



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Use of Woodvale Park for a cultural celebration on the 11 July 2012
Date:	14 June 2012
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Mick Largey, Parks Manager David Robinson, Good Relations Officer

1	Relevant Background Information
	<p>Members will be aware of the work of the Council led Bonfire Programme, which has developed into a programme of Cultural Networks. This brings together around 50 bonfire groups across the City, with funding being provided by both the Council as well as through funding under the Council's Peace III programme.</p> <p>Woodvale and Cambrai Youth and Community Association have been active participants on the programme for a number of years. In 2007 they were involved in the design of the Bonfire Beacon as an alternative to the traditional 11th July bonfire. They have run successful events since 2008 with around 1,000 people attending these events annually. Last year the group successfully used a bonfire frame as opposed to a beacon. The staging of these events was approved by the Parks Committee on each occasion.</p> <p>This group are again intending to develop a cultural event in Woodvale Park on the 11 July. They are seeking permission to erect a bonfire frame and to stage associated community activities as part of their ongoing efforts to transform bonfires within the wider locality.</p>

2	Key Issues
	<p><u>Provision of bonfire frame</u></p> <p>The bonfire frame is a simple design, which aims to regulate the size and height of the bonfire enabling greater regulation of the fire. Under the</p>

provisions of Article 10 of the Recreation and Youth Services (NI) Order 1986 a district council has a power to establish, maintain and manage facilities for recreational, social, physical and cultural activities, together with certain ancillary powers, including the power to provide assistance to third parties to organise such activities. The Council can therefore assist this event by setting aside a small area within the Park for the operation of a managed bonfire in the context of bonfires being a particular expression of cultural identity.

Developments within Woodvale Park

The £2m development of Woodvale Park is currently going on site and as a result, the traditional area in the Park (on the cinder pitch) is unavailable for the bonfire frame. However, an area close to the bowling pavilion has been identified by Parks staff for a scaled-down version of previous events to occur. Site visits have taken place with the Fire Service and the PSNI who have assisted the Council in identifying a suitable location for the frame and space for limited associated events. This has been developed alongside the local community who appreciate the limited space available this year, but who also recognise the need to maintain the positive steps undertaken in recent years, which saw events developed in the Park as a substitute to 5 bonfires on local streets.

Risk Management

There are issues of risk that will be carefully reviewed. The organisers of any proposed event at Woodvale Park will be required to liaise closely with the Council and the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service.

The proposal to permit the proposed event will be underpinned by an appropriate form of legal agreement. It is also the view of Legal Services that suitable fencing should be erected around the bonfire frame after the burn. Photographs of the bonfire frame are attached as an appendix to this report.

The work of the Council in relation to the transformation of bonfires continues to be supported by the inter-agency group who assist the Council with the Programme. The Fire and Rescue Service, the PSNI, DRD (Roads Service), NIHE, NNIEA and the Community Relations Unit of OFM/DFM have all supported developments thus far.

Benefits of the proposal

There is local support for the proposal to host this event, with a commitment of up to 50 local volunteers to supervise the event. These volunteers are trained in stewarding techniques and officially accredited by the Open College Network.

The provision of beacons and the frame in the past has proven to demonstrate that communities can take responsibility for managing bonfires and conducting events in a responsible manner.

3	Resource Implications
	<p><u>Financial</u> None. Current approved budgets within Council will support the initiative.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bonfire frame, (fabrication and delivery): £1,260 (through existing Good Relations bonfires budget) • Provision of sand base: £100 (through existing Parks area North budget) • Fencing for after the burn: £200 (through existing Parks area North budget) <p>There are no post event clean-up costs envisaged.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u> Continued Parks and leisure as well as Good relations staff engagement with developing the proposed event.</p>

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
	None.

5	Recommendations
	<p>That the Committee grant authority for this event to be held on Council property (Woodvale Park) in July 2012, subject to satisfactory terms agreed with the Director of Parks and Leisure and on the condition that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The event organisers resolve all operational issues to the Council's satisfaction; • Legal agreement is entered into; and • The event organisers meet all statutory requirements including entertainments licensing.

6	Decision Tracking
	David Robinson, Good Relations Officer, and Mick Largey from Parks have been working with the community in the development and delivery of the bonfire and beacon project over the last number of years within Woodvale Park and will be responsible for any actions arising out of this report.

7	Key to Abbreviations
	None.

8	Documents Attached
	1. Photographs of the bonfire frame