area. We aim to ensure that all our staff feel involved in the strategic direction for the department and are aware of our vision in relation to people, places and possibilities.

Key actions

We will:

- Improve the customer experience at Parks and Leisure venues by:
 - Implementing the customer service improvement plan and training
 - Agreeing standards and targets linked to the customer improvement plan
 - Implementing further service improvement pilots and programmes:

- Community Park Warden pilot
- Review of swimming coaching arrangements
- Through operational reviews identifying and delivering improvements and efficiencies in our services:
 - Review of Driver/Gardeners and ROSPA
 - Review of Active Living and Open Spaces Unit
 - Development strand of improvement programme
 - Phase 2 of the Leisure Service review
 - Overtime and agency improvement plan
 - Review of opening hours
- Improve service provision and support for allotments and community gardens across the city

5.7 An Organisation Fit to Lead and Serve

By establishing clearly defined processes and procedures of working, we can build on progress made in raising standards across the department. We must also focus on improving efficiencies, financial management and effectiveness in managing human resources. It is imperative that we support our staff through training, personal development and performance management to improve our skills base.

Human Resource Management

Key actions

We will:

- Ensure compliance and review effectiveness of corporate HR strategies, policies and procedures including attendance policy, vacancy control and health and safety
- Roll out consistent PDP process and participate in the process of obtaining corporate IIP

Financial Planning

Key actions

We will:

- Adhere to corporate processes and development of financial planning, management and control and review effectiveness

- Secure and manage funding from external sources for major initiatives, including Peace III (i.e. Belfast peace plan phase 2), DSD and the Heritage Lottery Fund

Information Management

Key actions

We will:

- Implement and review corporate information management systems, including Clockwise and TLMS
- Review and improve the use of IT systems in the department including Business Process Re-engineering (BPR) of current processes
- Embed use of the ASB CRM system in the Parks and Cemeteries Service and introduce into Leisure Services

Planning and Performance

Key actions

We will:

- Manage, monitor and review the departmental planning approach and improve the link between financial estimates and business plans
- Hold quarterly DMT performance meetings with senior managers to monitor and review departmental priorities and financial management
- Rationalise and refine departmental key performance indicators in line with departmental strategic direction and objectives

Communication, Marketing and Engagement

Key actions

The majority of the departmental budget for this area was centralised departmentally in 2011/12, with a view to generating efficiency savings and improving consistency, whilst modernising and professionalising the department's marketing and communications approach. We are also developing a departmental approach to consultation and engagement.

Communications - external

We will:

- Reinforce communications procedures throughout the department and encourage greater compliance with the council's communications policies by partner organisations
- Continue the departmental effort to rationalise printed publications and generate cost savings
- Ensure that the department's web presence is developed within the corporate context and in line with the recommendations of the 2011 SOCITM assessment
- Continue to review and modernise departmental signage

Communications - internal

We will:

- Improve internal communications in line with recommendations arising from the initial Investors in People assessment

Marketing - departmental services

We will:

- Develop and deliver a three-year marketing strategy for Parks and Leisure

Social marketing

The department has already assumed a variety of key roles in encouraging behavioural change among residents, for example in relation to promoting healthier and more active lifestyles.

We will:

- Rebrand and relaunch the Boost leisure product and develop an associated loyalty programme to reward positive behaviours including active living, active leisure and sport

Assets

We will:

- Ensure that recommendations from the asset management strategy are implemented and contribute to the development of the council's asset management plan

Governance and Risk

We will:

- Complete and monitor the departmental risk register and risk management plans and integrate into business planning process

6.0 Key performance indicators for 2012/13

6.1 Environment

Performance Indicator	Annual Target
• No. of parks and green spaces to attain green flag accreditation	3
• Amount of parks waste sent to landfill	TBC*
• Energy consumption expressed in gigajoules per hour per sq metre (Parks and Leisure Department)	TBC*

6.2 Economy

Performance Indicator	Annual Target
• No. of visitors to the zoo	300,000

6.3 People and Communities

Performance Indicator	Annual Target
• No. of leisure centre members	TBC*
• % of users who use leisure centres twice + per week	TBC*
• Programme participation levels (outreach and health)	TBC*
• No. of people who use/ visit our indoor and outdoor leisure facilities	TBC*
• Participation levels at events	TBC*
• No. of reported ASB incidents	TBC*

6.4 Better Services

Performance Indicator	Annual Target
• Hectares of parks and open spaces with green flag accreditation per resident	TBC*
• % residents that live within 1000m of green flag rated parks	TBC*
• Number of complaints received - All	TBC*
• % complaints that met response target - All	TBC*

6.5 Organisation fit to lead and serve

Human Resource Management	Annual Target
Performance Indicator	
• Average number of working days per employee lost due to absence (measured against agreed targets)	TBC*
• Variance between actual direct employee costs and budget	0
• Variance between actual Staff Number and agreed establishment	0
Financial Planning	Annual Target
Performance Indicator	
• Compliance for PO raised after the supplier invoice date	85%
• Compliance for GRN against the Supplier invoice	70%
• % variance between actual net revenue expenditure and budgeted net revenue expenditure (in year)	+1 / -2
• % variance between forecast net revenue expenditure and actual net revenue expenditure (year end)	+0.5 / -2
• Total net cost per user (indoor)	TBC*
• Total net cost per user (outdoor leisure)	TBC*
• Total net cost per user (Belfast zoo)	TBC*
• Ratio of income to expenditure (Rate of recovery) (Parks and Leisure Department)	1: 0.28
• Total net cost per ratepayer	£93.60
Planning & Performance	Annual Target
Performance Indicator	
• % PIs with valid data collected and reported upon	85%
• % PIs on target	TBC *

7.0 Financial information

- 7.1 The approved net revenue expenditure for the Department for 2012/13 is £23,166,040.36. A breakdown of the revenue estimates by the main Services of the Department and Directorate Support is provided in Table 1

Table 1
Estimated net revenue expenditure 2012/13

	Net Expenditure 2011/12	Net Estimated Expenditure 2012/13
Leisure Development	558,512.00	549,243.00
Leisure Centres	7,535,480.00	7,670,865.00
Leisure Services	8,093,992.00	8,220,108.00
Zoo	865,622.00	794,549.00
Landscape & Planning	1,750,254.00	1,847,757.00
Parks & Cemetery Services	9,303,041.00	9,357,534.83
P&C Development	201,618.00	177,906.00
Parks & Cemeteries	12,120,535.00	12,177,746.83
Policy & Business Development	941,579.00	998,285.00
P&L Directorate Support	1,799,160.00	1,769,900.53
Directorate Support	2,740,739.00	2,768,185.53
Total	22,955,266.00	23,166,040.36

8.0 Monitoring and review arrangements

The Council has introduced an integrated performance management system that enables regular, up to date reporting to be undertaken at corporate, departmental and service level.

Key performance indicators have been identified for all services within the Parks and Leisure Department and are contained within section 6 of this plan.

A number of PIs and tasks have been identified as corporately significant and are contained in the corporate plan. They will be reported on a quarterly basis to CMT to ensure ongoing management of the key priorities.”

Arising from discussion, the Director undertook to submit reports in relation to the development of an improvement programme for the City Cemetery. In addition, the Committee noted that a report in relation to the Council's future leisure provision would be submitted to a future meeting.

Belfast Zoological Gardens

(Mr. M. Challis, Zoo Manager, attended in connection with these items.)

Break-in

The Committee considered a report in connection with a break-in at the Belfast Zoo on the evening of 7th May. It was reported that the incident had received significant media interest and, subsequently, a review of security measures at the site had taken place. The Zoo Manager pointed out that the occurrence of such incidents was extremely rare. The youths in question appeared to have been on site for only a short period and apart from the release of the three Shetland ponies, vandalism had been relatively minor. The extent of this had been damage to a door located at the room utilised by the Friends of the Zoo, the forcing of doors to a 'porta-cabin' and a boiler room and a fire extinguisher had been set off. He proceeded to outline the additional security measures which were being implemented at the site, including the increase in security guards, mobiles vehicles and patrols using dogs. In addition, a significant portion of the zoo's boundary fence, where it bordered the Cave Hill Country Park, had been renewed two years previously and staff were currently considering, in conjunction with the Council's Property and Maintenance Unit, the potential to renew further sections of the boundary fence and were reviewing the closed circuit television at the site.

