



Belfast City Council

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| Report to: | Parks and Leisure Committee |
| Subject: | St. Patrick's Day Operations in Parks |
| Date: | 12 April 2012 |
| Reporting Officer: | Andrew Hassard, Director Parks and Leisure |
| Contact Officer: | Pete Murray ASB Co-ordinator |

1. Relevant Background Information

At the meeting of the Committee in March Members requested that an update report be brought to April Committee outlining the actions and activities over the St. Patricks weekend and bank holiday in relation to keeping our Parks and Leisure spaces safe and free of anti-social behaviour.

In the last number of years the council has been working closely with its partners to coordinate resources to effectively tackle any antisocial behaviour occurring during St. Patrick's day across the city.

This year, as before, preparatory meetings were held with the PSNI, NIFRS, Ambulance Service, Queens University and Ulster University and a comprehensive operations plan was drawn up to support effective communications during the St. Patrick's Day/ Mothers day bank holiday weekend.

2. Key Issues

The aims of the St. Patrick's Day operation were to:

- Communicate with local communities, elected representatives and revellers about the St. Patrick's celebration 2012 operation;
- Provide a safe environment for residents, communities and revellers to enjoy and partake in St. Patrick's Day Celebrations across the city;
- Tackle crime, on-street drinking and antisocial behaviour;
- Enforce breaches of local bye laws and other legislation;
- Improve the public image of Belfast as a safe city to socialise in.

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| | <p>The principal areas given attention included the Holylands, the City Centre during the St. Patricks Day parade and the parks throughout the city over the long weekend.</p> <p>The Parks and Leisure Department had officers contributing to the development of a city wide plan for the St. Patrick's Day operation. Parks operations began on St. Patrick's day at 7am and continued until 7:30pm. An additional resource was deployed on the following bank holiday, on 19 March, between 12 noon and 5pm.</p> <p>Hourly updates on the situation in parks were collated by the City Park Manager. These updates were shared amongst the agencies and informed decisions on where to deploy resources were taken using this information.</p> <p>The mobile CCTV van was deployed throughout parks across the city on 17 March and was very effective in identifying and quantifying antisocial behaviour hotspots within park areas. There were a number of reports involving alcohol in Botanic Gardens, Falls Park, Cavehill Country Park, Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park and Woodlands Playing Fields. The mobile CCTV van visited these areas and provided an extremely versatile asset, as the PSNI could make decisions on deploying a response using "real time" images to assess and respond to any problems.</p> <p>As a result there were a number of successful responses which utilised the coordinated resources of Park Rangers, Community Safety Wardens, Get Home Safe Officers and the PSNI to tackle drinking in Parks across the city. The Mobile CCTV van was also deployed during the Bank Holiday on 19 March.</p> |
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| 3. | Resource Implications |
| | <p>The mobile CCTV was supplied under a contract sourced by the Community Safety unit and resourced by the Safer Neighbourhoods Antisocial behaviour programme budget.</p> <p>The contract for future provision of mobile CCTV services will be procured through tender during the 2012 – 2013 period.</p> |

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| 4. | Equality and good relations implications |
| | <p>Much of the ASB programme work spans activities related to reducing interface tensions or responding to community concerns. All of the programme work is in line with the council's equality and good relations policies and procedures.</p> |

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| 5. | Recommendations |
| | Members are asked to note the contents of this update report. |

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| 6. | Decision Tracking |
| | None. |

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| 7. | Key to Abbreviations |
| | PSNI: Police Service for Northern Ireland NIFRS: Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service CCTV: Closed Circuit Television ASB: Antisocial behaviour |

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| 8. | Documents Attached |
| | None |