



Subject:	Static Park Warden Pilot update
Date:	Tuesday 9 th April 2024
Reporting Officer:	Jim Girvan, Operational Director Stephen Leonard, Operational Director
Contact Officer:	Eiméar McCullough, Lead Officer - OSS, 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 an ongoing pilot static park warden initiative focused on addressing ASB in 3 park sites in the city.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	Members are asked to note the content of the report and to agree subject to budget to extend the pilot until the end of the September 2024 and to agree that Falls Park is included as an additional site for the pilot.
3.0	Main report
	Background
3.1	Belfast City Council have the responsibility to maintain and keep our public parks safe for citizens and accessible for all.

3.2	Members will recall that a report on 'Anti-Social Behaviour within BCC Parks' was tabled at People & Communities Committee on 10 th January 2023 overviewing ASB in our Parks over a 3-year period (see Appendix 1). This report set out mechanisms and roles responsible for reporting ASB and highlighted factors contributing to an inconsistent capturing of data on ASB resulting in limitations on data available in determining patterns and hotspots.
3.3	At Member's request at this meeting a further report was tabled at P&C the following month (7 th February 2023, entitled 'Anti-Social Behaviour - update on previous interventions and initiatives in parks', exploring a number of approaches successfully undertaken in our parks to alleviate ASB for potential future implementation, budget and resources depending. This included dedicated warden/attendant and animation in Dunville Park and Divis Back Path which encouraged community ownership of these parks. (see Appendix 2)
3.4	Strategic Policy and Resource Committee on 24 th March 2022 agreed to the reallocation of £220,254 to made available for the delivery of a 'pilot project replicating model used in Dunville Park to reduce levels of ASB in parks'. It was further noted that the resources should be directed to those parks in the city already identified at January P&C Committee as having high levels of reported ASB – to include Dunville Park and Pairc Nui Chollan" with additional parks to be included.
	'Static' Park Warden Deployment
3.5	Members will be aware that Council's existing Park Warden Teams are located in each quadrant of the city and carry out an important role in our parks and open spaces which are not limited to addressing ASB issues. They are deployed, as required, to provide a targeted response in parks with identified ASB issues during their working hours which reflect the standard 'dawn to dusk' opening hours of our parks.
3.6	Following risk assessment for the new warden roles, and recognition that posts were for a specific initiative to tackle ASB – it was confirmed that the pilot 'static' wardens must work in pairs at all times and as a result of this that the employment of a total of 6x wardens was possible, limiting the pilot to 3x park sites citywide.
3.7	Woodvale Park was added to Dunville Park and Pairc Nui Chollain as the focus for the pilot initiative. Operational working hours for the new wardens were also agreed on the premise that an afternoon/evening and a weekend focus would allow them to better target ASB. Hours of operation at these 3 sites Wednesday to Sunday 3pm – 11pm each day, except Sunday with an earlier finish time at the earlier time of 10.30pm.
3.8	It was agreed that the newly recruited staff for the pilot would be operationally managed during the pilot period through OSS area teams. 6 Park Wardens began in August and following a short induction were placed in the 3 parks in September 2023. The pilot has now been in operation for 7 months.
	Key Findings – Pilot Period To Date
3.9	The Pilot has been operating since the start of September 2023 and ASB reporting statistics are now available for the 6 consecutive months of September through to end of February 2024. Key findings from data recorded over this period, based on an evaluation framework drafted at the Pilot's initiation, are set out below:
3.10	Since the start of the Pilot there has been a 26% decrease in ASB incidences reported overall at the 3 park sites when compared to the same months the year previous (Sept 22-Feb 23). 61 ASB incidences were reported during the September - February 'Pilot period' compared to the figure of 82 for same period the year previous. This includes a slight increase in figures for ASB reports for the Woodvale Park site.

<p>3.11</p> <p>3.12</p> <p>3.13</p> <p>3.14</p> <p>3.15</p> <p>3.16</p> <p>3.17</p> <p>3.18</p> <p>3.19</p>	<p>ASB reporting trend for each park over the Pilot period when compared to same 6mth period the previous year (monthly average) was as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dunville Park - monthly average reports decreased from 6.8 to 2.3 (41 previous year and 14 during Pilot period) • Woodvale Park- monthly average reports increase from 1.2 to 1.8 (7 previous year and 11 during Pilot period) • Pairc Nui Chollan monthly average reports decreased from 8.5 to 6. (<i>Note opened in November 2022 totals not comparable as data is available for 4 months in previous period only</i>) <p>Members should note that evening programming (midnight soccer and other diversionary activities) have also been taking place during the pilot period and have very likely have had a positive on ASB at these locations.</p> <p>During the pilot period, members should note that there has been an increase in reported ASB in some park/playground sites in the vicinity of the pilot sites. Breakdown of reporting increase in each park as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Falls Park - ASB reports up from 51 to 66 (29 % increase) • Ohio St playground - ASB reports up from 5 to 9 (80% increase) <p>Given the impact of the pilot at the 3 sites chosen and the ongoing issues particularly at Falls Park members are asked to consider extending the pilot to cover Falls Park and to note that if they agree to this the number of static wardens will increase by 3 to ensure operational requirements of the pilot at that site can be met.</p> <p>Members should note that the Park Warden pilot has been supported by the Safer Neighbourhood Officers and the PSNI. Good working relationships have been developed which have ensured and improved response to ASB incidents at the sites.</p> <p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>Based on forecast spend for the pilot initiative there are funds to continue until early June 2024. There is no available budget for the Pilot going forward beyond this time. Should members agree to the extension it should be noted that this will be funded from within existing budget estimates.</p> <p>Members should note that subject to support from Continuous Improvement (CI) the City and Neighbourhood Services Department is planning to review the park warden function. This pilot will be used to inform this review.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessments</u></p> <p>There are no Equality or Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessments associated with this report.</p>
<p>4.0</p>	<p>Appendices – Documents Attached</p>
	<p>Appendix 1 - People & Communities Committee report, 10th January 2023 - ‘Anti- Social Behaviour within BCC Parks’</p> <p>Appendix 2 - People & Communities Committee report, 7th February 2023- ‘Anti- Social Behaviour - update on previous interventions and initiatives in parks’</p>

