



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Parks and Leisure Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Antisocial Behaviour Programme Quarterly Update
<b>Date:</b>	14 February 2013
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Peter Murray, Antisocial Behaviour Co-ordinator

<b>1.</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
	<p>The purpose of this report is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• report an overview of antisocial behaviour by electoral area;</li><li>• update committee on the activities of the Safer Neighbourhoods Antisocial Behaviour programme during June to December 2012.</li></ul>

<b>2.</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
	<p>The antisocial behaviour programme contributes to the achievement of the departmental vision of providing quality parks, open spaces and leisure environments that people value and use. In particular, it enables the delivery of the departmental objective regarding the provision of programmes and services to make people feel safer.</p> <p>In line with the departmental plan, the objectives of the antisocial behaviour programme are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• enhance the <b>environment</b> around Parks and Leisure facilities;</li><li>• develop <b>education</b> initiatives involving creative or supportive interventions to model acceptable behaviour around Parks and Leisure facilities;</li><li>• define <b>enforcement</b> as a deterrent against infraction of bye-laws or legislation; and</li><li>• develop sustainable <b>interagency</b> and <b>inter-departmental</b> networks and leading a <b>partnership</b> approach to reducing antisocial behaviour.</li></ul> <p>The Antisocial Behaviour Coordinator prioritises action and expenditure</p>

	<p>by collating evidence gathered through antisocial behaviour incident reports. This information is used to inform a coordinated partnership response, drawing on council resources, the support of local community resources, PSNI and the Policing and Community Safety Partnership (see Appendix 1 Summary of Interventions)</p> <p>Members will recall that a new ASB incident recording system was implemented in February 2012. The new CRM system records more detail than the previous Flare system and a substantial increase in the number of reported ASB incidents was expected due to the improved categorisation of ASB.</p> <p>2.1 <b><u>Trends in the available ASB incident data</u></b>  The evidence available for June to August 2012 indicates a slight seasonal increase in antisocial behaviour, especially in park areas in Balmoral, Court, Lagan Bank, and Old Park.  (See Appendix 2: Table 1, Comparison of ASB incidents in Parks and Leisure Facilities across electoral areas between June to August 2011 and June to August 2012)</p> <p>2.2 The data for the period September to December 2012 indicates a decreasing trend of ASB. The rate of the decrease in ASB between June to December 2011 and June to December 2012 is significantly different. In 2012, incidents of ASB declined sharply between summer (June to August) and autumn (September to December) whereas they declined marginally in 2011.  (See Appendix 2: Table 2, Comparison of ASB incidents in Parks and Leisure Facilities across electoral areas between September to December 2011 and September to December 2012)</p> <p>2.3 <b><u>Previous Interventions</u></b>  There are a number of interventions that will have contributed to the reduction in expected ASB reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During the months June to September 2012 in Old Park, in Marrowbone, walls were removed, fencing and gates were redesigned to restrict access from youths and increase the capacity of PSNI to identify youths gathering in the park.</li> <li>• In Old Park, in the Waterworks, a series of mobile CCTV van visits were planned in conjunction with the PSNI in support of the wishes of surrounding communities to reduce tensions in June and July.</li> <li>• In Lagan Bank, in Botanic Gardens, there was a group of drinkers that had repeatedly congregated at the bandstand and a series of joint operations were initiated in partnership with the PSNI to remove them.</li> <li>• A series of mobile CCTV van visits were also planned in Botanic Gardens and Ormeau Park to reduce the numbers of drinkers gathering.</li> <li>• In Balmoral, in Musgrave Park, Wedderburn and Woodlands, a number of fencing improvements, a series of joint operations with the PSNI and use of mobile CCTV van patrols was initiated to</li> </ul>
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reduce the numbers of drinkers using the sites.

- In Court, the closure of Woodvale park has had a significant effect on the decreasing number of ASB incident reports.

For further information on interventions across the city please refer to Appendix 1: Summary of Interventions June to December 2012.

