

## Parks and Leisure Committee

Thursday, 11th October, 2012

### MEETING OF PARKS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor McCabe (Chairman); and Councillors Kelly, Corr, Humphrey, Rodgers, Haire, Hendron, Mallon, McKee, McNamee, Mac Giolla Mhín, Mullan, Newton, O'Neill, Thompson, Garrett, Hartley, Ó Donnghaile 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.

#### Apology

An apology for inability to attend was reported from Councillor Kyle.

#### Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 13th September 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 October, subject to the omission of the minute under the heading "Laganscape Partnership Scheme Project" which, at the request of Alderman Ekin, had been taken back to the Committee for further consideration.

#### Declarations of Interest

Councillor Mullan declared an interest in Item 3 viz., Windsor Park National Stadium Project.

#### Laganscape Partnership Scheme Project

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

*The Committee considered the undernoted report:*

**“1     Relevant Background Information**

*The purpose of this report is to update Members in respect of the Laganscape Partnership Scheme Project (LPSP) and seek Members approval to allocate human and financial resources in order to complete Council's programme of activities within the scheme and fulfil its requirement to the programme.*

**LPSP is managed by Lagan Valley Regional Park (LVRP) which is a partnership between the Council, Castlereagh Borough Council, Lisburn City Council, Department of Culture Arts and Leisure and Northern Ireland Environment Agency. Historically the Council has provided funding to support LVRP over a number of years and, during this time the Council has benefitted from the positive impact of the work of LVRP.**

**In 2006 LVRP submitted a funding application to Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), seeking funding in respect of the LPSP. The aim of the LPSP was to implement and manage a programme which included the following elements:**

- **interpretation development**
- **species survey and conservation**
- **habitat management and enhancement**
- **volunteer and community participation and**
- **built heritage and urban improvements.**

**In June 2007 LVRP received a letter of offer from HLF confirming that its funding application had been successful and a grant in the sum of £1,617,000, which represented 71% of the total eligible project costs, had been approved.**

**On 24 August 2007 Council signed a partnership agreement consenting to delivery of the LPSP in accordance with the LVRP funding application to HLF and the letter of offer issued by HLF. A copy of the partnership agreement is attached as Appendix 2.**

**The project was to be delivered over a five year period commencing in 2007 with capital projects being delivered in year 1 and projects aimed at engaging users, community groups and schools delivered throughout the duration of the project. A list of the project partners together with their contribution to the project is attached as Appendix 3.**

**In 2007 the Council agreed to invest an in kind contribution to the project in the sum of £50,000 under the theme of habitat management and enhancement, in particular grassland and wetland management within Council sites.**

*Council's Corporate Plan identifies the importance of caring for Belfast's environment by creating a clean, green city now and for the future. The Parks and Leisure Departmental Plan supports the Council's objectives under the themes of environment and people and communities by maintaining, developing and protecting parks and open spaces as well as engaging with local people to create a wide range of community programmes. By participating in the LPSP, Parks and Leisure Department endorsed these aims and objectives through delivery of its programme themes under habitat management and enhancement.*

**2 Key Issues**

*To date Council has evidenced £4,554 of 'in kind' contribution to the project and it is estimated that a further £2,500 in respect of works is in the process of being submitted to LPSP.*

*Given that Council agreed to a total in kind contribution in the sum of £50,000 (over the 5 years), a balance of £42,946 would technically still be outstanding.*

*LPSP has confirmed that the project will be extended to June 2013, which will enable Council officers' sufficient time to complete a proportion of works in respect of habitat management and enhancement within Council sites.*

*It is proposed to carry out grassland and wetland enhancement initiatives on Council sites within LVRP such as Lagan Meadows and Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park. Specific project proposals will be further developed and subject to Committee approval, an implementation plan will be devised for delivery during the period October 2012 to June 2013.*

*Council works closely with the LVRP (to which it makes a financial contribution on an annual basis) and officers have developed a strong working relationship over a period of time.*

*The Laganscape project is now in year 5 (final year). Throughout its lifespan there has been a range of project delays and staff / project management changes. Given that the Council's original commitment for 5 years is due to expire in November 2012, the question has now been raised as to BCC's ongoing level of contribution.*

*At this stage, there is no forward plan or budget beyond this year (and up until June 2013) to support this project. It is proposed that BCC commit to fulfilling an in-kind contribution of £10K for the 12-13 year and that any further, ongoing request would fall outside of the original agreement and would therefore need to be defined in a business case and submitted to the current Parks and Leisure Committee for review and approval in line with future planning / estimates cycles.*

**3 Resource Implications**

**Financial**

*As outlined above, it is proposed that £10K is contributed (by way of 'in-kind' contribution) to Laganscape in the current financial year – this can be provided for from the Parks area south/west budget.*

**Human Resources**

*Officer time will be required for planning, coordinating and delivering project activities.*

**Asset and Other Implications**

*The project activities will enhance a number of Council parks and ongoing maintenance will need to be incorporated into the relevant parks management plans.*

**4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations**

*There are no known associated equality considerations associated with this project.*

**5 Recommendations**

*It is recommended that the Committee:*

- *Note the contents of this update report;*
- *Agree that a contribution of £10K 'in-kind' be made to the project for this final year of the original agreement in order to fulfil our obligation to the programme;*
- *Agree that any further request for financial or 'in-kind' support would be subject to a more detailed proposal from Laganscape being*

***submitted to the Parks and Leisure Committee  
for review and agreement in line with current  
planning and estimates processes.”***

*The Committee adopted the recommendations.”*

After discussion, the Committee agreed that a report in relation to the Scheme be submitted to the meeting of the Committee scheduled to be held on 15th November.

#### **Windsor Park National Stadium Project**

The Committee was reminded that the Irish Football Association was seeking views on its Stadium Project. The proposed development involved the upgrading of the existing stadium to provide an 18,000 seated capacity National Football Stadium. In this regard, the Democratic Services Officer reported that correspondence had been received from Mr. G. Wilson, Head of Marketing and Communications, Irish Football Association, inviting Members of the Council to meet with the Stadium Design Team at the organisation's Windsor Avenue headquarters in order to present the project proposals and gain feedback thereon. Accordingly, the Director recommended that, due to the impact which the development would have on the City, the Committee accept the invitation from the Irish Football Association and that all Members of the Council be invited to attend.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

#### **Support for Sport – Individual Grant and Hospitality Applications**

The Committee noted a schedule of Support for Sport applications in relation to hospitality which had been approved by the Director of Parks and Leisure in accordance with the authority delegated to him. In addition, the Committee approved also the recommendations for the award of individual grants as outlined below and granted delegated authority to the Director to deal with future applications for individual grants. The Director undertook to submit to a future meeting a report in relation to the allocation of funding in respect of the various areas of the City:

Name	Sport	Recommendation
Cathy McLean	Netball	£500
Fionnuala Toner	Netball	£500
Oonagh McCullough	Netball	£500
Louise McKeown	Netball	£500
Cheryl Wilson	Netball	£500

Name	Sport	Recommendation
Gemma Gibney	Netball	£500
Marie Toner	Netball	£500
Niamh Cooper	Netball	£500
Frances Campbell	Netball	£500
Noleen Lennon	Netball	£500
Caroline O'Hanlon	Netball	£500
Hannah Irvine	Netball	£500
Lisa McCaffrey	Netball	£500
Thomas Abraham	Squash	£250
Emma McGuigan	Squash	£250
Jenny Drennan	Swimming	£500
Michael Watt Kane	Squash	£250
Joshua McVeigh	Squash	£250
Daniel Mayhew	Judo	£250
Peter Hawkins	Cycling	£1,000
David McCann	Cycling	£1,000
Ellie McVeigh	Squash	£500
Edward McGinley	Athletics	£1,000
Emma Jane Sharkey	Triathlon	£1,000
Paul Pollock	Athletics	£1,000
Gladys Ganiel	Athletics	£1,000
James Reid	Judo	£250