The Committee was advised that zoo and corporate communications staff had worked together to manage a significant number of media requests in the period immediately following the break-in. The security situation at the zoo would be kept under close review and the increase in security provision would extend to at least the end of the summer period. The total cost of this to the Council would be approximately £19,000.

After discussion, during which the Committee congratulated the staff at the Belfast Zoo for the manner in which the trespass had been handled, the Committee noted the contents of the report, the costs associated with the increase in security measures at the site and that the Police Service of Northern Ireland were maintaining a close vigilance in and around the site.

Scale of Charges

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1 Relevant Background Information

In February Committee adopted the scale of charges in relation to the zoo and agreed the concessionary rate to be set at 50% of the full rate. It was agreed that the concessionary rate will be applied across all activities in relation to over 60s, those on means tested benefits, students and children.

2 Key Issues

The review of fees and charges ensured that there was a simpler more consistent approach across the department and that there was agreement on the groups receiving a concession. Detailed benchmarking was undertaken regarding the charges and advice sought regarding the approach in relation to disabled people and other groups. This information was reflected in the charges put forward for Committee's approval with concession charges for disabled children and special needs groups and free admission for carers.

The above approach is being monitored and reviewed and will link to the wider issues in the Zoo regarding income generation and operational efficiency. To date a number of issues have been raised in relation to charging disabled groups of children or children with special needs as previously no charge would have been applied in these circumstances.

To address these issues it is proposed that the Director can use his delegated authority to review on a case by case basis whether a charge to certain groups should be waived. The department will also continue to monitor this position and review it in line with the upcoming estimates process.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 Financial

In the last financial year the Zoo experienced a deficit in its income target of approximately £150k. Currently the impact of the economic downturn is affecting the service and it is hoped that reviewing how we charge our customers will generate additional income either through increased visits, new services or the retention of existing users.

Human Resources

There are no HR implications.

Asset and Other Implications

None.

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

The scale of charges is subject to Equality screening.

5 Recommendations

Members are asked to agree to the Director of Parks and Leisure being granted delegated authority to assess the level of charge to be applied to disabled or special needs children's groups on a case by case basis."

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendation and agreed that a policy in this regard be developed at the earliest opportunity.

Request for Filming

The Assistant Director reported that a request had been received from a Company involved in the production of Sky Atlantic's 'Twin Towns' to film at the Belfast Zoo. She explained that the programme would involve a family spending a week in Nashville and vice versa. Both parents of the Belfast family which had been selected worked at the Belfast Zoo and it was proposed that they would spend a week living with a Nashville family and experience that family's way of life. The Company planned to film at the zoo and a number of other sites, including the City Hall during the American family's visit. She pointed out that Council officers had been assured that the programme was a celebration of City twinning and it would be shown on the Sky Atlantic channel in both the United Kingdom and the United States. The series currently received significant viewing figures of up to six million and the Council's Corporate Communications Section had no issues with the request.

The Committee granted authority for the filming at the Belfast Zoo, subject to the completion of an appropriate legal agreement.

Support for Sport Development Grants

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

The Committee noted a schedule of support for sport applications in relation to development grants which had been approved by the Director of Parks and Leisure in accordance with the authority delegated to him.

Stadia Upgrades - Windsor and Casement Parks

(Mr. G. Millar, Director of Property and Projects, attended in connection with this item.)

(Councillor Mullan left the meeting while this matter was under discussion.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1 Relevant Background Information

Members will be aware that last year the NI Executive committed significant investment towards local sports facilities including - £61.4m to the IFA (of which £25.2m will go towards

the redevelopment of Windsor Park), £61.4m to the GAA for the redevelopment of Casement Park and £15million to the IRFU towards the upgrade of Ravenhill. The respective sporting governing bodies are also expected to provide additional substantial funding of their own towards facilities upgrades. The governing bodies are now in the process of developing full business cases for their respective projects.

Council related projects aligned to the stadia upgrades are highlighted as emerging projects in the Council's Investment Programme 2012-2015. In addition, a comprehensive review of the Council's leisure estate is also a key project under the Investment Programme.

The Council owns a number of leisure assets in the immediate vicinity and surrounding areas of both Windsor Park and Casement Park. These include -

- *Windsor Park* – Olympia Leisure Centre/Community Centre, Boucher Road Playing Fields, head landlord for majority of Boucher Road Estate
- *Casement Park* – Andersonstown Leisure Centre, North Link Playing Fields

The Council therefore regarded it as important that these stadia developments and investments were not viewed in isolation but rather that the full regeneration impacts, added value of and synergies between the developments was examined. This would have the potential to help build critical mass, have the potential to lever further infrastructure investment, engender greater public interest and potentially generate greater economic, social and physical regeneration outcomes for the city.

It was therefore agreed last year that the Council would commission consultants to

- examine the potential added value and regeneration impact of the proposed stadia upgrades and
- identify practical opportunities where it might add value to the developments, and to explore how its future investments, resources and assets might be configured to align with the construction of the new stadia and secure optimum social outcomes and community benefits.

The scope of this work was limited to the investment in Casement Park and Windsor Park given the proximity of the Council's leisure assets to these stadia. Following a competitive tendering process Deloitte were appointed to progress this work.

The report by Deloitte considered the strategic context of the stadia developments; future potential in terms of the surrounding areas; an economic assessment of the recommended way forward for each stadium site in conjunction with Council assets; the potential social impact and benefits which the redevelopment of the stadia could have on the local areas and the potential for partnership working.

It should be noted that this work is being undertaken in parallel to the work which is being progressed by the sport's governing bodies (IFA and GAA) on the development of their business case proposals and the work on the development and design of the stadia themselves. Sport NI, as part of the of the consultation for the Deloitte report, highlighted that the funding for the redevelopments of the stadia is committed under this CSR round and there is a very finite 'window of opportunity' in which the Council can input into the design process – in terms of, for example, the integration into the surrounding area and provision of services etc. DCAL highlighted their support for the wider regeneration of the stadia areas but it was made clear that the stadia projects have fixed budgets and fixed timescales under which the money has to be spent.

2 Key Issue

In their report, Deloitte have highlighted that as at the 2001 Census both areas were within the top 30% of most deprived areas of N.Ireland and have low levels of economic activity. The major investment in the redevelopment of the major sports stadia in Belfast should therefore provide a much needed boost to the local construction industry and create new jobs, training and employment opportunities. The projects link directly to the Programme for Government 2011-2015 and will contribute to national strategies relating to sport and physical recreation as well as the Council's own priorities on playing pitches and enhancement of open spaces. The wider regeneration benefits of the projects will impact positively on the health and well being of surrounding communities and provide economic regeneration through new employment, training and skills development opportunities.