- 2.4 The available data provides an accurate ASB profile for each park. The parks with the most incident reports suffer the following ASB issues:
- Falls Park: Drink, Littering and Rowdy behaviour
  - Alexandra Park: Substance abuse, Drinking and Rowdy behaviour
  - Waterworks: Drinking and Rowdy behaviour
  - Botanic Gardens: Drinking and Rowdy behaviour
  - Ormeau Park: Rowdy Behaviour and Vehicle nuisance
  - Woodvale: Drinking and Vandalism
  - Musgrave: Drinking and Rowdy behaviour
  - Cavehill: Animal problems
  - Victoria: Animal problems

(See Appendix 4: Categories of ASB across Parks June to December 2012)

2.5 **Future Interventions**

The profile of incidents above demonstrates that specific interventions are required to reduce specific ASB. The use of mobile CCTV will be programmed to attend parks during the lighter evenings to deter drinkers and rowdy behaviour. The development of the approach to Young adult association areas will continue in Falls, Botanic and Musgrave. Ormeau Park will benefit from further restrictions to vehicular access and options will be explored with the Park Manager. Enforcement operations will be scheduled in Cavehill and Victoria Parks to reduce the impact of Animal problems.

The electoral area which continues to show an overall increase of ASB incidents in parks areas, is Old Park. In the period of February to March 2013, the ASB coordinator will liaise with local Councillors, Park Managers and PSNI in order to identify appropriate interventions which will respond to the particular profile of ASB in the area.

Members will recall the report to committee detailing the Young Adult Association areas (December 2012). The development of these sites are ongoing, they are designed to reduce the incidents of damage, littering and rowdy behaviour. The proposals are attracting positive comments from PSNI and community partners. Although these interventions are not appropriate for every park area in Belfast, there are a number of alternatives such as weekend education initiatives designed to attract participation from young people, which may be more appropriate for the Old Park area. A report will be brought back to members following any development or evaluation.

2.6	<p><b><u>Park Warden developments</u></b></p> <p>The internal resource used to reduce incidents of ASB is the deployment of Park Wardens. They have recently attended formal training led by the Association of Public Sector Excellence which was designed to support them in adopting statutory enforcement powers and inform their understanding of the legal framework underpinning enforcement operations.</p> <p>The partnership between the Dog Wardens, Litter Wardens, Get Home Safe Officers and Park Wardens has been very successful in providing a series of joint working opportunities and the necessary support to issuing fixed penalty notices.</p>
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3.	<p><b>Resource Implications</b></p> <p>The development of the programme will be facilitated through the agreed antisocial behaviour budget 2012-13 which is approximately £250,000.</p>
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4.	<p><b>Equality and good relations implications</b></p> <p>Much of the antisocial behaviour programme work spans activities related to reducing interface tensions and bringing youth together to take part in positive programmes and activities. All of the programme work is in line with the council's equality and good relations policies and procedures.</p>
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5.	<p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <p>Members are asked to note the contents of this update report</p>
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6.	<p><b>Decision Tracking</b></p> <p>Updates on the Safer Neighbourhoods antisocial behaviour programme will be brought by the ASB Coordinator to the Committee three times a year, in June, October and February.</p>
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7.	<p><b>Key to Abbreviations</b></p> <p>ASB: Antisocial behaviour  CRM: Customer Relationship Management  PSNI: Police Service for Northern Ireland  CCTV: Closed Circuit Television</p>
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8.	<p><b>Documents Attached</b></p> <p>Appendix 1: Summary of interventions June to December 2012  Appendix 2: Comparison of ASB incidents in Parks and Leisure Facilities across electoral areas between June to December 2011 &amp; 2012  Appendix 3: ASB in parks and electoral areas between June and December 2012  Appendix 4: Categories of ASB across Parks June to December 2012</p>

## **Appendix 1**

### **Summary of interventions June to December 2012**

There have been a series of successful actions implemented throughout the period of June to December 2012. A significant portion of time has been invested in the development of the Park Wardens and the resources they require to enforce bye laws and legislation.

Parks operations are separated into three distinct areas: North, East and South/West.

The details of thematic interventions within these areas are as follows:

#### **North Belfast**

##### Environment

- Fencing adaptations in several locations to enable safer access to park areas, ie Wheatfield and Marrowbone.
- Removal of internal fencing and repositioning the old playground in Marrowbone.