Club/Organisation	Title of event	Recommendation
St. Paul's GAC	Northern Bank Ulster Minor Club Football Tournament 2012	Do Not Recommend. Event does not meet the 50+ criteria from outside NI
Belfast Harlequins RFC	5 All-Ireland league events during 2012/13 season	Do Not Recommend. Event does not meet the 50+ criteria from outside NI
<b>Total Allocated to date: £23,195</b>		<b>Total Allocated October 2012: £0</b>

#### Update on the Development of a Boxing Strategy

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

##### **“1. Relevant Background Information**

Members will be aware that we are currently developing a boxing strategy for the city in partnership with Co Antrim Boxing, Ulster Boxing Council (UBC), Sport Northern Ireland (SNI) and the Irish Amateur Boxing Association (IABA).

The Committee agreed the proposed approach at its meeting in March 2012 and since then the steering group has been established and has met on four occasions.

The first stage of the process was the undertaking of a baseline assessment and the key findings from this was brought to the Committee meeting in June 2012.

##### **2. Key Issues**

The steering committee have now produced a draft Boxing Strategy for Belfast 2012-22. The strategy includes an examination of the strategic context and an analysis of several pieces of work that have been undertaken to assess the need within boxing. This includes a survey of clubs undertaken by UBC around facilities and the baseline assessment undertaken as part of this process. This provided us with information on a range of issues including membership, coaches and volunteers, governance structures, funding, facilities and equipment.

We have used this information to identify need across the city and common issues that are facing boxing clubs. These include:

- Many clubs have facilities that are not fit for purpose and are not large enough for them to expand their membership.
- Although there is a growing interest in female boxing the majority of clubs do not have female changing facilities and therefore cannot expand female membership.
- Although the majority of coaches do have formal coaching qualifications a programme of coach development is required. This will create a high standard of coaching in the future which is necessary if boxing is to continue to enjoy success at international competition level.
- Boxing clubs do not have paid staff and depend on volunteers. The standard of training for volunteers varies greatly across clubs and some clubs have difficulty recruiting new volunteers.
- Governance and management varies across clubs and work is needed to ensure a high level of governance and management across all clubs.
- Not all clubs have a club development plan. There is interest among clubs in working towards Clubmark which will require them to have a current and active plan.
- The majority of clubs are based in areas of social deprivation and operate on very small annual budgets. They would benefit with help to source funding.

### Action Plans

Based on the assessment of need and the issues identified, actions plans were developed around four strands:

- Pathways (boxers, coaches and officials)
- Coach education and development
- Club support and development
- Governance

These vary from the strands that were originally stated within the proposed approach to the development of this strategy, which were (management/governance, sports development and capital investment). However these are the strategic challenges that are used in the IABA's strategic plan and are used by both UBC and Co Antrim Boxing in their plans and for this reason we are suggesting using them to ensure alignment.

The action plans are included as section 7 of the strategy and include actions around:

- increasing participation;
- coach, volunteers and officials training and development;
- supporting club development; and
- improving governance.

Although a lack of adequate facilities and equipment were seen as a major challenge to boxing clubs the steering group took into account the Sport Northern Ireland Boxing Investment Programme. This programme will aim to invest approx £3m into boxing clubs throughout Northern Ireland. Sport NI is currently developing the process for allocating the funding but it is anticipated that £232,000 will be allocated in 2012-13 for equipment with the remainder being allocated for capital projects in 2013-14 and 2014-15. Funds for capital projects will be awarded as a result of an application process with applications being assessed against criteria. Boxing clubs within Belfast will be encouraged to apply for support from this programme. It is likely that Sport NI will fund 75% of capital projects.

#### Delivery and Finance

It is proposed therefore that the implementation of this strategy in its first phase, 2013-16, will concentrate on issues around increasing participation, coach and volunteer development, club development and improving governance.

To facilitate delivery of the actions it is proposed that two additional sports development officers will be created on a fixed term basis for three years. It is proposed that their primary focus will be boxing but that they will be required to provide support in other areas as capacity allows. These will be based in the Leisure Development Unit and be managed by the Leisure Development Manager. The full job description and scale of post is to be determined but based on current scales it is likely to be in the region of SO2.

On appointment the Sport Development Officers will be responsible for developing a programme of activities under the four streams of the action plan.

We estimate that the budget required for the implementation of the strategy to be in the region of £200,000 per year. The following table breaks this down but it should be noted that these are estimated figures and that they may be change when the detailed programme of activities are developed.

Strategic challenges action plans	Estimated budget per year
<b>Pathways (boxers, coaches and officials)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for Belfast based events</li> <li>• Activities to promote participation</li> <li>• Training for ring officials</li> <li>• Support for a schools programme</li> </ul>	£15,000 £10,000 £2,000 £10,000
<b>Coach Education and development</b>	£20,000
<b>Club support and development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sports Development Officers (2)</li> <li>• Provide start up funding support for development of new clubs (via an increase to the kick start funding element of Support for Sport)</li> <li>• Development of a volunteer toolkit</li> <li>• Deliver of a good relations training programme</li> </ul>	£75,000 £20,000  £10,000 £10,000
<b>Governance</b>	£20,000
<b>Total for delivery of action plans</b>	<b>£192,000</b>

It is also suggested that in Year 1 a piece of work be undertaken to explore the potential to use the Council's assets to give clubs security of tenure and to deliver programme of activities. It is anticipated that this will cost in the region of £10-15,000.

Sport NI has recently provided the funding for the IABA to appoint a Club Development Manager on a fixed term post to March 2015. The Club Development Manager's role will be to work with key partners to improve boxing by developing quality, child friendly sports clubs in Northern Ireland. Their responsibilities will include supporting boxing clubs to source additional funding and developing a club development plan and a range of templates and resources to support clubs. The Belfast based officers will work with this person to ensure there is no duplication in work and to maximise resources.

#### Monitoring and review

To monitor progress against the actions plans indicators have been developed and where possible will be reported on an annual basis. We would also propose that a comprehensive strategic review be undertaken in 2016 to consider how successful the approach taken has been and to agree the next phase of actions. This strategic review would include a repeat of the baseline assessment that was undertaken to inform this strategy. The purpose of the baseline will be to measure the impact of the delivery of the action plan and to provide evidence around the need and priorities for the next phase.

We are currently undertaking some further analysis of the baseline information and consulting with the steering group members to enable us to develop realistic targets for the performance indicators outlined in section 9 for the next 3 years.

**Next steps**

Following committee approval of the draft strategy a 12 week period of public consultation will take place on it. It is anticipated that the public consultation will commence on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2012 and close on Friday 25th January 2013. As part of the public consultation a meeting will be held to which all the boxing clubs in Belfast will be invited to obtain their views. A consultation questionnaire will be developed and will be downloadable from the Council's website.

Following the period of consultation the responses will be collated and the draft strategy amended. A summary of the consultation responses and the final strategy will be brought to the committee meeting in March 2013 and following Council approval it will be launched.

**3. Resource Implications**

**Financial**

At this stage no financial resources attached to the development of the strategy and resources to cover meetings etc are included within the department's development budget.

The cost of the implementation of the strategy is estimated to be £200,000 per year for three years and at this stage requires to be agreed in principle subject to being considered by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee as part of the estimate and rate setting process over the next 3 years.

