

People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 12th May, 2015

MEETING OF PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Corr Johnston (Chairperson);
the High Sheriff (Councillor McKee);
Aldermen McCoubrey and Rodgers;
Councillors Austin, Bradshaw, Brown,
Copeland, Corr, Garrett, Groves, Hanna,
Heading, Jones, Mallon, McAllister, McCabe,
Newton and Sandford.

Also attended: Councillor Kyle.

In attendance: Mr. R. Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources;
Mr. G. Millar, Director of Property and Projects;
Mrs. R. Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks
and Leisure;
Mrs. S. Toland, Lead Operations Officer/
Head of Environmental Health;
Mr. T. Martin, Head of Building Control;
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer; and
Miss. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor Beattie.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Motion - Cavity Wall Insulation

The Committee was reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 5th May, had considered the following Notice of Motion, which had been moved by Councillor Heading and seconded by Councillor Convery:

“This Council, having taken note of the level of fuel poverty in the city, urges the Northern Ireland Executive to recognise the relationship which exists between fuel poverty and poor home insulation.

It notes further the core study and research carried out by the Mount Eagles Drive Action Group and the South Eastern Regional College into the health and financial impacts which the poor quality of the installation of cavity wall insulation can have.

Accordingly, the Council calls upon the Northern Ireland Executive to provide direction to civil servants to enter into a process with the industry to identify effective measures (legislative and other) to address the problem of failure in cavity wall insulation.”

After discussion, the Committee agreed to write to the Northern Ireland Assembly regarding the issues outlined in the motion.

Reconsidered Item - Belfast Festival Open Spaces / Policy Framework re: Large Scale Partnership Events

The Committee considered the following report:-

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 This report outlines a proposal for an outdoor event as part of the Belfast Festival 2015 programme, in partnership with the Council. The Committee will recall that this matter was deferred at the meeting held on 21 April to enable a deputation from the organisers of the Belfast Festival to attend. The representatives will be in attendance and will be admitted to the meeting for ten minutes to clarify issues for the Committee.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 1. Authorise officers to initiate discussions with the Belfast Festival to agree the conditions of financial support for 2015, in line with the objectives outlined in the report; and

2. Agree to support an outdoors event as part of the programme for the Belfast Festival up to £20,000, subject to conditions agreed and legal agreements drawn up to the satisfaction of the Town Solicitor. This will include the partial closure of Botanic Gardens for up to 8 days in October for the exclusive use of attendees. A further outreach event may be facilitated in the City Hall grounds, depending on terrain and performer requirements.

3. Agree that a further report is presented to a future meeting which outlines a policy framework for a programme of supported, large scale partnership events in the city’s parks and open spaces.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Key Issues

The Council established successful partnership arrangements with the Belfast Festival at Queen's and Mela in 2013. These operate at minimal cost to the public. These type of events are well-received by audiences and significantly add to the attractiveness of the Council's parks and open spaces.

Proposal for 2015 event with Belfast Festival

- 3.1.1** Belfast Festival is proposing to work in partnership again with the Council to stage two outdoor performances in the Council's open spaces. Last year, over 5,000 people attended events in Botanic Gardens and City Hall grounds.

At the request of the Committee, Richard Wakeley, Director from Belfast Festival has been invited to present the proposal to the Committee at its meeting on 12 May.

The proposal for 2015 is for two leading circus and acrobatic troupes from Europe; The Jashgawronsky Brothers (Italy) with their comedy musical work, *Trash* and Lonely Circus (France) with their unique acrobatic performance piece, *Le Poids de la Peau*.

This would include an activity marquee in Botanic Gardens where families would be invited to participate in outreach workshops reflecting the nature of the two professional groups including music making, acrobatics and a variety of other activities.

Taking into account artists' fees, installation expenses, accommodation, transport, and travel costs from Europe, Belfast Festival is seeking a contribution of £20,000 towards this project. Belfast Festival will take all responsibility for overseeing the installation, running and promotion of the work and will credit it as a joint presentation with the Council.

Organisers are currently assessing the suitability of terrain. The proposed timescale from set up to take down of the event is up to eight days in October 2015 in Botanic Gardens. Consultation by Belfast Festival will be undertaken with other local stakeholders such as Queens University, Lyric Theatre, local residents' groups and the Friends of Botanic Gardens.

