



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Improvement Programme: Presence in Parks Pilot
Date:	9 December 2010
Reporting Officer:	Rose Crozier Head of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Pete Murray, Antisocial Behaviour Officer Liam McKinley, Park Manager

1.	Relevant Background Information
	<p>As part of the Departmental Improvement Programme officers have been examining the role of Parks staff with a view to developing working practices which will provide an improved service and create safer green spaces.</p> <p>The report below outlines a proposed 'Presence in Parks' Pilot which will operate for a period of 9 months (Jan 2011 – Sept 2011). The proposed pilot will amalgamate existing ranger and attendant resource into a team of Community Park Wardens and Park Safety Wardens. All of the wardens will be trained to integrate with and support council warden services and the specialist team of Park Safety Wardens. They will be mobile and will respond quickly to reports of antisocial behaviour and be trained and authorised to enforce specific bye-laws in support of existing council wardens and PSNI resources.</p>

2.	Key Issues
	<p>The 'Presence in Parks' Pilot</p> <p>The rationale behind the development of the 'Presence in Parks' pilot is to demonstrate the department's commitment to park users and outside agencies that we will continue to tackle the issue of safety in parks.</p> <p>The primary strength of the existing Park Ranger Service is the connection they have with the communities in the city. The local knowledge and contacts that the Rangers have developed, will be invaluable in the creation of safer green spaces and the provision of quality services to park users. The 'Presence in Parks' pilot will harness the Rangers local knowledge in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• build feelings of safety within and outside of the park boundaries,• increase the capacity of the council to adopt a one council approach, and• effectively combine all the warden resources such as the new Park Wardens, Dog Wardens, Litter Wardens and Community Safety Wardens.

The pilot will introduce two roles, Community Park Warden and Park Safety Warden.

The role of the Community Park Warden will be a development of the role of Park Ranger and Park Attendant. They will be site based across 9 strategic park locations, as set out in Appendix 1. Duties will be focused on:

- opening and closing the site where they are based and opening and closing smaller satellite locations,
- raising public awareness, delivery of education and provision of quality customer service,
- recording incidents of damage or antisocial behaviour at the site where they are based and at smaller satellite locations, and
- assess possible risks and if needed request the assistance of the Park Safety Wardens or PSNI.

The role of Park Safety Warden will be a development of the role of Park Ranger Team leader. Duties will be focused on:

- responding to reports of antisocial behaviour across the whole city,
- enforcement of bye laws and codes regarding Litter, Dog fouling and Alcohol consumption in parks
- supporting existing council enforcement officers (Litter wardens, Dog fouling Wardens and Community Safety Wardens) and
- provision of supervision to the Community Park Wardens outside core hours (Friday night, Saturday and Sunday).

All of the wardens will be trained and directed to liaise with existing council resources to embed a one council approach in response to the issue of park safety.

If the 'Presence in Parks' Pilot is agreed, the roles of Community Park Warden and Park Safety Warden will be drawn from existing departmental resources

Reporting ASB and Responding to ASB

The 'Presence in Parks' Pilot provides an opportunity to review and test new operational systems and technology, which will:

- support the new park wardens to record and respond to antisocial behaviour, and
- provide a facility to support the public to report incidents of damage and antisocial behaviour in park areas.

The use of technology will support better collection and analysis of data and it will improve our service standards. The data will be collected by the Community Park Wardens. It will be central to the development of the pilot that ASB incidents are recorded consistently across all park areas and our subsequent actions are reported more accurately to members and the community.

The Park Safety Wardens will respond to all reports, their actions will be recorded and used to feedback to the community, providing a visible and accountable service to the public.

As part of the pilot, work will be undertaken to explore the development of a single contact number for the public to report incidents. Recommendation for this service will be reported to Committee during the pilot.

	<p>Co-ordination of services Park Safety Wardens liaise closely with the Community Safety Wardens, Litter Wardens and Dog Fouling Wardens through the Parks ASB Co-ordinator and the Community Park Manager based at Duncrue. Regular briefings will be held at Duncrue which raise issues of safety as they occur and provide opportunity to brief and liaise with the PSNI.</p> <p>The Community Park Wardens and Park Safety Wardens will work closely with each other combining lock up duties if required. This function will be co-ordinated through regular meetings between Community Park Managers. There is also a role for all Wardens to provide visible staff presence and support during events, assist in the delivery of schools programmes and tours through input from the Parks Outreach Manager.</p> <p>Protocols and Procedures Community Park Wardens will work closely with Dog Wardens, Litter Wardens, Community Safety Wardens and PSNI. It will be essential to develop working protocols and procedures to define exactly what is expected of the various services and how any joint operation will be managed.</p> <p>Criteria for Assessing Effectiveness of Pilot Work will be undertaken in January/February 2011 to establish a baseline for the key parks in the pilot measuring antisocial behaviour, usage of parks and level of customer satisfaction. It is envisaged that the same measures will be examined in September/October 2011 to assess the impact of the pilot and to inform future proposals.</p>
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3.	<p>Resource Implications</p> <p>It is envisaged that the new Community Park Warden resource will be drawn from within the department amalgamating the roles of Park attendant and Ranger positions, if necessary the new roles could be supplemented by the Parks Apprentices.</p> <p>The role of Park Safety Warden will be drawn from existing Team leader positions.</p> <p>As the proposed roles can be filled by existing staff, the Enforcement pilot will not require any additional resources.</p> <p>Training and Professional Development</p> <p>All park wardens will receive the following training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of technology and recording systems • Development of Warden role: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Litter awareness – educate park users and share information with Cleansing service. ○ Dog Fouling and dog related issues – educate park users and share information with Dog Wardens ○ Drink/Drug Awareness - sharing Information with PSNI and community/voluntary sector. ○ Healthy Living Projects - developing closer links with leisure colleagues.
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	<p>As the Park Safety Wardens will work closely or in tandem with PSNI and existing council enforcement services, they will receive specialist training to enable enforcement of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drinking alcohol in designated places • Dog fouling • Litter and fly tipping. <p>In the long term, support will be required to develop areas such as customer care, basic horticulture, community engagement and partnership building with internal and external agencies.</p>
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4.	Equality and Good Relations Implications
	None.

5.	Recommendations
	Members are asked to adopt the pilot and agree the implementation in January 2011 for a period of 9 months.

6.	Decision Tracking
	The 'Presence in Parks' pilot will be evaluated every three months with a final evaluation proposed in November 2011.

7.	Key to Abbreviations
	ASB: Antisocial Behaviour PSNI: Police service for Northern Ireland

8.	Documents Attached
	Appendix 1: Pilot Locations