



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee.
Subject:	Woodvale Park – Cultural Celebration July 2013
Date:	13 June 2013
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Fintan Grant, City Park Manager (North)

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	<p>The Committee will be aware of the ongoing work of the Council led Bonfire Programme which has developed into a successful programme of Cultural Networks. This brings together around fifty bonfire groups across the City, with funding being provided by both the Council as well as through the Council's Peace III programme.</p> <p>The Woodvale and Cambrai Youth and Community Association has been an active participant on the programme for a number of years. In 2007 they were involved in the design of the Bonfire Beacon as an alternative to the traditional 11th July bonfire. They have run successful events since 2008 with around 1,000 people attending these events annually. For the past several years the group has successfully used a bonfire frame as opposed to a beacon. The staging of these events was approved by the Parks Committee on each occasion. This group are again intending to design and deliver a cultural event in Woodvale Park on the 11/12th July. They are seeking permission to construct a bonfire within the park and to stage associated community activities as part of their ongoing efforts to transform bonfires within the wider locality.</p>

2	Key Issues
2.1	<p><u>Positioning of the bonfire</u> Unlike in recent years it is not proposed to have a frame on this occasion, this is owing to the condition of the frame. It has been proposed that we use crowd control barriers to contain the bonfire and to provide a safe area within which it will be managed. The fire will be positioned on a 6 inch bed of sand to prevent damage to the ground surface.</p>

Developments within Woodvale Park

The £2m development of Woodvale Park is nearing completion, it is anticipated that the work will be completed by the end of June 2013.

In the past, including 2012, the bonfire has been constructed on the site of an old cinder pitch in Woodvale Park. However, the refurbishment scheme has seen the removal of this pitch and its replacement with a modern polymeric surfaced multi user games area. The option therefore of locating the bonfire at this spot is no longer a viable option.

As reported in previous years there are limited options for a bonfire on the site. Two possible locations have been identified. One of these options would be the site of the recently refurbished football pitches, however, these pitches are not yet ready for use and even though a sand base could be set down to protect the surface it would restrict growth and delay the use of the pitches by local clubs.

The second option is to locate the bonfire on the site of the former tennis courts, this area is behind the service yard and adjacent to one of the bowling greens. It is a small area with restricted viewing.

Discussions have taken place with community representatives and there is agreement that the 2013 bonfire be located, with Council's permission on the site of the former tennis courts. The accompanying celebratory events will take place throughout the park in agreement with Council staff.

Risk Management

As reported in previous years there are issues of risk with such an event that will be carefully reviewed. The organisers of the proposed event at Woodvale Park will be required to liaise closely with the Council and the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service. The proposal to permit the proposed event will be underpinned by an appropriate form of legal agreement. It is also the view of Legal Services that suitable fencing should be erected around the bonfire frame after the burn. The work of the Council in relation to the transformation of bonfires continues to be supported by the inter-agency group who assist the Council with the Programme. The Fire and Rescue Service, the PSNI, DRD (Roads Service), NIHE, NIEA and the Community Relations Unit of OFM/DFM have all supported developments thus far.

Benefits of the proposal

There is local support for the proposal to host this event, with a commitment of up to 50 local volunteers to supervise the event. These volunteers are trained in stewarding techniques and officially accredited by the Open College Network. The provision of beacons and the frame in the past has proven to demonstrate that communities can take responsibility for managing bonfires and conducting events in a responsible manner.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>There are no additional financial implications.</p>
3.2	<p><u>Human Resources</u></p> <p>There are no additional human resource implications at this time.</p> <p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u></p>

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	Local communities and agencies have been consulted on the proposals.

5	Recommendations
5.1	<p>That the Committee grant authority for this event to be held on Council property (Woodvale Park) in July 2013, subject to satisfactory terms agreed with the Director of Parks and Leisure and on the condition that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The event organisers resolve all operational issues to the • Council's satisfaction; • Legal agreement is entered into; and • The event organisers meet all statutory requirements including entertainments licensing.

6	Decision Tracking
No further reports are required.	

7	Key to Abbreviations
<p>PSNI – Police Service of Northern Ireland DRD – Department of Regional Development NIHE – Northern Ireland Housing Executive NIEA – Northern Ireland Environment Agency OFMDFM - Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister</p>	

8	Documents Attached
None	