

Parks and Leisure Committee

Thursday, 10th January, 2013

MEETING OF PARKS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

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

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

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillors Mallon, Mac Giolla Mhín and A. Newton.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 6th December were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 7th January.

Declarations of Interest

In respect of item 3 viz., 'Stadia Developments', Councillor Mullan declared an interest in this matter in that she was related to an individual associated with the contractors appointed by the Irish Football Association for the Windsor Park re-development.

Financial Estimates and District Rate 2013/2014

(The Director of Finance and Resources attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered a report in respect of the Committee's estimates of revenue expenditure for the financial year 2013/2014. A copy of that section of the report, in so far as it applied specifically to the Parks and Leisure Committee, is set out hereunder:

"Parks & Leisure Committee

A spending limit of £23,631,235 is recommended for the Department in respect of the financial year 2013/14. This represents an increase of £465k or 2% on the 2012-13 estimates. The main budgetary intentions of the Department for next year are set out below:

	<u>Service</u>	<u>£</u>
	Leisure Services	8,469,190
	Parks and Cemetery Services	12,211,114
	Directorate	2,950,931
	Total Net Expenditure	<u>23,631,235</u>

Growth

As part of the implementation of the investment programme support for the development of participation, community engagement and community events around many of the newly created assets is required. Resources to manage these programmes and to develop further assets and events have also been included for a number of posts; specifically around outreach and commercial development at a cost of £130k.

Active Belfast was previously provided through thematic budgets however from 2013/14 these are no longer available and the department has streamlined the existing £70k into the leisure development budget to support local communities to identify solutions to the problems which they face around life inequalities. To support this approach the Active Belfast Partnership launched a grants programme. The programme has been well received by the community and by key partners, with the PHA confirming the same level of funding available for the grant scheme in 2013/14.

Increased costs

Additional costs of £166,615 must be borne by the Department in respect of superannuation increased provision. Increased electricity, gas and water charges have been provided based on current projections of costs which have added £244,882 to the budget.

Income

The leisure centres as a whole are not likely to experience any growth in income for 2013/14 due to some closures for maintenance and due to the current economic climate and the reduction in leisure centre memberships.

Belfast Castle and Malone House have both reflected a loss of income through fees and charges and the franchise fee for each site has also been reduced as the contracts are being terminated due to poor performance. Consequently a reduction of income of £55,000 and £36,000 respectively has been shown for each site.

Income for the Zoo has decreased by 1% or £18k from £1,811k in 2012/13 to £1,793k in 2013/14. It is felt that throughput will not grow and it is proposed that charges are held around inflationary levels. The Cemeteries and Crematorium income is up by £330k or 18% to reflect increases in charges as per committee decisions in February 2011 and October 2012. The crematorium income has also increased significantly due to the availability of extra slots each week as a result of the new opening hours.

The Department will make a contribution of £156,752 to the efficiency programme in 2013/14. Efficiency savings will be made as follows:

Efficiency Area	£
1. Review of overtime and agency costs	50,000
2. Additional income from cremations due to opening hours increasing	50,000
3. Procurement contract savings	26,476
4. Telephony review	13,262
5. Mobile phones review	3,614
6. Printing reviews	10,000
7. Review of Advertising vacancies	3,400
Total Departmental Efficiency Savings	<u>£156,752</u>

Recommendations

The Committee is requested to note the contents of the report and agree the cash limits for the Parks and Leisure Committee for 2013/14 of £23,631,236.

PARKS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE
MAIN ITEMS OF ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE 2013/14

	Net Expenditure 2012/13	Net Expenditure 2013/14
<u>Leisure</u>		
Leisure Centres	7,670,865	7,826,198
Leisure Development	549,243	642,992
<u>Parks and Cemeteries</u>		
Zoo	794,549	854,146
Landscape Planning and Development	1,847,757	1,935,307
Estates Mgt inc Belfast Castle/Malone House	252,215	339,042
P&C Development	177,906	138,893
P&C Services	1,284,501	1,204,121
Open Spaces & Active Living	546,894	658,461
Area East (Including Roselawn/Crem.)	2,285,031	1,883,562
Area South West (including City Cem.)	2,751,475	2,850,145
Area North	2,237,419	2,347,437
<u>Directorate</u>		
Anti Social Behaviour	253,545	253,917
PBDU	744,740	701,608
Business Support / Bereavement Admin	1,769,900	1,995,406
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>23,166,040</u>	<u>23,631,235</u>

The Director of Parks and Leisure outlined the factors which had been taken into account in the preparation of the estimates and highlighted the issues which had contributed to a 2% increase in the Department's expenditure from the previous year's figure. He informed the Members that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee would meet the following morning to set the cash limits for all of the Council's Committees and he recommended that the Members endorse, in principle, the estimate as set out for the Parks and Leisure Committee at £23,631,235.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Hartley,
Seconded by Councillor O Neill,

That the Committee agrees to endorse the estimates of expenditure as set out for the Parks and Leisure Committee at £23,631,235, subject to the endorsement of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 11th January.

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

Stadia Update

(Councillor Mullan left the room whilst this matter was under consideration.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1. Relevant Background Information

Reports were presented to both the Parks and Leisure Committee and the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on the Stadia upgrades at their June 2012 committee meetings. Members were also updated on the Deloitte Report which considered the potential added value and the regeneration potential of the proposed Stadia Development.

The Council's Investment Programme 2012-2015 committed the Council to working with Government, sporting bodies and local communities to maximise the benefit of the Stadia investment.

The Investment Programme also committed the Council to a Review of Leisure Provision and to create proposals for the redevelopment of the Leisure Estate.

The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its' June meeting agreed that the Directors of Parks and Leisure and Property and Projects' progress discussions with the IFA and

Linfield on the wider regeneration potential of the stadium development and agreed a feasibility study being commissioned in relation to the options for the Stadium, Midgely Park and Olympia in the context of the wider review of leisure.