**Human Resources**

Officer time on an ongoing basis.

**Asset and other Implications**

None at this stage.

**4. Equality and good relations implications**

The development of the strategy will be subject to ongoing equality screening.

## **5. Recommendations**

**The Committee is asked to:**

- 1. agree the draft strategy subject to any comments, amendments or inputs from Members;**
- 2. agree in principle that £200,000 per year be allocated to the implementation of the strategy over the period 2013-16 subject to consideration by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee as part of the estimating and rate setting process over the next 3 years.**
- 3. subject to committee approval, note that a 12 week period of public consultation will take place on the draft strategy;**
- 4. subject to committee approval, agree that the Council's vetting and selection process is followed to explore the creation and recruitment of two Sports Development Officers.”**

After discussion, it was

Moved by Alderman Rodgers,  
Seconded by Councillor Thompson,

That the Committee agrees to defer consideration of draft strategy to enable further information in relation to the financial implications to be obtained.

### **Amendment**

Proposed by Councillor O'Neill,  
Seconded by Councillor Mac Giolla Mhín,

That the Committee agrees to adopt the recommendations contained within the report.

On a vote by show of hands twelve Members voted for the amendment and seven against and it was accordingly declared carried.

The amendment was thereupon put to the meeting as the substantive motion when twelve Members voted for and seven against and it was accordingly declared carried.

**Castle Catering Contract**

The Committee considered a report in relation to the existing catering contract with Castle Catering in respect of the Malone House and the Belfast Castle.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to terminate the contract with the company, subject to an interim arrangement for a maximum of one year being negotiated by the Director of Parks and Leisure. This interim arrangement would be for the shortest time possible and would be reviewed on a quarterly basis. In addition, the Committee granted authority to initiate a tendering exercise in relation to the provision of catering services at both venues and noted that the tenders would be evaluated against criteria based on both cost and quality and that, in accordance with the authority delegated to him, the Director would accept the most economically advantageous tender submitted.

**Avoniel Leisure Centre - Swimming Pool**

The Director reported that the swimming pool at the Avoniel Leisure Centre had been losing water for a number of years but that this had been carefully managed by staff at the centre. However, during August, the leakage had escalated and the Council's Facilities Management Unit had recommended that the bottom area of the pool be drained and excavation works carried out to ascertain the extent of the problem. Accordingly, the pool had been closed on 20th August and all staff and customers notified. He explained that exploratory works had been undertaken but that the main source of the leak had not yet been discovered and investigations were ongoing. The next phase of the repair works was then outlined to the Members and, based on the current difficulties which had been uncovered, the Facilities Management Unit anticipated that the pool could remain closed until at least the end of March, 2013.

The Committee noted that a report in respect of the cost of repairs would be submitted to a future meeting and that the Department was consulting users to ascertain whether additional classes and activities could be temporarily put in place. In addition, the Committee agreed that monthly update reports in relation to the closure of the facility be submitted.

**Community Capital Programme –  
Relationship with Sport Northern Ireland**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**"1 Relevant Background Information**

**The Committee will recall that it has, between December 2010 and August 2012, received a series of reports regarding the Community Capital Programme which is a funding scheme administered by Sport NI. The programme was targeted at small groups, clubs and organisations and was encouraged them to apply for funding of up to a maximum grant of £245,000 for projects which would encourage greater participation. Council's and other public authorities were ineligible to apply.**

A report was presented to Committee in December 2010 regarding several requests from sporting clubs / groups who had applied to Sport NI for the funding. The Committee was initially informed that there had been 4 applications in respect of Council land; these were Marrowbone millennium Park; Mountain Bike Trail at Barnett's Demesne; Hammer Open Space and North Queen Street Playground. The North Queen Street Playground Application was subsequently not progressed by Sport NI. A subsequent report was brought in January 2011, this set out some further details and asked the committee to support the projects in principle subject to further discussions.

Sport NI dealt directly with the applicants and during the process of assessing their applications provided them with key milestones at which they would assess their state of readiness to deliver the schemes for which they had applied for funding.

In August 2011 a report to Committee highlighted that Sport NI had three main issues that it needed addressed to enable them to assess the applicants state of readiness, these were:

1. Security of tenure;
2. Short fall funding; and
3. Planning approval was required (if necessary)

At this time the applicants asked the Council to assist them with the security of tenure of the sites in question. The remaining issues relating planning consent, design, funding etc were matters for the applicants to address. The Committee agreed at the time to enter into an appropriate legal agreement with the sporting clubs and groups to enable them to draw down the funding providing the issues regarding statutory approvals and funding were addressed.

Following representation on behalf of some of the applicants, a report was brought to the November 2012 meeting of the Committee and subsequently to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. It was agreed that a total of £375,000 would be set aside to provide financial support to the three applicants to enable them to meet some or all of the short fall in the funding.

In the interim Council Officers continued to meet with the applicants and Sport NI as necessary to address the issue around security of tenure. The outcome of this was that the council entered into lease arrangements in respect of the Hammer Open Space and the Marrowbone Millennium Park and a management agreement in respect of the Mountain Bike Trail at

Barnett's Demesne. In addition, Sport NI required a Deed of Dedication which tied the Council to the asset and the facility in the event that the applicant was unable to deliver the facility for the required 10 year period.

In January 2012 the Council was made aware that there was a further application which had been on hold by sport NI and which had now been activated, this related to Shore Road playing fields, a report was brought forward in February 2012 and again in August 2012 on this. In May 2012, Officers became aware of another application in respect of Cairn Lodge Boxing Club. In both cases, security of tenure was required in the form of a lease and a deed of dedication. However, in both cases whilst the model used in relation to the previous applications would have been generally applicable, there was insufficient time to put the agreements in place within the deadline set by Sport NI. Both of these applications were subsequently unsuccessful in drawing down funding. Not just because of the security of tenure issue but because of match funding and planning consent issues.

Members are also asked to note that the Marrowbone project was also unsuccessful owing to the applicant being unable to convince Sport NI regarding match funding and the absence of planning approval.

The two projects at the Hammer Open Space and the Mountain Bike Trail are still being progressed although there has still been no letter of offer from Sport NI.

In conclusion, the scenario as outlined has been less than satisfactory and the purpose of this report is to seek to ensure that these types of situation do not arise in the future.

## **2 Key Issues**

This scenario raises a number of important issues:

- 1. Applications for funding can be made in respect of Council land without the prior knowledge or consent of the Council;**
- 2. Sport NI's relationship is with the applicant and there is an uneasiness within it about formally liaising with the Council on matters relating to an individual application;**
- 3. At times the Council may be unaware of the applicants requirements until quite late in the process which**

results in inadequate time to consider the options for support objectively, to protect its interests and to meet the actual requirements of the funding body. For example the discussions and drafting of legal agreements can take months to complete;

4. The implications for the Council can change throughout the process as the capacity of the applicant is open to further scrutiny. For example the ability of the applicant to meet any financial shortfall. Their ability to appoint, manage and pay for external design team consultants to undertake the necessary works to obtain planning consent and to prepare detailed drawings and documentation necessary for tender. These can be technically demanding and costly exercises and at times they are undertaken by groups and clubs with ambition and aspiration but lacking in the necessary resources to deliver them.