Benefits to Council

- 3.1.2 The Belfast Festival proposal is a good fit with the policy objectives of the Council in that it is family friendly work that is participatory and fun. It will animate our public spaces whilst also providing educational learning opportunities for children and young people. It is proposed that Council provides financial support to the event (up to £20,000), given the positive economic impact it has for the city, improved good relations and attractiveness of the Council assets.

As part of an agreement with Belfast Festival, a series of targets for participation, outreach and sponsorship would be set.

Way forward

- 3.1.3 The Committee recognises the value and benefit which a diverse and well-designed events programme in its parks and open spaces can bring to the city and its neighbourhoods.

It is recommended that a policy framework is required to guide the number, size and nature of events which happen in its green space in the council area. This will ensure that a number of events are sustainable and feature as annual events, and encourage a diverse range of events which have wide appeal for the community as well as tourists and visitors.

This could include working with the City Events Unit to promote the availability/suitability of a range of parks and open spaces for major city events.

In addition, work would be undertaken to develop the criteria for the park grants funds to enable events to be sustainable year on year and more evenly spread across the city e.g. a higher score for working with partners; using under-used parks; community outreach.

Financial & Resource Implications

- 3.2 A fund has been provided for large-scale cultural events in Council parks within revenue budgets for 2015/16. There may be overtime required by staff to assist with the management of the proposed events which would be met by the Council.

The Legal Agreement will include a Bond of Reinstatement (£1,000) to ensure minimal impact on Council property. The event organisers will prepare an events plan and meet all statutory requirements including Health and Safety and Licensing, to the satisfaction of the Assistant Director.

Equality or Good Relations Implications

- 3.3 The Events Policy for Parks and Leisure facilities and venues was previously screened as part of its consideration at Committee. The application of the policy is deemed to have no differential impact on any one group, given the diversity of applicant groups and range of events organised across the Council's properties."**

In accordance with its decision of 21st April, the Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, welcomed to the table Mr. R. Wakely, representing the Belfast Festival.

Mr. Wakely requested that consideration be given to the proposed events which would include two leading circus and acrobatic troupes from Europe, an activity marquee in Botanic Gardens and a variety of outreach workshops, which would be organised as part of the Belfast Festival 2015 programme in partnership with the Council.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Wakely for his presentation and he retired from the table.

The Assistant Director outlined the principal aspects of the report which included the requirement for a policy framework and answered a range of Members' questions in respect of the options which had been identified.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Heading,
Seconded by Alderman Rodgers,

That the Committee agrees to support the outdoors event as part of the programme for the Belfast Festival, up to £20,000, subject to the following conditions:-

- that the organisers investigate the potential for inclusion of outreach events to be facilitated in those areas of east and west Belfast which were transferred from the former Castlereagh and Lisburn Councils;
- that the financial support would be reduced to a maximum of £15,000, if the above outreach events would not be viable; and
- that legal agreements would be drawn up to the satisfaction of the Town Solicitor to include the partial closure of Botanic Gardens for up to eight days in October for the exclusive use of attendees;

and that a further report be presented to a future meeting which outlines a policy framework for a programme of supported, large scale partnership events in the city's parks and open spaces in line with the forthcoming corporate City Events Strategy.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Bradshaw,
Seconded by Councillor McAllister,

That the Committee agrees to adopt the original recommendation as set out within 2.0 of the report.

On a vote by show of hands, eight Members voted for the amendment and nine against and it was declared lost.

The proposal standing in the name of Councillor Heading and seconded by Alderman Rodgers was thereupon put to the meeting when ten Members voted in favour and none against and it was declared carried.

Presentation: Update on Physical Programme

The Director of Property and Projects provided an update on the Council's overall physical programme for 2015/16, which outlined key details of the Capital Projects including the Capital Programme, the Belfast Investment Fund, the Local Investment Fund and other projects.

The Director also highlighted the role of the People and Communities Committee and the Area Working Groups in relation to the physical programme.

The Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed that the Director of Property and Projects investigate the feasibility of working with partners on erecting hoardings on strategic physical programme sites which would communicate details of the projects being delivered.

