



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Safer Neighbourhoods: Antisocial Behaviour Programme Update
Date:	9 June 2011
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Pete Murray, Anti-social Behaviour Coordinator

1.0	Purpose
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Update the committee on the development of the Safer Neighbourhood Antisocial Behaviour Programme (SNASB) across all Parks and Leisure facilities;2. Outline the Safer Neighbourhood Antisocial Behaviour Programme methodology;3. Report an overview of antisocial behaviour by electoral area; and4. Update committee on the recent work in Parks and Leisure and the key areas of focus and expenditure related to ASB.

2.0	Relevant Background Information
2.1	<p>The antisocial behaviour programme involves internal and external partnership working to make our parks and leisure sites welcoming and safe environments that people in the city value and use.</p>
2.2	<p>The objectives of the antisocial behaviour programme are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• enhance the environment around Parks and Leisure facilities;• develop education initiatives involving creative or supportive interventions to model acceptable behaviour around Parks and Leisure facilities;• define enforcement as a deterrent against infraction of bye-laws and legislation; and• develop sustainable interagency and inter-departmental networks and leading a partnership approach to reducing antisocial behaviour.
2.3	<p><u>ASB Programme Methodology</u></p>

<p>2.4</p>	<p>The programme spans the entire management remit for ASB, from incident reporting, review and follow-up, action planning, resource allocation and delivery of improvement measure (either environmental or educational). More detail on each of the stages is attached at Appendix 1.</p> <p><u>Monitoring of ASB statistics</u></p> <p>The evidence-based approach of the SNASB programme supports the effective monitoring of interventions in order to establish if they are successful over time.</p> <p>The programme prioritises action by collating evidence gathered through incident reports. Once the information is collated, it is used to inform a coordinated response.</p> <p>The evidence available (April 2009 to March 2011) indicates an overall decreasing trend in antisocial behaviour across Belfast. (See Appendix 2 - chart 1.1; Comparison of ASB incidents between 2009 and 2011). Although the existing trend is downwards it is important to emphasise to Members that we are beginning to introduce new recording systems which are likely to encourage the public to report ASB in parks and leisure facilities. Once these systems are functioning, there will be a likely increase in reports. However, the added benefit of the system will be that we have more accurate information and we will be able to record and measure the follow-up and timely response to the reports. The plan is that this information will be fed back directly to community groups and through the internet.</p>
<p>2.5</p>	<p><u>Identifying antisocial behaviour</u></p> <p>The information attached in Appendix 3 (Chart 1.2) illustrates the type of antisocial behaviour that occurs in Parks and Leisure facilities.</p> <p>The main ASB issues involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property Damage: Indicates damage largely as a result of fire setting. • Unauthorised use of Council facilities: generally describes drinking after the park closes. • Misuse of Vehicles: Motor cycles or scramblers travelling through the park. • Under age drinking. • Youths causing annoyance. • Graffiti. <p>This evidence will provide the basis for allocating resources during 2011/2012 and will inform the council's response. The facilities which have more than 15 recorded incidents of antisocial behaviour will receive an "intensive" series of interventions. These interventions will be initiated in the first quarter of the financial year.</p>
<p>2.6</p>	<p><u>Responding to antisocial behaviour</u></p> <p>There are not many "off the shelf responses" to ASB and most solutions are negotiated or designed in partnership with Council officers (Park managers or the Community safety team), PSNI and NI Housing Executive. Many of our interventions do not require any additional financial resources but rather</p>

officer time in terms of developing better working relationships across the council and between statutory organisations, for example:

- In order to reduce fire setting in parks the ASB programme coordinator links into the council's Bonfire management programme through Good Relations. Most fires in parks are lit in connection with cultural celebrations in July and August. Using the support of the Bonfire management programme to develop partnerships between the community, the council, PSNI and the NI Fire and Rescue Service; we hope to reduce the instances of fire setting in parks.
- In order to reduce drinking in parks; Park Rangers plan operations alongside the PSNI or the council's Get home safe project. These operations tackle groups drinking or causing annoyance in the park and often lead to prosecutions.
- There are two park areas where we are aligning our service with PSNI and the community to reduce scrambler usage in parks. The addition of "kissing gates" at the entrance of these parks will reduce scrambler access. We are also working with the community to raise awareness of the dangers of using scramblers and to develop scrambler seizure operations with the PSNI.
- The antisocial behaviour programme has devoted resources to a graffiti removal initiative, where graffiti is removed from park and leisure hotspots as soon as it is reported.

2.7 The Presence in Parks Pilot

This pilot which is currently being developed seeks to re-distribute park staff across Belfast and support staff to enforce byelaws and prosecute adults who are drinking, littering or letting their dogs foul the park. The Presence in Parks Pilot will introduce new systems, which will inform how we deploy the new Park Safety Wardens and further improve our service to the community.

