



Subject:	Belfast Hills Partnership – request for additional funding
Date:	11 June 2024
Reporting Officer:	Stephen Leonard, Director of Open Spaces, Resources, Fleet & Transport
Contact Officer:	Stephen Leonard, Director of Open Spaces, Resources, Fleet & Transport

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"/>
Sometime 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 advise Committee of a request for an increase in funding support from the Belfast Hills Partnership – letter attached at Appendix 1.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	Members are asked to consider the request for additional funding from the Belfast Hills Partnership and note that the request will require presentation to Strategic Policy & Resources Committee for decision given the associated financial impacts.
3.0	Main report
3.1	Since its inception in 2005, Belfast City Council has been a key partner within the Belfast Hills Partnership. This funding has enabled the organisation to grow and develop from a small team of three individuals to today’s team which consists of 6 full time members of staff and 9 part time staff bodies which allows the partnership to deliver a wide range of programmes within the Belfast City Council area which include:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat & species surveys & improvements • Environment education for young people • Volunteering opportunities • Addressing anti-social behaviour including fly tipping and wildfires • Tree propagation & planting • Community support & engagement • Information provision • Health walks
3.2	The April 2011 meeting of the former Parks and Leisure Committee approved an annual funding allocation to the Belfast Hills Partnership of £36,900 which has since been included in revenue budgets.
3.3	BHP have highlighted consistent rising costs, which they have tried to absorb internally by seeking to cut costs where possible – however, they are now in a position of seeking support from funding partners to continue delivering their services. Whilst NIEA have confirmed that they will increase their funding to BHP by 37%, the Partnership is approaching their Council partners to seek additional funding.
3.4	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council and Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council have confirmed that they have agreed an increase of 30% on current funding. It should be noted that each council provides funding in proportion to the land area owned by each Council within the Belfast Hill's Area and this arrangement will continue with these latest funding revisions.
3.5	Belfast Hill Partnership currently receives £36,900 from Belfast City Council and have requested an increase of 30% (£11,070) to £47,970.
3.6	Members are asked to recommend that this matter be referred to Strategic Policy & Resources Committee to decide on any increase to funding allocation to Belfast Hills Partnership.
3.7	<p><u>Financial Implications</u></p> <p>Belfast Hills Partnership are requesting an additional £11,070 alongside the current allocation of £36,900.</p>
3.8	<p><u>Equality Impact/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>There are no additional impacts related to this report.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
4.1	Appendix 1 – Letter from Belfast Hills Partnership