



Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	Connswater Community Greenway Update
Date:	24 May 2013
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks & Leisure
Contact Officers:	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director Parks and Leisure

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Members will be aware that the Connswater Community Greenway is being delivered as part of the Council's Investment Programme. The scheme will create a 9km linear park through East Belfast, following the course of the Connswater, Knock and Loop Rivers, connecting the open and green spaces and reacquainting the river with the surrounding communities. The scheme also incorporates flood alleviation works. Funding of the scheme is provided by the Big Lottery, Belfast City Council, DSD and the Rivers Agency.
1.2	Revised governance arrangements were agreed at Strategic Policy and Resources committee in April 2012.
1.3	At Officer level decisions are made through the authority delegated to the Corporate Management Team of the Council and the Senior Responsible Owner of the CCG programme, the Director of Parks & Leisure.
1.4	The governance arrangements have been implemented and a programme plan and associated budget has been developed and considered by the CCG Oversight Board chaired by the Director of Parks and Leisure.
1.5	The programme plan sets out key milestones for delivery and is supported by project plans for each of the work streams; Communication & Engagement, Capital Works/ Land and Management & Maintenance. An extract from the programme plan is attached as an Appendix 1.
1.6	Key milestones at this stage are the appointment of a contractor for delivery of the works at Orangefield Park and Victoria Park which were agreed as a priority to reduce flooding likelihood, and the procurement of the consultant design team and contractor for the main contract – as set out in section 4 of the programme plan.

2	Key Issues
2.1	<p>Capital Works</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rivers Agency commenced piling work in Orangefield Park on the 3rd April 2013. • 5 contractors were invited to tender for Phase 1 of the contract. The Project Management Unit has identified and notified a preferred contractor. It is intended to award the phase 1 contract by the end of May 2013. • A total of 10 pre qualification responses were received for the Phase 2 design team role in February 2013 and were assessed by a team assembled from BCC, Rivers Agency and CPD. Tender documents were subsequently issued and returned on the 10th May 2013. • Estates are working on a number of land agreement issues which need to be resolved before the Phase 1 contractor can commence work, including agreements with Translink and Belfast Harbour Commissioners. • The delay in the Phase 1 programme is currently 6 weeks and the intention is to recover this delay during construction phase. • The draft Environmental Management Plans (EMP) have been issued to NIEA for approval. • Road licence agreements have been received and issued to legal service for signature • The signage strategy has been developed and an interpretive planner engaged for the heritage element. • Discussions have taken place with Roads Service regarding enhanced treatment of road surfaces and the treatment of the entrance to Victoria Park. Whilst there are some constraints discussions are ongoing about the design options. • The group previously involved with Public Art have been contacted with a view to reviewing the public art brief.
2.2	<p>Communication and Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work is continuing on engaging with local communities on the development of the Greenway using a range of channels. The development of tourism trails and plans for marketing of these products is also in progress. • A report on Opening Gates & Lighting for the greenway was presented to Parks and Leisure Committee in February 2013 to outline the approach. Further research will be carried out and consultation with local communities will take place before proposals are brought forward. • Empty belly signage for hoardings is currently being developed. • The Avoniel Community Garden is in production with several local groups already engaged for the first growing season. An event to mark the opening of the garden is planned for June 2013. • Discussions have taken place about the naming of the proposed bridge from Victoria Park to Bombardier Airport Road and options are being explored, such as running a competition, to take place in the context of Council's naming policy. • Meetings with Council's Corporate Communications have been established with the aim of planning the communications programme of work for a three month outlook.
2.3	<p>Management and Maintenance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration is being given to the operational impact of the works and the requirements for park closures etc during the construction phase. • Access to the no-man's land at Orangefield Park will be required for maintenance. • Talks have taken place with the National Trust regarding joint working opportunities.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration is now being given to the recruitment of park wardens for the end of the first phase of works. • A new invasive species contract is being commissioned with appointment in June 2013. • Consideration is being given to the need to remove waste from rivers and river banks and options to facilitate this.
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3	Resource Implications
	<p>Finance No impact on existing budget arrangements to support the delivery of the CCG programme</p> <p>Human Resources No issues</p> <p>Assets The Connswater Community Greenway will create a 9km linear park through East Belfast, following the course of the Connswater, Knock and Loop Rivers, connecting the open and green spaces and remediating the Connswater River itself. The Greenway will reconnect the communities of East Belfast and restore the rivers as community assets. It will create vibrant, attractive, safe and accessible parkland for leisure, recreation and community events and activities.</p>

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	None

5	Recommendations
5.	Members are asked to note the update provided.

6	Documents Attached
6.1	Appendix 1 Extract from CCG Programme Plan

7	Abbreviations
7.1	<p>CCG Connswater Community Greenway</p> <p>DSD Department for Social Development</p> <p>CPD Central Procurement Directorate</p> <p>NIEA Northern Ireland Environment Agency</p>