



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Small Grants Scheme
Date:	13 October 2011
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Agnes McNulty, Open Spaces and Active Living Manager

1.	Relevant Background Information
	<p>The Committee is reminded that the Parks Event Small Grants Scheme has been operating successfully since 2006. Its original purpose was to encourage community based groups and organisations to organise and hold events in parks and thus increase their usage and instil a sense of ownership within the community.</p> <p>Each year a short report has been brought to Committee to set out the main headlines from the previous year and to seek authority to advertise the scheme for a further year.</p> <p>Members will recall that a report outlining the groups recommended for support under the scheme is presented to Committee in February of each year for approval.</p> <p>The scheme continues to be popular with community groups, churches, friends groups and other organisations. During 2011, a fund of £60,000 had been allocated for the scheme and a maximum grant of £2,250 was available per group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A total of 33 applications were received• 31 groups were funded• 51 events were to be held• 26 different sites were to be used.
2.	Key Issues
	<p>In line with the Parks and Leisure Department's new vision of animating our parks and open spaces as much as possible and encouraging community events and participation, it is hoped that we will be able to grow and develop this scheme over the next number of years.</p>

	<p>To this end, the department has made a bid for the £60,000 to be increased to £100,000 in the draft estimates for 2012/13 which will be subject to Members consideration of the estimates later this year.</p> <p>It is proposed that the department continue to run the scheme for a further year either at the existing level of £60,000 or (pending approval) at the increased level of £100,000.</p> <p>Officers will be working to develop this grants scheme in the intervening period and will be examining the criteria and structure of the grant ward process in order to encourage a broad range of applicants and help increase participation in the events in parks and open spaces. Any revisions will be brought back to Committee for review and approval.</p>
3.	Resource Implications
	<p><u>Financial</u> Provision of £100,000 has been included in the draft estimates for 2012/13 to cover this extended scheme.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u> The management of the scheme mainly involves staff from the Open Spaces and Active Living Unit and Business Support. The Community Park Managers and Outreach Officers are responsible for liaising with groups on site.</p> <p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u> Having groups organising their own events in parks helps to increase use of parks and encourage a sense of ownership of them.</p>
4.	Equality and Good Relations Implications
	None.
5.	Recommendations
	It is recommended that Committee approve the running of a Parks Small Grants Scheme for the 2012/13 period and, subject to approval through the estimates process, agree to extend the scheme to provide a fund of £100,000.
6.	Decision Tracking
	Responsible officer: Agnes McNulty, Open Spaces and Active Living Manager, closing date of scheme: Tuesday 10 January 2012 Further report to be brought to Committee February 2012 for approval of the grants to be awarded.
7.	Key to Abbreviations
	None.
8.	Documents Attached
	None.