



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	River Terrace Community Garden
Date:	5 December 2013
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure

1.	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Committee is reminded of the successful community gardens that have been established across the city. Belfast City Council now have 15 community growing spaces and continue to provide in kind support to community gardens situated on land not directly owned by the Council.
1.2	The Council have received a request from St John Vianney Youth Centre to explore the option of establishing a community led garden in River Terrace.
1.3	It is anticipated that the local community would get involved in the planning, development, maintenance and ongoing use of the garden as a resource for programmed activities and as a means of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supporting healthier lifestyles by providing growing opportunities to people of all ages,• Supporting and developing communities by building and encouraging ownership of and pride in the city's growing spaces and,• Engaging the wider community through inclusiveness in the development of shared growing spaces.
1.4	Members are reminded that that £200k was allocated to the development of four community gardens one in the North (Finlay Park), one in the west (Whiterock), one in the east (Knocknagoney) and one in the south (site still to be determined)there is still 50K of this fund to be allocated to South Belfast for the provision of a community garden. It has been suggested that River Terrace could receive this investment if the scheme proves to be viable.

2.	Key Issues
2.1	The land in question is owned by the Department of Social Development (DSD). Initial conversations have taken place with regards land transfer and whilst DSD seem agreeable in principle, further discussions will need to take place to finalise any formal agreements.
2.2	At present there are issues with public liability and currently members of the public would not be covered for any activity on the site. However if the land was transferred in to Belfast City Council ownership then community participation would be covered by the Council's insurance.
2.3	In 2006 a contamination report was carried out on the site which highlighted contaminants are present. The changes to the legislation have increased the standards and as a result further contamination surveys will need to be carried out. The Landscape Planning and Development Unit in Parks and Leisure have produced initial concept drawings for the site however these are difficult to cost at this time as a result of not knowing the extent of the contamination.
2.4	There is already an established amenity community garden in the adjacent area owned by An Droichead. Local schools, the housing association and local residents have keys to access the existing community garden and early consultation suggests that they would be keen to work in partnership regarding future projects.

3.	Resource Implications
	<p><u>Financial</u> 50k of capital funds allocated to South Belfast could contribute to the build of a community garden at River Terrace.</p> <p><u>Human</u> Staff time will be required to engage with the local community to prepare a draft drawing of the proposed garden. The Community Parks Outreach Manager will continue to work with the community to establish a core group and increase participation in the garden in line with the Growing Communities Strategy.</p> <p><u>Asset</u> The potential transfer of this land will result in the Council gaining an additional asset in South Belfast with associated implications</p>

4.	Equality Implications
	There are no implications at this stage. However equality and good relations factors will be taken in to account in any activities delivered at the community garden or through the project.

5.	Recommendations
	It is recommended that Committee approves the further investigation of the potential for the development of a community garden in River Terrace with a further report brought to Committee in due course.

6.	Decision Tracking
	All actions will be completed by officers from the Landscape Planning and Development Unit and by Lynne McCreery, Community Parks Outreach Manager.

7.	Key to Abbreviations
	Department of Social Development - DSD

8.	Documents Attached
	None