



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Parks and Leisure Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Ligoniel Environmental Heritage Project
<b>Date:</b>	14 October 2010
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Stephen Walker, Principal Parks and Cemeteries Development Manager

### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to consider the Committee's position in respect of the presentation from representatives of the Ligoniel Improvement Association which was received by the Committee at a Special Meeting on 6 September 2010.

### Relevant Background Information

The Committee will recall the presentation by representatives from the Ligoniel Improvement Association in respect of proposals to create and improve access from the Forthriver and Glencairn up through Ligoniel, its parks, dams and rivers and on into the Belfast Hills.

The Association itself is funded and exists with its own constitution. The Association is focused on two major projects; the environmental heritage project is the one which impacts on Belfast City Council. The other project relates to the development of its current site and has no Council involvement.

Figure 1 attached provides a graphical illustration of the proposal. The Committee will note that the proposal, which is in its early stages, impinges on several Council owned and managed parks, Forthriver, Glencairn, Glenbank Park and Ligoniel Park.

The Committee agreed at its meeting on 10 June 2010 to support the Ligoniel Improvement Association's application to Biffaward (Landfill Communities Fund Scheme) for funding for phase 2 of its project located around the old dams at Wolf Hill. The Committee also agreed to make a financial contribution of £5,116.14 to support the application.

At this point the Council is not being asked for additional funding. However the Association wishes to:

- obtain Council support to the principle of creating and improving access through this part of the City to the surrounding Hills
- position the project within the context of Council Plans and Strategies
- seek the continued support of Council Officers to work with and guide the

Association in the further development of this project.

The Association wishes the council to note that through the project it is intended that a positive contribution can be made to benefit the city in terms of:

- Increased opportunities for walking which would improve aspects of health and well being
- Improved access across the city which would help build community cohesion and shared space
- Increased opportunities for education and awareness which would help promote, protect and protect the natural environment
- Increased opportunities to attract visitors and groups of people to the area through interpretation strategies which tell the history of the area and its contribution to the development of the city.

### **Key Issues**

The key issue for the Committee to note that the project is consistent with the Open Spaces Strategy in terms of the desirability of connecting people and our open space. Through this project the potential exists to create links between discrete pieces of open space and other parts of the public realm to create access through this part of North Belfast to the Belfast Hills and to create further connectivity with its neighbours in the West of the City.

### **Resource Implications**

#### Financial

There are no additional financial implications at this time.

#### Human Resources

There are no additional human resource implications at this time.

#### Asset and Other Implications

If delivered this project would greatly enhance access between West and North Belfast and into the Belfast Hills and would help promote the natural environment.

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. Note the content of the report
2. Agree in principle to support the concept of the Ligoniel Environment Heritage Project
3. Incorporate, where appropriate the project within the Departmental Plan;
4. Agree to continued Officer involvement with the Association to support and guide the project as appropriate
5. Agree to receive a update report at a future meeting and no later than September 2011

### **Decision Tracking**

The Actions will be Completed by the Principal Parks and Cemeteries Development Manager by September 2011.

### **Key to Abbreviations**

None.

### **Documents Attached**

Appendix 1 - Illustrated concept drawing