At a special meeting of the Parks and Leisure Committee to which all members of Council were invited on 12 November 2012 the IFA provided a presentation on the Windsor Park Development.

Officers met with the GAA in December 2012 regarding the Casement Park development and the potential to work with the Council on wider community benefits and regenerative potential particularly with regard to Andersonstown Leisure Centre.

The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 14 December 2012 agreed that a further report and timetable would be submitted to the Committee in line with the Deloitte Leisure Estate Report which is due in January 2013 and that officers continue to work with the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure, the IFA and the GAA to ensure the greatest mutual benefit in terms of community gain from these projects.

2. Key Issues

The IFA architects who are working on the Windsor Park project have been appointed to undertake the feasibility study into options for the Windsor, Midgely Park and Olympia sites. They are due to report in early February 2013.

Initial discussions have been held with the GAA design consultants regarding the potential for an integrated leisure solution being developed to include Andersonstown Leisure Centre as well as the wider regenerative projects in the area.

Members will be aware that Deloitte have been commissioned by the Council to provide an expert view on the city's leisure needs and on the development of the framework within which the Council can take decisions on the renewal of the Leisure Estate. This work is nearing completion and will be reported on to both SP&R and Parks and Leisure Committees in January 2013. Clearly the realisation of the benefits of strategic opportunities such as the Stadia Developments to provide better integration of services and provide value for money should form a significant part of any decision making framework going forward.

There is a tight time frame for the delivery of Stadia with both having to be completed by the end of March 2015. The programme for delivery of the Windsor Park Development is further advanced than that for Casement Park but in any event the Council will have to take decisions regarding the possible integration of leisure provision including the financial commitment required by the end of May 2013.

Further reports will be brought to SP&R Committee in January 2013 and the Parks and Leisure Committee in February 2013 on proposals for the Leisure Estate Review and the potential to maximise the strategic opportunities provided by the Stadia Development.

3. Recommendations

Members are asked to note the content of this report.”

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Sport N.I. - Boxing Investment Programme

The Committee considered the undernoted report and endorsed the associated appended response to the above-mentioned consultation.

“1.0 Relevant Background Information

In November 2012 Sport NI (SNI) commenced a public consultation on its Boxing Investment Programme. The Boxing Investment Programme is a lottery funded programme supporting the purchase of boxing equipment and upgrading of facilities for boxing clubs in Northern Ireland.

SNI, through the Boxing Investment Programme, will award approximately £3.27 million for the purchase of boxing equipment and a range of building works based on the needs of individual boxing clubs. SNI will seek to allocate funding for equipment in the financial year (2012/13) with funding for building works being made available in 2013/14 and 2014/15.

To augment a survey carried out by the Ulster Provisional Boxing Council as part of the development of their Implementation Plan and to gather intelligence to assist with further programme development, SNI carried out an expression of interest exercise. An expression of interest form was sent to all clubs that had been, or are presently affiliated to the Irish Amateur Boxing Association in the following years:

- 2009/10
- 2010/11
- 2011/12
- 2012/13

99 expressions of interest have been received (from across NI) to date with the following summary outcomes:

- All clubs have identified a need for equipment based on a closed list of equipment provided by the IABA.
- In total 58 clubs have identified a need for a capital project (either repairs or major capital works).

Expressions of interest have identified a clear need for funding equipment and capital works.

The funding will be available in three tranches:

Tranche 1 - Boxing Equipment

SNI will make up to £232,000 available for the supply of boxing equipment to individual clubs. The IABA will be asked to submit an application based on the information gathered through the expression of interest exercise. The Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) will assist the IABA and SNI with the procurement of this sporting equipment.

Tranche 2 - Minor Repairs

SNI will seek applications from individual clubs to assist with premises repairs to their club facilities. These will include:

- toilets;
- showers;
- changing Rooms;
- roofing;
- heating systems; and
- other identified repair works.

Tranche 3 – Major Works

SNI will seek applications from individual clubs to assist with major refurbishment projects or new capital build projects.

As Members will be aware the Council recently agreed a Draft Amateur Boxing Strategy for Belfast and we are currently undertaking public consultation on it. A representative from Sport NI is on the steering group which oversaw the development of this strategy.

2.0 Key Issues

In summary, the consultation asks for responses to six questions:

- Do you agree with the proposal to invest in boxing?
- Do you agree there should be a focus on deprived communities in terms of boxing investment?
- Do you agree that the results of the Expression of Interest exercise identify a clear need for funding both equipment and capital works with boxing?
- Do you agree with SNI's proposal to fund a range of initiatives as follows: boxing equipment, minor repairs and major works?
- Do you agree with SNI's proposal to only support boxing clubs currently affiliated to an AIBA (International Boxing Association) recognised boxing governing body?
- Do you agree that capital projects should be 100% funded?

With all questions respondents were asked to give alternative proposals if they did not agree. Respondents were also asked to provide any other comments they would like SNI to consider.

Following consideration by relevant officers across the Council, a response has been completed in draft form for approval by Members.

In summary the draft response welcomes the investment in amateur boxing. Based on the work officers undertook as part of the development of the Council's draft Amateur Boxing Strategy for Belfast we agree that there should be a focus on deprived communities in terms of boxing investment. The baseline assessment also showed that there is a clear need for funding both equipment and capital works within boxing but that there is also a need for resources to be directed to support clubs in improving their governance and management structures and providing further training for coaches and volunteers.

We agree in principle that the allocation of public money for equipment and capital grants should be to clubs that are affiliated to a recognised governing body as this gives assurance that a club is operating to a high standard, has the correct policies and procedures in place and offers progression pathways for its members. However it is recognised that in some cases it may be possible to support new clubs and established clubs working towards affiliation with 'in-kind' funding to allow them to develop. Within our draft response we ask that SNI consider issues around tenure and that they take cognisance of the draft Amateur Boxing Strategy for Belfast in the delivery of their boxing investment programme.

