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| Subject: | Connswater Community Greenway – proposed naming (James Ellis Bridge) |
| Date: | 7 June 2016 |
| Reporting Officer: | Nigel Grimshaw, Director of City and Neighbourhood Services |
| Contact Officer: | Rose Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure |

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| 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 |
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| 1.1 | The Connswater Community Greenway (CCG) programme is currently being delivered in East Belfast by the Council as part of our Investment Programme. The £40 million scheme was conceived by the EastSide Partnership and in addition to ourselves, is funded by the Big Lottery Fund and DSD. It also includes DRD's Rivers Agency's £11million East Belfast Flood Alleviation Scheme which will provide increased protection to at risk properties and businesses. |
| 1.2 | The CCG will create a 9km linear parkland through East Belfast which will connect the river with the surrounding communities by creating a vibrant, safe and accessible open and green spaces for leisure, recreation and community events and activities. Along its length numerous new structures are being constructed - all of which will be under BCC ownership and open to the public as the scheme's various sections complete throughout the year. |
| 1.3 | Members will be aware that at its January 2016 meeting, Committee agreed to Connswater Community Greenway Trust (CCGT), in partnership with the Council, taking forward a phased consultative process to formally name a series of bridges and link paths within CCG. The process, carried out in line with Council's naming policy involved engaging the local community to give them the opportunity to propose and select suitable names to be brought back to Committee for consideration and formal agreement in due course. |
| 1.4 | The first series of structures to be taken through this naming process this Spring included the |

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| 1.5 | <p>new pathway connecting Orangefield Park to Braniel – which has been named ‘Marshwiggie Way’; and three pedestrian bridges within CCG Phase 1 - Greenville Park and Orangefield Park now successfully named ‘Collyard’s Bridge’, ‘Avalon Bridge’, and ‘Kingfisher Bridge’.</p> <p>Another proposed bridge name that attracted much attention and support from the local community during this campaign was the locally born actor and stage director, ‘James Ellis’. However, it was agreed by the judging panel that it would be more appropriate to name another major CCG bridge located near Park Avenue in his honour as it was where he grew up and in closer proximity to Victoria Park’s Sam Thompson Bridge. The purpose of this paper is therefore to gain Committee approval for the proposal to name the new CCG bridge near Park Avenue the ‘James Ellis Bridge’.</p> |
| 2.0 | Recommendations |
| 2.1 | <p>The Committee is asked to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree the proposal to name the new bridge being installed near Park Avenue as part of CCG the ‘James Ellis Bridge’ in honour of the locally born actor and stage director. |
| 3.0 | Main report |
| 3.1 | <p>Members will be aware that at its January 2016 meeting, Committee agreed to Connswater Community Greenway Trust (CCGT) taking forward a consultative naming process in partnership with the Council, which would give the local community the opportunity to propose and select suitable names for a series of bridges and link paths in the CCG.</p> |
| 3.2 | <p>The first group of structures formally named through a consultative naming process developed in line with Council’s naming policy, were three pedestrian bridges in Phase 1 completed section of Orangefield Park; and also the new greenway link/pathway in Phase 2, i.e.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridge connecting Greenville Park to Orangefield Park (lower) -‘Collyard’s Bridge’; • Bridge connecting Greenville Park to Orangefield Park (Upper) - ‘Avalon Bridge’; • Bridge at Orangefield Lane ‘Kingfisher Bridge’; and • Pathway connecting Orangefield Park to Braniel – ‘Marshwiggie Way’. |
| 3.3 | <p>Local residents in the areas, park users and interested parties were afforded the opportunity to participate in the consultation process through both offline and online communication methods. A local paper, The Loop brought details of the campaign and submission slips to 40,000 households in East Belfast, with a further 10,000 being distributed directly to businesses, churches, schools, community buildings and households in the Orangefield Park area.</p> |

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| 3.4 | <p>Through the consultation process the name of the locally born actor and stage director 'James Ellis' also emerged as having support from the local community; however, the naming panel (made up of representatives of CCGT, BCC, EBCDA and Bloomfield Community Association) agreed that a more fitting alternative would be to put his name forward for another major CCG bridge in a more locally significant location to the now deceased local actor and stage director.</p> <p>Council's (Re)naming policy</p> |
| 3.5 | <p>Council's policy framework for managing requests to (re)name parks and leisure facilities was agreed at a meeting of Council's Parks and Leisure Committee in August 2008. (see Appendix A) Whilst this policy only applies to the (re)naming of entire parks and facilities, and not structures within them - Committee may want to consider the proposal to name the new CCG bridge near Park Avenue the 'James Ellis Bridge' in the context of its agreed criteria.</p> |
| 3.6 | <p>Although James Ellis has not been deceased for over five years - the proposal to name the bridge near Park Avenue in his honour is in line with the policy's other agreed criteria, in so far as he lived within the locality and District Electoral Area; and made a "significant contribution" to the life of the area and City.</p> |
| 3.7 | <p>James Ellis grew up on Park Avenue in East Belfast and the home remained within his family until the year 2000. James' career as an actor and stage director stretched over 60 years and began with the Belfast based 'Ulster Group Theatre'. He is widely known for his major role in bringing to fruition the staging of Sam Thompson's controversial stage play Over the Bridge (1960). The proximity of the Park Avenue Bridge to the SamThompson Bridge is particularly poignant as James Ellis had been due to open Sam's bridge in April 2014 but sadly he passed away 4 weeks before it opened.</p> |
| 3.8 | <p>The Ellis family are aware of the community support to name one of the CCG bridges after James Ellis, and have welcomed the possibility of the bridge near Park Avenue being named in his honour. They further said that it would be a 'very appropriate legacy because it was due to Jimmy that the playwright Sam Thompson's play Over The Bridge saw the light of day'.</p> |
| 3.9 | <p>The naming of the new CCG bridge near Park Avenue the 'James Ellis Bridge' is in line with Council's policy given the locally born actor and stage director's remarkable legacy to local and regional theatre; his connection to the Park Avenue area, and his strong links to playwright Sam Thompson after whom CCG bridge in Victoria Park has been named.</p> |

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| 3.10 | <u>Financial & Resource Implications</u> None |
| 3.11 | <u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u> There are no equality or good relations implications attached to this report. |
| 4.0 | Appendices – Documents attached |
| 4.1 | Appendix 1 - Belfast City Council Parks and Leisure Naming Policy |
| 5.0 | Key to Abbreviations |
| 5.1 | CCG – Connswater Community Greenway EBP – East Belfast Partnership BMAP – Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 DSD - Department for Social Development DRD - Department of Regional Development EBCDA- East Belfast Community Development Association |