



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Green Flag Awards
Date:	14 August 2014
Reporting Officer:	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	John Macfarlane, Parks Equality Manager

1.0 Relevant Background Information

The purpose of this report is to inform members of the successful achievement of fourteen Green Flag awards for the Department's parks and playing fields. Twelve sites retained their Green Flag status and a further two sites which applied for the first time this year were successful in achieving the award.

Established in 1996, the Green Flag awards were managed by Keep Britain Tidy. Now in Northern Ireland they are overseen by the Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful campaign.

The Green Flag Standard was adopted by the department as a key element of the departments improvement programme. The standard ensures that resources are aligned to improving the expectation of parks and open spaces in the city and that parks and open spaces through effective engagement are central to the lives of local communities.

In 2009 the Department achieved its first Green Flag Award for Cave Hill Country Park. Subsequently in 2010 it gained awards for Musgrave Park, Barnett's Demesne and Botanic Gardens. Then in the next 2 years a further 3 sites were added each year across the City – in 2011 Ormeau Park, Falls Park and Roselawn Cemetery, and in 2012 Belmont Park, Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park, and Waterworks Park. In 2013 a further 2 sites were entered and were successful these were Grove Playing Fields and Lagan Meadows.

As part of the Departmental Improvement Plan a further three sites were identified to be submitted for the 2014 assessment round. The three sites were:

- Woodvale Park
- Dunville Park
- Knocknagoney Linear Park.

2.0 Key Issues

	<p>Green Flag is a standard for quality management and in particular community engagement, with significant emphasis placed on the stakeholders experience and community involvement in site activities, development and improvements.</p> <p>Management and staff have worked in all sites with the community to raise standards to meet the aspirations of the site's users and neighbours. This has included the development of an improvement framework which is applied across all sites to raise standards.</p> <p>Two of the three new sites were successful this year; these were Woodvale Park and Dunville Park. In these 2 sites the Council had invested recently in new facilities, design and activities to ensure the community had a sustainable and valued shared open space in their locality.</p> <p>Unfortunately Knocknagoney Linear Park narrowly failed to meet the standard and was unsuccessful in achieving a Green Flag this year. This was always going to be a challenging site to bring up to Green Flag standard and the local community and the staff are to be commended for the huge transformation and improvements achieved there this year. It is anticipated that with continued commitment from all and further site improvements, the park should succeed in achieving the award next year.</p> <p>The Council now holds fourteen of the thirty five awards held in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>It is proposed to submit Knocknagoney Linear Park again in 2015, along with the other 14 successful sites. In the future, it is expected that there would be an application for a Green Flag award for Connswater Community Green Way as 1 site (this would include Victoria Park, Cregagh Glen, Dixon and Orangefield Playing Fields) when the Greenway is complete.</p> <p>Committee is asked to note that all parks have been assessed internally according to the Green Flag Standard and improvements prioritised to bring poorer open spaces up to standard.</p>
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3.0	Resource Implications
	<p><u>Financial</u> The cost for submitting a site for Green Flag applications and assessment is approximately £750 a site which is allowed for in the individual site revenue budget. Where applicable some provision is made in the Department's improvement budget for any desirable refurbishment works.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u> There will be no additional human resources required at this stage.</p> <p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u> None at this stage</p>

4.0	Equality Implications
	There are no implications at this stage

5.0	Recommendations
	Committee is asked to note the achievement of fourteen Green Flag awards by the Department in 2014 and approve the submission of fifteen sites for Green Flag accreditation in 2015.

6.0	Decision Tracking
	John MacFarlane, Parks Equality Manager.

7.0	Key to Abbreviations
	None

8.0	Documents Attached
	None