SNI has also equality screened the Boxing Investment Programme and a copy of this form is attached as appendix 2. SNI have asked for comments on their screening by 19 February 2013.

SNI has not provided a template for responses so it is proposed that an email outlining the following comments is sent to SNI:

- Belfast City Council (BCC) believes that the Sport NI Equality Screening document adequately picks up the main issue regarding affiliation with the IABA and the impact on this for people from the PUL community regarding their participation in the sport and possible national representation.
- BCC has collated information on the involvement of people from the various Section 75 groups in boxing as part of the baseline assessment undertaken as part of the development of its strategy and it believes that SNI would find this of use as a data source as a part of its EQIA.
- BCC agrees that the investment in amateur boxing will have a positive impact on the number of females getting involved in the sport. Women's boxing is continuing to grow in popularity and its inclusion at the London 2012 Olympics and the success of Irish and British female boxers in winning medals has increased its profile. The main barrier identified in our baseline assessment to increasing female participation was a lack of suitable facilities and this investment will help to address this issue.

- BCC agrees that the investment in amateur boxing will have a positive impact on the number of people from a minority ethnic background getting involved in the sport. The evidence from the baseline assessment undertaken showed that the majority of clubs in Belfast had members from a range of racial groups including Irish Travellers and Eastern European countries.
- BCC agrees that the investment in amateur boxing will have a positive impact on the number of people with a disability getting involved in the sport. The evidence from the baseline assessment undertaken showed that very few clubs had accessible facilities and this investment will help to address this issue.

3.0 Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- (i) Note the contents of this report;
- (ii) Approve submission of a final consultation response to SNI, subject to any comments or amendment provided, by the deadline of 8 February 2013; and
- (iii) Approve the comments relating to the equality screening of the Boxing Investment Programme, subject to any comments or amendment provided, which will be emailed to SNI by the deadline of 19 February 2013.

Council Response

Do you agree with the proposal to invest in boxing? If you do not agree, do you have any alternative proposals?

Answer - Belfast City Council is in agreement with the proposal to invest in boxing. Belfast has a proud tradition of boxing and our boxing clubs across the city continue to produce talented boxers. The success of Belfast boxers in winning two bronze medals at London 2012 has further raised the profile of boxing. Boxing also plays an important role in the life of communities across the city, many of them in socially deprived areas. We have recognised the important role that boxing plays in the life of the city and have with key partners including the Irish Amateur Boxing Association (IABA), the Ulster Boxing Council (UBC), Co Antrim Boxing and Sport NI (SNI) developed a draft 10 year strategy for the development of amateur boxing in Belfast which is currently out for consultation.

Do you agree there should be a focus on deprived communities in terms of boxing investment? If you do not agree, do you have any alternative proposals?

Answer – As part of our analysis in the development of the amateur boxing strategy we mapped the location of boxing clubs in Belfast against the 2010 Multiple Deprivation and Health Deprivation Measures. This work showed that the majority of clubs in Belfast (90%) are ranked within the 20% most deprived in Northern Ireland. Research by the IABA also shows that boxing has a significant reach into disadvantaged areas. Therefore we agree that there should be a focus on deprived communities in terms of boxing investment.

Do you agree that the results of the Expression of Interest exercise identify a clear need for funding both equipment and capital works with boxing? If you do not agree, do you have any alternative proposals?

Answer – Sufficient detail is not provided on the findings from the Expression of Interest exercise to allow us to express an opinion on whether the results identify a clear need for funding both equipment and capital works within boxing. However evidence from elsewhere, including work that was undertaken by the Ulster Boxing Council and the baseline assessment that we undertook as part of the development of a strategy for Belfast, identify a clear need for funding both equipment and capital works within boxing.

Do you agree with SNI's proposal to fund a range of initiatives as follows: boxing equipment, minor repairs and major works? If you do not agree, do you have any alternative proposals?

Answer – We agree with SNI's proposal to fund a range of initiatives as follows: boxing equipment, minor repairs and major works. The evidence we gathered from the baseline assessment undertaken as part of the development of a strategy for Belfast showed that clubs in Belfast and on the periphery, have varying requirements for funding. Some clubs have already sourced funding and occupy buildings that are fit for purpose while others train in buildings that require minor works and some are in a dangerous condition with a lack of basic facilities such as toilets or running water. The evidence also showed that the majority of clubs do not have buildings with disability

access or facilities for females. In addition to a need for funding for equipment and capital works the Council's baseline assessment found that there is also a need for resources to be directed to support clubs in improving their governance and management structures and providing further training for coaches and volunteers. Belfast City Council has committed £200k per annum over the next 3 years to implement its strategy. This funding would be complementary to the SNI boxing investment programme and would be used to support club development in areas such as coach, volunteer and ring official training and development and club governance and management. It would also be used to promote boxing across the city, in particular among underrepresented groups such as females.

Do you agree with SNI's proposal to only support boxing clubs currently affiliated to an AIBA recognised boxing governing body? If you do not agree, do you have any alternative proposals?

Answer – We agree that the allocation of public money for the development of clubs through grants for equipment and capital works should be to clubs that are affiliated to a recognised governing body. Affiliation to a recognised governing body gives assurance that a club is operating to a high standard and that they have the correct policies and procedures in place around areas such as:

- Health and safety
- Child protection
- Governance and management
- Coach education and vetting
- Training and vetting of volunteers

This is particularly important in a high impact sport such as boxing to ensure that any risk of injury is mitigated.

Affiliation to a recognised governing body is also essential for progression pathways for competitors, coaches and ring side officials. If a club is not affiliated to a recognised governing body they will not be able to offer their boxers development opportunities and the opportunity to compete at the highest levels such as at European, World, Olympic or Commonwealth level.