The proposed stadia upgrades provide a one-off opportunity to consider how the surrounding council assets could be best utilised to facilitate a more comprehensive regeneration of both sites. The report highlights that leisure services are a vital aspect of both the Windsor and Casement Park areas. User numbers at both Olympia and Andersonstown Leisure Centres have been increasing with swimming a key feature at both sites. The 3G pitch is very well used at Olympia. However they feel

that there is a lot of poorly utilised space within both leisure centres and their exteriors are not well configured to maximise the potential of both sites

The main recommendations in the report include:

Windsor Park:

Given the close proximity of Council assets to Windsor Stadium, Deloitte consider that the Windsor Park site offers significant development potential with a suggested option for the wider Windsor Park to create a Sports Village incorporating Windsor Park, Midgley Park, Olympia LC and Boucher Road Playing Fields. The key features of this could potentially include:

- Windsor Park development as planned by the IFA
- Replacement/realignment of Midgley Park pitch to facilitate longer term access from Windsor Park to Boucher Road
- Replacement Olympia LC – with reconfigured foot print and facilities
- Provision of a mini-stand back to back with West Stand of Windsor Park
- Development of commercial, floodlit 5 a side pitches
- Removal and relocation of 3G pitch to Boucher Playing Fields
- NEAP quality play facilities targeting younger people
- Frontage on Boucher Road freed up to be developed for commercial/hospitality use

Deloitte highlight that a comprehensive approach would offer a number of potential benefits. However in order to realise such a vision a number of issues would require further detailed consideration by the Council in terms of–

- The structure of any development between the Council and Linfield
- Funding for a replacement leisure centre
- Funding for spectator facilities associated with a replacement pitch at Midgley
- Capacity of the site to include a commercial 5 a side (which would help generate revenue)
- Quantum of commercial development
- Would the scheme be promoted by the Council or a third party development partner
- Longer term management options for the centre/site

The current access to Windsor Park is either through side streets in the Village area or via the caged walkway at the side of Olympia. An important requirement for the new stadium

development is improved access from the Boucher Road in the construction phase and IFA have approached the Council for approval in principle to have an access for construction traffic to the side of Olympia Leisure Centre onto Boucher Road. The construction access will not be required until later next year but IFA wish to include it as part of their planning application process in terms of a construction access.

In the longer term a permanent access to the stadium onto Boucher Road may present opportunities to properly enhance the access and aesthetics of the approach to the stadium, provide additional economic and regenerative benefits, and it may also improve the perceptions of the stadium, making it more neutral. In this scenario a comprehensive approach would be required which took in Midgley Park, the Olympia Leisure Centre site, and Windsor Park. Initial discussions have been held with Linfield re this and were positive however this will need to be formalised.

Casement Park:

The close proximity of Andersonstown Leisure Centre and the North Link playing fields is highlighted and although the opportunity to collaborate leisure services with the stadium is reduced given the physical separation of the sites, there is a suggested option for the wider Casement Park development of a GAA hub.

It also highlights that the rear of Andersonstown Leisure Centre is currently unused and suggests that could potentially be redeveloped as an outdoor park for urban sports (for example skate boarding/BMX). It further suggests that consideration be given to the North Link Playing Fields being potentially redeveloped with new 3G pitch and changing rooms together with enhanced children's play facilities.

There are various other recommendations in the report around wider opportunities to extend time in the Andersonstown area on match days. It highlights the fact that if Casement's profile is raised as a big match venue there is greater potential for spectators to extend their stay in Belfast overnight which will help the area develop as a tourism location with links to the Gaeltacht Quarter, Culturlann, West Belfast Festival and Belfast Hills. Parking was also highlighted as a major concern.

The report provides some recommendations in relation to establishing community stadium working groups to influence issues such as parking and match-day experience as well as to negotiate Community Benefit Agreements. A further report is being brought to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee

to consider both the asset related and wider economic and social impact issues raised in the Deloitte report.

Community consultation is a key element of the planning process for both stadia developments and Planning Service will require evidence of a robust community engagement process. Whilst some initial community consultation has commenced, both the IFA and the GAA are currently working up proposals for future community engagement. Council officers have requested a meeting with the GAA and IFA in the near future to assist in taking forward the community engagement process and in engaging with Members. This issue of community engagement and consultation is something that the Area Working Groups may wish to consider and officers can bring forward more details on this following an initial meeting with the GAA and IFA.

3 Resource Implications

Financial

Not known at this stage. Financial implications can be assessed following the completion of the recommendations below.

Human Resources

Staff resource, primarily from Parks and Leisure and Property and Projects in taking forward the proposed recommendations.

Asset and Other Implications

Depending on the outcome of any of the recommendations the proposals should lead to enhanced regenerative, economic and social outcomes

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

None at this stage.

5 Recommendations

Members are asked to note the recommendations of the stadia report in relation to Olympia and Andersonstown Leisure Centres and to give approval to:

- (i) In principle allow access for construction traffic to the side of Olympia Leisure Centre onto Boucher Road. A further report will be brought back in due course for

approval to the detailed terms of the construction access.

- (ii) The Director of Property and Projects and the Director of Parks and Leisure progressing discussions with the IFA, Linfield and the GAA regarding the potential projects which might add value to and improve the regeneration impacts of the stadia developments with a report to be brought back to Committee in due course.
- (iii) Undertake a feasibility study in relation to the Windsor, Olympia and Midgley Park options in the context of the wider strategic review of leisure.
- (iv) In the context of the wider strategic review of leisure, to consider the future development of leisure facilities on the Andersonstown site including the lands to the rear.

Members are also asked to note that a further report will be brought to Strategic Policy & Resources Committee on the asset related and the wider economic, regenerative and social impact issues.”

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations contained in the report.

Wilmont House

(Mr. G. Millar, Director of Property and Projects, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

At its meeting on 14 May 2009 the Parks and Leisure Committee authorised that expressions of interest be sought for the development of Wilmont House and that a process be undertaken to enter discussions with the Dixon family to explore the relaxation of restrictions associated with use of the property.

Wilmont House and some 134 acres of surrounding land was gifted (subject to the payment of death duties on the property) to the Council via the Will of the late Lady Edith Stewart Dixon with the property eventually being transferred to the Council under a Conveyance dated 5 December 1959. The Conveyance included a covenant which banned the sale of intoxicating liquor on the land and premises. However one of the main elements of the Conveyance was that the Council

(then the Corporation) was to hold the land 'in trust' "To use the said house (Wilmont House) and lands for the greatest good of the Citizens of the City of Belfast".

Since the 2009 Committee decision the Council has sought Counsel's Opinion on the key elements of the 1959 Conveyance and the current position may be stated as:

- i) In relation to the restriction on the sale of alcohol it is not clear which individual or individuals may be able to provide a release from this restriction and if relaxation of this covenant is required the best option may be to seek a preliminary authority from the Lands Tribunal to advertise the Council's desire to seek relaxation and thereafter to make a full application for relaxation of the covenant to the Lands Tribunal.
- ii) In view of the relative importance of the 134 acres of grounds at Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park, Wilmont House itself should not be regarded as essential to purposes of the Trust and that a disposal of Wilmont House itself, by way of medium term lease, or sale, should not take the Council outside of the terms of the Trust and that High Court approval is thus not required prior to such a disposal.
- iii) In view of the Trust status of the property it will be necessary to have the approval of the relevant Charities body before the Council could proceed with any disposal. With the establishment of the Charities Commission in Northern Ireland the regulatory functions presently carried out by DSD Charities Branch are soon to be transferred to the Charities Commission.
- iv) In view of the current condition of Wilmont House it could be argued that any scheme aimed at the refurbishment and regeneration of the house is a purpose which is for the greatest good of the Citizens of Belfast, or is certainly 'as near as possible' to the purposes contained in the Trust. This latter point has yet to be fully agreed by DSD Charities Branch/the Charities Commission.

In order to gauge the level of interest from outside parties and in order to better understand the sorts of alternative feasible uses for Wilmont House, the Council sought Expressions of Interest through public advertisement in March 2012. A total

of six proposals were received by the closing date in late April 2012. The proposals contained a variety of potential schemes, a synopsis of which is provided in Appendix 1 to this report. Some of the Expressions of Interest were of a more commercial nature and some were less so. Some sought lifting of the covenant related to the no sale of alcohol and some did not.

2 Key Issues

Wilmont House is a 'Listed Building' and continues to suffer the effects of continuing vacancy. It will remain as a liability for the Council and may incur increasing revenue expenditure to help keep it wind and weather proof. It is a very visible element of Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park and its continuing decline could detract from the general amenity of the Park.

Members may wish to note that refurbishment of Wilmont House is an emerging project in the Council's City Investment Programme.

A next step could be the issue of a more formal Development Brief, which, in accordance with good practice, would be publicly advertised and would seek more detailed information on proposed schemes. This would include further information on capital expenditure, funding arrangements, revenue projections, as well as any financial and operational implications.

