



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Green Flag Awards
Date:	11 August 2011
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Victoria Law, Lead Communicator

1	Relevant Background Information
	<p>The purpose of this report is to report to Committee the successful achievement of five additional Green Flag awards by the Department and, following reassessment, the retention of the existing two awards held.</p> <p>Established in 1996, the Green Flag Awards are managed by Keep Britain Tidy, the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers and GreenSpace.</p> <p>In 2009, the Department achieved its first Green Flag Award for Cave Hill Country Park and subsequently gained the award for Musgrave Park in 2010. As part of the Departmental Improvement Programme, a working group was established to take forward applications for five additional sites in the 2011 assessment round. The five sites identified were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Barnett Demesne▪ Botanic Gardens▪ Falls Park▪ Ormeau Park and▪ Roselawn Cemetery.

2	Key Issues
	<p>There are 8 criteria used to assess the parks, cemeteries and open spaces which are detailed in Appendix I. Each of these has a number of sub-elements.</p> <p>It is important to note that this is not only a health and safety standard unlike the Blue Flag for beaches. Green Flag is a standard for quality management and in particular for community engagement, with significant emphasis placed on the stakeholders experience and involvement in site</p>

	<p>development and improvements. The UK Communities Minister played an important role in the announcement of the awards and emphasises the crucial community role which our parks and open spaces provide;-</p> <p><i>“Green spaces are vitally important as 'green lungs' in our built-up areas, but they can provide much more as shown by this years winners of the Green Flags and Pennants. They are important to people of all ages as a place to meet friends and family, celebrate, exercise, play games and sports, but some are also places to learn about not only plants, wildlife and farming but also art, music and films, and help bring the entire local community together.”</i></p> <p>Management and staff have worked with community involvement to apply the standard to the five sites. This has included the development of and improvement framework which will be applied across all sites to raise standards.</p> <p>Roselawn Cemetery is now the first and only cemetery in Northern Ireland to achieve this national quality accreditation.</p> <p>The Council now holds seven of the 11 awards held in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Members will be aware that two Departmental officers are qualified Green Flag judges and participate annually in the UK judging rounds. Using this expertise and the Green Flag framework an assessment was made of the feasibility for entering additional Council sites for the 2012 awards.</p> <p>The assessment identified that the parks best placed to enter the awards next year are Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park, Waterworks Park and Belmont Park. At this stage it is also anticipated that the potential 2013 entries will be Lagan Meadows, Grove Playing Fields and Victoria Park.</p> <p>Considerable sustained effort, as well as ongoing developmental activities with local communities, will be required to ensure the achievement of the award for the new sites identified, as well as ensuring ongoing retention of the seven awards now held.</p>
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3	Resource Implications
	<p><u>Financial</u> The estimated cost for submitting three additional sites in the 2012 assessment round is in the region of £2,500. In addition, provision is made in the department’s improvement budget for necessary improvement works including signage.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u> There will be no additional human resources required at this stage.</p> <p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u> None at this stage.</p>

4	Equality and Good Relations Implications
	There are no implications at this stage.

5	Recommendations
	Committee is asked to note the achievement of the Green Flag awards by the department and the three additional sites to be put forward for accreditation in the 2012 assessment round.

6	Decision Tracking
	N/A

7	Key to Abbreviations
	None

8	Documents Attached
	None