



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Knocknagoney Linear Park – Redevelopment of the Bull Ring Area into a Land Base Activity Zone
Date:	10 April 2014
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Lynne McCreery, Community Parks Outreach Manager Cailín Lynn, Community Parks Project Coordinator

1.	Relevant Background Information
	<p>The Knocknagoney Area Forum (KAF) was formed as a result of the <i>Living on the Edge</i> report, undertaken in January 2011 by Belfast City Council and East Belfast Community Development Agency (see Appendix 1). This report highlighted Knocknagoney as an area with high levels of social deprivation, unemployment, low levels of self-esteem and academic achievements.</p> <p>KAF represents an initiative developed in response to the needs highlighted in the above report, drawing on several stakeholder organisations and groups with a view to positively challenging these statistics. Their committed and collective work has had a significant impact on this local community.</p> <p>The groups involved are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Knocknagoney Primary School2. Knocknagoney Community Centre3. Knocknagoney, Orchardville and Garnerville - a community group for the area4. Glenluce Group - set up for care of the elderly (dissolved in July 2013)5. Residents6. Church of Ireland7. Aslan Centre - Church of Ireland Youth Club

8. Presbyterian Church
9. Tesco
10. Parks Management Team
11. Police Service of Northern Ireland
12. Northern Ireland Housing Executive

KAF has four key areas of focus:

- Community cohesion
- Environment
- Health and well-being
- Education and youth

Following a Green Flag quality standards inspection in 2011 Knocknagoney Linear Park was reported as being the lowest scoring park in East Belfast and in need of significant improvement.

Members may be aware that the Council has made investment in Knocknagoney Linear Park over the last two years in preparation for Greenflag:

1. Park lighting
2. Ongoing woodland thinning
3. Woodland outdoor classroom
4. Forest School Project
5. Removal of trees and shrubs in the bullring area
6. Removal of fly tipping
7. Community garden
8. Kickabout area
9. Children's cycle and skills development area
10. 12 week summer activity programme
11. Tree planting
12. Arts projects to reimagine the viewing towers
13. Ongoing community engagement

Community involvement and ownership within Knocknagoney Linear Park has been significant since the community garden opened in May 2013. Council officers have observed large numbers of young people who may have otherwise been involved in ASB engaging positively and respectfully in the community garden and newly refurbished kickabout area.

Council officers have been working closely with KAF to develop Knocknagoney Linear Park in line with the aspirations of the local community.

The parks management team have been in discussions regarding possible solutions and concepts for the disused bullring area (see Appendixes 2 & 3).

2.	Key Issues
	<p>Through discussions with park management it is envisaged that this natural amphitheatre could be transformed into a Land Base Activity Zone (LBAZ). This LBAZ would have the potential of providing challenging, enjoyable and educational recreational zones where young children, teenagers and adults can discover a variety of different activities in a cross generational environment.</p> <p>The options below may be considered when developing a concept plan for the bull ring area;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti vandal material will be used to ensure a longer life span for equipment and activity areas • Council officers would work with KAF in order to create changeable audio, visual platforms and interpretation panels • The development of a centre stage in this natural amphitheatre to encourage performances and shows. • Capacity building and skills development with the community working alongside a variety of training/ employment agencies. <p>If Committee are in support of the concept, KAF and Parks management will work to develop the scheme and together with the departments Funding and Monitoring officer identify potential funding streams.</p>

3.	Resource Implications
	<p><u>Financial</u> It is estimated that the funding required to develop a LBAZ could be in the region of £150,000. Council officers are keen to develop the LBAZ with the community and various agencies that have capacity to provide training or employment opportunities which could reduce overall costs.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u> There would be additional human resource implications attached to this report for inspection regime for this LBAZ. It is envisaged that the ROSPA team could inspect this area similar to playground inspections.</p> <p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u> A LBAZ within KLP represents a use of disused space as well as delivering on key Council outcomes such as helping people become healthier, active, and more involved in their local communities and neighbourhoods. Once installed, the LBAZ will form part of the departmental asset portfolio and the department will assume responsibility for the ongoing maintenance of the area.</p>

4.	Equality Implications
	This LBAZ would have positive implications in terms of the promotion of equality and good relations and will be undertaken in an inclusive manner.

5.	Recommendations
	<p>It is recommended that committee grant authority for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council officers to further investigate the feasibility of this LBAZ working in partnership with Knocknagoney Area Forum • Council officers and Knocknagoney Area Forum to identify potential funding streams

6.	Decision Tracking
	<p>All actions to be carried out by Community Parks Outreach Team, Lynne McCreery and Cailín Lynn also Lisa Mackle, Funding and Monitoring Officer and the Landscape Planning and Development Unit.</p> <p>An further report will be brought to Committee following completion of community consultation and the consideration of possible funding streams.</p>

7.	Key to Abbreviations
	<p>KAF - Knocknagoney Area Forum KLP - Knocknagoney Linear Park LBAZ - Land Base Activity Zone</p>

8.	Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1 - The Living on the Edge plan for Knocknagoney, Garnerville and Orchardville Appendix 2 - Photographs of the Bullring area within Knocknagoney Linear Park (Before & After photos) Appendix 3 - Knocknagoney Landscape Zoning Plan</p>