To ensure that the Council is better placed to deal with such situations in the future the following measures are proposed:

- The Council, through the Director of Parks and Leisure, write to the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure and Sport NI outlining the difficulties with the current approach and requiring that a process be developed to ensure and that when an application is received from a group and the asset belongs to the Council that the Council is notified of the application. Sport NI should ensure that a copy of the application should be forwarded to the Council together with the details of the funding requirement and the associated terms and conditions. Sport NI should be required to outline the assessment process for the application and timeline including key milestones.
- In addition it is further proposed that the Council inform the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and Sport NI that it requires a formal liaison mechanism to be established to consider any applications and the implications for the Council. This would also serve to monitor progress in line with the requirements of both the funding body and the Council. It would also allow Sport NI and the Council to consider the capacity of the group to take the project forward and how the project should be moved forward from a technical point of view. This would inform the Council's decisions on the level of support to give to individual applicants.

### **3 Resource Implications**

#### **Financial**

**There are no financial implications.**

#### **Human Resources**

**There are no additional human resource implications.**

#### **Asset and Other Implications**

**There is no doubt that the securing of external funding can support the delivery of improved service provision in local areas, however, the report has highlighted that the situation can place the Council in a difficult position and can result in the loss of assets for a period of time. In addition, the situation can result in projects requiring Council financial support and this could impact on other projects already in the system.**

### **4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations**

**There are no equality implications.**

### **5 Recommendations**

**The Committee is asked to provide guidance to the Director on the issues raised and to agree to write to the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and Sport NI in the terms outlined in the report.”**

After discussion, the Committee authorised the Director of Parks and Leisure to write to the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and Sport Northern Ireland as outlined within the report and agreed also to seek a meeting with the Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure, Ms. C. Ni Chuilín, in order to discuss the issues outlined therein.

#### **Pitches Strategy**

(Mr. S. Walker, Departmental Portfolio Programme Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee received a report and a presentation in relation to the progress which had been achieved in respect of the delivery of the physical element of the Council's Pitches Strategy.

The Committee noted the revisions to the site locations and the planning for delivery of the capital build projects.

**Scale of Charges for Parks and Leisure Services 2013/2014**

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

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of a report on the Scale of Charges for the 2013/2014 financial year to enable it to be considered at its meeting scheduled to be held on 15th November.

**Procurement of Supplies and Services**

The Director of Parks and Leisure sought and was granted authority to instigate tendering exercises in relation to the undernoted items:

<b><u>Tender</u></b>	<b><u>Potential Annual Costs/Revenue</u></b>
Supply and Installation of Hanging Baskets	£24,000 per year
Control of Invasive Species in various parks locations	£33,000 per year
Supply and Delivery of Bedding Plants for various parks locations	£80,000 per year
Supply and Delivery of Animal Feed to the Belfast Zoo	£30,000 per year
Provision of a Catering Franchise at the Belfast Zoo	£50,000 revenue per year
Supply and Delivery of Frozen Fish at the Belfast Zoo	£28,000 per year
Supply, Delivery and Installation of Signage for various Parks and Leisure sites	£16,000 per year
Provision of Children's Entertainment as part of the Departmental Events Programme	£30,000 per year
Provision of a Catering Service at the Stables Coffee Shop at the Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park	£12,000 revenue per year
Supply and Delivery of Play Equipment for various playground locations	£400,000 per year

The Committee noted that all tenders would be evaluated on both cost and quality and that contracts would be awarded by the Director, in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation, for a period of three years, to the most economically advantageous tenders submitted.

### **Bereavement Administration**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **“1 Relevant Background Information”**

In March 2010 the Parks and Leisure committee approved the recommendations of the review of Bereavement Services administration which examined the working patterns of the cemetery clerks and other Bereavement administration staff with regard to stabilising the unit, making it more fit for purpose, clarifying the roles of the cemetery clerks and delivering a more customer focused service in relation to cover at lunchtimes and on Saturdays.

#### **2 Key Issues**

The recommendations of the review have now been implemented for over two years and overall have been successful in providing a high level of service to the bereaved and provided adequate cover for the service over the four sites.

Currently three of the part time posts are vacant (one in Dundonald and two at the City Cemetery) and management have taken the opportunity to review the current gaps in cover within the service especially within City Hall, City Cemetery and Roselawn.

The requirements of each site have been assessed and currently administrative cover is provided at Dundonald Cemetery Monday to Friday 8.30am – 4.30pm and Saturday 8.30am-12.30pm i.e. 37 hours per week. There were 148 burials at Dundonald Cemetery for 2011 and 80% of these took place between 10am and 2pm.

It is therefore proposed that administrative cover for Dundonald is provided Monday to Friday from 10am – 2pm and from Saturday 9.30am to 12.30pm. This will free up 18 hours per week to be reallocated to provide support at the busier sites i.e. City and Roselawn. It is also proposed that burials will be facilitated at Dundonald during these hours and administrative support will be on site for funerals.

The Cemeteries and Crematorium Manager and the Manager of Bereavement Administration have been consulted in relation to this proposal to ensure the needs of the bereaved have been fully provided. In relation to Customer queries at the site it will still be facilitated via staff at City Hall when there is no administrative cover at the site.

Management are looking at arrangements on the site for dealing with Customers queries that cannot be resolved by the operational staff at the site. For example a direct-line available for customer use as well as notices stating the central administration phone line for the City Hall or the mobile number of the Community Park Supervisor for the site or the Cemeteries/Crematorium Manager.

### **3 Resource Implications**

#### **Finances**

There are no financial implication of this report however this proposal will free up 18 hours which can be used alongside the vacant posts to reschedule the working patterns to provide the cover required at all 4 sites.

#### **Human Resources**

The Business Manager will continue to consult with those staff affected by this proposed change in working patterns. The proposal will be implemented in accordance with all HR policies and procedures and the operation of the new arrangement reviewed within the year.

### **4 Recommendations**

The Committee is asked to agree to the proposal that:

- Administrative cover at Dundonald Cemetery is provided Monday to Friday 10-2pm and Saturday 9.30-12.30pm and that burials can only take place during these time slots.
- That one part time vacant post can be filled at Dundonald Cemetery as per the proposed rota and a second part time post is recruited as a 'floater' to provide cover for the current gaps identified at the busier sites of Roselawn and the City Cemetery. This arrangement will be reviewed within the year and any issues reported back to committee."

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations and agreed that a report be submitted after a period of six months on the operation of the arrangements. In addition, the Director undertook to submit a report to a future meeting in relation to staff cover at the City Cemetery.

### Falls Park and City Cemetery Master Plan

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **“1 Relevant Background Information**

**A report was presented to Committee in April 2012 outlining the development of a Master Plan for Falls Park and City Cemetery.**

**The plan has been developed through a number of workshops and meetings involving Friends of Falls Park and with key stakeholders to identify priorities for the site.**

**The Friends of Falls Park is a group of people dedicated to continuously improving Falls Park and the surrounding area for the benefit of the local community.**

**The proposals identified have been classified as short term, medium term and long term projects. Short term refers to 1-2 years, medium term is 3-5 years and long term is 5 years+.**

#### **2 Key Issues**

**Clearly the Master Plan has to be seen in the context of the capacity required to deliver the Investment Programme and the projects that are emerging as part of that from the Area Working Groups.**

**Contained within the Master Plan are a number of proposals including the following:**

##### **Short Term**

- **Development of a Community Garden.** This is proceeding with a number of design options identified. Landscape designs are being prepared in consultation with local community representatives. The completion date of the community garden will be March 2013. £35,000 has been approved by Parks and Leisure committee for this scheme.
- **Development of Allotments in Falls Park adjacent to Whiterock Leisure Centre.** An environmental survey for the allotments has been commissioned and Officers have received a report indicating that remedial works will be required to ensure the area is safe to grow fruit and vegetables. This will involve a process to ‘cap’ the proposed area by creating a barrier of crushed stone or

a geo-textile and then infilling with approved topsoil. This will cost in the region of £200,000 including ancillary works, pathways, water connections etc.