In view of the responses to the Expressions of Interest there appears to be a degree of interest from parties who would not require relaxation of the covenant on the sale of alcohol. In addition the legal position regarding the types of schemes which may be acceptable to DSD Charities Branch/the Charities Commission will not be finally put to rest until a formal approach can be made to the relevant Charities body for a particular selected scheme. The Council, through Legal Services are, and will, continue to pave the way for this by provision of copy documentation, such as Expressions of Interest, draft Development Brief, draft lease etc. to the relevant Charities body as appropriate. However it remains possible that more commercial schemes could find less favour with the relevant Charities body.

3 Resource Implications

Financial

No definitive financial implications at this time. Ultimately there will be a need to weigh the implications of proceeding

with a particular scheme against the implications of maintaining the status quo

Human Resources

Existing resources in Legal Services, Estates Management Unit and Parks and Leisure Department required at this stage.

Asset and Other Implications

An appropriate regeneration, refurbishment and use of Wilmont House could have a positive impact upon the surrounding Park and would generally improve the amenity and marketability of the city. The relaxation of the covenant on the sale of alcohol is not considered crucial to the success of the Development Brief exercise, although potential developers would be free to make their own proposals and judgements on whether they would wish to seek such relaxation.

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

There are no equality or good relations issues at this stage.

5 Recommendations

Committee is recommended to approve the preparation and public advertisement of a Development Brief for the regeneration and refurbishment of Wilmont House on the basis of the current restrictions on its use and to note the continuing efforts of officers to pave the way for potential development through continuing contact with the relevant Charities body(ies).”

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Cairn Lodge Boxing Club

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

The Committee is reminded that at its meeting on 10 June 2010 it received a report in respect of a request from the Cairn Lodge Boxing Club. A copy of the report is attached as Appendix A. The report set out that the Club wished to construct its own facility on land within the Hammer Open Space and sought from the Council a lease on an area of land adjacent to St Michael’s Church, a copy of the site map is attached as Appendix B. As can be seen from the attached report, the Committee agreed, in

principle, subject to certain conditions, to enter into a 25 year lease.

In the intervening period, the Boxing Club has secured a design team and prepared drawings for a new building. Planning permission has been secured.

In addition, the Boxing club has sought funding from Sport NI under its Community Capital Programme. If successful, the club will have secured a maximum of £245,000, the total cost of the scheme is estimated to be £443,278.80, as at November 2010. This leaves a short fall of approximately £200,000. To meet the short fall, the Boxing Club been in discussion with the Department for Social Development (Belfast Regeneration Office) and has been advised that there is potential funding of £95,000. The Club has also made application to the Council for financial support under the Local Investment Fund and the availability of funding from this source will have to be considered in the context of the relevant criteria as outlined by members.

2 Key Issues

The Committee is asked to note the following issues:

1. The Committee has previously agreed, in principle, to enter into a 25 year lease;
2. The Club has progressed the project to a point where greater certainty is required around security of tenure;
3. However, while the project has been progressed there remain areas of uncertainty. While the indications around funding have been positive, there are as yet no letters of offer;
4. Further design work will be required to prepare tender documentation;
5. Copies of the sports development plan and business plans have not been received, however this will be a requirement by the funding bodies;
6. The initial estimate was prepared in November 2010 and is likely to need revised;

Sport NI has asked that Council provide security of tenure in respect of the land, this is a requirement of the grant process.

Members will note from the issues above that the project remains work in progress. Within this context it would not be appropriate for the Council to provide a lease on the land. However, as indicated in the previous report of June 2010 and to meet the requirements of SNI it is proposed that at an appropriate point in the process the Council enter into development agreement. The development agreement would

require certain conditions (including agreement on building specification and confirmation of funding) to be fulfilled before commencement of construction on site. In essence, this agreement would set out that in the event that the Boxing Club construct the new building within a specified period of time, say 24 months, that a lease agreement will be activated. Members are asked to note that a lease agreement forms an attachment to the Development Agreement which is a legal document. This safeguards the Council and the Club.

3 Resource Implications

Financial

Notwithstanding any funding which may be accrued as [part of the Local Investment Fund there is no expenditure anticipated in relation to this project. The lease will provide for payment to the Council of an annual market rent.

Human Resources

There are no additional human resource implications at this time.

Asset and Other Implications

The report should highlight implications for Council assets and any other major implications which the decision required would have for the overall strategic planning of the Council.

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

There are equality or good relations considerations.

5 Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee in accordance with its previous decision to agree in line with Standing Orders to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that the Council enters into a 25 year lease agreement by way of a development agreement subject to the agreement of appropriate terms including confirmation of funding being secured.”

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Cliftonville Football Club - Access Over Council Owned Land

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

At its meeting on 7 November 2006 the former Parks and Cemeteries Services Committee approved a number of arrangements with Cliftonville Football Club (the Club) regarding access arrangements along the Council’s laneway. The laneway forms the only access route directly off the Cliftonville Road to the Waterworks. The various arrangements were associated with access to the Club’s ground (Solitude) following construction of a new spectator stand at the ground. In 2009 the (new) Club management sought to vary the terms of the previous Committee approval and draft legal arrangement which dealt with pedestrian and vehicle access along the laneway. Discussions with the Club have been on-going since 2009 and a number of reports have been presented to the Parks and Leisure Committee in the interim.

At its meeting on 12 January 2012 Committee received a report on progress which had been made in discussions. Committee agreed to limit further access by Cliftonville Football Club along the laneway in the event of final agreement not being reached with the Club within six months. Committee also agreed to make a contribution to the cost of installing security gates and lighting along the laneway. These installations were required to facilitate the Club’s use of the laneway and, in the absence of the Club’s use, would not be a Council requirement. Committee agreed the Council contribution to these installations was not to exceed 50% of the cost of the works.

Following the January 2012 Committee decision further discussions were held with the Club Chairman and officials in an effort to agree the outstanding matters. These discussions have resulted in provisional agreement with the Club (subject to respective Committee and Club Board approvals) on the terms which would be incorporated in a revised draft Grant of Easement.

2 Key Issues

The agreed terms provide the Club with a range of uses of the Council’s laneway. The terms endeavour to regulate the uses and provide clarity regarding the respective responsibilities of the parties. They also reflect input from the PSNI. To preserve public safety the proposed arrangements mean that new fencing and gates will be installed at the Waterworks end of the laneway and that public access along the laneway will not be available for a period before, during, and after, matches at Solitude.

Club officials have undertaken to further engage with residents of Linden Gardens, which backs on to the laneway, regarding the proposed arrangements including the proposed lighting installations.

3 Resource Implications

Financial

The Council has agreed a rent with the Club in respect of use of the laneway which brings 'third party' income to the Club in the form of franchise fees. However because the various rights being granted to the Club may be terminated at relatively short notice, it is considered inappropriate to seek rent from the Club for the grant of the various rights associated with use of the lane by spectators and players/officials. The Club will however reimburse the Council in respect of any additional staff costs and be responsible for any damage to the Council's property which may arise from the arrangements.

In relation to the costs of providing new fencing/gates and lighting along the laneway, the estimated costs of these installations is put at £40,500. At its meeting on 12 January 2012 the Parks and Leisure Committee agreed to fund up to 50 % of these costs. On this basis the Council's contribution to these costs would be £20,250. No allowance was made for this in 2012-13 revenue budgets and therefore will have to be funded from savings elsewhere.

Human Resources

No additional human resources required. The drawing up of the detailed agreement and its implementation will draw on existing resources within Parks and Leisure Department, Legal Services and Estates Management Unit.

Asset and Other Implications

The potential to terminate all or some of the elements of the proposed arrangements mean the Council can recover full control of the laneway should the need arise.

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

There are no known equality or good relations issues associated with this report.

5 Recommendations

Committee is recommended to approve the terms of the proposed Grant of Easement to Cliftonville Football Club, as set

out in this report subject to the approval of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in accordance with Standing Orders 46 and 60 and incorporation of agreed terms within an appropriate legal agreement to be drawn up by Legal Services.”

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Sport Northern Ireland - Community Capital Programme

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

The Committee is reminded that it has received a series of reports regarding applications relating the Sport NI Community Capital Programme from external groups. The first report dates back to December 2010 and there have been further reports in January 2011, August 2011, and November 2011.

