



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Parks and Leisure Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Feedback Report on Woodvale Park beacon event and cultural celebration on 11 July
<b>Date:</b>	14 August 2008
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
<b>Contact Officers:</b>	Laura Hamill, Antisocial Behaviour Coordinator David Robinson, Good Relations Officer

### Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to update Members with regard to the Woodvale Park beacon pilot and cultural celebration on 11 July.

### Relevant Background Information

Members will be aware of the ongoing work of the Council led Bonfire Management Programme. The programme is currently into year 2 of the current 3 year programme. The continuation of the programme, which is subject to an annual review, was agreed by Council at its meeting in December 2007 (B 142).

Woodvale and Cambrai Youth and Community Association have been active participants on the programme for a number of years. In 2007 they were involved in the design of the Bonfire Beacon structure with a view to developing an alternative to the traditional 11 July bonfire. They are also active participants, along with Friends of Woodvale Park, in developing actions as part of the Antisocial Behaviour Pilot programme.

This Committee granted approval, at the May meeting, for the Woodvale Community to hold 11 July celebrations in Woodvale Park to launch the bonfire beacon. This proposal was based on the use of a bonfire beacon, which has been tested and proven to cause no damage to the ground surface – as opposed to a traditional bonfire.

## **Key Issues**

The Beacon structure represented an alternative to the annual traditional bonfires which happen in Woodvale. In previous years, up to five small bonfires had been burned on the roads in and around the streets of Woodvale. For this reason this proposal in itself had the support of the Fire and Roads Services. The beacon structure itself was designed by young people from the Woodvale area and had been tested extensively in partnership with RPS Consultant Engineers and FireSERT at the University of Ulster.

The development of the Beacon also has the support of the inter-agency group who assist the Council with the Bonfire Management Programme. The Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service, the Police Service for Northern Ireland (PSNI), Department of Regional Development (Roads Service), Northern Ireland Office, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Environment and Heritage Service and the Community Relations Unit of OFM/DFM have all supported developments thus far.

Planning meetings took place in the run up to the event between the Woodvale Community, Northern Ireland Fire Service, PSNI and BCC Parks, BCC Cleansing, Good Relations and Antisocial Behaviour Pilot Programme. The proposed event aimed to:

- bring the community together into the Park for a positive community experience;
- make a massive contribution to eliminating antisocial behaviour from the park over the twelfth period.
- make a major contribution towards developing a wider understanding and respect for cultural diversity within the City and beyond.

The event took place as planned and was attended by upwards of 2,500 of the local Woodvale Community. Up to 50 trained local people stewarded the event and the entries to the park. The Council's park rangers supported the event operationally tying in with the stewards on the night itself. There was an alcohol ban for the event and the local community cleaned up the park afterwards. The park was vacated by 1.00am. A photograph taken at the celebrations is attached for information at Appendix 1.

There were no reports of any incident in relation to this event, with the PSNI in fact congratulating all involved on the good work done in delivering the event. There are plans to hold an evaluation session involving the Woodvale Community and all partner organisations on 18 August at Woodvale Community Centre and plans are also being made to explore the possibility of making a presentation about the event and the success of the beacon to the Good Relations Panel at Stormont.

<b>Resource Implications</b>
<u>Financial</u> No additional financial implications - current approved budgets support the initiative.
<u>Human Resources</u> Continued Antisocial Behaviour and Good Relations staff engagement with the Woodvale Community in any follow up evaluation sessions and issues involving antisocial behaviour.

<b>Recommendations</b>
Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

<b>Key to abbreviations</b>
PSNI: Police Service for Northern Ireland OFM/DFM: Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister

<b>Documents attached</b>
Appendix 1: photograph of Woodvale Celebrations