We agree in principle that the allocation of this fund should only go to affiliated clubs, however it is recognised that in some cases it may be possible to support new clubs with 'in-kind' funding such as places on training courses or officer time to allow them to put in place policies and procedures to allow them to become constituted and obtain affiliation. Belfast City Council is currently investigating potential funding to further assist us in carrying out this type of work with clubs and we believe this is complementary to SNI's boxing investment programme.

Do you agree that capital projects should be 100% funded? If you do not agree, do you have any alternative proposals?

Answer – While we believe that clubs will welcome 100% funding for capital projects we require further information on what the maximum level of funding will be. In some cases the overall cost of the capital works required by a club may exceed what is available from this fund and they will be required to source additional funds from elsewhere. In the current economic climate clubs may have difficulty in sourcing additional funds and at this time Belfast City Council do not have the resources to establish a fund for match funding for capital works in boxing clubs. However a number of individual capital projects are currently being considered under the Council's Local Investment Fund.

While 100% funding will assist those clubs that receive it, this should be balanced against insuring that a reasonable maximum limit is set to ensure that the greatest number of clubs can benefit from this funding.

Are there any other comments you would like SNI to consider?

Answer – Belfast City Council welcomes this investment in amateur boxing in Northern Ireland. As SNI are aware Belfast City Council has worked with them and a number of other partners (IABA, UBC and Co Antrim Boxing) on the development of an amateur boxing strategy for Belfast. We would ask that SNI take cognisance of this strategy in the delivery of their boxing investment programme to ensure synergy and complementarity and an overall holistic approach to the development of the sport and associated infrastructure.

Our research has shown that only a minority of boxing clubs in Belfast own their own premises. The majority have long term leases on buildings while some rent premises as required or have another type of arrangement. This will raise an issue around security of tenure for some clubs if they wish to apply for funding for capital works and is something that SNI need to consider in the development of its criteria. We would also ask that SNI consider the appropriateness of investing public money into a building that a club has a short or medium term lease on, to ensure that any

improvements made to a building benefit boxing clubs and not landlords.

SNI should also consider that where a physical building is to be upgraded or to be built and then becomes a capital asset for another public body such as the Council then that body is likely to want to deliver it or oversee the delivery of it to ensure that it meets with public procurement rules, is built to their standards and is easy to maintain and operate if required.”

Parks Operative Posts

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1. Relevant Background Information

As part of the ongoing Parks and Leisure Improvement Programme, it has been identified that the Parks Service has experienced operational difficulties due to a shortfall of posts with driving responsibilities within their job description. This has resulted in a reliance on the post holders within the pool of Gardener 3's carrying out driving duties on a goodwill basis. Withdrawal of this flexibility poses a substantial risk to the department as the ability to provide the required operational services and business continuity would be greatly diminished.

The Parks Service also has employed four agency workers to provide additional driving capacity.

Following the re evaluation of the operational designations of Driver Gardeners and Tractor Drivers in June 2012 the post of Parks Operative was created to give a high degree of flexibility with regards to both driving and gardening duties. By increasing the number of Parks Operative posts the service anticipates that there will be a reduction in overtime and agency costs.

2. Key Issues

Number of Parks Operative posts and driving requirements

Parks and Leisure Services have an establishment of 25 Parks Operative posts (Scale 4). The Parks Operatives work as members of static or mobile gardening teams throughout the city and are responsible for transporting staff and equipment around the sites. To determine where the current gaps in driving provision exist a consultation exercise and an analysis of the driving requirements was undertaken by the Organisational Development (OD) Unit.

To cover driving responsibilities in areas where there are no Parks Operative posts, Gardener (Scale 3) postholders have been driving on a voluntary basis. The Parks Service also has employed four agency workers to provide additional driving capacity at a cost of £82,960 per annum. (These costs have been included in revenue estimates for at least the past four years).

The analysis of the driving requirements across the Parks Service showed that up to a further 22 Parks Operative posts are required to provide the service with the correct driving capacity and operational flexibility. It is proposed that the 22 Parks Operative posts replace the same number of Gardener (Scale 3) posts (of which there are currently 41 established posts), thus ensuring that the establishment figures remain unchanged. This would remove the need to employ agency drivers.

It is therefore proposed that up to 22 Parks Operative posts would be filled via an internal ring fenced trawl to posts at Scale 3 and above throughout the Council to provide some protection to the 22 Gardener (Scale 3) posts that will be deleted from the structure.

3. Resource Implications

Financial

The cost of deleting up to 22 Gardener (Scale 3) posts and replacing these with 22 Parks Operative posts (Scale 4) is £43,230. However ceasing to engage four agency drivers will save £82,960.

Implementing these recommendations will therefore result in a net saving of £39,730 for the department. It is envisaged that these funds will be redirected to ongoing reviews which are currently being undertaken as part of the Parks and Leisure Improvement Programme in relation to operational cover for pitches and bowling pavilions.

Human Resources

There has been extensive consultation with both staff and Trade Unions resulting in a management side agreement on the recommendations. Employee Relations have also been consulted with to discuss the proposed changes and to agree the appropriate implementation process. Normal HR policies and procedures will be applied in conducting all changes.

4. Recommendations

Members are asked to approve the revised establishment as follows:

- The creation of up to twenty two Parks Operative (Scale 4) posts; and
- The deletion of up to twenty-two Gardener (Scale 3) posts from the structure.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations as set out and it was agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting which would provide an overview of the number of operational reviews which had been carried out thus far as part of the Parks and Leisure Improvement Plan and which would provide also an outline of the number of reviews which had as yet to be undertaken.

New Attraction at Belfast Zoo

The Assistant Director informed the Committee that the Department had received a request to locate a traditional fairground carousel within the grounds of the Belfast Zoo, close to the Floral Hall, from the Easter period until the end of September, 2013.

