

# People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 8th November, 2016

## MEETING OF PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Garrett (Chairperson);  
the High Sheriff (Alderman Rodgers);  
Aldermen McKee and Sandford; and  
Councillors Austin, Beattie, Brown, Copeland, Corr,  
Corr Johnston, Heading, Jones, Lyons, Magennis, McCabe,  
McCoubrey, McCusker, Newton, Nicholl and  
O'Neill.

Also attended: Councillors Attwood, Collins and McDonough-Brown

In attendance: Mr. N. Grimshaw, Director of City and  
Neighbourhood Services;  
Mrs. R. Crozier, Assistant Director;  
Mrs. S. Toland, Assistant Director;  
Mrs. C. Taggart, Community Development Manager; and  
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

### Apologies

No apologies were reported.

### Minutes

The Minute of the meetings of 11th October 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 November.

### Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

### Request for Deputation

The Chairperson advised the Committee that a request had been received from a representative to present to the Committee in relation to Agenda item 5 (a) Anti-Social behaviour (Citywide and the Holylands). He reported that the representative was in attendance should the Members agree to hear his presentation.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to hear the presentation and Mr. J. Montgomery was invited to present to the Committee.

Mr. Montgomery thanked the Members for the opportunity to present. He advised that he was a resident of South Belfast for 46 years and he was also a landlord who worked for an estate agent for three months of the year.

Mr. Montgomery reported that the purpose of his presentation was to highlight that he did not feel that the behaviour of the students and standard of the accommodation within the Holyland/Queen's University area was as bad or as isolated to this particular area as it was often portrayed and he outlined his views to the Committee.

The Chairman thanked the representative for his presentation.

### **Anti-Social Behaviour (Citywide and Holylands)**

The Committee considered the undernoted report.

#### **“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues**

**1.1 Further to the Notice of Motion referred to Committee in October 2016 (as detailed below) and increasing Member concern around antisocial behaviour in a range of parks and open spaces across the city, the purpose of this report is to update Members on:**

- The anti-social behaviour context in the Holy Land and around parks and open spaces across the city;
- The ongoing work in response to these issues;
- The planned work to improve the response to these issues;

#### **Notice of Motion**

**“This Council recognises the substantial social and economic contribution which students and universities make to our City. We also condemn, without reservation, the disorder seen on the streets of Belfast and express our support for the affected residents. The Council resolves to consider a report in the relevant Committee specifically addressing the return of wardens, the installation of CCTV, the impact of private landlords and options for more rigorously enforcing bye-laws. The Council also agrees that Chief Officers will attend the Inter-Agency Group in recognition of the seriousness of the problem”.**

#### **2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to;**

- Consider the contents of the report.
- Note the progress to date and endorse the future work planned to address these issues more effectively.

**3.0 Main report**

**The Anti-Social Behaviour Context**

**The Holyland**

- 3.1** Members will be aware that for a number of years, the Holyland area of South Belfast has experienced significant issues with ongoing anti-social and nuisance behaviour, particularly at key dates e.g. St. Patrick's Day, Halloween and the Fresher's Period. The main issues being on street drinking and noise. There have also been occasions when street disorder has taken place due to the large numbers of people in the area and the influence of large quantities of alcohol.
- 3.2** Groups in the area representing the interests of long term residents and newly settled families continue to report that these behaviours have significant impacts on their quality of life, particularly as the issues have been ongoing for a number of years.
- 3.3** The issues are associated in the main (although not exclusively) with the large student population in the area. There is also recognition that not all students are involved in the negative behaviours.
- 3.4** At a recent public meeting of the Wider University Area PACT (Partners and Communities Together) to review the Fresher's period 2016, significant concern was articulated from long term residents and newly settled families that agencies and the Higher Education Institutions (HEI's) were not effective in their efforts to minimise the impact of these issues on the community in the area.
- 3.5** She advised that a summary of the resources provided and actions taken by Council, PSNI and the HEI's during Fresher's 2016 were available.

**Parks and Open Spaces**

- 3.6** For several years there has also been an Elected Member and public concern regarding anti-social behaviour in local neighbourhoods. In recent months, Elected Member concern and the number of customer complaints has grown, in respect of crime and anti-social behaviour in a number of parks and open spaces across the city.

**3.7 An additional concern in respect of parks and open spaces is the growth of a large group of young people who are transient in nature (anything from 50 – 150 young people at a time), who move across parks and open spaces in the city. This group can be under the influence of alcohol and drugs and are often determined to remain detached from existing structured youth provision in their own communities.**

**3.8 Currently the main parks and open spaces most affected at present are:**

<b>Park/Open Space</b>	<b>Main Issues At Present</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Girdwood	Criminal damage, inappropriate use of scramblers, abuse of staff/residents, rowdy and nuisance behaviour.	Unpredictable, can happen any night of the week.
Marrowbone	Criminal damage/vandalism, trespass, drinking, lighting fires, drug use, rowdy and nuisance behaviour.	Weekends mainly and school holidays
Falls Park/City Cemetery	Criminal damage/vandalism, lighting fires, burnt out vehicles, inappropriate vehicle use, drinking, drug use, rowdy and nuisance behaviour.	
Lagan Walkway	Vulnerability of young people under influence of alcohol and possibly drugs and proximity to water.	
Cavehill Country Park	Criminal damage, graffiti, drinking, inappropriate use of scramblers, rowdy and nuisance behaviour.	

Dunville	Drinking, rowdy and nuisance behaviour, inappropriate use of scramblers.	
Whiterock	Possible damage to new playground facility and proximity to Falls Park/City Cemetery.	

**The ongoing work in response to these issues**

**The Holyland**

**3.9 Members will be aware that agencies (including the HEI's) have been working in partnership with the community to address issues in the Holyland area for a number of years. This work has included:**

- Holylands Strategic Study to better understand the challenge and make recommendations on proposed ways forward;
- Learning City Inter-Agency Group (previously Holyland Inter-Agency Group) to ensure strategic focus was given to issues in the area (including delivery of Learning City Action Plan);
- Student Housing Strategy to support the City to meet the demand for Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation;
- Joint PSNI, Council and University operations every St. Patricks, Halloween and Fresher's period;
- Wider University Area PACT (including delivery of the Wider University Area PACT Action Plan;

- Financial support for community led family friendly, community safety and environmental improvement projects;
- HEI development of student disciplinary policy to better manage student behaviours
- City Wide Community Safety Warden Service 2009 – 2013;
- Pilot Holy Land redeployable CCTV Provision 2010 – 2016, partner funded.

