



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Connswater Community Greenway - Development of Code of Conduct and byelaws.
Date:	16 October 2014
Reporting Officer:	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Fiona Holdsworth, Principal Parks and Cemeteries Service Manager

1.	Relevant Background Information
	<p>Connswater Community Greenway is a £40 million investment in east Belfast. The project has been developed by the East Belfast Partnership and is funded by the Big Lottery Fund, Belfast City Council and the Department for Social Development.</p> <p>The 9km route follows the course of the Connswater, Knock and Loop Rivers, connecting the open and green spaces and remediating the Connswater River itself. The Greenway will create vibrant, attractive, safe and accessible parkland for leisure, recreation and community events and activities, benefiting the 40,000 people living in the wards adjacent to the rivers.</p> <p>It will have many physical benefits for the local area, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a 9km linear park, complete with special 'wildlife corridor'• 16km of new walking and cycling routes• 30 new or improved bridges• 5km of restored water courses• six tourism and heritage trails• several landmark public art pieces• a civic square, located near the Hollywood Arches <p>The first phase of the Greenway is now almost complete, the main element for public use is a 24 hour a day open and lit pathway in</p>

	<p>Orangefield Playing Fields and Victoria Park. The announcement of the award of the contract for Phase 2 of the contract will take place in early October.</p> <p>The 2 existing sites are covered by existing Park bye laws as they are long established Belfast City Council park properties.</p>
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2.	Key Issues
	<p>The pattern of use and the environment of these sites has changed with the development of the Greenway. The paths are a 24 hour a day shared space between a range of users including cyclists, dog walkers, pedestrians and joggers. There is a need to ensure that potential conflicts of interest and inconsiderate behaviour is minimised, to promote the enjoyment for users and their safety, to ensure the space is a welcoming place for all.</p> <p>A key element of the flood alleviation work has been the moving of the river. The outcome being that the river is more accessible, more attractive and a more valuable habitat for plants and animals in sections which form part of a flood plain. There is a need to ensure that this feature is treated with respect by all users to protect the public and the ecosystem.</p> <p>In Victoria Park and Orangefield Playing Fields there are existing bye laws in place however there is a need to update the current bye laws to reflect the changes highlighted. It is proposed that a code of conduct is introduced (see Appendix 1) into these 2 sites in the interim to encourage appropriate behaviour.</p> <p>The Connswater sites being developed in Phase 2 are new and do not appear in any existing byelaw schedules. In future there is an acknowledgement that there may be other 'Greenways' and it would now be appropriate to develop new byelaws for this type of shared open commuting space using elements of the code of conduct and existing byelaws. It is anticipated that the new bye laws should be in place for the opening of Phase 2 of the Connswater Community Greenway.</p>

3.	Resource Implications
	<p><u>Financial</u> The cost of updating the byelaws and introducing a code of conduct should not involve any significant additional costs. Promotion of the rules and byelaws is required no matter what the wording.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u> There will be a need for input by Legal Services and Parks staff into the design and wording of new bye laws and code.</p> <p><u>Assets</u></p>

	The provision of useful and effective rules concerning behaviour on sites should help to protect assets ensuring they are treated responsibly and that users enjoy a positive experience.
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4.	Equality Implications
	None identifiable at present.

5.	Recommendations
	<p>Committee is asked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to approve the introduction of a code of conduct for Phase 1 of the Connswater Community Greenway as outlined to support existing byelaws. • to authorise the development of new byelaws for the Phase 2 of Connswater Community Greenway which would also be applicable to future greenway sites.

6.	Decision Tracking
	Fiona Holdsworth, Principal Parks and Cemeteries Services Manager

7.	Key to Abbreviations
	None

8.	Documents Attached
	Appendix 1. Draft Code of Conduct