The Assistant Director provided an overview of the attraction, which had been built in 1895 and which contained thirty-six double-seated individually hand-carved horses. She outlined the benefits which the operator had indicated might be accrued in agreeing to permit the attraction to be located at the Zoo. She indicated that the Council would receive 25% of the gross income generated, which she estimated would be between £12,500 and £15,000. She indicated that there were a number of operational and business issues which would need to be considered and recommended that a feasibility study should be undertaken to assess the potential of the proposal and that a further report would be brought to the Committee in February.

The Committee agreed that a feasibility study be undertaken in this regard and noted that a further report would be submitted for its consideration in February.

Future Crematorium Provision - Feasibility Study

The Committee agreed that a special meeting be held, on Monday, 18th February at 5:30 p.m., at which a presentation in respect of the future crematorium requirements for the City would be provided by the Council's consultants in this matter.

Waterworks Community Garden

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"2 Key Issues

2.1 Following success in its application to Big Lottery Fund, Grow wrote to the Council in November 2012 requesting use of the existing Waterworks site for a three year period to deliver activities under the new project. These would include –

- Training of volunteers;
- Ongoing maintenance and development of the present Waterworks site;
- Recruitment of community participants to the project;
- Regular community gardening sessions;
- Regular garden cooking session;
- Community engagement workshop;
- Mentoring of participants;
- Community days;
- Exchange visits; and
- Celebration and dissemination events.

The project is due to run for 3 years.

2.2 The current funding agreement with Grow was established with the clear understanding and intent that, following expiry of the agreement, management of the Waterworks site would return to the Council for ongoing use in line with the newly developed Growing Communities Strategy.

2.3 Should the request for the use of the site by Grow be approved, it is proposed that it would be an "Agreement for Use" of the current Community Garden space, for the period of the "Reaching Out: Connecting Older People" project and that management and maintenance of the garden would revert back to the Council on completion of the project. It would further be proposed that the Council and Grow would work in partnership in order to use the site for other community growing programmes and activities as long as they are feasible and do not compromise Grow's delivery of the Big Lottery project

- 2.4 To this end, it is proposed that a formal Agreement for Use would be prepared by Legal Services affording Grow the use of the Waterworks community garden for the duration of the project funded by the Big Lottery (exact duration to be confirmed) .

3 Resource Implications

3.1 Financial

Grow have been successful in attracting £200,000 for a programme relating to the use of this space and are not seeking any other Council contribution at this time.

3.2 Asset and Other Implications

Grow's request and the ongoing use of the community garden space within the Waterworks Park represent a use of the space as well as delivering on key Council outcomes such as helping people become more healthy, active, and more involved in their local communities and neighbourhoods.

4 Recommendation

- 4.1 Committee is asked to consider this request from Grow and grant approval for use of the current Waterworks community garden for the duration of the Big Lottery funded application, subject to an 'Agreement for Use' being prepared by Legal Services."

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Summer Scheme Review

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1 Relevant Background Information

Each year, summer schemes are organised in leisure centres providing a programme of sporting and play activities to young people over the months of July and August. The summer schemes are extremely popular with almost all places across all centres being filled. All summer scheme users benefit from a subsidised service, funded through the rates.

A full evaluation of the summer schemes has been undertaken by a working group led by the Leisure Improvement Manager. The issues which the group have addressed include:

- Staffing
- Registration
- Publication and Communications
- Operational Issues

2 Key Issues

Staffing

In the past summer scheme staff has been made up from a combination of existing centre staff plus agency staff providing a number of coordinators and support workers. To provide better services and improved staff development it is proposed for the 2013 summer schemes, and for future holiday schemes (including Halloween, Easter and Christmas), that the recruitment of the staff is brought in house through a casual recruitment initiative. There will be an initial recruitment cost for this exercise which can be covered by the department and will realise a saving in staff costs of £15,000 per annum. The recruitment exercise will support the objectives of the investment programme by creating Council posts. The recruitment process will start in February 2013 with a target completion date of mid April 2013 to allow for training and Access NI checks.

Registration

Recent years have shown that the Grove wellbeing centre is a particularly popular summer scheme. Parents have queued for places overnight and places have been allocated within hours of registration opening. This is the only centre with such popularity therefore a proposal for a pilot pre-registration scheme has been developed for the Grove only at this stage. The purpose of this exercise is to avoid the potential long overnight for queues. It will also allow staff to allocate as many places as possible to families. A pre-registration form will be available online and in the centre. Parents can then request a place for up to four children at the scheme. The pre-registration form can be posted in a box in the centre or submitted online on a specific date. This is not a first come first served service. On closure of the pre-registration, staff will then allocate places to the children.

The criteria for allocation of places will include allocating places firstly to BT15 residents, this is the immediate surrounding area of the Grove wellbeing Centre. If places are still available they will be allocated to other ratepayers of Belfast. In the unlikely event that after this stage places still remain they will be allocated to residents of other Council areas.

On applying these new geographical criteria and depending on demand, it may mean limiting the number of weeks per child to three or four weeks out of five to accommodate all the BT15 applicants. Consideration is also being given to bringing in more leaders and therefore increasing the number of places on this scheme depending on the uptake of the pre-registration pilot exercise. When the demand is understood and has been assessed, those successful at the pre-registration stage will be invited to attend the centre to register their child at a specific time. The usual photographic and address ID will be needed.

The pre-registration process for the Grove will be open during the second week in April following the Easter Break. The full registration for all centres will then take place during the last week in April 2013 giving parents the option to apply for another centre. The process for pre-registration will be subject to evaluation to assess its effectiveness and to refine it for future years.

Publication and Communication

A mapping exercise was undertaken this year to show the addresses of the children attending the summer scheme in relation to any particular centre. This exercise has highlighted that for many of the centres the children attending the schemes are not from the immediate local area of the centre, with the exception of Whiterock. In order to attract more local children a coordinated and collaborative advertising campaign will be launched. The participation team will also engage with local schools and community organisations to attract local children.