#### Parks and Open Spaces

3.10 Further to reports considered by Committee in May/June 2015 collaborative work between Parks, Community Safety and (D)PCSP (Policing and Community Safety Partnership) teams has been ongoing. Additionally, with those teams now being within the City and Neighbourhood Services Department the effectiveness of a 'One Council' response to crime and anti-social behaviour is improving. Ongoing work includes:

- Joint planning and ongoing 'one Council' front line responses to community safety issues in all parks and open spaces detailed above;
- Fortnightly operational planning meetings to monitor ongoing concerns and develop responses;
- Joint visible reassurance patrols of Council Officers and when required PSNI;
- Proactive visits to off licenses around parks and open spaces to give advice and guidance on consequences of selling alcohol to minors;
- Ongoing delivery of programming to support positive and legitimate use of the parks and open spaces;
- Delivery of positive diversionary activities in partnership with (D)PCSP's;
- Partnerships developed with local youth providers and (D)PCSP supported detached youth work to address anti-social behaviour in priority parks and open spaces;
- Council and (D)PCSP investment in community infrastructure around parks and open spaces to encourage participation and sustainability;
- Ongoing delivery of proactive work on social media and through schools to promote parental responsibility as well as reinforcing the expectation that young people using the parks will do so in a positive manner;
- Joint procurement and deployment of mobile/redeployable CCTV solutions;

- Single point of reporting crime and anti-social behaviour issues on a daily basis to improve our understanding of the issues.

**The planned work to improve the response to these issues**

- 3.11 It is recognised that significant effort has gone in to developing the ‘one Council’ and partnership approach to addressing crime and anti-social behaviour across the city (including the Holy Land and parks/open spaces across), however, challenges remain in improving the effectiveness of our efforts to address these issues. The remaining challenges have informed the focus of our work going forward. They are:

**Operational Demand v Availability of Resource**

- 3.12 It is recognised there is significant demand from across the city for Council to provide a front line and operational response to address anti-social behaviour. Members will be aware however, that the available citywide Council front line resource currently stands at:

- 8 Safer Neighbourhood Officers (SNO’s) whose main focus is working at community level to address community safety issues. The working patterns of SNO’s is Mon – Thurs 2pm – 10pm (8 SNO’s), Fri/Sat 4.30pm – Midnight (4 SNO’s)
- 24 Park Wardens with part focus of job on addressing community safety issues within parks. Park Wardens work a shift pattern providing cover throughout the day from morning to park closing. For the autumn/winter period this means that Park Wardens are not available from within their normal shift pattern for evening work.
- Up to 10 casual Alcohol Enforcement Officers (AEO’s) who can be deployed to support SNO’s and Park Wardens at key dates and events, but this carries an additional financial cost.

- 3.13 Operational demand for front line Council resource exceeds the core available resource at present (Park Wardens and SNO’s). Evidence of need (both recorded incidents and anecdotal input from Elected Members and communities) has informed the areas of focus at present but this may change in the future.

3.14 **Future Work Planned**

- Explore the short term opportunities for flexible working between SNO’s and Park Wardens to meet the citywide demand at evenings and weekends.

- In the context of the City and Neighbourhood Services Department change programme, explore the possible benefits of a more integrated ‘one Council’ approach to warden type services to maximise availability and effectiveness of the resource

**3.15 CCTV**

CCTV can be a useful tool; however, as a standalone resource it is not effective in dealing with and addressing crime and anti-social behaviour.

- 3.16** Members will recall the decision of Belfast City Council in February 2016 to close the pilot redeployable CCTV system operating in the Holylands and to support the impact with mobile/redeployable CCTV when required.

This decision was based on the following:

- None of the funders or partners of the original scheme currently have any financial resource to contribute toward the urgent upgrade needed to ensure the Holylands CCTV system operates at an acceptable level.
- PSNI who had taken responsibility for recording and monitoring of cameras are no longer able to do so at the original level and are only prepared to commit to recording capacity for five strategically placed cameras. Live monitoring of these cameras would only take place over key dates throughout the year e.g. St. Patrick’s Day, Fresher’s and Halloween.
- CCTV is not considered a current priority for them
- There is a reluctance from partners to consider re-investment in a system which has not provided tangible evidence of impact over the years.
- CCTV as a standalone resource is considered not effective in dealing with anti-social behaviour in the Holylands area.
- There is a view that a shared multi-agency responsibility and partnership working is the most effective way of addressing issues in the Holylands area.
- Future investment would need to show strong evidence of impact.

- 3.18** The current position remains that no partner funding is available at present to contribute to fixed CCTV systems either in the Holy Land or elsewhere in the city for the purposes of preventing crime and anti-social behaviour and



that PSNI are not in a position to monitor any additional CCTV cameras.

**3.19 Mobile/Redeployable CCTV and Body Worn Cameras are now available for use by Council, and PSNI can deploy Evidence Gathering Teams (EGT) when the evidence of need is established.**

**3.20 Future Work Planned**

- Continued provision of Council procured mobile/redeployable CCTV solutions and where appropriate and available the PSNI Evidence Gathering Teams (EGT) in hot spot areas and at high risk times
- Continued use of Body Worn Cameras for Council Officers in hot spot areas at high risk times

**3.21 Council Role v PSNI Role**

Partnership working between Council and PSNI in providing front line services to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour is intrinsic to how both organisations work. Joint Council and PSNI operations have taken place in the Holy Land, at large events and at hot spots in communities for a number of years.

**3.22 However, core to this joint working is clarity on the individual roles and responsibilities of each organisation. For example:**

- Council Officers will work to address low level noise, nuisance or anti-social behaviour where it is safe to do so and within their existing working patterns. Additionally, Council Officers do not have any supplementary powers should an individual be obstructive.
- PSNI Officers will work to address more serious nuisance or anti-social behaviour, criminality and street disorder and are a 24/7 resource.