Governance

Appointment of Members to Community Centre Committees

The Community Development Manager reminded the Committee that on 31st March the Community and Play Centre Committees had ceased with the end of the old Council and invited the Party Groups to consider representation on the list of current centres that had committees as outlined in the report. She informed the Committee that the community centre committee approach would be reviewed as part of the City strategy and framework for community centre provision, with any recommendations being submitted to the Committee for consideration.

The Committee agreed that expressions of interest from Members to sit on the Community and Play Centre committees as listed (a copy of this was available on Modern.gov) would be submitted through their Party Groups and agreed, in principle, that each of the Community and Play Centre Committees would include at least one Member from the People and Communities Committee.

Belfast Agenda - Community and Neighbourhood Services

Proposed Strategic Workshop to Develop Committee Work Plan

The Director of Finance and Resources reminded the Committee of the work already undertaken to develop the Belfast Agenda and the planned work to engage stakeholders in 'the Belfast Conversation'. He advised the Committee of a proposed workshop to consider the following themes:-

- to define the role of the People and Communities Committee in supporting the delivery of the Belfast Agenda;
- to raise awareness and understanding of the functions and cross cutting themes within the sphere of the Committee's responsibilities and to obtain Members' input to how Committee business should be conducted;
- to set out strategic objectives for the Committee and further define its working relationship with Area Working Groups, working towards an outcomes based approach to understand causes, priorities and action at a local level; and
- to identify key priorities and develop an action plan for 2015/2016.

The Committee agreed that a workshop would take place before the summer break to develop a Committee work plan and that Members of the People and Communities Committee would be invited to attend.

Tackling Anti Social Behaviour - Update

The Lead Operations Officer and Assistant Director updated Members on the progress on the internal review on how the Council dealt with anti-social behaviour. She outlined the work that had been undertaken in the four areas of particular focus, Falls Park/City Cemetery; Woodvale Park; Musgrave Park; and Orangefield Park and the expected future direction of the work in line with the priorities of the new Council.

After discussion, the Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed that a further report would be considered at its next meeting, to include;-

- the effectiveness of joint patrolling of the parks;
- research on tackling anti-social behaviour in the City; and
- an update on tackling anti-social behaviour in the parks in the Ballysillan and Oldpark area.

Playground Improvement Programme

The Committee considered the following report:

“Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the successful Playground Improvement Programme 2014 - 2015 and outline plans for a new two year rolling programme of playground refurbishments for 2015 -16 and 2016 – 2017. Members are asked to note that the refurbishments are funded under the Capital Programme and that an allocation of £580,000 has been agreed for the next two years for this programme
- 1.2 Members will be aware that as part of the LGR 16 playground sites were transferred to the Council which brings the total number of playgrounds across the city to 93. Members are asked to note that the SP&R Committee agreed in January 2015 that £2m from the new boundary rate base should be applied to projects in the new boundary areas which included playground refurbishments at Brooke; Areema; Mount Eagles; Roddens Crescent and a new playground in Poleglass. Preparatory work is being advanced on these projects and will be taken forward in conjunction with the playground refurbishment programme.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 1. Recommend to SP&R Committee the refurbishment of the sites below under Year 1 and Year 2 of the Playground Improvement Programme which has an allocated budget of £580,000 under the Capital Programme for the next two years (a copy of which, was available on the Council’s website)

Year 1 2015 -2016	Year 2 (2016 – 2017)
a) Skippers	a) Cregagh
b) Horn Drive, Lenadoon	b) Jubilee Park
c) Belmont Park	c) Alloa Street
d) Drumglass Park	d) Wedderburn
e) Tirna nog Ligoneil	e) Grove
f) Willowbank	f) Glencairn
g) Nubia Street	g) Ardoyne
	h) Springhill Site A
	i) Castleton

2. Agree to replace eight, two-seater rotators that no longer comply with the BSEN 1176 safety standards during Year 1 of the Programme.

3. Agree the use of Framework Agreement 'E' (Landscape Architecture) to assist delivery of the LGR playground improvements during Year 1 of the Programme.

Members are asked to note that it was agreed in January 2015 that £2m from the new boundary rate base should be applied to projects in the new boundary areas which included playground refurbishments at Brooke; Areema; Mount Eagles; Roddens Crescent and a new playground in Poleglass. Work on these will be progressed at the same time as the Playground Refurbishment Programme.