Operational

The review has highlighted that where there is greater demand for places on schemes, employing additional staff could facilitate greater numbers. Although the ratio of children to adults is somewhat restrictive there is some potential for increasing numbers of places according to demand.

Last year a pilot sunrise club, accepting children from 8.30am was trialled in a number centres. The uptake was low and the evaluation forms showed that many parents were not aware of the sunrise club. With a coordinated advertising scheme and a specific programme for the sunrise club it is projected that higher numbers of children could be attracted. It is proposed that four sunrise clubs are planned for 2013, one in each area of the City, North, South, East and West.

The age limit for most schemes is eight years however in 2012, two schemes accepted children from five years old. This attracted many more children to the schemes. It is proposed that four schemes will accept children from five years of age in 2013. Again, one in each geographical area of the City.

Through the work of the Council's internal summer intervention coordination group it is evident that our centres could provide a scheme to older children, particularly later in the day between 5pm and 7pm. At this time centres are typically quiet in the summer months. Therefore a pilot youth scheme is proposed for four centres, across the City. The scheme would be aimed at 12-15 year olds.

By increasing the numbers of children coming to the summer schemes by attracting younger and older children for a longer duration the staff costs will increase. These costs can be offset by additional income and by using the savings made in bringing the staff recruitment internal (£15,000).

Shankill Leisure Centre

During the month of August 2013 Shankill Leisure Centre will be used to host World Police and Fire Games events. The summer scheme in Shankill usually runs for five weeks following the 12 July holidays. However for 2013 only the summer scheme will run throughout July for five weeks from Monday 1 July – Friday 2 August 2013.

3 Resource Implications

Financial

The department will realise a saving of £15,000 per by bringing the recruitment of staff in house. The additional £15,000 will be used to provide additional staff for the sunrise club and pilot youth scheme. Recruitment costs will be covered by the Department within existing budget.

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

The alterations in the registration and selection processes will be subject to the council's existing equality screening process. Good Relations have been consulted regarding the revision in the Grove pre-registration scheme in that the summer scheme is available firstly to the local community of the centre, BT15.

5 Recommendations

Members are asked to note the contents of the report and approve the proposed changes to the registration and operation of the summer schemes including;

1. A pilot pre-registration scheme for the Grove;
2. Allocation of places on the Grove Summer Scheme firstly to BT15 residents, Belfast rate payers and others in this order;
3. Four schemes will have sunrise clubs (N,S,E,W);
4. Four schemes will accept children from five years old (N,S,E,W); and
5. A pilot youth scheme for four centres (N,S,E,W)"

After discussion, the Committee agreed to adopt the recommendations as set out, subject to the allocation of places on the Grove Summer Scheme being extended in the first instance to residents living within the BT14 and BT15 postcodes.

Avoniel Swimming Pool

The Committee considered a report which provided an overview of the work which was ongoing to address the leak which had necessitated the closing of the swimming pool at the Avoniel Leisure Centre.

The Committee agreed that the Elected Members from the Victoria and Pottinger District Electoral Areas be invited to undertake a site visit to the leisure centre to view the extent of the work which was being undertaken to resolve the issue.

John Hewitt Park - Alloa Street

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

The Committee is asked to note that the Council has received an approach from URS consultants on behalf of their clients, the Department for Social Development, (DSD) regarding proposed works within the John Hewitt Park in Alloa Street.

This is part of a series of public realm improvements being undertaken throughout Belfast. In essence, the local community wish to create a themed garden area within the playground. As members will be aware John Hewitt was born on Clifton Park Avenue and the Committee recently agreed to rename the park. The conceptual design for the garden is based around John Hewitt's poem 'Hedgehog' (1952), the first five lines of the poem will be engraved into the paving as indicated.

Before the work can be progressed the Council's approval is required on a number of issues as outlined in the key issues section below.

2 Key Issues

The Committee is asked to note the following issues:

1. In the first instance the approval of the Council is sought to permit the work to be undertaken on its land. DSD will appoint its own contractors to undertake the work which is not included within the Council's Capital Programme;
2. The work will take approximately six weeks to complete. As the Department will require access to Council land to undertake the works, a licence is required, which will set out the regulatory framework within which the works will be carried out and will include a requirement to be completed to the Council's satisfaction;
3. Members will be mindful that these works will be undertaken immediately adjacent to an active playground. It is our desire to keep the playground open during the works and will require the contractor to take appropriate precautions to secure the site.

4. Whilst there are no terms and conditions attached to the funding, the Department has asked that the Council agree to undertake the maintenance and management of the garden and to include it within the Council's public liability schedule. Discussions with the parks manager indicate that the work can be absorbed within the existing resources and should be minimal outside of officer time.
5. Members are asked to note that the sculpture of the hedgehog will be 5m by 3m high (approximately 10 ft). Officers have expressed concern regarding its proximity to the playground, the landscape architect has incorporated a hedged buffer between the play area and the garden in an attempt to separate the two. Staff from Landscape Development Unit had proposed a railing around the playground, however, the cost of this would be prohibitive and would increase the Council's maintenance liability plus potential capital replacement in the future.
6. It is our understanding that the development of the scheme has been undertaken in consultation with the local community and that it does not conflict with a current proposal currently under consideration as part of the Local Investment Fund initiative.

3 Resource Implications

Financial

The cost of the works will be met in full by Department for Social Development. The maintenance liability will be met from within existing resources. There will be no contractual obligations placed upon the Council to maintain or retain the proposed facility.

Assets and other implications

In view of the absence of legal obligations upon the Council in relation to future maintenance and/or retention of the developed facility, the Council will remain free to determine any future development proposals for the site, subject to any Committee approvals as may normally be required. The scheme is understood to be supported by the local community and is intended to enhance the local physical environment. The scheme remains subject to Planning Permission and any other necessary statutory or regulatory approvals being obtained.