At its meeting on 11 August 2011 the Committee was provided with information on three schemes which were progressing under the Programme. The three schemes were:

1. The provision of a mountain bike trail at Barnett Demesne / Mary Peters Track.
2. The provision of a 3G soccer pitch at Marrowbone Millennium Park.
3. Provision of a 3G soccer pitch at Hammer Open Space.

The Committee is reminded that there were three critical strands to the application process;

- Planning and other statutory approvals as necessary;
- Matched funding; and
- Security of tenure

This report is primarily concerned with the security of tenure issue.

Committee had authorised officers to enter into further discussions with the various groups to agree the nature of any legal arrangements and agree terms prior to referring the matter back to the Parks and Leisure Committee and ultimately the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in accordance with Standing Orders 46 and 60.

The report in November 2011 had sought and received specific authority in relation to each of the projects in terms of the appropriate legal agreements. Discussions have continued with

Sport NI and it's solicitors as well as the individual applicants as a result of which further elaboration is required.

For the information of members under the Management Agreement route the Council will carry out the maintenance and other normal obligations in respect of Council land and would retain any income generated from use of the facilities. If the site is leased out then the Club/tenant would be responsible for management and all normal running costs but would be permitted to keep any income generated. A lease would also contain provisions for the payment of rent which will be assessed and agreed with the tenant on the same basis as for other sites leased by the Council for playing field purposes.

- (i) In the case of the Marrowbone and Hammer 3G pitch developments, SNI has stated that whilst it's preference would be for the grant applicant to hold a lease for ten years from the date of the grant award, it would be satisfied with an appropriate management agreement between the Council and the Applicant setting out the respective roles and responsibilities of each; this agreement would be underpinned by a deed of Dedication which would represent a tie to the land and would require the Council to continue to use the land for the agreed purpose for a period of 10 years from completion of the works. Discussions with Shankill FC has concluded that the Club wish to obtain a Lease rather than a Management Agreement, the lease will transfer responsibly for management and maintenance to the Club and the Club will also be responsible for complying with Sport NI's Grant Conditions, which include replacement of the pitch (if necessary) during the 10 year Grant Period. In return, the Club will retain any income generated from the hire and use of the pitch. The position regarding the Youth Providers Forum remains unclear and it is proposed that a verbal update will be provided at the meeting.**

- (ii) In the case of the Mountain Bike Trail at Barnett's Demesne/Mary Peters Track, the facility will remain under the ownership of the Council, however, Countryside Recreation NI (CRNI) will remain responsible for the delivery of project outcomes such as usage, events, programmes and promotion. The facility is not income generating. In a previous report presented to Committee in April 2010 it was reported that an application had been made to provide mountain bike trail, on that occasion the application had been made to the Rural Development Programme, this application has been successful and funding secured. As part of that report it was noted that**

the maintenance of the trail would be undertaken by the Council and that the cost of this based on similar facilities would be in the region of £8,000 per annum. Following more detached work this estimate has been revised upwards and is more likely to be in the region of £10,000 per annum.

- (iii) The Committee is reminded that the Deed of Dedication with the three potential grant recipients, would require the Council to take over responsibility for maintaining, operating and (if necessary) replacing or renewing the facility if the grant recipient is unable to do so at any time during the ten years. Should the Council chose not to maintain, operate, or replace the facility, SNI could seek repayment, of part of the grant funding (based on a sliding scale over the ten year period).

2 Key Issues

The key issues for the Committee to note are:

Immediately following completion of the Mountain Bike Trail at Barnett Demesne the Council will assume maintenance responsibility for the Trail and this will be incorporated within the management agreement;

Subject to the approval of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee the Council will enter into a 10 year lease, by way of an appropriate legal vehicle, with Shankill Football club in relation to the pitch at the Hammer Open Space;

A final decision is awaited from the Ardoyne Youth Providers regarding whether it wishes to proceed with a management agreement or a lease. An update on this will be presented to the Committee at the meeting.

Physical Development

In order to ensure delivery of the projects it is intended that the projects will be managed through the Council's Property and Projects Departments. It is proposed that a tender process be initiated to facilitate the design and construction of the three projects. To initiate the process requires the approval of the Client Committee and Strategic Policy And Resources. The Committee is therefore asked for its approval to proceed and to make recommendation to SP&R.

3 Resource Implications

Financial

The maximum grant aid payable by Sport NI at each of the three sites is £245,000 and this would form the maximum financial exposure to the Council in the event that the grant recipients were unable to sustain the facility at an early stage. Thereafter the financial exposure could diminish by 10% over each of the 10 years of the grant period. In respect of the 3G pitch facilities, the ability of the grant recipients to sustain the facilities could occur later in the grant period. In such circumstances the Council would wish to choose between repaying the grant monies to Sport NI, or taking-on the running cost of the facilities and the cost of pitch replacements. Maintenance and reinstatement of the proposed Mountain Bike Trial will become a Council responsibility from the outset.

The Council will make a contribution to the project costs for the three schemes to a maximum value of £375,000

The maintenance cost of the Mountain Bike Trail is estimated to be in the region of £10,000 p.a.

Human Resources

No additional human resources required or released. Existing resources in Parks and Leisure, Legal Services and Property and Projects, required in setting up the various legal arrangements.

Asset and Other Implications

The projects will have implications for the land in so far as there will be associated deed of dedication which ties the Council in to a 10 year use of that land for the specified purpose. Should the Council default on this there may be financial implications imposed through a claw back clause. However, the completion of the works will provide an enhanced facility and will make a positive contribution to health and well being for the city.

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

The proposed agreements and Deeds of Dedication will include requirements related to Section 75 compliance via the sports development plans.

5 Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. approve the entering into an agreement to enter in to a management arrangement with CRNI in respect the Mountain Bike Trail and agree that the management arrangement be for a period of 10 year;
2. approve the entering into a lease agreement in respect of the provision of a 3G pitch at the Hammer Open Space;
3. Agree to enter into an appropriate agreement, whether management agreement or lease in respect of the Ardoyne Youth Providers Forum in relation to the provision of a 3G pitch at Marrowbone Millennium Park;
4. Agree to enter into 10 year Deeds of Dedication with Sport NI and the prospective grant recipients to provide a safety-net to Sport NI in the event that the grant recipients are unable to sustain the facilities and/or the leases. This recommendation is subject to the further approval of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in accordance with Standing Orders 46 and 60;
5. agree to provide the necessary licence agreements to facilitate construction works at the appropriate times; and
6. agree to proceed with the tender and delivery of the three proposals and to commend this decision to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Update on Development of a Boxing Strategy for the City

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 15th March, it had agreed an approach in relation to the development of a Boxing Strategy for the City. The Assistant Director pointed out that the first stage of the process was to undertake a baseline assessment to ascertain what boxing clubs were currently doing and how boxing, as a sport, was provided throughout the City. To inform the baseline assessment, it was agreed that a questionnaire be forwarded to all boxing clubs in Belfast and those on the periphery. The questionnaire had been designed by Council officers, with input from members of the Steering Group, and advice had been sought from the Council's Equality Officer to ensure that the correct questions were asked to assist in the equality screening of the draft strategy.

The Assistant Director stated that a list of twenty-seven clubs in Belfast and four on the periphery had been drawn up by the County Antrim Boxing Board and that the questionnaire had been forwarded on 12th March with the closing date for return no later than 6th April. In addition, Council officers had offered assistance in relation to the completion of the questionnaire and the offer had been taken up by several clubs. However, not all clubs had responded by the closing date and further contact had been made with those clubs to encourage a response. She explained that the next stage of the process would be the drafting of the Strategy which would be undertaken over the Summer and that the Steering Group would meet over this period to share information

and provide comment on the initial drafts. Thereafter, action plans would be developed under three themes, viz., management/governance, sports development and capital investment. A draft strategy would be submitted for the Committee's approval at its meeting on 13th September. Following Council approval, a twelve week period of public consultation would take place.