- Installation of new 3G pitch and changing rooms. This is proceeding as part of the Pitches Strategy with planning application due to be submitted in February 2013.
- Installation of Outdoor Gym in Falls Park. Funding for this was agreed at November 2011 Parks & Leisure Committee in partnership with PHA. This is proceeding with consultations completed, designs completed and work due to start on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2012.
- Development of a Partnership between Belfast City Council and the Commonwealth War Graves commission to develop tourism and cultural history of the cemetery. Contact is continuing on a regular basis with key stakeholders involved in the process and a separate report will be brought to the Committee on this issue in due course.

#### Medium Term

- Relocation of Falls Park and the City Cemetery Service Yards.

The City Cemetery depot is not fit for purpose and it is proposed to combine City Cemetery and Falls Parks depots into one agreed location to enable efficient management of both sites. The indicative cost would be in the region of £750,000. This is a capital project and needs to be considered not only in the context of the Master Plan but also in the context of the overall staff accommodation needs within the Council. It is further proposed that interim arrangements for staff accommodation are investigated to address the immediate need.

#### Long Term

- Development of Foxes Lodge. Approval was sought and given by Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in August 2012 for a development brief for Foxes Lodge in City Cemetery. Officers will be in receipt of business proposals in due course and a further updated report will be brought to committee in early 2013.

- Upgrade of Gate Lodge at entrance to Falls Park. Contained within the Master plan is a plan to renovate the Gate lodge and develop it into a café and or visitors centre. Renovation of the building which has been extensively damaged is estimated to cost in the region of £650,000.

The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 22nd June, 2012 agreed that the Falls Master Plan was one of a number of schemes that should be progressed to Strategic Outline Case stage. This would allow for it and the schemes contained within to be considered by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for inclusion in the uncommitted section of the Capital Programme. Officers will now progress the development of the Strategic Outline Case.

### **3 Resource Implications**

Finance for installation of the community garden, installation of the 3G pitch and installation of the outdoor gym has been approved by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

On completion of the Strategic Outline Case for the works associated with the delivery of the Master Plan it will be referred to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration and inclusion of schemes in the uncommitted section of the capital project. These would be delivered once prioritised for funding in the normal way.

### **4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations**

There are no equality or good relations considerations.

### **5 Recommendations**

Members are asked to note the contents of the Master Plan and the progress made to date with the Outdoor Gym, pitch and changing accommodation.

Members are also asked to note that the Strategic Outline Case for the Falls Master Plan will be developed for consideration by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for inclusion of schemes within the Capital Programme.”

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

### Drinking Fountains in Belfast Parks

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **“1 Relevant Background Information”**

The Green Flag standard encourages the provision of drinking fountains near sports facilities and playgrounds. In a wider context, there is a current trend for the promotion and provision of external drinking fountains to reduce plastic water bottle consumption. The benefits of free potable water include improved user health and wellbeing. Water fountains may also lead to improved park user satisfaction and further improve the public perception of public parks.

The proposed drinking fountain sites should consider the location of proposed and existing cycle routes, sports pitches, multi-use games areas, outdoor gyms and play areas. The location of existing park buildings and the existing mains water routes should also be considered, as nearby access to such will dramatically reduce potential cost and timescales of fountain installation.

Under the Planning (General Development) Order (Northern Ireland) 1993, Schedule 12 Development by District Councils; public drinking fountains are deemed to be permitted development and would not require planning approval.

#### **2 Key Issues**

##### Site requirements

- Easily accessible, hard surface access path and hard standing area for user
- Unit design appropriate to context, e.g. does not create an adverse visual impact in a park
- Site with natural surveillance, to deter vandalism

##### Potential refurbishments

- Repair of existing drinking fountains, replace any old lead pipe connections to remove associated lead pollution threat
- Historic fountains may be listed and require historic building consent for refurbishment
- In addition to the general issues of aesthetics and function, the unit design should consider;
- Maintenance issues – easily maintained, vandal resistant, corrosion proof, easy access to plumbing

- Hygiene - easily cleaned, consider covered spout (to prevent mouth touching it), and design to deter contamination.
- Water quality improvement - inbuilt water filter
- Ability to turn off water supply in winter
- Speed of water flow/fill rate
- Accessibility - consider accessibility for all potential users, e.g. children, wheelchair users
- Other/extra functional options, e.g. outdoor bottle stations, pet level water supply
- Sustainable design and impact on the environment (unit life cycle analysis)
- Robust/vandal resistant
- Site specific design issues, should the unit match other 'furniture' in the park, become a feature/customised design or have a single 'branded' design to be used citywide.

The success of the project will be determined by the correct installation of the appropriate units, in the correct location, maintained to a high standard, combined with good user uptake. The provision of drinking fountains could potentially increase Green Flag scores.

### **3 Resource Implications**

#### **Financial**

The estimated cost of drinking fountain unit and installation, located adjacent to mains water supply, is £2500-£4000. The estimated annual cost of maintenance, per drinking fountain unit is £1000-£2000.

Each fountain would also require an area of hard standing and potentially an access path, further to the cost of the fountain installation estimate.

The total cost of four pilot sites would be in the region of £16,000. This would be provided for in current grounds maintenance budgets.

#### **Human Resources**

It is estimated that each fountain would require one inspection visit, every 2 days, plus any required repair work. Testing and sampling may also be required. Additional work is required to establish resource requirements however it is anticipated this will be provided within existing budgets.

### Asset and Other Implications

#### Potential risks

The potential provision of drinking water fountains may incur the following risks;

#### *Health and safety*

- Water borne disease
- Potential contamination of water supply/outlet – a pilot scheme elsewhere noted that fountains which dispense water from a hidden spout below and not above are less likely to be contaminated. Note this design would favour filling of bottles, rather than ‘stooping and drinking’.

#### *No/low uptake of use*

- Potential poor public perception may result in no/low uptake of use
- Poor maintenance, unsightly/unkempt appearance, e.g. traces of mould, algae etc. may detract from perception of park and also perception of water quality
- Many amateur sportspeople supply their own drinks

#### *Vandalism*

- To fountain structure and setting

#### *Miscellaneous*

- Water wastage due to pipe bursts etc. and improper use of fountains
- Spills and potential slip hazard
- Winter freeze

#### *Public liability*

- BCC liability for such potential hazards

## **4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations**

None

## **5 Recommendations**

Committee is asked to agree:

- i) To a pilot scheme in four sites in the city to test drinking fountain units, user reaction, maintenance issues etc;
- ii) The potential pilots sites are Dunville Park, Woodvale Park, Ormeau Park, Sir Thomas & Lady Dixon Park which is aligned to existing Green Flag sites and current investment programme;
- ii) A full audit of potential sites and the repair or reconnection of existing drinking fountains which are currently unused, if feasible; and
- iii) To promote the use of drinking fountains through the installation of signs and marking drinking fountains of park maps and on websites to help people o find and use fountains.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

#### **Cliftonville Playing Fields - Key Holding Arrangements**

The Committee was advised that a request had been received from the Ardoyle Kickham's and the Pearse's Gaelic Athletic Clubs in relation to key holding arrangements for the Cliftonville Playing Fields and its ancillary facilities. The Assistant Director reported that both clubs used the playing fields as their home venue for match fixtures and had been conducting training sessions there when the pitch was not closed for renovation works.