**3.23 Core to the clarity of roles and responsibilities is that Council Officers have a very specific remit to deal with low level and minor issues. Council Officers are not recruited for or trained to deal with more serious nuisance, anti-social behaviour, criminality or street disorder.**

**3.24 The Way Forward**

- Guidance to be provided to Elected Members and Communities on roles and responsibilities of Council and PSNI

- More joint operational planning between Council and PSNI to reduce duplication of and maximise efforts
- Further exploration of how to maximise the Council roles in supporting this work as part of the City and Neighbourhoods Department Change Programme

#### Role of Education Authority and other Youth Providers

3.25 Crime and anti-social behaviour in parks and open spaces can often be driven by alcohol and drug use among young people. The young people in question are often transient in nature and move in large groups between parks and open spaces and are largely detached from more structured youth provision.

3.26 Most youth providers (including the Education Authority) will not work directly with a young person under the influence of alcohol or drugs and this presents a challenge in respect of meaningful engagement with this group with a view to meeting their needs and changing their negative behaviours.

#### 3.27 Future Work Planned

- A review of the specific needs of this group of young people (detached, transient and sometimes under the influence of alcohol/drugs) is being undertaken by Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP).
- The Education Authority is in the process of establishing Local Advisory Groups (LAG's) to inform the future of youth provision in the city. Council Officers will participate in these groups with a view to influencing the Education Authority to improve how they meet the needs of this specific group of young people as well as the needs of young people generally.

#### Legislative Review

Further to Council's consideration of a Notice of Motion expressing concern about the effectiveness of legislation and bye-laws designed to tackle on street drinking, Council requested that the Department of Justice and Department for Communities commence a review of the effectiveness of the existing legal framework. This review should also consider additional powers which could complement or enhance those currently available in Northern Ireland. That review is underway with the proactive support of Council Officers.

### 3.29 Future Work Planned

- **Ongoing delivery of the review of the effectiveness of existing legislation and bye-laws and report back to Committee on recommendations**
- **Meantime exploration of how far the parameters of existing legislation and bye-laws can be used to alleviate the issue.”**

With the permission of the Chairperson, Councillor McDonough-Brown addressed the Committee. He reiterated his concerns surrounding the levels of anti-social behaviour in the Holylands/Queens area and acknowledged that anti-social behaviour was an issue throughout the City.

A number of Members concurred and cited examples of problem areas/parks in their areas. A suggestion was made that park attendants could be reintroduced.

The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services advised that, given this was a citywide problem, the Council in trying to tackle the issue had to adopt a broader approach. He stressed that it would be pointless to try and target individual areas and not the wider problem.

A Member suggested that it might be beneficial to have discussions with representatives from the Universities and Belfast Metropolitan College to establish if a joined up approach could be taken both in terms of assistance and funding.

Following detailed discussion, the Committee noted the progress to date and agreed:

- that a report would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee, given this was being considered as part of the organisational development within City and Neighbourhoods, which would consider the wider practical resource implications of citywide warden provision. The report would include projected expenditure, resource requirements and detail clearly any financial impact on the Council's existing budgets;
- an update in respect of the Landlord Registration Scheme be submitted to a future meeting of the committee;
- that the Director and Assistant Director of City and Neighbourhood Services and the Chairperson of the Committee request a meeting with the Universities and Belfast Metropolitan College to explore if there was any funding opportunities; and
- that representatives from Queen's University, the University of Ulster and Belfast Metropolitan College and the PSNI be invited to attend a future meeting of the Committee to address the Council's concerns.

### Hire Charges for Council Pitches

The Committee considered the following report:

#### **“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

**1.1 At the People and Communities Committee meeting on 11th October 2016 the following notice of motion was presented:**

**In accordance with notice on the agenda, Councillor Collins proposed:**

**“This Council notes the concerns raised by local football teams over the cost of pitches, including grass, 3G and 4G pitches. Some of our most long-standing service users have indicated that they have had to face a price increase of up to 20-25% over the recent period, with some teams reporting that the price of grass pitches has risen from £30 to £55 over a two year period and 3G pitches from £90 to £120 over a one year period.**

**The Council agrees that this is simply unattainable for many local teams and it is serving to negatively impact upon grassroots football. The Council views it as important that we ensure that these facilities are within the reach of our local teams and, accordingly, agrees that these price increases should be reversed and a re-examination undertaken of pitch pricing policy to ensure that these facilities are accessible to all.”**

**1.2 Committee agreed that a report be brought back to November’s People and Communities Committee in response to this.**

#### **2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- Note the 2016/17 scale of charges for the use of pitches in our parks**
- Note that there will be no price increase in 2017/2018 in line with the estimates process underway**

**3.0 Main report**

**Key Issues**

**3.1 Fees and Charges for the use of facilities within the department are reviewed annually, in line with the estimates process and revised rates implemented with effect from 1st April each year. In the last number of years there have been minor inflationary increases.**

**3.2 Belfast pitch charges did not increase in 2016/2017 except for the following circumstances:**

- 1. A proposal was agreed at Transition Committee on 10th February 2015 to retain the Lisburn City Council rate of £60 for the hire of 3G pitches at the Brooke Activity Centre for a period of 12 months, that is, from 1st April 2015 until 31st March 2016. Therefore the rate at this facility reverted back to the Belfast rate as of 1st April 2016.**
- 2. The Leisure Services contract with GLL came into effect on 1st January 2015 and included the operation of 3G pitches at Leisure Centres. Within the terms of the contract the cost of pitch hire was frozen for the first 9 months retaining the 2015/16 hourly rate of £80. The GLL 3G charges reverted to the Council rate of £82 in September 2016 having operated at the reduced rate for an additional 11 months.**

**3.3 A benchmarking exercise is undertaken each year in relation to the cost of grass and 3G pitches within the greater Belfast area. The hourly hire charge for grass pitches ranges from £19 to £34 while our current price is £25.75 per hour.**

**The charge for a 3G full pitch ranges from £70 to £82 while our current price is £82 per hour. Match rates range from £90 to £110. This is for a hire period of up to 2hrs which was previously agreed by Council in response to demand from users.**

**3.4 Concessionary rates are available at a 50% reduction for Junior use and for off peak use for both grass and 3G pitches. Peak applies to bookings between 12-2pm and after 5pm Mon-Fri.**

**3.5 Clubs often avail of a block booking mechanism which allows bookings up to 13 weeks in advance and saves on VAT. For example a block booking for a match would equate to £91.67 per match on a 3G pitch for a booking of up to 2 hours.**

- 3.6 Significant investment has been put into both Grass and 3G pitches over the years and the benchmarks above are not always comparing the same standard of facility however they are competitive.**

**Financial & Resource Implications**

- 3.7 The hire of pitches generates approximately £200k income annually for the service. This income supports the management and maintenance of the facilities and in the case of 3G provides for the replacement of the surfaces which have an average life of 10 years.**

**Equality or Good Relations Implications**

- 3.8 There are no equality or Good relations implications.”**

With the permission of the Chairperson, Councillor Collins addressed the Committee and outlined his concerns surrounding the increase in the hire cost of the Council’s pitches. He stated that this was a problem that was placing a huge financial burden on many local clubs and organisations and he called for an immediate price reduction.

