



Subject:	Anti-Social Behaviour within BCC Parks
Date:	10 th January 2023
Reporting Officer:	David Sales, Director of Neighbourhood Services, City & Neighbourhood Services Department
Contact Officer:	Stephen Leonard, Neighbourhood Services Manager, CNS Jim Girvan – Lead Officer, Community Safety- CNS

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	To update members on levels of ASB within Belfast City Council Parks over a 3-year period from 20/21 – present.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the content of the report and the following actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Officers will liaise with Digital Services, the Customer Hub, Business Support and relevant CNS staff to develop a system to better capture ASB within BCC parks.• In the interim period, we aim to train all staff who work within Parks to record ASB through the Flare system to ensure a more standardised recording system is in place from January 2023 with reports brought to Committee on a regular basis. This review

	<p>will also consider concerns around the under reporting of ASB and how this can be improved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further work is also needed to review the roles of Park Wardens and Safer Neighbourhood Officers with regards to preventing and addressing ASB across the city. • When a more robust system for consistently capturing ASB data is in place, then it may be possible to use this information to develop and target Council interventions in problematic sites.
3.0	Main report
	<p>Background</p> <p>3.1 Belfast City Council have the responsibility of ensuring that our public parks are safe for citizens and accessible for all.</p> <p>3.2 Members will be aware that Directors have highlighted several times at Committee during the Covid Response and Recovery periods that the CNS Department was under significant resource pressure – particularly from a staffing point of view in relation to the number of vacancies it was carrying alongside the ability to fill those posts. Within Community Safety and OSS over the last 3 years, there have been significant pressures upon resources with new staff (temporary and permanent) being appointed, further exacerbated by sickness absence and annual leave requirements. This has had an impact upon consistent recording of data.</p> <p>3.3 In addition, throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and recovery phases, the limited OSS and community safety staff have been at the front line delivering essential services to the public. The redeployment of staff to cover essential services has impacted upon our services within parks and therefore, has contributed to an inconsistent capturing of data on ASB.</p> <p>3.4 Key Issues</p> <p>The APP-CivicaDatabase captures information collated by Council staff and complaints made by members of the public, elected representatives etc in relation to ASB in the city. The table below totals what has been recorded over the last 3 years across 52 parks:</p>

2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	3 Year Combined
169	769	291	1229

3.5

However, Officers would ask Members to note that these figures **may not** provide an overall accurate picture of ASB within Parks and therefore, their usefulness in terms of determining patterns or hotspots is extremely limited for the following reasons

- Residents complaining about ASB in Parks state that they don't always report every incident.
- The Capturing information on ASB within Belfast City Council parks lies within the responsibility of Park Wardens, ASB Officers, and Safer Neighbourhood Officers. However, Safer Neighbourhood and ASB Officers are not located within parks but are rather deployed in the city centre and neighbourhoods.
- A team of Park wardens is located in each quadrant of the city and each Park in the city is patrolled daily, with the more problematic parks receiving more targeted patrols than others.
- The Park Warden service operates within the current Parks closing times (Dawn to dusk). However the Department and PSNI do plan and carry out interventions outside these hours in response to large events in Parks, reports of ASB and underage drinking etc.

3.6

Along with the resource pressures outlined above, Officers have identified that there has been a variety of ways in which our teams have captured data (if at all) which presents challenges in obtaining reports which have consistent and robust data and from which conclusions can be drawn.

3.7

Members may wish to note that a short review of current recording of ASB within Parks will be completed by January 2023 to ensure there is a standardised approach to capturing ASB data across all parks. This will include a review of how members of the public report can report ASB in parks.

3.8

Members may also be interested to note that the PSNI have reported the figures below relating to incidents of ASB across the city comparing April – September 22 to the same period last year. Members will note overall that there has been a reduction in recorded incidences in all areas.

		April – Sept 2021	April – Sept 2022	Change	% Change
	Lisburn Road	3571	2770	-901	-22%
	Strandtown	1781	1422	-259	-20.2%
	Tennent Street	2859	2265	-594	-20.8%
	Woodbourne	1804	1494	-310	-17.2%
	Belfast City	10015	7951	-2064	-20.6%
3.8	<u>Financial & Resource Implications</u> No financial implications at this stage.				
3.9	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessments</u> None				
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached				
	Appendix 1 - Spreadsheet – ASB in Parks Nov 22				