



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Update on City Cemetery Decorative Arts Project
Date:	16 October 2014
Reporting Officer:	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Claire Sullivan, Policy and Business Development Unit Manager

1	Relevant Background Information
	<p>Members will be aware that there has been an ongoing project around a Decorative Arts Project in the City Cemetery. A report was brought to Committee in August 2012 outlining a proposal to develop a decorative art mural to address anti-social behaviour issues in the City Cemetery.</p> <p>A period of community consultation was undertaken and an update report was brought to Committee in April 2013 recommending that Members: ‘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.’</p> <p>Following discussion it was:</p> <p><i>‘Resolved - That the Committee agrees to contribute a sum of £15,000 towards the project on the understanding that the groups proposing to undertake the work would seek to secure additional funding from other bodies and agencies and, should there remain a shortfall in the finance secured from other sources, the Committee would be requested to reconsider the matter with a view to meeting any remaining shortfall in funding.’</i></p>

2	Key Issues
	<p>In November 2013 the Council submitted a Stage 1 application to the Arts Council of Northern Ireland's Re-Imaging Communities fund (ACNI). The application was successful and ACNI agreed to contribute £3,400 to overall project costs of £4,170. Stage 1 of the process was to commission an artist facilitator to carry out community consultation around the siting of a decorative arts piece in the City Cemetery. The findings of the consultation will be used to inform an ACNI Stage 2 application for up to £50,000 to install community agreed art piece(s) in Belfast City Cemetery.</p> <p>To oversee the process, a steering group was established and its members include: Aidan Crean, Cairde Páirc na Bhfál, Bobby Foster, Spectrum Centre, Tom Hartley, noted local historian and former Councillor and Billy Drummond, Greater Shankill Alternatives. Two officers from ACNI also sit on the steering group and officers from the Parks and Leisure Department act as secretariat.</p> <p>The Steering Group commissioned an artist facilitator to undertake initial consultation around the proposed siting of public artwork within the City Cemetery. The consultation took place between May and September with a wide range of individuals and organisations including the relatives of those buried in the cemetery, staff, visitors, local schools, youth groups, history groups, community, political and religious organisations and arts and cultural organisations. A full list of those consulted is included as appendix 1.</p> <p>The consultation included the facilitator conducting interviews, leading group discussions, hold and attending events and through the use of comment cards available in the Cemetery.</p> <p>On the whole, attitudes were positive and the majority of participants who raised questions about the siting of artwork within a cemetery, had specific types of artwork in mind, that they saw as not being fitting, or respectful. The concerns around artwork that would not be in keeping with the cemetery, were mainly focused on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bright, garish colours, or colour/design that is out of keeping with site • Murals, painted walls • Artwork that isn't recognisable or identifiable • Anything that can be damaged easily • Big, shiny, cold steel structures • Artwork that is not inclusive of the range of people represented within cemetery • Overtly religious or political, excluding of some sections of the community • Anything that can be climbed on, or encourage young people to sit around, or climb

The Stage 1 consultation report has been finalised by the facilitator and presented to the Steering Group and the Arts Council. Based on the findings of consultation the Steering Group has agreed a theme of Life & Time for the artist's brief. This theme extends a welcome to all the people of Belfast and the world, of all faiths and none, to reflect on what has passed and celebrate what is to come.

Location

Whilst the focus of this project to date has been the wall within the City Cemetery the public consultation has found that 'murals, painted walls' is not what is considered appropriate for the Cemetery.

The Arts Council has also raised concerns that the potential budget available (approx £64k) for this project is not sufficient to undertake a decorative arts project on the wall and that there will be ongoing maintenance issues.

Based on the feedback received through the consultation process the Steering Group are of the view that whilst dealing with the anti-social behaviour occurring at the wall remains a priority the Arts Council funding should be used to locate a decorative arts piece at a suitable location within the City Cemetery as it will add to the overall development of the site.

It is acknowledged that there are constraints on where a decorative arts piece can be located within the Cemetery and it is proposed that relevant officers consider the restrictions and select the most appropriate location.

Whilst there is not a requirement for the Council to provide match funding the Arts Council has indicated that our application for Stage 2 funding is looked on more favourable if we do so. A budget of £15,000 has been committed to this project and approximately £1,000 has been spent to date. It is proposed therefore that the remaining £14,000 be allocated to the decorative arts piece giving a total budget of up to £64,000.

It is proposed that alternate solutions are examined for dealing with the anti-social behaviour issues at the wall such as a planting scheme. It has been proposed the Steering Group that they work with the Council to identify possible funding sources to undertake this work.

Next steps and timescales

The next stage of the process is to move to Stage 2 and the potential granting of up to £50,000 to install community agreed art piece(s) in the City Cemetery. There is a very tight timescale around the process and the deadline for expenditure is 30 June 2015. The indicative timescale is:

Event	Day & Date
Advert for expression of interest	1. Tuesday 14 th October 2014

	Deadline for receipt of Expression of interest	2. Tuesday 11 th November 2014
	Shortlisting of artists based on expressions of interest	3. W/C 10th November 2014
	Invitation letters to shortlisted artists to move to Stage 2 (and letters to unsuccessful artists)	4. Monday 17 th November 2014
	Deadline for detailed design phase of short listed artists	5. Friday 12 th December 2014
	Presentation of detailed design proposals e.g. maquettes to selection panel & artist interviews	6. W/C 15th December 2014
	Anticipated delivery of project (normally 6 months)	7. By Monday 24 th May 2015
<p>Given the tight timeline it has been necessary to commence the process, although at this point no decisions have been made or commitments given. It is proposed that the Committee authorise the Director under delegated authority in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Committee to, based on the recommendation of steering group, appoint the artist. If Members are inclined to do this, it is proposed that an update report will be brought to Committee early in 2015.</p>		

3	Resource Implications
	<p><u>Financial</u> £15,000 has been allocated to this project and approximately £1,000 has been spent to date. The remaining budget will be spent in Stage 2 and up to £50,000 will be awarded by ACNI for this stage.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u> There are no human resource implications at this stage.</p> <p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u> This project will result in a piece of public art being located within one of our sites.</p>

4	Equality and Good Relations Implications
	The project has been equality proofed and we will ensure that potential artists are aware of the equality and good relations implications that they need to consider.

5	Recommendations
----------	------------------------

	<p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Note the update provided on the project; (ii) Agree that the scope of this project be amended so that the focus is not solely the wall and that the art piece be situated at a suitable location within the City Cemetery and the budget previously allocated for the wall be used for this art piece. (iii) Authorise the Director under delegated authority on consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Committee to, based on the recommendation of steering group, appoint the artist; and (iv) Agree that officers continue to explore other sources of funding in relation to potential solutions for the anti social behaviour associated with the wall.
--	--

6	Decision Tracking
	Update report to be brought to Committee in early 2015.

7	Key to abbreviations
	ACNI – Arts Council Northern Ireland

8	Documents attached
	Appendix 1 – Consultee list