She pointed out that both clubs met periodically with Council officers regarding use of the site and, during those meetings, had expressed an interest in becoming key holders for the entrance gate to the playing fields and its toilet facilities. Those toilet facilities were alarmed and secured separately from the main changing building and it was on that basis that the request could be considered. Currently, when a member of staff was available to work the shift, the site was booked through the Council's Outdoor Leisure Unit. However, not all bookings, particularly those received at the last minute, could always be accommodated. She stated that both clubs had explained to the Department that toilet facilities were required under health and safety guidelines but there was no requirement for dressing rooms for training sessions. The arrangement would enable both clubs to train at the site without the Department having to incur staff overtime costs. Match fixtures organised by the Gaelic Athletic Association would still require full use of the facilities and normal booking arrangements would apply.

The Assistant Director stressed that all usage, matches and training sessions would required to be booked through the Outdoor Leisure Unit and that a cost without changing facilities would be applied. This would ensure that:

- (i) there were no fixture clashes between the clubs or any other user;
- (ii) the income which the site generated from usage was protected;

- (iii) the Parks Manager could obtain usage figures to assist with the appropriate management and maintenance of the site and the grass pitch; and
- (iv) the Outdoor Leisure Unit could effectively manage all requests for usage.

She pointed out that an appropriate legal agreement, similar to that for the "Out of Hours" use at the Council's leisure centres, would be prepared by the Assistant Chief Executive/Town Solicitor and that the document would outline the terms and conditions of the key holding arrangements and protect the Council in relation to all operational and health and safety implications. Training would be required in relation to the use of the toilet facilities and the opening and closing of the site. Usage would still take place within the site's normal hours of operation. She recommended that the Committee grant authority for the Ardoyne Kickham's and Pearse's Gaelic Athletic Clubs to have key handling responsibilities for access to the Cliftonville Playing Fields and toilet facilities, subject to satisfactory terms being agreed by the Director of Parks and Leisure and on the condition that:

- both clubs managed all operational and health and safety issues to the Council's satisfaction;
- the completion of an appropriate agreement to be prepared by the Assistant Chief Executive/Town Solicitor; and
- prior to actual usage, all bookings be arranged with the Outdoor Leisure Unit.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

**Connswater Community Greenway –  
Community Garden at Avoniel Leisure Centre**

The Assistant Director reported that, during June, the Department had launched, in partnership with the Belfast Healthy Cities, the Public Health Agency and the Belfast Health Development Unit, the draft Growing Communities Strategy. That Strategy aimed to ensure that there were greater opportunities for Belfast residents to participate in community growing and to identify and support the development of sustainable growing sites. She reminded the Committee that the Connswater Community Greenway Scheme was a £32 million investment within the east of the City, which had been developed by the East Belfast Partnership Board and funded by the Big Lottery Fund, the Council, the Rivers Agency, the Department for Agriculture and Rural Development and the Department for Social Development. Since the initial proposals for the Greenway had been developed, a key element of the project had been the proposal for the provision of a number of community gardens along the route of the Greenway, which could be used by local community groups.

She reported that, since March, officers from the Parks and Leisure Department had had a series of meetings with the Connswater Community Greenway team in order to discuss the delivery of those community gardens. The team had sought and had received expressions of interest in respect of the development and operation of the gardens from various community groups, including the East Belfast Counselling Services, the East Belfast Mission, the Lower Castlereagh Community Group, the Bloomfield Community Association and the Oasis Caring in Action. Accordingly, the Connswater Community Greenway team had submitted a request for approval to use vacant land within the grounds of the Avoniel Leisure Centre in order to pilot a community gardens scheme.

She pointed out that the following two options for the project had been explored:

**Option 1**

This option involved working with the community as much as possible in relation to the design, construction and planting of the garden with the assistance of Council officers, the Community Greenway team, the community organisations and appropriate contractors. It was proposed that this approach could:

- develop local community skills in areas such as garden construction and horticulture;
- ensure inclusiveness and local ownership of the project;
- ensure community engagement with the Connswater Community Greenway; and
- allow for lower installations costs.

**Option 2**

This option involved Council officers, the Community Greenway team and the community organisations in the design and planting of the community garden, with appropriate contractors carrying out the majority of the required construction work. It was likely that this approach would provide less opportunity for community engagement, skills development and ownership, with higher construction costs, but may result in a greater lifespan for the garden with a lower maintenance requirement.

The Assistant Director pointed out that, in order to assess the level of community commitment and to build confidence, a pilot approach was considered to be appropriate and, given that community engagement was essential to ensuring that the site was maintained to an appropriate standard and to prove that the scheme was viable, Option 1 would be the preferred option.

She reported that officers had carried out a desktop contamination survey of the disused gravel pitch and that the ground was not suitable for planting, therefore, the majority of cultivation associated with either option would be in raised beds. For either option it was proposed that the majority of the work would be sourced from external contractors within existing contracts and quotations sought for the remainder of the works.

The estimated cost for Options 1 and 2 was approximately £15,000 and £58,000 respectively. The project would form part of the Connswater Community Greenway Programme of Works and costs would be incurred by the Council for additional electricity and water which could be met from within the Parks and Leisure operational budgets.

The Assistant Director recommended that the Committee agree to adopt Option 1 in respect of the development of a community garden, subject to satisfactory terms being agreed by the Director of Parks and Leisure and on the condition:

- that those groups involved resolve all operational and health and safety measures to the Council's satisfaction; and
- that an appropriate legal agreement be prepared by the Assistant Chief Executive/Town Solicitor.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

**Mary Peters Track**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 15th September, 2011, it had requested that progress reports be submitted in relation to the refurbishment of the Mary Peters Track.

The Director reported that the contractor had made good progress on the upgrading works and, as a result, the field area was largely completed and the laying of the new track was almost complete. However, progress had been slower than anticipated owing to the recent poor weather. Nevertheless, the track and field area was on schedule for completion during November and it was possible that it would be handed back to the Council at that point. Work was continuing on the spectators' stand which was scheduled to be completed in early 2013.

After discussion, the Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed, following completion of the associated works, to undertake a site visit to the facility.

**Progress Report on Redevelopment of  
Dunville and Woodvale Parks**

The Committee agreed to note the contents of a report in relation to the progress achieved in respect of the refurbishment of the Dunville and Woodvale Parks and the ongoing discussions with local communities regarding the management arrangements for the sites post completion.

**Closures for Public Holidays 2012/2013**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1 Relevant Background Information**

At the January 2012 Committee, Members approved the closure arrangements in respect of the various Parks and Leisure facilities. This was specifically in relation to proposals for the opening/closing times and dates due to public holidays and maintenance agreements during the current financial year.

**2 Key Issues**

A report on the opening and closing proposals is taken to Committee in either December or January each year so that adequate notice can be given to both customers and staff in relation to the Bank Holiday arrangements.

Over the last few years the extra statutory holiday has been allocated to 2 January and recommendations taken to Committee in January 2012 were on this basis.