After discussion, during which the Director undertook to provide details in relation to the Access NI vetting of volunteers and coaches, the Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Playground Improvement Programme 2012

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

The purpose of this report is to inform Members regarding the Playground Improvement Programme for 2012 - 2013 and to seek approval to carry out a number of new playground refurbishments based on the latest cycle of independent inspection reports.

Members will be aware that the refurbishment and improvement of playgrounds is a key commitment in the people, communities and neighbourhood section of the Council's Investment Programme. In August 2011 the Committee agreed to an improved independent playground inspection process. This approach proved effective in prioritising the sites that were refurbished under the 2011– 2012 programme.

Last year's refurbishment programme proved hugely successful with the following 10 playgrounds across the city being enhanced and re-opened by the end of the 2012 financial year.

- **Finlay Park**
- **Tir Na Nog**
- **Marrowbone**
- **Alexandra Upper**
- **Highfield**
- **Glassmullin**
- **Lenadoon**
- **Knocknagoney**
- **Tommy Patton**
- **Grampian Avenue**

The average quality score for the sites selected at the outset of last year's improvement programme was recorded as 3.0 (classified as poor), as a result of refurbishment the average quality score for all ten sites has been recorded this year as 9.3

(classified as good). This clearly demonstrates the desired improvement in overall safety, quality and play value at each of the sites.

As a result of the independent inspection process and refurbishment programme the percentage of 'poor' council maintained playgrounds has been reduced from 25% of all facilities to just 9%. Future improvements will continue to move the quality and safety of all selected playgrounds to that of 'good'.

Following the success of physical improvements on site staff carried out a review of the process used to deliver the programme. A number of improvements are proposed for this year including;

- inclusion of Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGA's) and outdoor gyms as part of the annual inspection process
- plan refurbishment works for the next two financial years (2012-13 & 2013-14) based on this year's cycle of independent inspection reports
- share information with local communities earlier to assist with planning and design
- establish a new 3 year tender for the supply of playground equipment commencing in April 2013

This year's inspections were again carried out by 'Play Services Ireland' consultants in May 2012. As before, a quality score and classification for all playgrounds was derived based on European safety standards BS EN 1176 & 1177. Playground sites have been ranked in line with these scores, helping to determine which are in most need of refurbishment. Inspection reports continue to identify and prioritise essential repairs to existing equipment and will be undertaken annually.

This year's inspection process has been widened to include all existing Multi - Use Games Areas (MUGA's) across the city. The condition of these facilities has been assessed against the current European safety standard BS EN 15312.

Members should note that MUGA's are not part of refurbishment works under the Playground Improvement budget. Essential works to these facilities will need to be prioritised and funded independently. As a European standard for outdoor gym equipment does not exist independent inspections will assess these items on a risk based approach.

Based on this year's cycle of inspection reports a two year programme of refurbishment work has been developed (2012-13 & 2013 -14). It is envisaged that planning works for the next two financial years will allow for improved information sharing with communities and more efficient project management by staff.

Community Park Managers and Parks Outreach Officers will continue to assist with the distribution of information relating to individual playground sites to local community groups and users.

Members should note that the current 'playground equipment' tender has recently been extended until April 2013 helping staff to deliver refurbishment works more efficiently.

2 Key Issues

The 2012 independent playground inspections covered a total of 79 sites across the city. Inspection reports recorded a total of:

- 7 playgrounds classified as 'poor' (quality score 0.0 - 4.9)
- 34 playgrounds classified as 'fair' (quality score 5.0 - 7.5)
- 38 playgrounds classified as 'good' (quality score 7.6 – 10.0)

Members should note that low quality scores have been recorded because of a combination of vandalism, outstanding repairs and general wear and tear of equipment and surfacing. The key to maintaining high standards on newly refurbished sites will be through continued daily safety inspections and prompt and comprehensive repairs and maintenance.

As before sites which have the lowest quality scores will be priorities for improvement. In line with budget constraints the following playgrounds will be refurbished as part of a two year programme.

In Year One (2012 - 2013) playgrounds at the following sites will be improved;

1. North Queen Street
2. North Link
3. Victoria Park
4. Belfast Zoo
5. Clarawood Millennium Park
6. Ballymacarrett
- 7 Mountford Road

In Year Two (2013 – 2014) playgrounds at the following sites will be improved;

1. Clara Street
2. Dover Street
3. Michelle Baird
4. Stewart Street
5. Taughmonagh
6. Ballysillan Park
7. Sir Thomas & Lady Dixon

Although ranked amongst the lowest scoring sites the following playgrounds have been omitted from the programme for the following reasons;

1. Dunville Park – part of a wider regeneration scheme
2. Woodvale Park - part of a wider regeneration scheme
3. Orangefield – part of Connswater Community Greenway
4. Avoniel - part of Connswater Community Greenway
5. Willowbank – investment made within the last 5 years
6. Ardoyne Community Centre – outstanding repairs required
7. Moyard – investment made within last 5 years
8. Olympia Leisure Centre – part of a wider regeneration plan for national stadium
9. Geeragh Community Centre – maintained under alternative budget

3 Resource Implications

Financial

All refurbishment work will be funded through the Playground Refurbishment revenue budget (£649,200.00 annually) each year for the next two years.

Human Resources

Staff from the Landscape Planning & Development Unit will continue to deliver the Playground Improvement Programme

Asset and Other Implications

As a result of refurbishment work all selected playground sites will move to the new classification of 'good' (quality score 7.6 – 10.0) when re-inspected.

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

The processes proposed in this report will be subject to the council's existing equality screening process.

5 Recommendations

Committee is asked to approve:

- the list of playground sites to be refurbished based on this year's independent inspection process
- refurbishment of these sites as part of a two year construction programme."

After discussion, the Committee granted the approval sought.

Anti-Social Behaviour Programme - Quarterly Update

After discussion, 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 of the Council's Safer Neighbourhoods Antisocial Behaviour Programme.

Use of Woodvale Park for Cultural Celebrations on 11th July

The Director of Parks and Leisure reminded the Committee that the Bonfire Management Programme was a Council-led initiative under the Cultural Networks Programme which sought to work with communities to bring about management of bonfires in Belfast. He advised the Committee that the Woodvale and Cambrai Youth and Community Association had been active participants on the programme for a number of years. During 2007, the group had been involved in the design of the Bonfire Beacon which had been developed as an alternative to the traditional 11th July bonfire.

The group had ran successful Beacon events in Woodvale Park, which included a range of community activities, with over one thousand people having attended each year. The staging of the event had been approved by the Parks and Leisure Committee on each occasion. During 2011, the Bonfire Frame had been used as an alternative to the Beacon and had been considered as a successful alternative. The Frame was set on a bed of sand and had proven to cause no damage to the ground surface. In this regard, the Council had been received further requests from the Association to hold a similar event at the Park in 2012 which would include the use of the Bonfire Frame, a range of family-based activities and music events.

The Director pointed out that the contractor appointed to deliver the £2 million development plan for the Park was about to go on-site and, as a result, the traditional area in the park, on the cinder pitch, was unlikely to be available for the Bonfire Frame. However, an area close to the bowling pavilion to hold a scaled-down version of previous events had been identified by staff. In order to comply with all statutory requirements, an Event Management Plan would be required and site visits had taken place with the Fire Service and the Police Service of Northern Ireland who had assisted the Council in identifying a suitable location for the Frame and space for limited associated events. Accordingly, the Director recommended that the Committee grant authority for the

cultural event to be held at the Woodvale Park on 11th July, subject to satisfactory terms being agreed and on condition that:

- (i) the event organisers resolved all operational issues to the Council's satisfaction;
- (ii) an appropriate legal agreement was entered into; and
- (ii) the event organisers met all statutory requirements, including entertainments licensing.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Feile an Phobail - Funding Application

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 12th April, it had considered a report in relation to the production of the Development Plan for the Falls Park, City Cemetery and the surrounding area. The Assistant Director stated that it was envisaged that the Development Plan would be included as part of the Management Plan under the Green Flag initiative and would provide a cohesive approach for the local community and assist in bringing investment to the area.

