



Subject:	Proposed Forest School Awards Programme
Date:	7 June 2016
Reporting Officer:	Nigel Grimshaw, Director of City and Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director

Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The Northern Ireland Forest School Association (NIFSA) has approached Council with a proposal seeking support for the delivery of a Forest School Awards programme in parks, working in partnership with the Council and local schools/organisations. Members considered this proposal in May 2016 and deferred the report seeking further information.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agree to support the proposal with a contribution of £8,000 from existing budgets and to agree to work in partnership with NIFSA and four schools/organisations across the city to deliver the programme.
2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Subject to Members supporting the programme, recommend that the Chair and Deputy Chair or their nominees participate in the Judges' panel to select participants in December 2016.
3.0	Main report
3.1	NIFSA is a charitable organisation established in 2008 to develop and deliver a sustainable environmental education programme. The organisation has trained teachers and youth leaders from all over Northern Ireland as Forest School Leaders and has

	supported over 15,000 children in outdoor activities. They have developed the nationally recognised Forest School Leader Award.
3.2	The award encourages and inspires local schools and organisations to become accredited Forest School Practitioners. It is supported by local Councils and every year schools and organisations have the opportunity to participate in the process to win entry to the programme. Forest school sessions are held in Council Parks, encouraging young people to develop an appreciation of their local area and open space environment.
3.3	NIFSA have partnered with ni4kids who will feature the NI Forest School Awards in their magazine, (10 issues) which has a wide circulation via Primary Schools, Nursery Schools , Retail, etc. within each Council area. This is complemented by a bespoke monthly ezine with over 19,000 subscriptions, on line activity and social media following. The value of this contribution to the programme is estimated to be worth £7,000.
3.4	This is a development proposal offering to deliver a programme to benefit young people in Parks. The proposal falls outside the scope of Parks Grants as it is above the maximum award threshold of £3,000 therefore it does not qualify under the Parks Events scheme. It is considered a viable proposal as the programme fits with the Council's objective to encourage active living and positive use of our outdoor spaces and complements other existing outreach programmes such as Parklife.
3.5	NIFSA are seeking support from the eleven Local Councils in the region and plan to launch the scheme in September 2016. Organisations will be invited to participate in September – November 2016 with selection by a panel of judges taking place in December 2016. Each participating Council is asked to nominate two judges. Schools will be selected by the judge's panel, one school from each area of the city in consultation with the Belfast Education and Library Board.
3.6	NIFSA will deliver the training programme which involves participating schools/organisations visiting their local park one day per week for six weeks between January and June 2017.
3.7	To date Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council and Mid and East Antrim Borough Council have agreed to participate. NIFSA are currently in discussion with Lisburn and Castlereagh Borough Council, Armagh City Banbridge, Craigavon Council, Causeway Coast District Council and Derry and Strabane Council.

	<p>The programme will end with a final celebratory event of all participants at one big Forest School event.</p> <p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p>
3.8	<p>The proposal to support the programme from council resources is provided for within existing budgets. Council contribution will be £8,000, however the value of the programme for Belfast is estimated to be over £15,000 taking into account the contribution from NI4Kids which is estimated at £7,000.</p>
3.9	<p>The £8,000 contribution from Council will support delivery of the programme to four Belfast Schools.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p>
3.10	<p>The proposal will be Equality Screened.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
4.1	None