



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Closure Report on People in Parks Initiative
Date:	10 November 2011
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Pete Murray, Antisocial Behaviour Co-ordinator

1.	Relevant Background Information
	<p>The People in Parks initiative is a pilot project that was developed as part of the Parks and Leisure Department's Antisocial Behaviour Programme. Members will recall previous reports updating the committee on the development of the initiative (12 August 2010 and 10 February 2011). The delivery of the initiative cost £27,000.</p>

2.	Key Issues
	<p>The People in Parks Initiative consists of activities that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• involve young people in legitimate use of council parks;• involve young people in creating safer parks; and• reduce antisocial behaviour. <p>The pilot initiative has been delivered by Challenge for Youth.</p> <p>The project has delivered youth participation opportunities in park hotspot areas in north, south, east and west Belfast. The hotspot areas were identified as Falls Park, Orangefield Park, Ormeau Park and Alexandra Park. These locations were chosen based upon evidence gathered by the Safer Belfast Tasking Process and the Parks and Leisure department ASB Co-ordinator.</p> <p><u>Main findings of the Evaluation Report</u></p> <p>The initiative has attempted to deliver 2 projects in each park as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Orangefield Park: access to the bowling pavilion for young people and a community fun day to tie in with the Royal Wedding in April 2011.• Ormeau Park: the design and development of a tourist information board/art piece and the delivery of a community fun day targeted at young people.

- Alexandra Park: access to the football pitches and facilities and a Lark in the Park community fun day.
- Falls Park: the erection of a plaque to a local young person who had passed away in the park and the delivery of a Schools Out for Summer community fun day.

Outputs achieved from the work have included

- Engaging 110 young people in the activities, 64% of these were male.
- The provision of more than 400 hours direct youth work delivery.
- Engaging the local community in the work being undertaken.
- Young people progressing on to other forms of support including training in child protection and health & safety and leadership programmes.

Outcomes from the initiative

- A reduction in antisocial behaviour in the areas targeted.
- An increase in the number of young people that have been engaged with, empowered and supported to change their behaviour.
- An opportunity for young people to get involved in their local communities and to influence the provision of future services in Council parks.
- Identifying young people that could potentially be the lead animators for community work in the future.

Recommendations

As a result of the evaluation process, the following recommendations are put forward for the future delivery of the People in Parks initiative.

- Project Planning and Management:
 - A project management group should be formed and be attended by key stakeholders including Parks Managers and community representatives. If necessary, a group should be established for each park targeted with minutes kept for each meeting.
 - Work should, where possible, feed into other existing groups such as the area based antisocial behaviour partnerships.
 - Standard documentation should be established, including templates for monitoring the work.
 - There should be more opportunities for the groups of young people to meet with decision makers in the council.
 - Meetings involving the young people should be in a place and at a time that is suitable to their needs.
- Outreach, Recruitment and Engagement:
 - A balance needs to be achieved between working with existing groups of young people and targeting those individuals that are detached and may be actively involved in antisocial behaviour.
 - Detached street outreach work and attendance at community events will be required to identify suitable young people.
- Timescales:
 - Any future contract should be awarded for a 12 month period and factor in times when it is difficult to achieve active engagement, such as school holidays.

- Individual projects should be delivered over 12 months as opposed to 6 months with potentially two groups engaged in each area simultaneously.
- Additional time should be built in to project delivery to allow development work to be carried out with both the young people targeted and the communities in which they live to ensure active buy in.
- Types of projects to be delivered:
 - A list of examples of other projects that had been successfully delivered in Parks in the past should be produced to give examples of what would be admissible for support and realistic with the time and resources available.
 - Each park area should deliver a community engagement event (fun day) as well as an event targeted at the identified needs of the particular park.
- Recognition of achievement and media coverage:
 - Young people engaged with work such as this should be considered for the Community Safety Partnership's Young People's Awards.
 - The work could be better promoted to the local community through the wider media and better use of Council resources such as City Matters magazine, in conjunction with the Council's communications department.
- Additional support to the young people:
 - Young people should be given opportunities to achieve accredited qualifications as a part of the support provided, including volunteering qualifications. This could be done by bringing young people from across Belfast into one group and learn from one another's experiences.
- Links to other council initiatives taking place:
 - Future delivery should be linked into other Council initiatives operating in those areas to achieve better value for money and reduce any duplication in delivery.

Next steps

The evaluation report has made a recommendation to incorporate the People in Parks Initiative into the ongoing work of the Safer Neighbourhoods Antisocial Behaviour Programme. The council and the Belfast Community Safety Partnership have invested resources into youth outreach work.

Currently, the Community Safety Coordinator with thematic responsibility for Antisocial behaviour and the Parks and Leisure ASB Coordinator are exploring a one-Council approach to the provision of Youth outreach/participation opportunities across the city. This work will provide better management of a citywide project and ensure that where there are efficiencies these savings could be redirected into service provision.

3.	Resource Implications
	<p><u>Financial</u> £30,000 would be required for the People in Parks initiative to continue for another year. These resources have been allowed for in the 2012/2013 Safer Neighbourhoods Antisocial Behaviour budget estimate which has been put forward by the department for approval.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u> None.</p> <p><u>Asset and other implications</u> None.</p>
4.	Equality and Good Relations Implications
	<p>The antisocial behaviour programme work spans activities related to reducing interface tensions and bringing youth together to take part in positive programmes and activities. All of the programme work is in line with the council's equality and good relations policies and procedures.</p>
5.	Recommendations
	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • note the content of this report and the attached evaluation, and • agree to the development of a city-wide council programme for youth intervention and engagement to help combat antisocial behaviour.
6.	Decision Tracking
	<p>Decision of the Committee to be implemented by the Antisocial Behaviour Co-ordinator.</p>
7.	Key to Abbreviations
	<p>None.</p>
8.	Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1: People in Parks Evaluation Report, October 2011</p>