She reported that Council officers had received a letter from Feile an Phobail advising of its intention to apply for £30,000 funding from the Alpha Programme in order to build a natural amphitheatre at the Falls Park. The correspondence had indicated that the proposed amphitheatre would be designed to enable public events such as festivals, music events and art and craft workshops to take place. It would enable the local community a natural seating area to enjoy picnics, a place where children's and family events could take place and the amphitheatre would include pathways which would allow accessibility for all.

The Assistant Director pointed out that this proposal fitted within the context of the Development Plan and, at this stage, there were no financial requirements from the Council other than minor ongoing maintenance costs associated with the proposal. It was anticipated that these would be absorbed within the existing revenue budget for the park. Accordingly, she recommended that the Committee note the contents of the report and authorise the Director of Parks and Leisure to forward a letter of support to the Alpha Funding Programme in respect of the project.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Online Cemetery Records Project

The Committee noted the contents of a report in relation to the progress which had been achieved in respect of the Council's online cemetery records project. In addition, the Committee congratulated those officers within the Department who had been involved in the Project.

Mary Peters' Track

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

The Committee is reminded that at its meeting in September 2011 it asked that a monthly progress report be submitted to Committee on the refurbishment of the Mary Peters Track. Members are reminded that the scope of construction works includes:

- The replacement of the existing six lane track with an eight lane track and field events area, to IAAF standard; the track will be surfaced with a Mondo SX prefabricated track as used in the London 2012 Olympic venues;
- The provision of a 400 seater stand incorporating storage and changing facilities; and
- An upgrade of existing floodlighting, site access and car park lighting

2 Key Issues

Physical Works

The Committee is asked to note that the contractor is continuing with the ground works. The contractor is in the process of removing the Japanese Knotweed from the area identified for the location of the grandstand. The intention is to bury and treat this on site in order to reduce the cost of removal. An invasive species management plan has been prepared and is currently with the NI Environment Agency.

The construction work is making good progress in terms of the earth work preparation for the laying of the new track, which is scheduled to commence later in the summer, and the new field area. Work remains on schedule to be completed November 2012 with the Stand being completed January 2013. The facility remains scheduled to be operational by March 2013.

Reopening of the Track Post Completion

The refurbishment is included within the Council's Investment Programme and represents a significant financial investment. It is likely that the event for the reopening of the track will form part of a wider corporate approach to similar investments emerging from the Investment Programme.

The reopening of the track will be scheduled for April/May 2013 and a number of options have been given initial consideration.

These include linking the launch with a scheduled event, this could be a local schools competition or some other pre-

scheduled athletics meeting such as an inter-varsity competition or other athletics events scheduled for April / May 2013. At a more local level, the Council organisations a series of schools athletics days and this might provide a forum. Preliminary discussions have been held with Northern Ireland Athletics who will further explore the options.

It is proposed that further discussions be held with the relevant governing bodies and that further consideration be given to the matter.

Regardless of the option decided on, such a launch will require a budget, whilst it may be possible to attract external funding it is necessary to have a degree of certainty around resources in order to incur expenditure to safeguard the event. It is therefore proposed a provisional estimate of £10,000 be allocated in the financial year 2013/14 to support the event. A detailed programme plus costs will be developed in advance of the estimate process.

Frequency of reports

The Committee at its meeting in September 2011 asked that monthly progress reports be submitted. As the work is now underway, Members are asked to consider whether it still wishes to receive monthly updates or whether it would be satisfied with a report every two months.

3 Resource Implications

Financial

It is proposed that a provisional figure of £10,000 be included in the 2012/13 financial estimates to support the launch.

Human Resources

There are no additional human resource implications; work can be progressed within existing resources.

Asset and Other Implications

The refurbishment of the track will safeguard the future of facility and provide improved facilities for users of the track and spectators.

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

Equality considerations will be taken account of in the design of the facility which will be DDA compliant.

When completed it is proposed to have a delivery plan in place which will seek to ensure wide access to the facility.

5 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- 1. Note the report;**
- 2. Offer comments on the issue of the launch of the refurbished facility post completion;**
- 3. Agree to set aside £10,000 to support the launch within the revenue estimates for 2013/14**
- 4. Consider the frequency of the progress reports.”**

The Committee agreed that £10,000 be set aside from the 2013/2014 revenue estimates to support the launch and noted the contents of the report.

Business in the Community Event

The Committee was advised that Business in the Community had requested that the Council partner an event being organised to support the community/voluntary sector as part of a “Pro Bono” week which would be held in the City during the period from 5th till 9th November.

The Director reported that national “Pro Bono” week comprised events across the United Kingdom celebrating the range and impact of Pro Bono activities undertaken by solicitors, barristers and legal executives. Business in the Community promoted the event as part of its Pro Help programme and currently over one hundred professional firms and businesses were committed to providing Pro Bono support to the voluntary and community sectors. The aim of the event was to target community groups which operated as a social enterprise and which would value and benefit from the opportunity to present their services/products to representatives from business. In addition, it also provided an opportunity for businesses to identify how they could support those groups and organisations as part of their corporate responsibility commitment.

The Director pointed out that Business in the Community was keen to provide this event free of charge to community groups and had requested that the Council sponsor the event by providing a venue. The Manager of the Olympia Leisure Centre had confirmed that the centre would be available and was able to accommodate the event on 8th November from approximately 8.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. In addition, Business in the Community had requested that the Council provide lunch for the representatives of the community groups at a cost of approximately £250.

The Director stated that sponsorship of this event would demonstrate the Council’s own corporate responsibility as well as its civic leadership in setting an example to other businesses and provide an opportunity to act on the commitments set out in the Council’s Investment Programme. The projected loss of revenue to the Council, if the event was to be facilitated, would be approximately £412 and, depending on timings, the provision of lunch would cost approximately £250.

After discussion, the Committee agreed that the main hall at Olympia Leisure Centre be made available to the organisation free of charge and that lunch for approximately forty community representatives be provided.

Blanchflower Playing Fields - Christopher Shaw Cup

The Committee was advised that a request had been received from the organisers of the Christopher Shaw Cup to hold a charity football tournament at the Blanchflower Playing Fields during the period from 25th till 27th August. The Director pointed out that the tournament would be dedicated to the memory of Christopher Shaw and this would be the ninth year of the tournament's operation. In addition, the event had developed each year and, since starting in 2003 with four teams, it now had thirty-four teams competing. The event brought together teams from all over Northern Ireland for a weekend of football activities and family fun.

The Director reported that the organisers had requested the free use of the pitches and ancillary facilities at the Blanchflower Playing Fields on 25th, 26th and 27th August. There were no bookings for the site during that time as the football season would not have officially started and therefore there was little chance of any potential loss of revenue. As with all such events, health and safety issues would be addressed through the preparation of an Event Management Plan by the organisers and to the satisfaction of the Council. He stated that, although the Council had been requested to waive the normal charge of booking for the use of the pitches and ancillary facilities over those three days, staff would be required to manage and clean the facility over that period. Staff costs were estimated to be approximately £668 and would be covered by the organisers. He recommended that the Committee grant authority for the organisers to hold a charity football event at Blanchflower Playing Fields during the period from 25th till 27th August, subject to the preparation of an Event Management Plan being agreed between the organisers and the Council and the completion of all legal and statutory requirements.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Attendance at Cremation and Burial Conferences

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1 Relevant Background Information

The Cremation Society of Great Britain is the founder and pioneer of the cremation movement in the United Kingdom. It established the first crematorium in the UK and is a founder member of the International Cremation Federation.

The Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities formed in 1924, represents 90% of all cremation authorities in the United Kingdom and some years ago widened its scope to allow full membership of the FBCA to burial authorities. Belfast City Council is a corporate member.

The Association of Private Crematoria and Cemeteries represents 70% of all private crematoria in the UK. Nearly all new crematoria are being established by the private sector.

The Association of Burial Authorities was formed in 1993 to fulfil the need for a consumer orientated organisation to co-ordinate the activities of burial grounds and provide a tangible link between them and the public.

Belfast City Council is a corporate member of the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management. The Institute is the only organisation within bereavement services to provide fully accredited and externally validated education and training opportunities for cemetery and crematorium staff at all levels. It promotes the development and advancement of its members to facilitate the better provision, operation, administration and management of cemeteries, crematoria and bereavement related services.