4 Recommendations

4.1 The Committee is asked to

- 1. Approve the carrying out of the work on Council land;**
- 2. Approve the entering into a licence agreement to permit the works to be carried out subject to approval by Strategic Policy and Resources in line with Standing Orders;**
- 3. Agree to absorb the maintenance cost and include on the Council's public liability schedule."**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Bridge at Clement Wilson Park

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided an update on the arrangements for the replacement of the bridge over the River Lagan at the Clement Wilson Park. Members noted also that the bridge had been closed to the public in December 2012 following an engineering survey which found evidence of corrosion and which had concluded that the structural integrity of the bridge had been compromised and had recommended that it be closed to all traffic pending construction of the replacement bridge.

Stewart Street Playground

The Committee was reminded that the Council leased the Stewart Street Playground from Power Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. It was reported that the Clanmil Housing Association had purchased land adjoining the site and was due to commence construction of a new boundary fence between its land and the playground. Accordingly, a request had been received from Clanmil seeking permission for its contractors, viz., Geda Construction Company Limited, to erect a temporary fence within the playground which would protect its new boundary fence during construction and enable the work to be carried out more efficiently. The portion of land which had been requested comprised initially of a 4.2 metre strip along the boundary, which would decrease to 2 metres after initial work had been carried out. It was pointed out that the site manager had considered the impact of the fence on the playground to be minimal and it was anticipated that the work would last for approximately twelve weeks.

The Committee acceded to the request and agreed that a licence agreement be drawn-up to oversee the work and that a charge of £75 per week be levied on the contractor for the use of the property.

Commemorative Floral Bedding Displays

The Committee was advised that two organisations, viz., the Girls' Brigade Northern Ireland and Tiny Life, had submitted requests to locate commemorate floral displays within the flower beds within Council parks. The Director reported that 2013 marked the 120th anniversary of the founding of the Girls' Brigade and indicated that Tiny Life, which had been established in 1988, was a charity dedicated to reducing the number of premature births in Northern Ireland, as well as providing support to families. He added that the Council would incur no additional costs in acceding to the requests.

The Director pointed out that the content of the floral displays would not be controversial and further discussion would be undertaken with both organisations in order to agree the designs and to determine specific locations to optimise visibility.

The Committee acceded to the requests and agreed to grant delegated authority to the Director to consider all future requests in this regard which were considered to be non-contentious in nature.

Belfast Taste and Music Festival

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1. Relevant Background Information

The Committee is asked to note that the Council has received a request from Wonderland Productions (NI) Ltd, promoter Eamonn McCann for the use of Botanic Gardens to hold ‘a Belfast Taste and Music Festival 2013’. Similar events have taken place in the Gardens since 1991, except for 2012.

2. Key Issues

- **The event would take place on in Botanic Gardens offering food and music entertainment with the public being charged fees to gain admission.**
- **The proposed event dates are Friday 24 – Monday 27 May 2013 with hours of operation 12.00 noon to 10.30pm daily. The total proposed duration of the event to include set up and take down would be seven days on site, two days to set up and one to take down.**

- **The admission fees proposed are:**
 - **£5.00 before 5pm**
 - **£10.00 after 5pm**
 - **Children under 5 Free**
 - **Children 5-15 half price**

- **The music will range from jazz to blues, to tribute bands and will appeal to a broad age range.**
 - **Four performances each day on the stage**
 - **12.30 - 2.00pm 3.00 - 4.30pm**
 - **6.00 - 7.30pm 8.30 - 10.30pm**

- **If the weather is good it would be hoped that attendance may reach 4,000 people each day.**

- **The event would be subject to the preparation of an event management plan which would cover all aspects of management including health and safety and access.**

- **Bar facilities are to be provided at the event, including beers and ciders from Northern Ireland.**

- **The event will permit access via Stranmillis Road and Botanic Avenue and access would be maintained to the Ulster Museum.**

- **The event promoter shall consult with all local communities and adjacent organisations. Residents living in close proximity to Botanic Gardens have raised objections in the past to musical events in the Park.**

- **The event organiser is aware of the need for the payment of a Bond of Intent and Bond of Reinstatement which must be completed prior to written confirmation that the venue shall be available.**

- **Due to the costs involved in holding the event the promoter has asked that fees for the use of the site be waived.**

- The promoter has raised concerns about realising the event in 2013 in such a short time scale and has asked to book similar dates in May 2014.

3. **Resource Implications**

Finance

Fees for the use of the facility would be £5,400 which the promoter has asked to be waived due to the costs involved in running the event.

For a similar event held in 2011 Committee agreed to accede to a similar request but on condition that, should a profit be made from the holding of the event, an appropriate claw back be recouped from the organisers.

A Bond of Intent of £600 and Bond of Reinstatement of £3000 will be required.

Human Resources

Due to the nature of the event and the importance of the site it is anticipated that management overtime will be needed each evening totalling £580 for the 7 days.

Asset

The Promoter must ensure minimal impact on Council property.

4. **Equality and good relations implications**

None

5. **Recommendations**

It is recommended that Committee agree to the event taking place in Botanic Gardens in 2013 or 2014 subject to:

1. a Bond of Intent to the value of £600 and a Reinstatement Bond of £3,000 to be paid within 28 days of request.

