



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Parks and Leisure Safer Neighbourhoods Antisocial Behaviour Programme: Update on the People in Parks Initiative
Date:	10 February 2010
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Peter Murray, Antisocial Behaviour Co-ordinator

1.	Relevant Background Information
	<p>The Committee will be aware that the thematic objectives of the Parks and Leisure Safer Neighbourhood Antisocial behaviour programme are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• enhancing the environment around parks and leisure facilities;• developing education initiatives involving creative or supportive interventions to model acceptable behaviour around parks and leisure facilities;• defining enforcement as a deterrent against infraction of bye-laws and legislation; and• developing sustainable interagency and interdepartmental networks and leading a partnership approach to reducing antisocial behaviour. <p>The committee will recall the introduction to the People in Parks initiative in the antisocial behaviour programme update report in August 2010. This report is a mid-project update review.</p>

2.0	Key Issues
	<p>Under the theme of education, the antisocial behaviour programme has initiated a number of projects to create opportunities for young people to be positively involved in the development of safer parks and leisure facilities. The People in Parks initiative, which commenced in June 2010, engages young people across the city to involve them in the legitimate use of council parks; in creating safer parks and reducing antisocial behaviour by using a range of techniques.</p>

The People in Parks initiative involves four phases:

- outreach – identification of young people from the antisocial behaviour “hotspot” areas;
- engagement – appropriate developmental work to motivate young people to participate;
- education – raising awareness of the impact of antisocial behaviour on the community using high energy, problem solving and discussion activities; and
- project work – facilitating the development of better relationships between the young people and their wider community.

The project is delivering youth work services in hotspot areas in north, south, east and west Belfast. The specific locations based upon evidence gathered by the Safer Belfast Tasking Process and the Parks and Leisure Department Antisocial Behaviour Co-ordinator, have been identified as Falls Park, Orangefield Park, Ormeau Park and Alexandra Park.

This project is being delivered by an organisation called Challenge for Youth who were already engaged in youth outreach work across Belfast. They have the appropriate expertise, networks and experience in working with hard-to-reach young people. It is essential that the project is delivered in partnership with local community youth providers (see Appendix 1 for details) and complements the work of other youth providers, namely:

- Belfast City Council’s Peace III youth intervention programme,
- Belfast Education and Library Board’s youth work services,
- the Community Safety Partnership’s Youth Outreach programme and, and
- other appropriate youth work services at a local level.

The desired outcomes of the People in Parks initiative are:

- reduction in antisocial behaviour identified through statistics available or through the Safer Belfast Tasking report;
- more young people become engaged, empowered and supported to change their behaviour and access opportunities;
- opportunities for young people to express their concern about their communities;
- young people informed about their responsibilities;
- support for young people to understand and fulfil their potential; and
- young people visible and engaged in positive actions within communities.

The project has been in operation for six months and each area has achieved success in a variety of ways. Each group of young people has continued to participate in the project and quarterly monitoring demonstrates a very high level of commitment and engagement. This is especially significant as the young people involved could be described

as “hard to reach young people”.

Challenge for Youth will deliver an end of project summary report outlining the learning from the initiative.

Group projects

Each group has been set the challenge of leading a project which will reduce antisocial behaviour or create a safer park environment.

In North Belfast (Upper Alexandra Park), the group of young people met with the Director of Parks and Leisure and discussed how they might influence the development of Alexandra park. They specifically asked if they could work with a group from lower Alexandra park in an attempt to ease interface tensions that have developed in the area over a number of years. Their project will now include a group of young people who use the lower end of the park. Their work together will focus on developing a series of interpretive panels to be located on either end of the park. The panels will be developed with the support of Groundwork NI and will record the history of the park and trace the history of the surrounding community from the perspective of the young people.

In East Belfast (Orangefield Park), an emerging community development organisation has been supporting young people to influence the development of the park and to increase the usage of the park by seeking permission for community groups to access the bowling pavilion in the evenings. This project will focus on younger and older people working together to influence the development of the park and the surrounding community. The group has worked with the park manager to gain access to the pavilion and made requests for lighting near the bowling pavilion to facilitate the safe passage of the pavilion users in and out of the park in the evening.

In South Belfast (Ormeau Park), young people have met with and made recommendations to the park manager about how signage could be improved and made more accessible and interactive for park users. Their project also involves the design and development of a piece of artwork for the park.

Some of the elements of their artwork will provide:

- a landmark for tourism;
- a view point for taking dramatic pictures of Belfast;
- a map of the park and local area; and
- a point in the park to “make a wish” or possibly make a donation to charity.

In West Belfast (Falls Park), the young people are planning to develop a memorial to a young person who had recently died in the park. In this instance, as the work is of an extremely sensitive nature, Challenge for Youth is working with a diverse partner group (see Appendix 1 for details). Their work is highly regarded in West Belfast and it has

	<p>developed from the long-standing partnership and commitment to support of “at risk” and marginalised young people. The young people have developed a project which will focus on honouring the life and vitality of their deceased friend by providing health and wellbeing information for the local community and park users.</p> <p>A mid-point comparison between current antisocial behaviour incident statistics and the statistics before the project started, indicate a slight decrease in antisocial behaviour incidents in the park locations included in the project.</p> <p>At the conclusion of this project, the young people will connect to other existing youth services or development programmes (including personal development, preparation for employment, volunteering or other training). This will be facilitated by Challenge for Youth and the ongoing work of the community partner organisations.</p>
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3.0	Resource Implications
	<p>This project is being funded from the Parks and Leisure Safer neighbourhoods antisocial behaviour programme budget under the themes of education and interagency network development.</p>

4.0	Equality and Good Relations Implications
	<p>The participants of this project are selected on the basis that they live in the locality of the four park locations. In one instance the participants have requested that they develop links with another community in order to explore opportunities to reduce interface tensions. This work will be facilitated within the context of the existing project and will not require any further resources.</p>

5.0	Recommendations
	<p>The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.</p>

6.0	Decision Tracking
	<p>Reports on the initiative will be included in the regular antisocial behaviour update. A closure report on the initiative will be brought in June 2011.</p>

7.0	Key to Abbreviations
	<p>None.</p>

8.0	Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1 : People in Parks Initiative Monitoring report</p>