A number of Members concurred and reiterated the financial pressure that many of the smaller football clubs were facing and also sought clarification on the current pitch prices.

The Assistant Director addressed a number of queries regarding the current pricing policy and the fees charged. She explained that the income generated was used to support the management and maintenance of the facilities which included the reseeding of the grass pitches and replacement of the 3G pitches that was required approximately every 10 years.

The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services highlighted that any reduction in the charges would have an impact on the departmental budget and it would therefore need to be considered as part of the Council’s rate setting process 2017/18.

It was:

Moved by Councillor Beattie,  
Seconded by Councillor Magennis,

That this Council adopts a discretionary policy for community and voluntary groups and grants a 25% reduction for groups that meet the criteria set out by this Committee.

On a vote by show of hands, 8 Members voted for the proposal and 11 against and it was declared lost.

Following further discussion, the Committee noted the update report and agreed that an additional report would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee that:

- would provide an explanation of how the pitch fee of £82 had been arrived at; and
- provide the detail of the engagement that had taken place with the various clubs and users of the pitches.

### **Tribunal Service Evaluation**

The Committee considered a report which had been presented by the Community Development Manager in relation to the findings of the evaluation of the Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service and the impending end of the Council funding contract.

With the permission of the Chairperson, Councillor Attwood addressed the Committee and outlined his concerns regarding the fact that the funding was due to cease in December 2016.

Several other Members also voiced their concern and requested that the matter be deferred to enable Party Group Briefings to be held to consider the matter in greater detail. The Members stressed the urgency of these briefings taking place immediately given that the contract end date was imminent.

The Committee agreed:

- that the matter be deferred to enable Party Group Briefings to be held;
- to write to the Department for Communities requesting an urgent meeting with the Minister to discuss the concerns of the Committee in relation to the cessation of the Belfast Tribunal Service.

### **Committee/Strategic Issues**

#### **Connswater Community Greenway** **Progress Update**

The Assistant Director reminded the Committee that, as a result of a successful bid for Big Lottery funding which had been led by the Eastside Partnership in 2007, the Council now had a legal agreement with the East Belfast Partnership Board (now known as the Eastside Partnership) that included a 40 year commitment to maintain and manage the Greenway.

She reported that the Council, Big Lottery, Rivers Agency and the Connswater Community Trust (CCGT) were the key partners on the strategic oversight group and operational project delivery board during and post construction of the Greenway.

The Assistant Director advised that the project was approximately a year from completion and the delivery board, which was chaired by the Council, felt that it would be timely to review the progress made and also the ongoing requirements post-construction.

The officer reported that as part of the development process, an animation plan for 2017, would be brought to a future meeting of the Committee for its consideration.

The Committee granted authority for officers to develop proposals to review the existing joint partnership arrangement and to collaboratively develop with CCGT the ongoing management and animation arrangements for the Greenway, post-construction.

### **Minutes of Meeting of the Strategic Cemetery and Crematorium Development Working Group**

The Assistant Director advised that, at the meeting of the Strategic Cemetery and Crematorium Development Working Group held on 2nd November, the following key issues had been considered:

- the terms of reference for the Strategic Cemetery and Crematorium Development Working Group;
- the City Cemetery Heritage Project; and
- the Memorial Safety Inspection Programme.

Following a query from a Member, the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services confirmed that he was now in receipt of the economic appraisal on the proposals regarding the future crematorium options and this would be included on the agenda for the December meeting of the Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Working Group.

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Working Group.

### **Fuel Poverty Update**

(Mr. I. Harper, Building Control Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **“1.0 Purpose of report or summary of main Issues**

**1.1 Members will recall that reports on the Affordable Warmth Scheme were considered at both the June and August Committees.**

**1.2 At its September meeting, Council agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting of the People and Communities Committee on the feasibility of amending the terms of reference for the Reference Group on Older People to allow for it to address the issue of fuel poverty or of introducing some other mechanism, given that fuel poverty was not restricted solely to older people.**

**1.3 This report provides an update to Members on the work the Council currently undertakes to support households**



suffering from fuel poverty and the steps it is taking through the winter planning group to improve and better co-ordinate this. The report also provides Members with an update on correspondence received from the Department for Communities and recent meetings between the Department and officers delivering the Affordable Warmth Scheme.

- 1.4 The report also provides an update to Members on the work the Council and other partners are proposing in relation to the provision of winter warmth packs for vulnerable households in the city.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to

- Note the contents of this report.

3.0 Main Issues

All Party reference Group on Older People

- 3.1 The Reference Group met on 21st September to consider the motion referred to in paragraph 1.2 and were updated on the Council discussion on the issue of fuel poverty. Members agreed this is a priority for the Council and is an important issue when considering older people's needs. It was agreed that it continued to be raised at this Committee when considering affordable warmth and fuel poverty issues.

Winter Planning Group For Older People

- 3.2 The need for a joined up approach to winter planning with older people was raised through priority actions identified by the Greater Belfast Seniors Forum, discussions in Belfast Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership (HASP) steering group and links with the Public Health Agency (PHA) about the distribution of winter warmth packages. The Winter Planning Group was established:

- To co-ordinate information to older people before or just as cold period starts-key contacts, keeping warm, avoiding or acting on burst pipes-also making sure key contacts are reachable, explore the expert patient/self-management approach
- To ensure a joined up approach to fuel poverty and coordinate benefit uptake, encourage a warm zones approach
- To keep up to date with Emergency planning and build on work from previous years, review any lessons

learned and changes needed with older people and a range of contacts.

- 3.3 At the last meeting it was agreed that there is potential for additional cross referral between the affordable warmth scheme, home safety check scheme, the chronic disease hub, AGE NI First Connect service and National Energy Action. The agencies are working together to consider how this can be achieved.