2. It is recommended that Committee charge a fee of £5,400. If however Committee decide to waive the fee, the promoter should pay the overtime cost for additional staff and should a profit be made from the holding of the event, an appropriate claw back be recouped from the organiser.
3. an appropriate legal agreement prepared by the Assistant Chief Executive and Town Solicitor is completed;
4. the event organiser meets all statutory requirements including health and safety and entertainment licensing.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations and agreed further that the associated fee of £5,400 be levied on the promoter for the use of the Gardens

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. Accordingly, the Director submitted the undernoted update report for the Committee's notation:

- **The completion of the project remains on schedule and the facility should be available for use in April 2013. Members are asked to note that correspondence has been received expressing dissatisfaction with the continued closure of the track and with proposals to keep the track closed until March / April 2013. This correspondence has been circulated to several local councillors. Members are asked to note that whilst the track area is ready for use, the field area needs time to settle and any unauthorised use of it at this time could damage it and necessitate further remedial works which would impact on its use for the World Police and Fire Games.**
- **In addition to this there are several other factors to be taken into account: the construction of the stand is still underway; following the completion of the stand it will be necessary to undertake some finishing works to the paths, floodlighting and car park etc to ensure that the site is handed over in a satisfactory condition and complies with health and safety requirements. The new track and associated areas need to accredited for**

use, at present the facility is not accredited and the necessary inspection will not take place until following completion of the spectator stand. Whilst it is our intention to open the track as soon as possible it is important that the contract be completed and the proper documentation is in place.

- The existing management agreement between the Council and Northern Ireland Athletics is currently renewed on a monthly basis. An advertisement was placed in November 2012 and the closing date is 15 January 2013. An evaluation of the tenders will be undertaken before the end of January with the aim of making an appointment in February 2013.
- Work on the statue of Dame Mary Peters is continuing and a procurement process is underway. It is anticipated that the statue will be ready March / April 2013, subject to approval from Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Noted.

Dunville Park / Woodvale Park

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; completion of both projects remaining on target for June, 2013, and noted further that discussions were ongoing with local communities regarding the management arrangements for the sites post completion.

Film Event at Ormeau Park

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

1. Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 The department has received a request from organisers of the 'Belfast Film Festival' for permission to hold a proposed screening of a film outdoors in Ormeau Park as part of their 13th Festival in April 2013 (festival dates 10 – 21 April).
- 1.2 Over the past 12 festivals organisers have been keen to screen films in unusual or site specific locations throughout Belfast and feel that these types of events engage new audiences and also present films in an exciting and dynamic context.
- 1.3 In the past they have screened films in St. Anne's Cathedral, Sinclair Seaman's Church, The High Court's, as a drive in movie in Titanic Quarter, in the grounds of Belfast Castle overlooking Cave Hill, on the Lagan Boat and last April 2012 had a special outdoor screening of the Titanic film 'A Night to Remember' at the Thompson Dry dock where the ship was launched. This event was attended by over 500 people including the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.

- 1.4 Event organisers have identified a possible location in the Ormeau park and would propose a small scale event for a potential audience of 250 people. The event would take place on one night between 10 - 21 April 2013 from 8pm to 11pm approximately. The exact date to be agreed with the organisers.
- 1.5 Given the location and the atmosphere of the park at night they would like to show a horror film. The film is however uncontroversial in nature and certified for an audience of over 15 year olds, made in 1987. The film is set in a wooded area and is a horror comedy called 'Evil dead 2'.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 Belfast Film festival would provide audio visual equipment, generators, seating, lighting equipment, St. John Ambulance, Portaloos, two project managers, volunteer staff and technical staff on the site. They would also hire security staff.
- 2.2 The event organisers wish to locate a portable film screen (20ft wide x 12ft high) within an enclosed grassland area surrounded by woodland. This area was preferred by the organisers to prevent or minimise the effects of wind on the film screen.
- 2.3 It is anticipated that this area would also minimise the effects of noise to surrounding areas.
- 2.4 There is a house located within Ormeau Park (Old Foreman's Lodge) which is now occupied by a family under arrangement with Hearth Housing Association (leased from the council). This is approximately 100 metres from the proposed location of the film event.
- 2.5 It is proposed that the film event starts at 8pm and is over by 11pm. It is not anticipated that any noise be generated after 11pm; however noise levels throughout the event will need to be carefully monitored.

- 2.6 Since it is not unreasonable to anticipate that residents living close to a park or open space used for an open air event of this nature will experience some degree of noise disturbance, event organisers and those attending events must recognise that there may be a need for noise level or finish time restrictions to be imposed to protect the local community from being unreasonably disturbed by noise.
- 2.7 It is proposed that the audience of approximately 250 people will be seated on camping style seats.
- 2.8 This particular area can be susceptible to wet ground conditions. Although there is no requirement for vehicular access or erection of scaffolding; some ground reinstatement may be required due to the heavy footfall in this location within the park.
- 2.9 Entrance to the film is by ticket only (estimated £10 per person) paid in advance at the event booking office. No cash transactions will be accepted at the event location.
- 2.10 No catering involved; however attendees may be advised by the event organisers to be permitted bottled water.
- 2.11 No alcohol will be sold or permitted at this event.
- 2.12 Parking proposed at the Ozone Recreation centre car park; subject to agreement.
- 2.13 There would be a requirement to ensure that the audience is safely marshalled to the film location within Ormeau Park and that safe access and egress are maintained.
- 2.14 There would be a minimal risk of anti-social behaviour.
- 2.15 As with all events, but particularly because of the 'evening' element to this event; it is essential that health and safety issues are addressed through the preparation of an event management plan by the event organisers to the satisfaction of Council Officers and the Police Service of NI.
- 2.16 The Council's Fire Safety Officer is content that the location is adequate for the intended purpose.

3. Resource Implications

3.1 Financial

There would be a hire charge for the period of hire in line with Council Policy.

3.2 Human Resources

Normal 'park closing time' in early April is 8.30pm, therefore additional three Parks staff cover will be required for this event to assist with public safety and enable park closing at approximately 12 midnight.

4. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee grant authority to the Director of Parks and Leisure to provide consent to this Film show; providing –

- An appropriate legal agreement be prepared;
- The event Organisers provide an 'event management plan' including 'Public Liability Insurance' and Health & Safety Risk Assessments – to the satisfaction of the Council;
- The event organisers meet all statutory requirements; and
- The event organisers resolve all operational issues to the Council's satisfaction."

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Chairman