



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	King William Park Closure and Art Project
Date:	15 March 2012
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Pete Murray, Antisocial Behaviour Coordinator

1.	Relevant Background Information
	<p>King William Park is situated at the junction between Lisburn Road, Bradbury Place and University Road. This small neighbourhood park has become the focus of a series of meetings between PSNI, BCC, Belfast County Orange Lodge and Community representatives from Sandy Row and Donegal Pass.</p> <p>In recent years, during the band parades on 12 July, crowds gathering at the railings of the park and using the park for antisocial activities have displaced young families from the local neighbourhood. Local families gathered at the park in the past because it provided a safe vantage point for children.</p> <p>PSNI and Community representatives have now requested that the park is closed during the 12 July celebrations and hoarding is placed around the boundaries due to the crowds gathering and behaving inappropriately at King William Park.</p>

2.	Key Issues
	<p>King William Park is a focal point for the band parades passing through Belfast on 12 July. Thousands gather to watch the parades throughout Shaftsbury Square, Bradbury place and Lower Lisburn Road. As the crowds swell, the passage of bands becomes restricted and a choke point forms at the end of King William Park.</p> <p>The profile of the crowds that gather at King William Park has been described, generally, as boisterous, adult males who are visiting the area for the day. These crowds have been reported to be climbing on the rails of the park, using the rails as a vantage point to watch the parades, using the park as a toilet and behaving in a manner which limits local residents</p>

	<p>and families' access to and enjoyment of the parades.</p> <p>Community representatives from Donegal Pass and Sandy Row have been working together to ensure that the two neighbouring communities enjoy the parades. They have requested that the park is closed during the celebrations on 12 July. They have also requested support to place hoarding and art work around the park to restrict boisterous crowds climbing on rails.</p> <p>The hoarding would restrict crowds hanging off the railings and restrict access to the park. The PSNI will also have officers stationed at the gates of the park. These actions are intended to reduce inappropriate behaviour. Community representatives have also suggested that the hoarding could feature an arts project, led by young people from the area. The art work would create a more attractive backdrop than bare hoarding and the designs would celebrate the traditions and culture associated with the parades on 12 July in the Sandy Row and Donegal Pass areas.</p> <p>Engaging the young people from Sandy Row and Donegal Pass in an arts project celebrating the traditions and culture associated with the parades on 12 July, will reinforce positive ownership of this event and reduce the influence of the boisterous crowds.</p>
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3.	Resource Implications
	The estimated cost of provision of hoardings and art work is in the region of £10,000. Provision has been made for this within the Parks and Leisure Safer Neighbourhoods and Antisocial Behaviour budget.

4.	Equality and good relations implications
	The request to close King William Park on 12 July and place art work around the park is intended to reduce tensions and bringing communities 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.

5.	Recommendations
	Members are asked to approve the closure of King William Park on 12 July 2012 and the provision of hoarding as requested around the boundary of the King William Park for a number of days before and after 12 July 2012 to be agreed with the local community.

6.	Decision Tracking
	The outcome of this project will be documented in the Safer Neighbourhoods Antisocial Behaviour Programme report to Committee in October 2012

7.	Key to Abbreviations
	PSNI: Police Service for Northern Ireland BCC: Belfast City Council

8.	Documents Attached
	None