Affordable Warmth Scheme Update

- 3.4 The Council's Affordable Warmth team continues to deliver 46 completed surveys to Northern Ireland Housing Executive per month as specified in the current Service Level Agreement between the Council and the Department for Communities (DfC). To date, the scheme has installed 1378 energy efficiency measures in 879 homes in Belfast. The value of approvals issued is just under £3.5 million.
- 3.5 While the scheme is primarily targeted, the Council receives a high number of enquiries and self-referrals. Each self-referral is assessed for eligibility and a triage system is used to prioritise each case. High priority cases are dealt with first i.e. households with broken heating systems or no central heating system at all. The Service Level Agreement states that that no more than 20% of the 46 surveys can be self-referrals. The Affordable Warmth Coordinator recently met with DfC to discuss the possibility of flexibility on this percentage due to an increasing number of high priority cases over the winter months. DfC acknowledged the issue and it was agreed that an increase in the percentage of self-referrals due to the number of high priority cases could be acceptable, provided that any deviations are discussed with the Department. The possibility of increasing the monthly target of 46 was also discussed, the Department will keep the Council informed if extra funding becomes available.
- 3.6 The affordable warmth co-ordinator works closely with colleagues across the Council. She attends the Winter Planning meetings and will be providing an update on the Affordable Warmth Scheme to the Council's All Party Reference Group on Older People.
- 3.7 If householders are not eligible for the Affordable Warmth Scheme, they are referred to the NIHE Boiler Replacement Scheme and other energy efficiency grant schemes through National Energy Action. Project officers also offer energy efficiency advice and refer householders to other Council services such as the Home Safety Check Scheme, the

**'Be Warm' Fuel Stamp Scheme and other Council Departments where appropriate.**

**Other Fuel Poverty Measures**

- 3.8** The home safety team complete 1,200 family home safety checks per year. The Council, in partnership with the PHA and the Trust, delivers the 'Home Safety and Repair Service' for people aged 65 and over living in the Belfast City Council area; as part of this scheme a further 500 home safety checks are completed. These home visits give officers an insight into individuals' living conditions and staff are aware of how to identify if anyone is living in fuel poverty (document attached). Because of the link between increased home accidents (e.g. falls and unintentional injury) for those living in cold homes, the regional home safety check form collates information relating to home heating.
- 3.9** Based on this information the home safety team make referrals to the Affordable Warmth team and agencies such as Bryson Energy and National Energy Action. The home safety officer sits on the winter planning meetings where fuel poverty is discussed.

Environmental Health Officers, when carrying out their housing duties, come across individuals living in fuel poverty and will also make referrals to the various schemes and agencies listed above.

**Be Warm Fuel Stamp Scheme**

- 3.10** Our fuel stamp scheme 'Be Warm', helps householders save for home heating oil, by spreading the cost of their fuel. Residents can buy oil stamps from participating retailers, collect them on a savings card and use the value of the stamps to pay for all or part of your oil when placing an order. The scheme is available throughout Belfast. Stamps can be purchased from 35 retailers and are accepted by 47 Oil Suppliers. To date the scheme has sold £1.5 million worth of stamps.

**Winter Warmth Packs**

- 3.11** Each year the Council procures 600 children's winter warm packs on behalf of the Public Health Agency. These packs are distributed by 9 Sure Starts in Belfast to families with young children (under 5) who meet the criteria. An additional £11,000 funding will be spent on older persons' winter packs

next month. These packs will be procured by HASP and Age NI and provided to community groups and organisations who will distribute them to individuals who meet the criteria.

3.12 The Council also holds a number of packs in reserve. These are used to support vulnerable adults or groups and to assist the Council's response in the event of an exceptional cold spell.

3.13 The criteria to determine eligibility for a pack were agreed previously by Committee. The procedure to be followed for the distribution of packs was recently reviewed by Audit Governance and Risk Services.

3.14 Financial & Resource Implications

There are no Financial, Human Resources, Assets and other implications in this report. However it is noted that the reduced funding for the affordable warmth scheme in 2016/17 will require a review of resource.

Equality or Good Relations Implications

3.15 There are no direct Equality implications."

Following a query from a Member, the Building Control Manager advised that officers had met with representatives of the Department for Communities to discuss the increasing number of high priority self-referrals. He reported that the Department had acknowledged the issue and the need to assist with high priority cases and it had agreed that any additional self-referrals could be discussed directly with the Department and accepted over the 20% allowance. However, he highlighted that no specific additional percentage had actually been set.

Noted.

Physical Programme and Asset Management

Official recognition of the "White Stone on Cave Hill"

The Assistant Director submitted a report which detailed the historical significance of the white stone on Cave Hill.

She reported that the Cave Hill Conservation Campaign had put forward a formal request for official recognition of the historic landmark to the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA). The NIEA had confirmed that the stone was a historic landmark and that its location would be added to the new historic environment map viewer.

The officer outlined that the Cave Hill Conservation Campaign Group wished to mark the stone with a granite plaque detailing the role that it played during World War II.

It was estimated that the cost would be approximately £200, which would be met by the Campaign Group.

The Committee noted the recent acknowledgement by NIEA of the white stone on Cave Hill as a historic landmark and approved the installation of a granite plaque which would detail its importance and historical facts.

#### **Keyholding Agreement with Clonard Residents Association**

The Committee was reminded that the former Department for Social Development (DSD) had owned a piece of land which was located between Springfield Avenue and Forfar Way that had been adjacent to an existing Civic Amenity Site. The DSD had initially proposed that it would provide a playground and MUGA on the site, however, during the design phase of the project it had been established that the designated area had been contaminated. The Department had undertaken to remediate the land but as a result the budget for the project had been expended and it had been unable to construct the MUGA.

The Assistant Director advised that the playground and additional land had transferred to the Council. The Council had subsequently agreed to provide the facility as originally intended and she confirmed that the work on this was nearing completion.

The officer reported that the site had a history of anti-social behaviour and she highlighted that during the construction of the MUGA representations had been made by residents regarding young people accessing the construction site and generally causing a nuisance. The Committee noted that the Planning Service had placed a restriction on the site and as a result the floodlighting could only be used up to 7.00 p.m.

