



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) - Consultation on the Draft Policy Position Statement on the Establishment and Management of NIEA Country Parks
Date:	14 February 2013
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Emer Boyle, Policy and Business Development Manager Karen Anderson-Gillespie, Policy and Business Development Officer

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	In January 2012, the Council received an invitation from the NIEA to contribute to a consultation on the draft policy position statement on the establishment and management of NIEA country parks. The NIEA is seeking responses to the consultation by 15 February 2013.
1.2	It was agreed that the Parks and Leisure Department would co-ordinate the preparation of a response on behalf of the Council. The Policy and Business Development Unit (PBDU) has prepared a draft response following feedback and input from relevant officers across the Council.

2	Key Issues
2.1	The NIEA is currently undertaking a stakeholder consultation on the draft policy position statement on the establishment and management of NIEA country parks; a copy of the full consultation document can be provided on request.
2.2	Whilst there is no statutory duty for NIEA to consult on internal management statements, they welcome constructive feedback from stakeholders on the management and use of NIEA country parks

	including views on their future management post 2015.
2.3	As part of the consultation process NIEA developed and distributed a reviewers comment sheet which provided the structure for open comments and feedback. Following consideration by relevant officers across the Council, a response has been completed in draft form for approval by Members, see Appendix 1.
2.4	In summary, the draft response supports the broad thrust of the detailed report and highlights the need for clarity and both local and regional involvement in any future management post 2015 to ensure all interests are represented and any impact are realised.
2.5	Subject to approval by Committee, it is proposed that the final response is submitted to NIEA by 15 February with the proviso that this is subject to full Council ratification at its meeting in March.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	<u>Financial</u> None required at present
3.2	<u>Human Resources</u> None required at present
3.3	<u>Asset and Other Implications</u> None at this stage.

4	Equality and Good Relations Implications
4.1	The NIEA have included a blank equality impact screening form at the back of the report in Appendix 1, which is yet to be completed.

5	Recommendations
5.1	Members are asked to – (i) Note the contents of this report; and (ii) Approve submission of the draft consultation response to NIEA, subject to any comments or amendment provided, by the deadline of 15 February.

6	Decision Tracking
N/A	

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7	Key to Abbreviations
NIEA – Northern Ireland Environment Agency PBDU - Policy and Business Development Unit	

8	Documents Attached
Consultation can be provided on request Appendix 1 – Draft Consultation Response	