



## Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Proposed Filming 'Big City Park' Children's Television series at Ormeau Park
Date:	15 April 2010
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Fiona Holdsworth, Principal Parks and Cemeteries Manager.

### Relevant Background Information

The Council received a request from 'Sixteen South Television Ltd' to film a 'Children's Television series' called 'Big City Park' in Ormeau Park from 5<sup>th</sup> April 2010 for a period of eleven weeks.

'Big City Park' is a brand new puppet and live action landmark show for children aged 3 – 6.

Following a successful pilot (filmed in Ormeau Park last October 2009) a series has been commissioned by 'CBeebies' for a national broadcast and is a joint production between 'Sixteen South' and 'CBeebies Scotland'.

'CBeebies' is the world's most reputable children's channel and broadcasts not only in the U.K; but in many English speaking countries. 'Big City Park' is being promoted as the channel's next landmark show, following in the footsteps of Balamory which ran for 200 episodes.

'Big City Park' is written, produced and filmed in Northern Ireland.

The show is set in Belfast's Ormeau Park, a beautiful busy public park in the centre of Belfast City. It is proposed to film the entire series outdoors, capturing the changing park through all seasons and in all weather.

'Big City Park' is all about adventure; finding nature's hidden treasures, storytelling, learning, games and loads of fun and imagination.

At its heart, 'Big City Park' is a funny and cheerful show that encourages our children to see their local parks and open spaces in a new light.

Throughout the development of 'Big City Park' research has continually highlighted the enormous value of outdoor play in a natural setting for children. It builds their confidence and self-esteem as they explore their surroundings and overcomes small challenges. It relieves stress and encourages imaginative play in an environment that is constantly evolving with the seasons.

'Big City Park' has a very organic feel throughout. The scene sets /structures in the park are all made from natural materials. The puppet characters are high quality puppets; designed and built by one of the industry's most respected puppet creators.

#### What does it mean for Belfast –

Image of Belfast - 'Big City Park' is due for first transmission on 6<sup>th</sup> August 2010. It will instantly raise awareness of the park's location (i.e. Belfast) as the puppet characters and children who visit on each show will all have local accents as well as show the real true face of Belfast –and the beauty of Northern Ireland.

Enhance tourism industry - Balamory was filmed in the little town of Tobermory in Scotland. That show instantly created a tourist market. It is envisaged the same happening for 'Big City Park'.

Boost local economy - 82% of the production budget for the first series is being spent in Belfast, including hotels, restaurants, local employment and materials.

#### **Key Issues**

The key issues for the Committee to note are –

- The potential benefits from this production in terms of positive publicity for the Council.
- Filming needs to -commence on 12<sup>TH</sup> April 2010 for a period of 10 weeks, with installation of the sets to begin on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2010. The first transmission due on 6<sup>th</sup> August 2010.
- The production set up would consist of the following-
  - A Unit Base – this designated area would be set up within the main entrance of the park on the Ormeau Road – vehicles lined up in a way which will not block the path.

Set locations –There are six set locations throughout Ormeau Park '-

1. 'May's Hut' – A free standing wooden shed
2. 'The storycircle' – under a large tree

3. Weather cover area – This is a sheltered group of trees with a tied canvas roof, which becomes the weather cover area if it gets too bad.
4. Semi – wooded area – this is an existing area of the park which has a natural hedge enclosing a group of trees
5. The Oak Tree – This is a ‘prop’ – it’s a fallen tree, where there is enough space for puppets to be behind it.
6. The Bandstand – this will be dressed with appropriate props e.g.box

- Working Hours - filming is planned – Monday through Friday from 8.00am and finish by no later than 8.00pm. Access for catering will be required before 8.00am
- Security - The production company is to hire reputable security company to look after their ‘set’ and ‘unit’ overnight and at weekends for the duration of their stay.
- Residents (via Hearth Housing Association) – to be informed.
- Organisers of other events held within Ormeau Park during this filming period to be informed of this filming as necessary.
- The production company will be responsible to cover the cost of any ground reinstatement.

### **Resource Implications**

#### Financial implications

A fee has been agreed with Sixteen South Television Limited of £5,500.

It is anticipated that other events organised for Ormeau Park during this period will not be affected and therefore no loss of revenue is envisaged

#### Human Resource implications

The Park Rangers will liaise with the Film company re- access & egress to and from Ormeau Park for the duration of this production.

### **Recommendations**

The Committee is asked note that the Director of Parks and Leisure in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, has given approval for this film production under delegated authority; subject to providing –

- An appropriate legal agreement be prepared
- The event Organisers providing an ‘event management plan’ including

'Public Liability Insurance' and Health & Safety Risk Assessments – to the satisfaction of the Council.

- The event organisers meeting all statutory requirements

**Decision Tracking**

All actions completed by Park Manager Ormeau

**Documents Attached**

None