



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Future Management Arrangements for Dunville and Woodvale Park
Date:	11 April 2013
Reporting Officer:	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Stephen Walker, Departmental Portfolio and Programme Manager

1	Relevant Background Information
	<p>The Committee is reminded that at its meeting on 10 May 2012 it received a report which considered future management arrangements in respect of Dunville and Woodvale Parks. The report highlighted these projects as the first major refurbishment schemes within the Parks estate for many years profiled in the Investment Programme. It was further noted that the projects had been progressed as regeneration schemes with the aim of improving the quality of life of those who live within the surrounding neighbourhood. It was suggested in the report that following the completion of the physical works that it was important to sustain the progress. It was proposed that central to the delivery of improved quality of life was how we manage the parks in the future.</p> <p>It was noted that there had been significant engagement and collaboration between Council Officers and community representatives during the development phases of each scheme and that relationships had been established and formed over the period. It was suggested to further secure the relationships and help to build capacity that we consider a range of management options. Underpinning this proposal is the desire to involve the community more positively in the management of the park and the delivery of its outcomes. A series of options were considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Option 1 BCC undertake the management of Park without Community involvement;• Option 2 - A Community based organisation undertakes the Management of the park – this may take the form of a social

	<p>enterprise company</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option 3 Management is outsourced to an external organization other than the council such as a Joint Venture Partnership or Private Sector Provider • Option 4 BCC Management with a Reconstituted Friends Group • Option 5 A Neighbourhood Management Committee with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. <p>Following on from this, Blueprint Consulting was appointed through a competitive procurement process to carry out consultation with a range of user groups / individuals from each area. The consultation essentially sought views on the options presented above, sought additional options and considered how we might move towards a management model which involves the community more in the delivery of the outcomes associated with parks.</p> <p>In short, there was a strong consensus in favour of Option 5 above. There was strong view that a partnership between the council and the community could help realise the potential offered by the refurbishment of the parks.</p> <p>There was a sense that the communities wished to create a 'Peoples Park', a 'living space' and that the refurbishment works created an opportunity to foster ambition for the parks. The consultation highlighted a range of opportunities. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General social use – passive recreation; • Sporting and health related activities; • Promotion and use of the grounds; • Cultural activities; • Community use; • Educational links such as environmental projects; <p>There was recognition that there were two broad generic management roles; there was an operational element which included general maintenance and opening and closing the facility; it was agreed that this would remain the responsibility of the Council. There was a wider management role which related to promotion of the park and the facilities and programming around encouraging use of the park. Whilst it was accepted that the Council had a central role to play it was noted that the community could make a valuable contribution.</p>
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2	Key Issues
	<p>The critical issue for Members to consider is how we give effect to the concept of a neighbourhood management approach which gives the community an active input to the delivery of the outcomes associated with the parks. Discussions with the community representatives have led us to conclude one way forward may be in the form of a central advisory group with the aim of representing a wide range of interests from within the community as outlined in the background section above. Within the</p>

	<p>discussions a number of issues arose, these included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of the role of local residents and within that specific reference was made to those who live immediately adjacent to the parks; • Clear terms of reference for the group and clear governance; • The need to avoid duplication with other groups in the area; sustainability was highlighted and the need to link in with existing structures was emphasised, whilst at the same identifying gaps, such as for examples local schools and businesses; • The need to define clearly roles and responsibilities with the community group and to build capacity. <p>Underlying principles which emerged included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need for inclusivity to ensure a wide range of interests are represented; • The need for balance to ensure that no single view can dominate; • Strong and proactive communication and engagement with the wider community; • The need for resources to be put to support the development of the model; initially this was seen as the allocation of a budget to support activities in the parks at least during the first year following the works; • The need for programming of activities in the park; • The need for a review of the approach within 18-24 months, to .inform and align with a view to corporate planning <p>An outline of the proposed pilot approach is attached as Appendix 1.</p>
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3	<p>Resource Implications</p> <p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>Consideration will be given to the establishment of a budget to facilitate the management arrangements in the first year of operation. This will be sourced within existing budgets.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u></p> <p>Support for the group will impact on the workload of existing staff, however, there will be no additional human resource requirements.</p> <p><u>Asset and other implications</u></p> <p>This approach represents a significant deviation from existing management models within Parks and Leisure and represents an opportunity to assess the real impact of greater community involvement in the management of our assets.</p>
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4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	There are no equality implications.

5	Recommendations
5.1	<p>The Committee is asked to note the report and to agree that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposed approach be piloted for 18-24 months and be subject to review; 2. The membership be drawn from the respective Neighbourhood / Area Partnership Boards, local schools, businesses and residents as appropriate; 3. The group is chaired by an appropriate Council Officer; 4. A development programme is put in place to support the work of the group during its first year.

6	Decision Tracking
	A further report will be brought to Committee in August 2013.

7	Key to Abbreviations
	BCC – Belfast City Council

8	Appendices
	Appendix 1 – outline of proposed model