



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Drinking Fountains in Belfast Parks
Date:	11 October 2012
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Rose Crozier

1	Relevant Background Information
	<p>The Green Flag standard encourages the provision of drinking fountains near sports facilities and playgrounds. In a wider context, there is a current trend for the promotion and provision of external drinking fountains to reduce plastic water bottle consumption. The benefits of free potable water include improved user health and wellbeing. Water fountains may also lead to improved park user satisfaction and further improve the public perception of public parks. The proposed drinking fountain sites should consider the location of proposed and existing cycle routes, sports pitches, multi-use games areas, outdoor gyms and play areas. The location of existing park buildings and the existing mains water routes should also be considered, as nearby access to such will dramatically reduce potential cost and timescales of fountain installation.</p> <p>Under the Planning (General Development) Order (Northern Ireland) 1993, Schedule 12 Development by District Councils; public drinking fountains are deemed to be permitted development and would not require planning approval.</p> <p>Further information on design options, positioning and cost, are contained in the feasibility report in Appendix 1.</p>

2	Key Issues
	<p>Site requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Easily accessible, hard surface access path and hard standing area for user• Unit design appropriate to context, e.g. does not create an adverse

	<p>visual impact in a park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site with natural surveillance, to deter vandalism <p>Potential refurbishments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repair of existing drinking fountains, replace any old lead pipe connections to remove associated lead pollution threat <p>Historic fountains may be listed and require historic building consent for refurbishment</p> <p>In addition to the general issues of aesthetics and function, the unit design should consider;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance issues – easily maintained, vandal resistant, corrosion proof, easy access to plumbing • Hygiene - easily cleaned, consider covered spout (to prevent mouth touching it), and design to deter contamination. • Water quality improvement - inbuilt water filter • Ability to turn off water supply in winter • Speed of water flow/fill rate • Accessibility - consider accessibility for all potential users, e.g. children, wheelchair users • Other/extra functional options, e.g. outdoor bottle stations, pet level water supply • Sustainable design and impact on the environment (unit life cycle analysis) • Robust/vandal resistant • Site specific design issues, should the unit match other ‘furniture’ in the park, become a feature/customised design or have a single ‘branded’ design to be used citywide. <p>The success of the project will be determined by the correct installation of the appropriate units, in the correct location, maintained to a high standard, combined with good user uptake. The provision of drinking fountains could potentially increase Green Flag scores.</p>
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3	<p>Resource Implications</p> <p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>The estimated cost of drinking fountain unit and installation, located adjacent to mains water supply, is £2500-£4000. The estimated annual cost of maintenance, per drinking fountain unit is £1000-£2000.</p> <p>Each fountain would also require an area of hard standing and potentially an access path, further to the cost of the fountain installation estimate.</p> <p>The total cost of four pilot sites would be in the region of £16,000. This would be provided for in current grounds maintenance budgets.</p> <p>See appendix 1 for list of potential sites and cost estimates</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u></p> <p>It is estimated that each fountain would require one inspection visit, every 2 days, plus any required repair work. Testing and sampling may also be required. Additional work is required to establish resource requirements however it is anticipated this will be provided within existing budgets.</p>
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	<p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u></p> <p>Potential risks</p> <p>The potential provision of drinking water fountains may incur the following risks;</p> <p><i>Health and safety</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water borne disease • Potential contamination of water supply/outlet – a pilot scheme elsewhere noted that fountains which dispense water from a hidden spout below and not above are less likely to be contaminated. Note this design would favour filling of bottles, rather than ‘stooping and drinking’. <p><i>No/low uptake of use</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential poor public perception may result in no/low uptake of use • Poor maintenance, unsightly/unkept appearance, e.g. traces of mould, algae etc. may detract from perception of park and also perception of water quality • Many amateur sportspeople supply their own drinks <p><i>Vandalism</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To fountain structure and setting <p><i>Miscellaneous</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water wastage due to pipe bursts etc. and improper use of fountains • Spills and potential slip hazard • Winter freeze <p><i>Public liability</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BCC liability for such potential hazards
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4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
	None

5	Recommendations
	<p>Committee is asked to agree:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To a pilot scheme in four sites in the city to test drinking fountain units, user reaction, maintenance issues etc. • The potential pilots sites are Dunville Park, Woodvale Park, Ormeau Park, Sir Thomas & Lady Dixon Park which is aligned to existing Green Flag sites and current investment programme. • A full audit of potential sites and the repair or reconnection of existing drinking fountains which are currently unused, if feasible. • To promote the use of drinking fountains through the installation of signs and marking drinking fountains of park maps and on websites to help people find and use fountains.

6	Decision Tracking
	To be implemented by Assistant Director Parks & Leisure

7	Key to Abbreviations
	None.

8	Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 Initial Feasibility Report on Drinking Fountains in Belfast Public Parks