



<b>Subject:</b>	Cherryvale Park – Dog Welfare
<b>Date:</b>	06 February 2024
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	David Sales, Strategic Director for City and Neighbourhood Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Stephen Leonard, Neighbourhood Services Manager (OSS Portfolio) Edel Gowdy, Lead Officer OSS Colin Willetts, OSS Area Manager East

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</b>	
Insert number <input type="checkbox"/>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Information relating to any individual</li><li>2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual</li><li>3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)</li><li>4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter</li><li>5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained</li><li>6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction</li><li>7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime</li></ol>	
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>							
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update members on two reported incidents of dog illness following a suspected ingestion of grass cuttings within Cherryvale Park and playing fields reported to the Council on 23 <sup>rd</sup> December 2023. The report provides a sequence of events leading to, and following, the dogs illness reports, as well as the actions taken by officers prior to and following the incident, in order to ensure that our park remains safe for all users. This is included at table one of the main report.							
1.2	To update members on the actions taken by Council officers to ensure the ongoing safety of all Cherryvale park users.							
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>							
2.1	Members are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note the actions taken by Council officers to ensure the safety of all park users of Cherryvale, following reports of dog illness.</li> <li>• Agree that an update on the outcome of the grass cutting test sample to be brought back to committee when it is received.</li> </ul>							
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>							
3.1	Table one below provides a sequence of events leading to and following the dog illness incidents reported on 23 <sup>rd</sup> December 2023.							
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<b>Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> December 2023</b>	BCC officers received a complaint from a member of the public regarding the dumped grass in the wooded area in Cherryvale Playing Fields, claiming that their dog was sick having consumed some of the grass. A response was sent on Tuesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> January. Officers requested further information from the dog owners' vet on what may have caused her dog to become ill, and any subsequent toxicology tests. Officers have not received a response to date.
<b>Monday 1<sup>st</sup> January and Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2024</b>	Two FOI requests received by Belfast City Council asking for confirmation on the type of fertiliser that was used on the grass of the pitches at Cherryvale. The Council confirmed in response that no fertiliser had been used on the grass that was cut for over one year as the pitch was not being used for a full season and the major repair work was completed by reurfing. Both FOI requests have been responded to.
<b>Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> January and Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2024</b>	The grass mound was removed by tractor and placed into skips which were moved off site. An operative manually removed all remaining small amounts of grass with a shovel.
<b>11<sup>th</sup> January 2024</b>	<p>Council officers requested test sample from grass cuttings and a COSHH sheet from the fertiliser supplier as a precaution. Currently awaiting sample testing results from laboratory however it must be noted that the grass had not received any fertiliser treatment in over 12 months.</p> <p>The manufacturer made the following comment: <b><i>'Overlooking the product composition in combination with the SDS I don't expect any issues at normal application rates as the dog would need to have digested all fertilizer over a very large area'.</i></b></p>
<b>Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024</b>	<p>PSNI officers confirm that the white substance removed by them from the site was not in a state suitable for testing. And therefore, the substance remains 'unidentified'. PSNI officers made the following observation: <b><i>'From informal discussion with colleagues who are trained in field testing, they have never seen a substance take on this consistency before, so it has been suggested that this is not a 'controlled drug'. However, the substance remains unidentified'.</i></b></p> <p>Officers have requested that the sample be returned in case the Council require to carry out any further testing.</p>

3.3 **Maintaining dog welfare within our parks.**

Members will be aware that maintaining high levels of both cleanliness and safety within our parks includes having regard for all parks users as well as considerations for animal welfare. As mentioned above, following the dog illness incident, we have increased the amount of signage advising dog owners to keep their dogs on leads. And whilst our officers make every effort to ensure the site is safe for all users, we cannot guarantee that all sites are free from inedible material. The best way to ensure pets remain safe is to keep them on a lead.

To date the Council has received no evidence to suggest that the reported cases of dogs illness at Cherryvale park was related to any product used by or work practice employed by Council

	<p>operatives. Despite this, all of the grass cuttings from the pitch have now been removed from the site as a precaution. We await results from the laboratory sample from the cuttings. An update on this will be brought to this committee when it is received.</p> <p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p>
3.4	<p>Minimal impact. Open Spaces and Streetscene will bear the cost of additional signage and test sampling.</p>
3.5	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>There are no equality or good relations implications in this report.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices - Documents Attached</b>
	None