



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Belfast Activity Centre request for use of the Waterworks lower pond
Date:	13 September 2012
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure

1.	Relevant Background Information
	<p>The Parks and Leisure department has received a request from the Belfast Activity Centre (BAC) as part of the Youth Build project for the use of the Waterworks Park and the pond situated at the lower end of the park. The proposal (see Appendix I) is to create a partnership between BAC and the Council to enhance and encourage involvement and participation in the park and in North Belfast.</p> <p>The Youth Build initiative offers a dynamic programme engaging leaders and potential leaders to participate in experiential learning activities and to explore leadership development to support sustained and enduring capacity building for the future.</p> <p>The BAC currently leases an area of land within Barnett Demesne where a large amount of their activity takes place. The activity centre consists of a climbing wall, high ropes obstacle course and manmade caving area. Other activities that take place in the surrounding parkland and area are, archery, orienteering and canoeing at Shaw's Bridge.</p> <p>BAC has provided a range of outdoor activities at recent parks and leisure events and in particular the mobile climbing wall has proved a hit with community focused events.</p>
2.	Key Issues
	<p>The proposal aims to recruit 12 youth leaders from within North Belfast (6 youths directly from the Waterworks area and the further 6 from North</p>

Belfast).

The 12 youths will undergo training in paddle sports with a potential accreditation to level one paddle sports coach standard. This will include foundation safety rescue training and a relevant first aid certificate.

The training will take place from October 2012 to March 2013 twice a week for 2 hours each session. Specific times and dates will be agreed with the Park Manager and Outreach Manager depending on other programmed activity in the park.

BAC will provide all the training to the 12 youth leaders selected for the programme who will sign up to a code of good conduct. All equipment, insurances and risk assessments will also be provided and managed by the BAC.

All activity is to take place on the lower pond in the Waterworks park and although all fishing activity takes place in the upper lake Council officers will liaise with the Families of the Waterworks Fishing Club and all other relevant stakeholders regarding the new proposed canoeing activity.

Council officers will work with BAC to develop a traffic management plan for vehicles that will transport canoeing equipment to and from the park. The appropriate Council departments will be involved to ensure that all insurances and health and safety documentation is adequate.

On successful completion of the training the newly qualified coaches will deliver sessions under the stewardship of the BAC/Youth Build staff.

The long term aim is to have a sustainable paddles sports programme, supported and governed by BAC in partnership with Belfast City Council and local communities. The proposal also reflects the Council's ambition to improve and make better use of its assets and get people more active and re-enforces the department's vision as regards people, places and possibilities.

Prior to this request the Parks and Leisure department have already engaged in discussions in respect of a potential partnership between the Council and BAC. The partnership would seek to enable and assist the Council to empower local community groups and community organisations to deliver and co-ordinate activities that will build future capacity within their local areas.

This proposal is the first step towards developing a partnership with BAC which will deliver development and learning opportunities through the powerful outdoor learning environment across the city.

3.	Resource Implications
	<p><u>Financial</u> There are no financial costs to Belfast City Council as BAC will fund all associated costs with the programme.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u> There are no additional human resources known at this time.</p> <p><u>Assets and Other Implications</u> The Parks and Leisure department will carry out an environmental impact assessment of the area and will work closely with the North Down Ringing Group to ensure there is no disruption caused to the birds that inhabit the lower pond.</p>

4.	Equality and good relations implications
	There are no equality or good relations implications anticipated.

5.	Recommendations
	<p>It is recommended that the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the contents of the report and the proposal by BAC • Approve the use of the waterworks park and the lower pond to allow BAC to deliver the Youth Build project in North Belfast and the Waterworks area subject to satisfying all legal and statutory requirements, the development of an agreed activity plan and insurances being approved by Council officers.

6.	Decision Tracking
	All actions will be managed by Liam McKinley, Community Parks Manager and Paula Irvine, Community Parks Outreach Manager.

7.	Key to Abbreviations
	BAC – Belfast Activity Centre

8.	Documents Attached
	Appendix I – Proposal submitted by Belfast Activity Centre