##### Enforcement

- Mobile CCTV Van patrols during June and July in Cavehill, Grove, Alexandra and throughout North Belfast especially in the Waterworks to deter youths from fighting.
- Joint Enforcement operations in the Waterworks with Dog wardens to support the Park Wardens to develop the skills necessary to enforce Clean Neighbourhoods legislation.

##### Education

- Support for the Halloween Lantern Parade to encourage legitimate use of Park areas during school holiday periods
- Support to install a giant bouncy “Stonehenge” castle and family picnic day in Grove Playing fields during the last weekend of August.

#### **East Belfast**

##### Environment

- Inverary fence improvements: following a series of incidents during the summer, the fence was replaced and a section of woodland is being adapted for use by local schools and education projects.
- Robert Bradford Memorial & Orangefield Parks: Working with the Community Outreach officer to improve the kickabout area, installing new nets and developing an activity programme
- Botanic Gardens: Improvements to the bandstand are underway to encourage more legitimate usage and deter youths from gathering and drinking around the bandstand. Currently consulting with PSNI and community representatives regarding the installation of Young adult association area.

##### Enforcement

- Mobile CCTV Van patrols during June and July: this resource was deployed to deter drinkers from gathering in the area throughout Ormeau, Orangefield, Botanic and Belmont Parks.

- Joint Enforcement operations in Ormeau and Cherryvale with Dog wardens to support the Park Wardens to develop the skills necessary to enforce Clean Neighbourhoods legislation.

#### Education

- Robert Bradford Memorial & Orangefield Parks: Working with the Community Outreach officer to improve the kick about areas, installing new nets and developing activity programmes.

### **South & West Belfast**

#### Environment

- King William Park: additional fencing was installed which local young people placed artwork upon to improve the safety of the public whilst watching July band parades and deter drinkers from entering the park.
- Whiterock open space: fencing is being installed along the Whiterock road to deter youths from gathering and causing annoyance.
- Currently consulting with PSNI and community representatives regarding the installation of Young adult association areas.

#### Enforcement

- Mobile CCTV Van patrols during June and July to deter youths from fighting in Falls Park, City Cemetery, Musgrave Park and Woodlands

#### Education

- Falls Park: Support for the Teddy bears picnic and youth activities during Féile an Phobail.

### **All areas**

The antisocial behaviour programme coordinator has been engaged in a range of internal and external partnerships.

#### Implementation of Park Warden Pilot

Park Wardens have now been issued with new uniforms and resources; a new ASB incident recording system is currently in use; Cross service training has been initiated to equip Park wardens with statutory powers.

#### Interagency and Interdepartmental networks

- Area based partnership meetings used to identify and monitor antisocial behaviour and co-ordinate interventions around parks and leisure facilities.
- Joint working with Community safety fora, PSNI and Antisocial behaviour Officers, are improving our ability to effectively respond to antisocial behaviour.
- Working in partnership with Dog, Litter and Alcohol enforcement officers to increase the capacity of Park Wardens to enforce bye laws.
- Participation in the internal officers groups such as the Bonfire internal officers group has provided support to effectively respond to a wide range of incidents, improve the effective “one council” approach and ensure safer park events throughout the city.

## Appendix 2

**Table 1: Comparison of ASB incidents in Parks and Leisure Facilities across electoral areas between June to August 2011 and June to August 2012**

<b>Electoral Area</b>	<b>June - Aug 2011</b>	<b>June - Aug 2012</b>
Balmoral	5	13
Castle	35	30
Court	15	23
Lagan Bank	26	51
Lower Falls	8	5
Old Park	47	75
Pottinger	72	36
Upper Falls	40	40
Victoria	16	14
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>287</b>

**Table 2: Comparison of ASB incidents in Parks and Leisure Facilities across electoral areas between September to December 2011 and September to December 2012**

<b>Electoral area</b>	<b>Sept - Dec 2011</b>	<b>Sept - Dec 2012</b>
Balmoral	17	9
Castle	31	11
Court	57	9
Lagan Bank	16	10
Lower Falls	5	2
Old Park	52	57
Pottinger	66	15
Upper Falls	13	6
Victoria	3	3
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>122</b>

### Appendix 3