The annual Cremation and Burial conference is organised in partnership with the Cremation Society of Great Britain, the Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities, the Association of Private Crematoria and Cemeteries and the Association of Burial Authorities. The Conference will take place from 2 – 4 July 2012 at the Hilton Newcastle, Gateshead.

The annual Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management Learning Convention and Exhibition will take place from 1 – 3 October 2012 at the Forest Pines Hotel, Broughton, North Lincolnshire.

Attendance at these events will allow Councillors and officers to keep up to date with developments in the funeral services industry and make contacts with other authorities and service providers, learning from their expert knowledge and experience. The exhibitions attached to these events offer excellent opportunities to see the range of products and services that are on offer to help officers provide the best possible service to bereaved people.

2 Key Issues

This year's Conference and Convention will continue the on-going co-operation of like-minded organisations and the programmes will contain presentations on important issues to all those in the death care industry. It will be of particular interest to representatives from Cremation and Burial authorities who wish to keep abreast of the latest developments affecting their service and facilities.

Through a series of papers and via the exhibitions information will be provided that delegates can take back and utilize in their workplaces. As the providers of the only cremation service in Northern Ireland and providers/operators of the largest and busiest cemetery in N Ireland, it is important to keep up to date with developments in the industry and changes in legislation. Attendance at these events will enable the Council to do this and to also make contacts with other local authorities and private sector providers to ensure that appropriate standards and working practices are being applied in Belfast. It is also an excellent opportunity to build up a supportive network of colleagues, fellow professionals and suppliers from the contacts they make at these important events.

3 Resource Implications

Financial

The Cremation and Burial Conference and Exhibition fee including three nights accommodation is £475 per delegate. The flights and transport to the venue will be approximately £150 per delegate. Day packages are available at £140 per day and accommodation is £125 per night dinner, bed and breakfast.

The Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management Learning Convention and Exhibition fee including 2 nights accommodation is £495 per delegate. The flights and transport to the venue will be approximately £175 per delegate. Day packages are available at £160 per day and accommodation is £120 per night dinner, bed and breakfast.

Human Resources

A member of staff will be away from site for up to three days at each event; however they will be bringing back updated information and knowledge to provide appropriate briefings.

4 Equality Implications

None.

5 Recommendations

It is recommended that the Chairman and Deputy Chair of Parks & Leisure Committee or their nominees and the Director of Parks & Leisure or his nominee attend the Cremation and Burial Conference and Exhibition from 2 – 4 July 2012 and the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management Learning Convention and Exhibition from 1 – 3 October 2012.”

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Filming at the City Cemetery and Botanic Gardens

The Committee was advised that a request had been received from a production company seeking authority to film within the grounds of the City Cemetery on 26th July and the Botanic Gardens on 31st July as part of a short feature film entitled "Made in Belfast". Filming at the Cemetery would take approximately four hours and it was anticipated that one hour filming would be required at the Botanic Gardens. The Director assured the Members that written agreements with the company would be sought to ensure that any filming taking place within the City Cemetery would be respectful and sensitive to the nature of that location. He requested that the Committee grant approval for the filming to take place in the City Cemetery and Botanic Gardens during July, subject to a legal agreement outlining the restrictions for filming within the City Cemetery.

The Committee granted the approvals sought.

"Grow it Yourself" Request

The Committee was advised that Grow it Yourself Ireland was a not-for-profit organisation which aimed to encourage people to grow their own food through various activities, including community meetings, campaigns promoting school growing, family growing and community garden events. The organisation involved around 12,000 people and 100 community groups holding regular meetings which were open to all and free of charge.

The Director reported that, since September, 2011, Grow it Yourself Ireland's local representatives had been involved in the Council-led Steering Group working to develop the draft "Growing Communities Strategy" as presented to the Members at its meeting on 10th May. The organisation's aims reflected those of the draft strategy and the organisation's activities were likely to directly contribute to implementation of the strategy across the City.

He stated that Grow it Yourself Ireland's local representatives had written to the Council requesting free use of a Council venue in South Belfast for monthly meetings and he summarised the nature and requirements of those meetings as follows:

- each meeting would involve around 10 to 30 members of the community from across North, South and East Belfast (there was currently a separate community group in the West of the City);
- meetings would be held monthly on a Monday evening from 7.00 p.m. to 8.30 p.m., during the period September to May inclusive;
- meetings aimed to "inspire and empower people to grow their own by bringing together community groups to share tips, advice and expertise" and might involve guest speakers, presentations, mentor panels and brainstorming sessions;

- meetings would require no particular facilities apart from heating, lighting, power and access to facilities for making tea/coffee; and
- all meetings would be attended by the organisation's local representatives.

The Director indicated that a bowling pavilion could provide a suitable venue.

Accordingly, he recommended that the Committee grant authority for the free use of such a facility, subject to availability.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

London 2012 Olympic Qualifiers

The Committee was advised that the 2012 London Olympic Games would commence on 27th July, with the closing ceremony on 12th August. In addition, the 2012 Paralympic Opening Ceremony would be held on 29th August and would run until 9th September. For the previous twelve months local athletes had been striving to make qualifying times and selection for the games to represent Great Britain or Ireland in their chosen sport.

The Director reported that five local athletes had qualified to represent Ireland at the upcoming games and that those athletes were competing at the pinnacle of their career and were role models for young aspiring children across the City. He recommended that the Chairman of the Parks and Leisure Committee write to those athletes, and any local athletes who subsequently qualified congratulating them on the qualification and passing on the Council's best wishes for success at the Olympic Games.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

London 2012 Games Maker Bursary

The Committee noted a report in relation to the 2012 Volunteers Bursary on the progress achieved in relation to the London 2012 Volunteers Bursary Scheme.

Spring and Autumn Flower Show - Annual Contribution to Societies

The Committee was advised that the Parks and Cemeteries staff were responsible for organising the Spring Fair in April at the Barnetts Demense and the Annual Autumn Fair during September at the Botanic Gardens. The Director stated that, in previous years, the Committee had granted a small donation to each of the societies involved in the organisation of the events, in recognition of the assistance which they had provided. He recommended, therefore, that a donation of £100 be made to each of the undernoted organisations:

- Friends of Bonsai
- Northern Ireland Daffodil Group
- Belfast and District Beekeepers' Association

- Belfast Winemakers' Circle
- British Cactus and Succulent Society
- Federation of Women's Institutes of Northern Ireland
- Irish Fuchsia and Pelargonium Society
- North of Ireland Dahlia Society
- Northern Ireland Bonsai Society
- Northern Ireland Group of Flower Arrangement Societies
- Northern Ireland Orchid Society
- Northern Ireland Vegetable Association
- Rose Society of Northern Ireland

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Boucher Road Playing Fields - Vital Festival

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1. Relevant Background Information

At the February 2012 Parks and Leisure committee approval was granted to MCD Productions to use the playing fields at Boucher Road for two concerts on 21/22 August for the Vital Festival.

Since approval work has been ongoing to complete the legal agreement and to address the necessary statutory requirements, including entertainment licensing and all operational issues to the council's satisfaction.

2. Key Issues

As it is estimated that each concert will have a capacity of 45,000 plus staff, traffic management and flow of people to and from the concert has been a key aspect of planning the event.

Discussions between the promoters, MCD Productions and council officers has highlighted the potential need to use the car park at Olympia Leisure Centre as a taxi pick up point after the concert and to use the grounds around Strangford playing fields as a contingency for overflow parking.

3. Resource Implications

Finance

The additional requests will not impact on users of either site or result in loss of income to the Council.

Human Resources

No impact. Staff at both sites will be provided by the promoter.

Asset

Measures will be taken by the organiser to protect the grounds and any damage to grounds will be reinstated within specified timescales.

4. **Equality and good relations implications**

None

5. **Recommendations**

It is recommended subject to a legal agreement that committee grant approval for the use of the car park at Olympia Leisure Centre and Strangford playing fields as necessary to support the successful delivery of the Vital Festival.”

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Chairman