The Assistant Director detailed that the facility would continue to be opened and closed by Council officers, however, discussion had taken place with the Clonard Residents' Association which had premises close to the site. She reported that the Association had been involved in the project from its inception and it was fully aware of the issues in the area. The Association had agreed to take on a key holding role to demonstrate local commitment and ownership of the site and to help try and address issues of anti-social behaviour.

The Committee agreed to enter into a key holding agreement with Clonard Residents' Association in relation to the playground and multi user games area at Springfield Avenue / Forfar way.

#### **Renewal of Licence to Use Agreement with Grow**

The Committee was reminded that the Council had previously agreed to permit Grow to use land at the Waterworks Park to provide a community garden. This arrangement had been in place since 2010 and was due to terminate on 31st December, 2016.

The officer explained that the existing Licence of Use had been based on the organisation's current funding from the Big Lottery. She reminded the Members that

when entering into agreements it was necessary for the Council to satisfy itself that the terms and conditions of funding would not place an undue burden on the Council or its assets.

The Assistant Director advised that Grow had secured new funding from the Rank Foundation, this funding would be in place from January 2016 and would continue for a further two years until December 2018. She explained that Grow had now sought additional security of tenure over and above the terms of the funding and had also highlighted that as an organisation it wanted to seek and secure additional funding from other organisations, and on this basis, Grow had sought additional 'comfort' in relation to the security of tenure.

The Assistant Director reported that officers had reviewed the request and were content to recommend to Committee that, given the current funding agreement with the Rank Foundation, the Council agree to enter into a further two year agreement with Grow. It was also recommended that the Council agree up to a further three years, subject to review and the project remaining sustainable.

The officer advised that Grow might also be interested in an additional piece of land adjacent to the Community Garden, she clarified that this section of land was not included within this agreement and that Grow would make a further representation to the Council should the organisation wish to pursue it further.

The Committee:

- agreed to renew the Licence to Use agreement with Grow in relation to the provision of a community garden within the Waterworks Park for a period of two years; and
- agreed to delegate authority to the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services to extend the agreement for up to a further three years, subject to review and the Director's approval that the project remained sustainable.

### **BMX Race Track**

The Assistant Director advised that a request had been received from the Belfast City BMX Club seeking the Council's support to locate, develop and operate a national standard competition and BMX training track in Belfast. She advised that the club had also sought written confirmation of the Council's support in proceeding to seek third party funding applications.

The officer outlined that BMX was recognised as the best development activity in grassroots cycling, offering cyclists the opportunity to develop skills, fitness and friendships in a controlled off-road environment. Active BMX clubs offered lessons for beginners, skills sessions for more advanced riders and race meetings for the most experienced. However, it was highlighted that there was no competition standard BMX tracks in Belfast.

The Committee noted that the proposal was only commencing and that an update report would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee. A Member requested that when considering options for the potential location of the track that the Andersonstown Leisure Centre would be considered. A further Member requested that

the Alderman Tommy Patton Memorial Park would also be considered as a potential venue.

The Committee agreed:

- to support the Belfast City BMX Club in its application for third party funding for the development of a national standard competition and training BMX track in Belfast;
- that officers would be permitted to assist the Belfast City BMX Club in identifying an appropriate location; the production of a development proposal; developing the track; and producing a sustainable operational and management plan; and
- that, when considering the potential location, the Andersonstown Leisure Centre and the Alderman Tommy Patton Memorial Park would be considered along with other suitable locations.

### **Shaftesbury Energy Report**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

- 1.1 The Council-owned Shaftesbury Sports and Recreation Centre was leased to the Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group (LORAG) in the year 2000. In 2009, this arrangement was renewed and extended to a 25 year lease. Under LORAG’s management, significant investments and improvements have been made to the centre.**
- 1.2 LORAG has secured external funding to establish an energy project at the centre. This involves placing a number of solar panels on the roof of the centre so that up to 33 kWp of electricity is produced for use within the centre.**
- 1.3 LORAG has successfully applied for and have been awarded £75,652 funding for the project through the Northern Ireland Executive’s Social Investment Fund (SIF) and from Pure Leapfrog Community Energy Fund. This covers the total estimated cost of the project.**
- 1.4 In order to progress the project, LORAG has requested formal permission from the Council to install the solar panels. They have also requested technical assistance from the Council in order to assess the viability of the project and to help appoint suitable contractor(s) to carry out the works in accordance with the funding rules.**

## 2.0 Recommendations

### 2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- approve LORAG's request to install the solar panels on the Shaftsbury Sports and Recreation Centre;
- agree Council technical assistance support for LORAG to appoint and manage suitable contractors to carry out the works in accordance with the funding rules; and
- agree to recommend the project to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, subject to detailed terms being agreed by the Estates Manager and Legal Services.

## 3.0 Main Report

3.1 Shaftsbury Sports and Recreation Centre, which was originally run by the Council, was leased to the Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group (LORAG) in 2000. In 2009, this lease arrangement was renewed and extended for a further 25 years. Under LORAG's management, significant investments and improvements have been made to the centre.

3.2 The latest proposal involves establishing an energy project at the centre. This involves placing a number of solar panels on the roof of the centre so that up to 33 kWp of electricity is produced for use within the centre.

3.3 LORAG has successfully applied for and have been awarded 100% funding for the project through the Northern Ireland Executives Social Investment Fund (SIF) and from Pure Leapfrog Community Energy Fund, a UK based charity which supports high quality carbon reduction projects. The funding is provided using donations to Pure Leapfrog from British Airways passengers via the Carbon Fund.

3.4 In order to progress the project, LORAG has requested formal permission from the Council to install the solar panels. They have also requested technical assistance from the Council in order to assess the viability of the project and to help appoint suitable contractor(s) to carry out the works in accordance with the funding rules.

3.5 There are a number of issues identified with this project;

- Structural. A structural survey has been undertaken by LORAG and a report issued confirming that the existing roof is capable of supporting the proposed panels.



- **Health & Safety.** In considering the project, BCC Property Maintenance Officers identified the need for some structural alterations to the roof including the need for provision of suitable handrails in order to access the panels throughout the roof area as well as protecting the translucent panels in the roof.
- **Procurement.** LORAG does not have the necessary expertise to develop a formal tender and technical specification in order to comply with the grant conditions. BCC Property Maintenance Unit has agreed they can offer this assistance.
- Once placed on the roof of Shaftsbury RC, the solar panels would become the property of BCC who would be responsible for their maintenance. Upon assessment however this is anticipated to be minimal.

