



Belfast City Council

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| Report to: | Parks and Leisure Committee |
| Subject: | Growing Communities: The Conservation Volunteers request and authority to go to Tender |
| Date: | 9 August 2012 |
| Reporting Officer: | Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure |
| Contact Officer: | Emer Boyle, Policy and Business Development Manager |

| 1 | Relevant Background Information |
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| | <p>The purpose of this report is to update Members on ongoing facilitation work by the Conservation Volunteers (TCV) at a number of Parks and Leisure sites and to consider a request by TCV to have use of the Ormeau Park on Sunday 7 October 2012 for their “Big Green Weekend”.</p> <p>As members will be aware, the Council now operates community gardens at Suffolk, Lenadoon, Glenbank and Musgrave Park and is developing further gardens at sites across the City, including Finlay Park, Wedderburn Park, Knocknagoney and Falls Park. The Council also hosts various projects operated by community organisations, including community gardens at Grove Park, Waterworks Park and Ballysillan.</p> <p>Following the launch for public consultation of the draft ‘Growing Communities’ strategy in June, developed by the Council in partnership with Belfast Healthy Cities, the Public Health Agency and Belfast Health Development Unit, it is expected that the Council will develop and support more community gardens across the City in the future.</p> <p>Since 2010, The Conservation Volunteers (TCV), GROW and Larne Lough Nurseries have worked with the Council, undertaking environmental improvement and community facilitation work in a number of the aforementioned community gardens, either directly funded by the Council or through partner agreements. At the February 2012 meeting of the Parks</p> |

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| | and Leisure Committee, Members approved additional, interim financial support for these organisations to cover the period April to June 2012, pending implementation of an agreed longer-term approach to provision of these services. |
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| 2 | Key Issues |
| | <p>TCV are a not for profit organisation, established in Northern Ireland in 1983, delivering a range of environmental improvement activities involving the local community. TCV have worked with the Council on various projects in recent years, and are currently an active member of the Steering Group for the development and implementation of the Growing Communities Strategy.</p> <p>Under the arrangement outlined in paragraph 1.3, TCV manage community garden projects at Ballysillan, Glenbank and Musgrave, developing the gardens with the local community, and delivering health and social wellbeing and active citizenship activities, as well as accredited training.</p> <p>In order to maintain current levels of activity and community involvement at these sites from July to the end of the current growing season in October 2012, The Conservation Volunteers have requested further funding for this year up to a total of £8,100. Approval for funding facilitation around all of our “growing” activities was granted by Committee at its meeting in December 2011, up to a total of 24,360 (for non-Peace funded activities) and this £8,100 is included within that total amount agreed.</p> <p>For those projects where TCV are involved this would be broken down as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ballysillan – one day per week – Musgrave – one half day per week plus one Saturday per month – Glenbank – one half day per week plus one Saturday per month <p>TCV propose to match the funding provided by the Council, by adding additional sessions / days’ at each site. The activities to be delivered include, in summary, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Site maintenance and development; – Community engagement; – Grow Your Own training; – Healthy cooking demonstrations; – Hosting events to raise the profile of the site and volunteering; – The involvement of schools; and – Monitoring and evaluation of all activities. <p>The full proposal submitted by TCV is provided at Appendix 1.</p> |

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| | <p>All of the facilitation support which the Council has engaged to date has been in order to meet an immediate requirement to ensure continuity of activities in the community gardens which we would otherwise not be possible to achieve through current Council resources.</p> <p>Following the launch of the draft strategy to consultation, it is timely to review the requirements for ongoing provision of community facilitation in Council community gardens, in order to identify an approach for securing a facilitation partner or consortium of partners on a longer-term basis.</p> <p>To this end we would propose to develop a tender for community facilitation for growing activities for a three year period, to commence from January 2013. The department will ensure appropriate contract management processes are in place and that, as per our normal processes, the tender will be evaluated on both cost and quality and will be awarded to the most economically advantageous tender.</p> |
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| 3 | Resource Implications |
| | <p><u>Financial</u> It is proposed that the value of the contract for three years would be £90,000. If approval is granted, allowance for this work can be made in the forthcoming estimates period (although some spend will be required between Jan-March 2013). All of this type of work is an ongoing area of growth for the Parks and Leisure Department.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u> Officer time is required on an ongoing basis to manage the facilitation partners and their requirements.</p> <p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u> All of the ongoing development of community gardens across the city are enhancing existing Council (and non-Council) assets and helping to bring residents and local communities into our facilities to engage in healthy activities in their localities.</p> |

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| 4 | Equality Implications |
| | None at this stage. |

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| 5 | Recommendations |
| | <p>Members are asked to note the ongoing partnership working with TCV and to:-</p> <p>(i) approve TCV's request for the use of Ormeau Park on Sunday 7</p> |

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| | <p>October 2012 for their “Big Green Weekend”;</p> <p>(ii) approve that officers develop the specification and tender for facilitation of growing activities for a period of 3 years, to the value of £90K</p> <p>(iii) and authorise the Director, under the Scheme of Delegation, to award the successful tender.</p> |
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| 6 | Decision Tracking |
| | None required. |

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| 7 | Key to Abbreviations |
| | TCV – The Conservation Volunteers |

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| 8 | Documents Attached |
| | Appendix 1 - Proposal from The Conservation Volunteers relating to a number of Belfast City Council Community Gardens and request for use of Ormeau. |