The public / bank and statutory holiday entitlements for the financial year 2012/13 have now been confirmed and this year the extra statutory holiday has been allocated to the 31 December 2012. As a result of this changes to the Christmas bank holidays are required. This will include the following:

- Leisure centres will close on Monday 31 December and open on Wednesday 2 January.
- The grounds of the cemeteries and the crematorium will be open as usual on 31 December 8.00am – 4.00pm.
- Burials at Roselawn, Dundonald and the City cemeteries will be scheduled to take place in the morning only of 31 December from 9.00am – 11.00am in line with normal Bank Holiday times.
- Cremations at the City of Belfast Crematorium will be scheduled to take place on 31 December from 8.30am – 12.00noon. However if demand requires these will be extended to normal working hours 8.30am – 5.00pm.
- The Cemeteries/Crematorium Central Administration Office and the site Offices at the Roselawn, Dundonald and City cemeteries will open on 31 December from 8.30am – 12.30pm

Members are reminded that cemeteries are open to the public as open spaces 365 days a year:

November – February: 8.00am - 4.00pm and Sundays 10.00am – 4.00pm

March and October: 8.00am – 6.00pm and Sundays 10.00am – 6.00pm

**April - September: 8.00am – 6.00pm, Tuesdays and Thursdays:  
8.00am – 8.00pm and Sundays 10.00am – 6.00pm.**

**3      Resource Implications**

**Financial**

The financial impact of implementation of these schedules has been reflected within approved revenue estimates for the period.

**Human Resource**

None.

**Asset and other implications**

None.

**4      Equality and Good Relations Implications**

There are no equality and good relations implications from this proposal.”

The Committee approved the closure arrangements in respect of the facilities outlined.

**Out of Hours Use of Leisure Centre**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1. Relevant Background Information**

The purpose of this report is to seek Committee approval for the extension of Out of Hours agreements under which sports clubs use Belfast City Council leisure facilities for training purposes.

The Parks and Leisure Committee at its meeting on 11 December 2008 agreed to extend out of hours use of leisure centres to all clubs and adopted a charging rate of £20 per hour as a contribution towards utilities costs. This rate was subsequently reduced to £10 per hour at Committee on 10 September 2009. At the January 2011 Committee this rate was then increased as part of the annual review of the scale of charges for the financial year 2011/12. There was no increase in cost for the current financial year.

The Parks and Leisure Committee at its meeting on 13 October 2011 approved the extension of the Out of Hours agreements to 31 March 2012.

Currently six water based clubs/governing body and one tennis club avail of the out of hours facilities totalling 22.5 hours per week.

Centres using out of hours include; Andersonstown, Ballysillan, Falls, Indoor Tennis Arena and Olympia.

The current participating groups have submitted interim reports giving feedback on the benefits of participating in the scheme and any other issues arising. The highlights from this feedback are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1**

Total club membership	390 Males	258 Female
Total No. hours used out of hours per week	22 Wetside	2 Dryside
Total No. hours paid by these clubs at full rate	20.5 Wetside	0 (Boost members)
No. of Participant opportunities weekly	450 during out of hours	

Comments from the clubs indicate that the out of hours service is highly valued and allows the clubs to keep costs down ensuring their membership fees are manageable. Many have spoken about the increased opportunity to train when it is increasingly difficult to get access to pool time during normal opening hours due to demand from the public. Some clubs have indicated a recent increase in interest which they put down to the London 2012 Olympics.

## **2. Key Issues**

The legal agreements for the second phase of the scheme ran until 31 March 2012 and since then all of the clubs have been 'over-holding' on their agreements.

Subject to Committee approval it is proposed that the Department writes to the groups to extend their current agreements until 31 March 2013.

It is also proposed that for future financial years, clubs will apply/reapply annually in January, directly to the Council and as before they will be scored against the agreed criteria. Following assessment the successful clubs will be required to enter into licensing agreements with Belfast City Council to use the

facilities out of hours and will be subject to management control and random checking.

Use of the centres for competitions will not be considered under this scheme as charging for out-of-hours competition bookings are identified within the normal pricing policy

Grove Well Being Centre – Belfast Health Trust has reconfirmed that that it is not prepared to allow access to the Grove Well Being Centre without staff present. Out of hours access will not be offered at this site.

Out of hours use should not displace current bookings, but must increase the amount of training time available to clubs beyond their current levels

Applications should be open to Belfast based sports clubs recognised by Sport NI or Belfast City Council.

**3. Resource Implications**

If current out of hours usage is maintained this will generate approximately £4,500 for the period October 2012 to March 2013.

**4. Equality and Good Relations Implications**

None.

**5. Recommendations**

It is recommended that Committee approve the extension of the current Out of Hours agreements to 31 March 2013 and the acceptance of an annual process for out of hours bookings.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**"Men in Sheds" Rejuvenate Programme**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1. Relevant Background Information**

The North Belfast Partnership has secured 3 years Big Lottery funding to address isolation amongst older men. The programme is fully funded by the Big Lottery Fund's Reaching Out: Connecting Older People.

A Rejuvenate Development Partnership (RDP) has been established to inform and oversee the development of the

programme. This is led by the North Belfast Partnership and includes representatives from the 5 North Belfast Renewal Partnerships.

Two full time members of staff have been appointed, by North Belfast Partnership to work on the programme. (1 programme co-ordinator and 1 development officer).

The rejuvenate programme will give older men the opportunity to get involved in practical, hands on activities as well as promote social inclusion, consider their own health and wellbeing and make positive contributions to their community. The Project will establish a sustainable network of SHEDS where older men will be involved in community and environmental projects that promote their collaborative learning, knowledge transfer and social interaction.

The practical activities will be linked to the establishment of 3 'Men in Sheds' in different parts of North Belfast. It is anticipated that the 3 SHEDS will be linked to the neighbourhood renewal areas and that 160 older men will be engaged as part of the programme.

Organisations already signed up to support the project include;

- North Belfast Partnership (Lead Partner)
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive
- Department of Social Development (Belfast Regeneration Office)
- Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
- Belfast Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership
- Volunteer Now
- North Belfast Senior Citizens forum
- Ballysillan / Upper Ardoyne Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership
- Crumlin / Ardoyne Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership
- Ligoniel Village Neighbourhood Partnership
- Rathcoole Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership
- Inner North Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership

Plans for the project were outlined to the Parks and Leisure department earlier in the year and at that time a general expression of support was given.

Now that funding is in place the North Belfast Partnership would like to confirm that the Council will support the project and will become one of the named partners in the programme.

## **2. Key Issues**

Commitment from the Council will require nomination of an officer to attend quarterly meetings of the RDP. It is anticipated that this would be the City Park Manager for Area North.

The department's role on the RDP would be an advisory one regarding community involvement in practical activities and outdoor spaces. Through community resources, programmes and networks Belfast City Council could add value to the development partnership and the operational engagement with project participants.

The partnership board has also requested approval for the use of parks and open spaces owned and managed by the Council should the rejuvenate programme identify practical activities or programmes of work within the Belfast City Council (Parks and Leisure) estate.

The department will identify, in writing, its terms of support and commitment to the RDP.

## **3. Resource Implications**

### **Human**

The estimated value of officer time to attend the quarterly meetings of the RDP is 4 hours per quarter.

### **Financial**

There are no financial implications anticipated.

### **Assets**

Parks and Open Spaces in North Belfast may be identified by the participants as potential areas for a programme of work. Occasionally this may require consultation with other park users, stakeholders or friends groups to share information regarding proposed further use and ensure that existing relationships are maintained.

## **4. Equality and good relations implications**

There are no known associated equality considerations associated with this request.