3.6 The project proposal supports a number of Council objectives including energy efficiency and reducing operating costs. The reduction in overhead costs, and any share of income generated, will allow LORAG to decrease their dependency on grant support and/or extend their current service offer. LORAG is in receipt of annual revenue support from BCC of £55,182. This does not fully cover the annual operating costs for the facility. The initial funding to procure and install the panels has been secured from SIF (£59,022). A further grant of £16,630 has been secured from Pure Leapfrog to support the cost of the structural alterations to the roof as assessed by the Council's Property Maintenance section.

3.7 The return on the capital investment used to procure and install the pv panels consists of 3 elements:

- The electricity saved as a result of the pv panels producing their own electricity.
- Any surplus electricity generated by the pv panels and not used by the centre being exported to the NIE for general use (which they pay for subject to their agreement).
- Payments generated from Central Government based on ROC's (Renewable Obligation Certificates), effectively an incentive grant available for the life of the panels and payable annually, in this case for 20 years.

3.8 If the scheme is not approved, LORAG will lose the ROC payments. The PV panels will still produce a saving from generating their own electricity however the payback period will be adversely affected from an estimated return within 6 years to a payback within 12 years for an operational life of 25 years.

- 3.9 Property Maintenance has agreed to provide technical and procurement assistance to LORAG as required. Once the panels are installed, it will be Property Maintenance's responsibility to maintain the system. They advise that costs will be minimal as the panels are virtually maintenance free and simply require occasional cleaning.
- 3.10 There are a number of benefits associated with the installation of this solar photovoltaic system.
- The initial capital investment is 100% funded by the Northern Ireland Executive and charitable funds.
  - Approximately 20% of the centre's electricity demand will be met by the PV system thereby significantly reducing the centre's electricity bill.
  - If NIE accept and process the application, the system will be eligible for NIROC payments. For every unit of electricity produced by the installed PV system LORAG will receive an annual payment for the next 20 years thereby providing them with a valuable source of income.
  - The additional income will reduce asset operating costs thus supporting sustainable service provision and reduced dependency on grant aid.

#### Financial & Resource Implications

- 3.11 There is no capital cost to council given income secured from external funders.
- 3.12 Property Maintenance has agreed to provide technical and procurement assistance to LORAG as required. Once the panels are installed, it will be BCC Property Maintenance responsibility to maintain the system.

#### Equality or Good Relations Implications

- 3.13 There are no equality or good relations implications to this report."

The Committee adopted the recommendations as set out within the report.

### Finance, Procurement and Performance

#### Parks Events Small Grants Scheme

The Committee was informed that a total of 16 applications had been received for the Parks Events Small Grants Scheme.

The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services advised that an Independent Assessment Panel had reviewed a sample (20%) of the applications and it had been satisfied with the scoring and application of the criteria for the grants and approved the recommendations for the awards.

The Committee noted that the Central Grants Unit (CGU) would continue the administration of the grant and noted the decisions taken by the Director of Development, under delegated authority, regarding the applications received in Tranche 2 for events taking place in parks between 1 October 2016 and 31 March 2017.

### **Operational Issues**

#### **Pride of Place Gala Event**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 12th April, it had agreed to host the Pride of Place Gala event which was being held in the Waterfront Hall on Saturday 26th November.

The Community Development Manager reported that the organisation of this event had been taken forward by an internal working group led by Community Services and the Chief Executive's office, supported by Co-operation Ireland. She advised that the group had succeeded in attracting sponsorship from the Department for Communities, the Public Health Agency and the Harbour Commission.

The Committee noted that ticket sales had exceeded the original target of 350 with 462 having been sold to date. Officers were anticipating an audience of 1,000 which would make this year's event one of the largest ever.

Noted.

#### **Management and Control of Japanese Knotweed**

The Committee considered the following report:

##### **"1.0 Purpose of report or summary of main Issues**

- 1.1 Members will be aware that the Council receives environmental inquiries and complaints regarding the presence of Japanese knotweed on residential and commercial sites and regarding the spread of Japanese knotweed onto properties from vacant lands. Inquiries can also arise as part of the Planning process whenever sites are being redeveloped or when construction is occurring.**
- 1.2 Concerns regarding the spread of Japanese knotweed across the UK have been recently highlighted by the national media, both on television and in print. At a local level, the issue of Japanese knotweed has been considered by the Northern Ireland Assembly and its Environment Committee.**

A few prominent cases involving residential properties have been identified within the Council area.

1.3 In order to identify opportunities for the more effective control of Japanese knotweed, council officers from the City and Neighbourhood Services Department and Legal Services have held a preliminary meeting with representatives of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA). This report serves to update Members on the outcome of that meeting and regarding the actions that are proposed to be taken jointly by the Council and NIEA to heighten awareness of Japanese knotweed within Belfast, thereby leading to the timely and more effective control of this non-native invasive species.

1.4 Members will be aware that an Assembly Motion has recently been tabled calling on the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to bring forward proposals for a regional programme to eradicate Japanese knotweed.

## 2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to;

- Note the contents of this report and to agree that Council officers continue to engage with the NIEA regarding the development of a Japanese knotweed publicity article for inclusion in City Matters, to be augmented by supporting information on the Council's website.

## 3.0 Main issues

### Context.

3.1 Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) is a highly invasive non-native species that was introduced into the UK in the mid-nineteenth century but has since spread to virtually all parts of the UK. It is spread solely via the movement of soil material infected with fragments of the rhizome (root) or plant material and although Japanese knotweed does flower, only the female plants are known to occur in Northern Ireland. Hybrids of the plant do occasionally occur but these generally do not survive.

3.2 Japanese knotweed is prescribed within the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 as a non-native invasive plant species. As such, it is an offence to plant or otherwise cause Japanese knotweed to grow in the wild. The enforcing authority is the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA). Although Japanese knotweed can cause structural

damage to property, thereby potentially leading to reductions in land values and difficulties in obtaining mortgages, it is not injurious to human health.

- 3.3 Invasive species are considered to be a threat to our native biodiversity as they crowd out native species and as such, they can cause damage to forestry, agriculture and infrastructure sectors.
- 3.4 Japanese knotweed is typically dealt with either by deep excavation and deep burial or via the sustained application of a Glyphosate based herbicide. Japanese knotweed is however difficult to successfully eradicate and so herbicide treatments need to be continued until no regrowth is observed which can typically take between 4 and 5 years.