3.0 Main Report

Playground Refurbishment Programme 2014/15

3.1 Since its inception in 2012, the Playground Improvement Programme has made a significant impact on overall quality and play value of the city's playgrounds. Through the Programme a total investment of £745k has improved accessibility and play value at each of the sites, providing new inclusive equipment, safety surfacing, boundary fencing, site furniture and landscaping works.

3.2 In 2012 independent inspection reports classified 25% of our facilities as 'poor' (quality score of 3.0 or less). Continued investment over the last four years has achieved the desired improvement in overall safety, quality and play value at each of the sites refurbished under the Programme. Based on this year's cycle of inspection reports only 2% of all sites are classified as 'Fair'. In terms of their quality, the remaining sites are recorded as 'sufficient' through to 'excellent'. None of the sites are recorded as being 'insufficient' to 'extremely poor'. The playgrounds improved under previous programmes are now more inviting, inclusive and exciting places for children and parents to visit. The 2014 - 2015 Improvement Programme will be fully complete by the end of May 2015 and has resulted in the following playgrounds being transformed.

- Stewart Street
- Queen Mary's Gardens (completion delayed until late May 2015)
- Carnamore
- Lemberg Street

- Falls Park
- Cherryvale Playing Fields.

Proposed Playground Refurbishment Programme 2015/16

3.3 Members should note that this year's cycle of independent inspections has been undertaken by Play Services Ireland Ltd in March 2015. The 'quality' score for each playground is based on compliance with European safety standards BS EN 1176 & 1177. Inspection reports also continue to identify and prioritise repairs to existing equipment for ongoing maintenance purposes. The 'quality' score awarded for each playground is categorised as:

Score 9 - 10	Excellent
Score 8 - 9	Very Good
Score 7 - 8	Good
Score 6 - 7	Fairly Good
Score 5 - 6	Sufficient
Score 4 - 5	Fair
Score 3 - 4	Insufficient
Score 2 - 3	Poor
Score 1 - 2	Very Poor
Score 0 - 1	Extremely Poor

3.4 Following this assessment, it is proposed that the playgrounds as listed in Table 1 above are refurbished under Year 1 and Year 2 of the Playground Improvement Programme which has an allocated budget of £580,000 under the Capital Programme. These playgrounds had the lowest overall quality scores (March 2015 - Quality Scores). As a result of refurbishment work all selected playgrounds will move from 'fair' to the new classification of 'excellent' (quality score 5.4 –10.0) when re-inspected.

3.5 Members are asked to note that Avoniel has not been included on the list of proposed refurbishments as there are wider proposals for this site as part of the leisure transformation programme. Refurbishments to Brooke, Areema and Roddens Crescent, which also all scored low, are being taken forward as part of £2m which has previously been agreed by the SP&R Committee for projects in the transferring in areas.

3.6 Members are asked to note that to deliver playground improvements for the additional sites above will require the engagement of consultants through the Council's existing Framework Agreement 'E' (Landscape Architecture).

3.7 Members should also be aware that as a result of this year's suite of independent inspections it has come to light that eight of our older model two-seater rotating units are no longer compliant with current BSEN 1176 safety standards. In order to ensure compliance with the safety standard all eight units should be replaced in Year 1 of the new two year refurbishment programme.

3.8 Financial & Resource Implications

- Refurbishment work at existing Belfast City Council sites will be funded through the capital programme and a budget of £580k has been allocated for each year of the programme.
- Staff from the Landscape Planning & Development Unit will continue to deliver and project manage the Playground Improvement Programme and will be using the Council's framework agreement 'E' (Landscape Architecture) to deliver improvements to the new acquired LGR playground sites. As in previous years, Community Park Managers and park Outreach officers will continue to assist with the distribution of information relating to playground improvements to members and local communities.
- The use of the framework agreement 'E' (Landscape Architect) will incur a range of professional fees, dependent upon the level of assistance required.

3.9 Equality or Good Relations Implications

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

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations as set out under section 2.0.

Belfast Agenda - Regeneration

Department of Regional Development (DRD) Lagan Footbridge – Gasworks to Ormeau Park

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided an update on the progress of the proposed DRD Lagan Footbridge ahead of the anticipated submission of a planning application and the impact the scheme might have on the Council post April 2016. The Director of Property and Projects outlined the key issues for notation, in particular:

- the significance of the infrastructure project for the City and its importance for connecting the city centre with communities east of the Lagan;
- the progress in recent months from concept design of nine options to detailed design of one preferred option and the anticipated submission of a planning application to the Council; and
- the continued engagement by DRD with the Council regarding operational issues and potential developments in Ormeau Park, such as cycle paths.

