



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Botanic Sculpture – Belfast Bloom
Date:	10 May 2012
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Stephen Stockman, City Parks Manager (East)

1.	Relevant Background Information
	<p>The Community Arts Partnership (CAP) was established in 2011 following the merger of New Belfast Community Arts Initiative and Community Arts Forum, and continues to build on the success of these two leading community arts organisations. CAP takes the lead in the promotion and development of community arts practice and supports and collaborates with community groups, schools, artists, the public, arts centres and other organisations in Northern Ireland and beyond.</p> <p>CAP is asking for approval to erect a community-led public sculpture at the entrance area of Botanic Gardens, opposite the statue of Kelvin at the main University Road gates (see Appendix 1). CAP describe this as an iconic piece of public art, developed, designed and produced through community arts participative practice, which will further enhance the relationship between Belfast’s communities and its most iconic Gardens.</p> <p>The piece has been constructed from 12 components that make up a 2.4 metre diameter sphere, teed-up slightly on a raised platform allowing ground clearance. CAP has secured all project funding for the development of this sculpture. Ten ‘petals’ of equal size have been developed by ten diverse community groups across Belfast. These groups include; under 16 and over 16 groups, an older people’s group, an Irish language group, an ethnic minority group and groups from socially deprived areas. Each group has developed relief imagery in clay on identical flower petal templates. The templates have then been cast in aluminium. Their size and dimensions are the same but the relief imagery reflects their community and cultural identity. The flower petals join together to create the overall sphere shape, the Belfast</p>

	<p>Bloom.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the piece will be unveiled in a launch bringing together all the groups that have worked on the art piece together with representatives of the Arts Council, Belfast City Council, DCAL and the Department of Foreign Affairs.</p> <p>At the last meeting of Committee held on 12/4/12 further information was requested, before a final decision was made regarding permission to install the piece. The additional information requested has been set out in 'Key Issues' and is also provided in Appendix 2.</p>
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2.	<p>Key Issues</p> <p>The key issues for the Committee to note are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ownership / responsibility - The Art work will be given to the citizens of Belfast. The Council has been asked to take responsibility for the sculpture and incur the costs for the installation, public liability and maintenance of the new art work. • Positioning - The management of Botanic Gardens, along with the Friends of Botanic group have together determined that the best place for the piece is the area adjacent to the entrance. There are a number of reasons for this. The site has been cleared for new development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. ease of installation ii. good drainage iii. a prominent position. <p>The piece has been designed to be site specific. Its scale and dimensions have been determined by the area originally proposed.</p> • It is anticipated that patrons of the park and the communities that the piece represents, would be able to see the piece at close quarters and, it was an aspiration of the parks team and Friends that it would form a new and exciting focus for people to engage with, be able to walk around and indeed, given the in-laid reliefs, touch. • It is hoped that an Aeolian (Wind) Harp mechanism can be introduced to the interior of the piece. • Security - The Belfast Bloom piece is of low value in terms of the metal it contains. The piece has only around 500-600kgs of Aluminium, valued at around £1,500 - £2,000. The same
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	<p>piece in bronze would have a metal value of £15,000.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The base-plate of the piece is constructed to engineers' specifications, using 20mm galvanised steel. The housing is then extremely securely anchored using a tried and tested fixing system consisting 4 x 4 No. 20mm threaded bar anchor bolts that are then concreted into the foundations. • The size of the piece, and the fact that Botanic Gardens is gated and walled, should mitigate against any potential theft. Aluminium cannot be cut using oxy-acetylene torches. Only steel or concrete saws could cut through the structure. To dismantle this piece using cutting equipment into even 4 sections would therefore take up to 16 hours of very loud industrial sawing. • Funding - The Arts Council of N Ireland, is the principal funder, and have been the main supporter of the three years plus process carried out with community groups across Belfast to the tune of approx £23k. The Department of Foreign Affairs have augmented this funding with £15k, supporting the fabrication and installation of this piece along with some community processes as well. The sum total of funding supporting the community process, design, fabrication and construction is therefore almost £40k.
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3.	Resource Implications
	<p><u>Finance</u> Council would be responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the cost of installation (cost to be established) • the cost of cleaning and maintenance • the provision and maintenance of suitable shrub planting around the Art work initially costing approximately £2,000 <p>These costs can be supported within existing Parks and Leisure budgets.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u> No impact.</p> <p><u>Asset</u> The erection of the proposed sculpture would enhance Botanic gardens adding another feature of interest for park users.</p>

4.	Equality and good relations implications
	This provides the potential to attract communities and tourists to the City to view this piece of community based artwork. The sculpture represents

	community cohesion and the aspiration of the groups involved in seeing our parks and open spaces shared by all members of the community.
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5.	Recommendations
	It is recommended that Committee grant approval to install and maintain the art work subject to an appropriate legal agreement being entered into between Belfast City Council and CAP.

6.	Decision Tracking
	Stephen Stockman, City Parks Manager (East)

7.	Key to Abbreviations
	CAP Community Arts Partnership DCAL Department of Cultural, Arts and Leisure

8.	Documents Attached
	Appendix 1: Site map of Botanic Gardens with proposed location. Appendix 2: Information and Mock up of Belfast Bloom Sculpture.