Legislative controls.

- 3.5 Where Japanese knotweed is located on private land, NIEA has indicated that any decision to control the plant lies with the landowner. Whilst it is not an offence to have an established Japanese knotweed stand growing on a property, an offence would be committed if it was knowingly removed from the site thereby leading to its further spread. Where Japanese knotweed has spread from one property to another, NIEA has advised that this is a civil matter between both landowners.
- 3.6 In GB, similar legislative controls to those available in Northern Ireland exist to prevent the spread of Japanese knotweed via the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. In addition, Section 14(4A) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, as inserted by section 23 of the Infrastructure Act 2015, enables species control agreements and orders to be made by environmental authorities to ensure that landowners take action on invasive non-native species, or permit others to enter the land and carry out those operations, to prevent their establishment and spread.
- 3.7 The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has advised however that these provisions should be used primarily to support national eradication programmes, typically used to remove newly arrived invasive non-native species or those of relatively restricted distribution, adding that it would not be an appropriate use of these powers or an effective use of resources to seek to apply these orders to invasive non-native species that have become widespread such as Japanese knotweed.

**Officer meeting with NIEA and proposed actions.**

- 3.8 During the recent officer meeting with NIEA, it was highlighted that there is likely to be a significant benefit to landowners in the prompt identification and treatment of Japanese knotweed, thereby preventing the plant from becoming established. Accordingly, it is proposed that the Council will join with the NIEA in order to develop a Japanese knotweed information article for inclusion in the spring 2017 edition of City Matters, prior to the 2017 growing season commencing. This article will be augmented by additional technical information, available via the Council's website. In addition, it is proposed that staff from the City and Neighbourhood Services and Property and Projects Departments will review procedures for dealing with Japanese knotweed on Council owned lands. Finally, it is proposed that Council officers will continue to liaise with NIEA regarding further opportunities for the more effective control of Japanese knotweed.

**Financial & Resource Implications.**

- 3.9 There will be a requirement for officers to periodically liaise with NIEA regarding development of the Japanese knotweed information article and supporting website information. Staff costs and the cost of production of the information article for City Matters are included within existing revenue estimates.

**Equality & Good Relations Implications.**

- 3.10 There are no relevant equality considerations associated with the proposed Japanese knotweed information article and supporting website inclusions."

A Member commended the officer who had worked on progressing this issue.

A further Member suggested that officers liaise with representatives from both the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and the Belfast Hills Partnership to ensure that a linked up approach was being adopted.

The Committee noted and welcomed the update report and agreed:

- that Council officers continue to engage with the NIEA regarding the development of a Japanese knotweed publicity article for inclusion in City Matters, to be augmented by supporting information on the Council's website; and
- that the Council also liaise with the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and the Belfast Hills Partnership regarding further opportunities/developing a linked up approach for more effective control of Japanese Knotweed.

### **Street Naming/Dual Language Application**

The Committee considered the undernoted applications to erect additional street nameplates in a language other than English:

<b>English Name</b>	<b>Non- English Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Persons surveyed</b>
Kilmore Square	Cearnóg na Cille	Off Clonard Street, BT13	Clonard Neighbourhood Development Partnership	44
Kilmore Close	Clós na Cille Móire	Off Clonard Street, BT13	Clonard Neighbourhood Development Partnership	71

It was reported that, in accordance with Council policy, a survey of residents had been conducted for both applications which had determined that at least two-thirds of the total numbers of residents surveyed had been in favour of the proposal.

Accordingly, the Committee approved the erection of the additional street nameplates.

### **Cancer Research UK - use of Ormeau Park**

The Assistant Director advised that a request had been received from Cancer Research UK seeking permission to hold a Race for Life 'Pretty Muddy' event in the Ormeau Park on Saturday, 2nd September from 10.00 a.m. She explained that set up for the event would take place the day previous and it would not be removed until 10.00 p.m. on the day of the event. This would require the closure of all or a substantial proportion of the facility.

The Committee agreed to grant permission to Cancer Research UK to hold an event at the Ormeau Park on Saturday, 2nd September 2017, subject to the completion of the appropriate Event Management Plans and satisfactory terms being agreed by the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services and on the condition that:

- the Event Organisers resolve all operational issues to the Council's satisfaction;
- an appropriate legal agreement is prepared by the Town Solicitor;
- the Event Organisers meet all statutory requirements, including Public Liability Insurance cover, Health and Safety, and licensing responsibilities;
- the Event Organisers make the timely payment of the agreed charges and bonds as required in the legal agreements; and
- the Event Organisers consult with adjoining public bodies and local communities as necessary.

### **World 24 hour Running Championship 2017 - Victoria Park**

The Assistant Director advised that a request had been received from a Local Organising Committee seeking permission to use some areas of Victoria Park to host the World 24 hour Running Championships 2017. She pointed out that the World Championship Event attracted over 500 participants from over 25 countries.

She explained that, after organising a 24 hour race at the Mary Peters Track for a number of years, the organisers had made a hugely popular shift to Victoria Park for the 2016 event. She advised that this had demonstrated that Belfast had the ability to host a successful World Championship with high levels of participants, spectators, logistical support and media coverage. The local organisers had attended the European Championships in October and received the baton for hosting the World Championship in 2017.

The Committee was advised that, the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, at its meeting on 18th December 2015, had agreed to underwrite the event to a maximum of £10,000. The Assistant Director reported that the Local Organising Committee were now meeting regularly with officers from Parks and City Events. She reported that an event management plan had been developed and the Parks Event 24 Point Plan had been submitted.

The Committee was advised further that, due to the scale of the event, there would be some minor disruption to some of the existing activities within the park which she reported as follows:

- the car park would be required to close for the setup of the race headquarters, marquees etc. in advance of and during the event (Topaz had offered use of their site for car parking on Airport Road West);
- bowlers would be requested to arrange no home matches that weekend;
- the tunnel would need to close to prevent access of vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians onto the race circuit;
- alternative through access would be provided across the park to the Sam Thompson Bridge;
- the organisers of the Park Run had already agreed to re-locate that weekend; and
- no other park bookings would be taken.

The Committee agreed to grant limited access to some areas of Victoria Park for the safe and successful management of the International event.

Chairperson