



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	City Cemetery Decorative Arts Project
Date:	11 April 2013
Reporting Officer:	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Pete Murray, Antisocial Behaviour Coordinator

1.	Relevant Background Information
	<p>Members will recall the proposal to develop a decorative arts mural which was presented to the Parks and Leisure committee in the City Cemetery Improvement Programme report, dated August 2012.</p> <p>The proposal made by local community representatives, requested resources to develop a mural project to address ongoing reports of youths gathering, drinking, littering and daubing the City Cemetery wall and gravestones with graffiti. The cost of the project was initially estimated at £6,500. Design suggestions included covering the wall with images of a secular nature connected and respectful to the environment. The proposal was approved contingent upon the involvement of cross community groups and organisations.</p>

2.	Key Issues
	<p>An internal officer group was established and tasked with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coordinating the project,• Establishing a stakeholder group and,• Identifying an appropriate procurement process. <p>The internal officer group reviewed similar council projects to identify lessons learnt. They recognised that procurement for this project would present a challenge as resources were limited to £6,500. The wall is approximately 350 metres long and costs were estimated at £100 per linear metre which indicates costs of £35,000 for the entire wall.</p>

Officers from the Parks and Leisure department and the Development department met and considered the procurement of an organisation that could:

- Seek further funding to ensure the entire wall was included in the finished product,
- Engage cross community groups and organisations and,
- Deliver a high quality public arts project on the theme of “City Cemetery and its place in the history and development of Belfast City”.

A specialist arts production organisation was identified, which could be procured as a proprietary service provider. However, as the project neared the end of the 2012/13 financial year, the combination of limited time and resources presented an obstacle to initiating the project. The allocated budget of £6,500 remained unspent.

Following consultation with local members, the project was halted until the following options have been considered by the Committee.

Available Options:

1. End the project and leave the City Cemetery wall in its current state.
2. Allocate the same amount of £6,500 from 2013/14 budgets and proceed with a low cost painted decorative arts project on a small portion of the City Cemetery wall using images of a secular nature connected and respectful to the environment which facilitates the involvement of cross community groups and organisations.
3. Support a decorative arts project in the City Cemetery using the theme of “City Cemetery and its place in the history and development of Belfast City”. Design and implement the project with cross community consultation and participation, using a variety of creative arts media to encompass the majority (or the entirety) of the City Cemetery wall. Establish that responsibility for raising funds to cover a significant portion of costs for the project will rest with the procured artist. In order to mitigate the risks to the procured artist, the department can underwrite the costs of the project up to the value of £29,000.

Options appraisal:

Option one does not address the issue of antisocial behaviour and graffiti on the wall and gravestones. This option does not engage the community in a response to concerns about youths gathering and is not a preferred option.

Option two repeats a difficult process that was ultimately unsuccessful. This option provides a response to the issue of antisocial behaviour and graffiti. However, once the costs for cross community consultation and repairs to the wall have been taken into account, there are limited resources available for the community to participate in placing artwork on the wall. Procurement of this option is hampered by the limited budget

	<p>which further increases the risks to achieving a high quality outcome.</p> <p>Option three is the preferred option, as it provides adequate resources to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address the underlying issues and removal of an eyesore and, • Engages the community in the provision of a significant and unique public art attraction. <p>Option three provides most flexibility in producing a large scale public art installation. Financial support from the department can be released in managed stages across 12 months. In doing so, procurement of the project can proceed unabated and the procured artist can source funding with support of the underwritten financial resources from the Parks and Leisure department. This option provides the most support for community groups to take ownership of the work and for achieving a high quality outcome.</p>
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3.	Resource Implications
	<p>Financial: to resource option three, £29,000 can be drawn from the existing departmental antisocial behaviour programme budget for 2013/14.</p> <p>Human resources: There are no additional human resource implications other than Officer time.</p> <p>Asset and other implications: The creation of a high quality public art installation at the City Cemetery site would increase legitimate visitor numbers and enhance the site as an historical and culturally significant asset.</p>

4.	Equality Implications
	<p>Much of the ASB programme work spans activities related to reducing interface tensions or responding to community concerns. All of the programme work is in line with the Council's Equality and Good Relations policies and procedures.</p>

5.	Recommendations
	<p>The Committee are requested to consider the report and members are asked to approve option three.</p>

6.	Decision Tracking
	<p>Update reports will be brought back to the Committee in October 2013 and March 2014.</p>

7.	Key to Abbreviations
	None.

8.	Documents Attached
	None.