Operational Issues

Strategic Cemetery and Crematorium Provision - Update

The Assistant Director advised the Committee on the progress that had been made in relation to cemetery and crematorium development. She reminded the Committee that the Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting in October 2014, had agreed to commission a review of the Council's current burial policy and that an economic appraisal was also currently being undertaken around the options for future cremation provision for the City.

The Committee noted the contents of the report and the planned workshop on Thursday, 18th June to consider the outcome of the review of the Council's burial policy and economic appraisal, to which all Members of the Council would be invited.

System for Observing Play and Recreation in Communities (SOPARC) - Update

The Assistant Director reminded the Committee that over the past 18 months the Council had successfully progressed to Phase 2 of the SOPARC pilot using a technique to effectively measure, analyse and encourage levels and characteristics of usage and activity within Council parks and open spaces. She highlighted the principal aspects of the report which included updates on each of the three phased approaches that were currently being implemented across the City.

Members noted the contents of the report and the ongoing development of the SOPARC pilot project.

Street Naming Applications

The Committee approved the undernoted application for the naming of a new street, in respect of which the Royal Mail had offered no objection:

<u>Proposed Names</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Applicant</u>
Global Crescent	Off Millar Street, BT6	Fold Housing Association

The Committee refused the undernoted application for the naming of a new street, to allow the developer to submit a further proposed name:

<u>Proposed Names</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Applicant</u>
Corrigan Heights	Off Westrock Drive, BT12	Apex Housing Association

Parks Events - Small Grants Scheme

The Committee noted the contents of a report which outlined the decisions taken by the Assistant Director, under delegated authority, regarding the Parks Events Small Grants applications received in Tranche 1 for events taking place in parks between 1st April and 30th September, 2015 (a copy of which was available on the Council's website).

Lagan Valley Regional Park Scheme

The Assistant Director provided an update on the funding position of Lagan Valley Regional Park (LVRP) and explained that a request had been received for additional funding of £41,055 in 2015/16 due to the changes in the availability of funding streams. She indicated that as part of Local Government Reform, funding for LVRP would now be divided between two Councils, namely the Council and the new Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, rather than three councils.

She outlined that the Council had benefitted significantly from its partnership with LVRP and funding it in 2015/16 would support and enhance work undertaken by the Council in countryside recreation, biodiversity, promotion and community engagement.

She reminded the Committee that the former Parks and Leisure Committee, at its meeting on 11th December 2014, had been informed that this level of funding had not been provided for in the estimates, however, officers had subsequently identified savings within the revenue budget for this request. She outlined that a report would also be submitted to the Committee at a later date regarding the assessment of the longer term funding arrangements.

The Committee noted the contents of the report and approved the funding of £41,055 to LVRP for 2015/16, subject to the relevant funding agreement being updated.

Alexandra Park - Creation of Outdoor Classroom

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the abovementioned report to allow Elected Members for the area to be consulted on the approach as set out within the report regarding the public consultation exercise on the development of an outdoor classroom in Alexandra Park and that a report be submitted to the Committee in this regard.

Food Safety Prosecution - Update

The Committee noted the contents of a report which outlined the outcome of the Food Safety and Port Health Team's investigation into the major E. coli O157 outbreak associated with Flicks Restaurant that had occurred in October, 2012.

Attendance at Events - Healthy Cities Annual Conference

The Committee granted authority for the Chairperson and the Deputy Chairperson, together with the appropriate officer from Environmental Health (or their nominees), to attend the Annual Business and Technical Conference (Phase VI) in Kuopio, Finland from 24 - 26 June.

Issues Raised in Advance by Members

Roselawn Cemetery - recent press coverage

Alderman Rodgers referred to an incident that had occurred at Roselawn Cemetery, during which graves had been submerged with rain water.

After discussion, the Committee agreed that the Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, would write a letter of comfort to the families which had been affected during the incident. It was agreed further that a site visit would take place to Roselawn Cemetery and Crematorium for Members of the People and Communities Committee.

Chairperson