



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Peace Wall within Alexandra Park
Date:	12 January 2012
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Paula Irvine, Community Parks Outreach Manager

1.	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The purpose of this report is to set the context for Members to receive a delegation from Groundwork who will provide an update on the pilot opening of the peace wall within Alexandra Park.
1.2	As part of the Alexandra Park regeneration project, a cross-community and multi-agency steering group was formed to assist and ensure delivery of the project. As a result of the ongoing work, the steering group identified a community interest in the possibility of providing an access gate within the Peace Wall that divides the communities that surround the park.
1.3	Following community consultation, Members approved a pilot to open the Peace Wall for three months from Friday 16 September 2011, Monday to Friday from 9.00am to 3.30pm. The access gate was supported and funded by the Department of Justice and a pathway connecting the two sides of the park was funded by the council.
1.4	PSNI, Park Rangers and the Community Safety Team have monitored the success of the pilot, recording all interface tensions and directly associated antisocial behaviour.
1.5	The 3 months of the pilot ended in mid-December with no incidents recorded by either Belfast City Council or PSNI. Feedback delivered to the steering group has been very positive and indicates that the new access arrangements have enhanced the enjoyment of park users. The same arrangements have been maintained in place in order to keep the wall opened and pending the update presentation to Members.

2.	Key Issues
2.1	Following the success of the pilot it is the wish of the steering group to continue with the arrangement and to extend the opening hours of the

	access gate, subject to further consultation with the local community. It would be intended to align the opening of the Peace wall with the park opening and closing hours, thus enhancing access across the park.
2.2	It is proposed that continued opening of the Peace Wall would be monitored on an ongoing basis, and reviewed after a period of 12 months to determine its success.

3.	Resource Implications
3.1	<u>Financial</u> Whilst there were costs associated with creating the access gate and paths, no further costs are expected beyond routine maintenance which would be covered by existing revenue budgets.
3.2	<u>Human Resource</u> There are no expected additional resource implications.
3.3	<u>Asset and other Implications</u> There are no expected additional resource implications.

4.	Equality and good relations implications
	There are no implications at this stage. However, equality and good relations factors will be taken into account in any activities delivered at Alexandra Park through the project.

5.	Recommendations
	Committee is asked to: 1. receive the delegation from Groundwork and their update presentation; 2. approve the continued opening of the Peace Wall within Alexandra Park, subject to review after a period of 12 months, and 3. approve the revision of the access gate opening times to align with the park's opening and closing times, subject to further community consultation.

6.	Decision Tracking
	Report to Committee in January 2013 outlining the results of a 12-month review of the continued opening arrangements.

7.	Key to Abbreviations
	PSNI: Police Service of Northern Ireland

8.	Documents Attached
	None.