## **5. Recommendations**

**It is recommended that the Committee support the Rejuvenate Programme by approving:**

- 1. That a Parks and Leisure officer actively participates in the RDP by sitting on the partnership steering group and attending quarterly RDP meetings in an advisory capacity.**
- 2. Granting delegated authority to the Director of Parks and Leisure to approve activities and programmes of work identified within the Parks and Leisure Estate subject to appropriate planning and consultation.**
- 3. The Council's support towards the Rejuvenate programme is put in writing to the North Belfast Partnership identifying clear roles and responsibilities for the Council, the North Belfast Partnership and the other key stakeholders on the RDP.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

## **Cave Hill Mountain Bike Event**

The Committee was advised that a request had been received from Adrenaline State, Marketing and Events Company, in relation to the holding of a mountain biking event on the Cave Hill. The Assistant Director reported that the proposed event would involve 100 bikers starting at the summit of the Cave Hill and racing down the path and through the forest to a finishing point within the Castle Estate. It was anticipated that the event would be held during the period from 24th till 25th November. She pointed out that the event had been scheduled to take place at Tollymore Forest. However, due to the danger of spreading larch disease, it had been cancelled and she stated that, although there was no evidence to suggest that that disease had reached Cave Hill, the Council would be requesting that the organisers put measures in place to ensure that cross-contamination did not occur. Access to certain areas of the Park would be restricted during the event to organisers and participants and the course design would keep disruption to a minimum. The event would also have a minimal impact on the business at the Belfast Castle.

The Assistant Director explained that downhill mountain biking was covered by the parks bye-laws, which stated that “A person shall not ride any bicycle in a manner which is unsafe or likely to cause damage to the park or give reasonable cause for annoyance or alarm to other persons in the park”. She pointed out, however, that management had engaged with mountain bikers for over a decade and had dealt previously with issues of public safety and illegal biking within the park. The event had the potential to attract additional riders to the site for which it was not designed to accommodate, nor were there the appropriate resources in place to enforce the bye-laws relating to such activity. Research had indicated that events such as this usually took

place in coniferous forest venues which were larger and of less biodiversity value. Environmental and biodiversity issues had been highlighted regarding the sensitivity of the habitats on the Cave Hill and the significant development of the path network at the site. She stated that, should approval be granted for a small event this year, the organisers had secured funding to make it an international event next year which could showcase the new mountain biking facility at the Barnett Demesne. A bond would be sought from the organisers in order to reinstate any areas damaged during the event.

Accordingly, she recommended that the Committee accede to the request to hold the event on the Cave Hill, subject to satisfactory terms being agreed with Parks management and on the condition that:

- the event organisers resolved all operational issues to the Council's satisfaction;
- the event organisers would meet with the Cave Hill Conservation Group and satisfied all requirements to conserve the area and natural habitat;
- the event organisers ensured that all health and safety requirements were met to the Council's satisfaction; and
- an appropriate agreement was prepared by the Assistant Chief Executive/Town Solicitor.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

#### **Santa's Grotto at Botanic Gardens**

The Committee was advised that a request had been received from Smallworld Music seeking permission to hold a Christmas event at the Botanic Gardens. The Director reported that Smallworld Music had worked with the Council over a fifteen year period and currently held the contract for event production management services for the Development Department's Corporate Events Team. In addition, the Company had worked regularly with Botanic Gardens staff on a number of projects and worked directly with the Friends of Botanic Gardens on a number of events.

He pointed out that the company had requested free use of The "Little Pavilion" at the Botanic Gardens to host a Santa's Grotto. The building was situated on the East walk of the great lawn at the site and the organisers had requested the use of the Little Pavilion on the following dates:

- Saturday, 24th November and Sunday, 25th November
- Saturday, 1st December and Sunday, 2nd December
- Saturday, 8th December and Sunday, 9th December
- Saturday, 15th December and Sunday, 16th December
- Saturday, 22nd December and Sunday, 23rd December
- Christmas Eve, Monday, 24th December

The organisers wished to open the grotto from 10.00 a.m. till 4.00 p.m. and had requested also access to the pavilion one week in advance of these dates in order to set up for the event. The Director reported that the proposed event would be both a unique experience for regular park users and raise some much needed funds for the Friends of Botanic Gardens Appeal for the Tropical Ravine. Small World had committed to donate 25% of their net profit to this appeal. It was anticipated that approximately 1,000 children would visit the Grotto over the eleven day period.

He reported that the company would operate the project as a commercial venture, with no direct costs being incurred by the Council, and had suggested charging a single child admission of £5.00 and £12.00 for a family of three children. Each child would receive a wrapped gift from Santa and a framed photograph to commemorate the visit. Additional copies of the photograph and a variety of other photo-based merchandise, such as snow globes and key rings would be available to purchase at pocket money prices.

The Director stated that officers had considered the option to manage this request and had identified that there would no cost to the Council for event as the "Little Pavilion" would be opened in line with the Parks opening times and therefore did not require additional staffing cover. As with all such events, health and safety issues would be addressed through the preparation of an event management plan. Accordingly, he recommended that the Committee grant approval for the free use of the "Little Pavilion" at the Botanic Gardens to Smallworld Music in order to host the Christmas Grotto, subject to the event organisers entering into an agreement for the use of the site, the submission of an event management plan, proof of public liability insurance and the associated risk assessments to the satisfaction of the Council.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

#### Christmas in the Park Event

The Director reported that a request had been received from the Stroke Association seeking permission to hold a Christmas fund raising event in the Ormeau Park Bowling Pavilion and surrounding park land. The organisers had indicated that activities would include a children's craft making event, storytelling and face painting. In addition, guests would be served non-alcoholic mulled wine and mince pies, whilst joining in with carol singing provided by children from local schools. Outdoor activities would be staged around the bowling green in the "secret garden" which would be lit by fairy lights in the trees. These would include festive characters for photo opportunities, a petting farm with animals and Santa arriving on a horse and cart. A sponsored Christmas trail would also be an optional activity for the children on the day.

It was anticipated that the event would attract approximately 250 people, with the main event taking place on Sunday, 9th December from 1.00 p.m. till 4.00 p.m. However, the organisers had requested access to the park and the bowling pavilion on the evening of 8th December from 6.00 p.m. till 10.00 p.m. in order to erect Christmas decorations and set up the various activities for the event. The event organisers would therefore require the use of the bowling pavilion and surrounding park land for ten hours over those two days.

The Director reported that the purpose of the event was to raise much-needed funds and raise the profile of the Stroke Association. The organisers were, therefore, proposing to charge an entry fee of £8 for adults, £12 for children and £30 per family, which would include non-alcoholic mulled wine and mince pies. As the purpose of the event was to raise funds for charity, the event organisers had requested that the Council waive the fee for hire of the bowling pavilion. That would result in a loss of income of £216 to the Council. The Director recommended that the Committee grant approval for the 'Christmas in the Park' event to take place at the Ormeau Park Bowling Pavilion on Sunday, 9th December and that the organisers be granted free use of the site, including time for set-up and dismantling, subject to the event organisers providing the Council with an event management plan, associated risk assessment and proof of public liability insurance. The staffing costs over the two days would be the Department's contribution-in-kind.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

**Rose Society of Northern Ireland –  
Permission to Raise Funds**

The Director reported that the Rose Society of Northern Ireland had written to the Assistant Director seeking the Council's permission to raffle a piece of artwork which was currently on display in the Higgins Gallery at Malone House. He explained that, as part of the intake for the H. R. Brown Art Exhibition at the gallery, an artist had donated a painting for display and sale on behalf of Rose Society funds. However, the artist had indicated that, should the painting not be sold, it should be raffled with all funds donated to the Rose Society. He pointed out that the Rose Society had stressed the importance of such funding activities in the current economic climate and had requested whether it would be possible to extend authority to cover other similar events.

The Director recommended that the Committee grant authority to the Rose Society of Northern Ireland to raffle a painting currently on display at the Higgins Gallery in the event that it remained unsold. In addition, he recommended that the Committee grant delegated authority to him to approve other raffles or similar events which might arise.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Chairman