2.8 Antisocial behaviour in electoral areas

The information recorded in Appendix 4 (Chart 1.3) illustrates antisocial behaviour by Electoral Area. The chart shows incidents of antisocial behaviour taking place throughout an area and indicates potential hotspots and can help identify when ASB is being displaced following action by Rangers or PSNI. This information informs how we implement joint operations and ensure that we do not move a problem on to another site.

2.9 Summary of interventions (2010-11)

A number of interventions and actions have taken place across the council's parks and leisure facilities during the last twelve months. The following lists of interventions were supported from the antisocial behaviour programme budget:

North Belfast

Environment

- Upper Alexandra Park fencing behind the Glen. Preventing Youths from entering the park over a smaller fence
- Lower Alexandra Park undergrowth clearance and tree thinning. Opening up sightlines through the park.
- Grove playing fields kissing gates. Preventing motor cycles from using the park as a shortcut
- Carrs Glen kissing gates and bollards. Preventing motor cycle access.
- Belfast Castle CCTV improvement.
- Carrs Glen: Reduction of trees and shrubs. Improving the sightlines where youths were gathering.

Education

- Waterworks: Support for Young at Art to run the Children's Festival
- Waterworks: Support for New Lodge Arts to run a Halloween Lantern Parade
- Grove Playing fields: Support for FASA to run a football coaching tournament
- Woodvale Park: Support for Woodvale Bonfire festival
- Alexandra Park: Support for Challenge for Youth to run the People in parks youth participation initiative.

Enforcement

- Belfast Castle: Joint operations with BCC and PSNI patrols.
- Alexandra Park: Joint operations with BCC and PSNI patrols.
- Waterworks: Joint operations with BCC and PSNI patrols.

East Belfast

Environment

- Botanic Gardens: Shrub reduction and clearance to improve sightlines through the park.
- Ormeau Park: Support for the development of the Green Flag management plan

Education

- Dixon/Orangefield: Support for FASA to run a football-coaching tournament.
- Orangefield: Support for Challenge for Youth to run the People in parks youth participation initiative.
- Ormeau Park: Support for Challenge for Youth to run the People in parks youth participation initiative.

Enforcement

- Botanic Gardens: Joint operations with BCC and PSNI patrols.
- Ormeau Park: Joint operations with BCC and PSNI patrols.
- Belmont Park: Joint operations with BCC and PSNI patrols.

2.10	<p>South and West Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower Crescent Park: Lighting and reduction of shrubs. Preventing drinkers hiding in the bushes. • Blythefield walkway: Reduction of trees and shrubs, litter lifting. Improving the sightlines and removing fly-tipping • Benmore Open Space: Reduction of trees and shrubs. Improving the sightlines to prevent youths gathering <p>Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lenadoon: Support for IFA to run a football-coaching tournament • Falls Park: Support for IFA to run a football-coaching tournament • Falls Park: Support for Halloween lantern parade • Northlink park: Support for Chalky residents to run a Christmas event <p>Enforcement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Falls Park: Joint operations with BCC and PSNI patrols. • City Cemetery: Joint operations with BCC and PSNI patrols. • Dunville: Joint operations with BCC and PSNI patrols. <p><u>Interagency and Interdepartmental networks</u> The SNASB programme coordinator has developed a range of internal and external partnerships.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area based ASB partnership meetings have been established. Park staff, Environmental Health staff and PSNI officers meet to monitor and co-ordinate interventions around park and leisure facilities. • Parks and Leisure staff will receive training support through Safer City to increase awareness of ASB and improve recording systems. • Joint working with Community Safety Officers, Dog Wardens and Litter Wardens are improving our ability to effectively respond to ASB. • St Patrick's day operations were coordinated through partnership with Council officers, PSNI, NI Fire and Rescue Services, Ambulance services, Queens and Ulster University. Sharing information and resources such as Wardens, a mobile CCTV van and council officers created safer public spaces across the city.
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3.0	Resource Implications
3.1	The development of the programme will be facilitated through the agreed ASB Budget 2011-12. The programme has £250,000 allocated in revenue estimates for the 2011-12 year.

4.0	Equality and Good Relations Implications
4.1	Much of the ASB programme work spans activities related to reducing interface tensions. All of the programme work is in line with the council's equality and good relations policies and procedures.
5.0	Recommendations
5.1	Members are asked to note the contents of the update report.
6.0	Decision Tracking
6.1	Updates on the Safer Neighbourhoods ASB programme will be brought by the ASB Coordinator to the Committee three times a year, in June, October, and February.
7.0	Key to Abbreviations
7.1	BCC: Belfast City Council ASB: Antisocial Behaviour SNASB: Safer Neighbourhoods Antisocial Behaviour Programme PSNI: Police Service for Northern Ireland
8.0	Documents Attached
8.1	Appendix 1: ASB Programme Methodology Appendix 2: Chart 1.1 - Comparison of ASB incidents between 2009 and 2011 Appendix 3: Chart 1.2 - ASB by site and type April 2010 to March 2011 Appendix 4: Chart 1.3 - ASB by Electoral area April 2010 to March 2011