



<b>Subject:</b>	Belfast City Council response to the DAERA consultation on the designation of the Lagan Meadows as a Quiet Area.
<b>Date:</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> October 2016
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Nigel Grimshaw, Director City & Neighbourhood Services Department
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<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	At the Committee meeting of 7 <sup>th</sup> June 2016, Members considered a paper recommending that the Lagan Meadows be proposed as a Candidate Quiet Area to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA). The identification and designation of Quiet Areas is a requirement of the Environmental Noise Directive (END) and of the Environmental Noise Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006.
1.2	DAERA is presently consulting upon the 'Designation of Lagan Meadows as a Quiet Area pursuant to the Environmental Noise Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006' and has formally written to the council seeking its view on the designation. The consultation will conclude on 19 <sup>th</sup> October 2016.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Consider this report and to endorse the designation of the Lagan Meadows as a Quiet Area.</li><li>▪ Endorse the draft consultation response to DAERA (Appendix 1).</li></ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
	<b>Background</b>
3.1	END requires Member States to 'preserve environmental noise quality where it is good' through the identification and protection of Quiet Areas within agglomerations, recognising

that Quiet Areas can make a beneficial contribution to public health, particularly for people living in noisy city areas.

3.2 In its written response to DAERA, the Committee recommended that the Department consider the Lagan Meadows as a Candidate Quiet Area due to the local soundscape and the fact that the Lagan Meadows fulfil the functional objectives described in the European Environment Agency publication, 'Good practice guide on quiet areas', i.e. a calm place to relax, think, walk, bike, read or picnic.

3.3 In addition, the Committee requested that DAERA engage with the council, prior to subsequent rounds of Quiet Area designations, in order to refine the Department's Policy Guidance and screening criteria relating to the identification of Quiet Areas. The next round of noise mapping and Quiet Area designation is scheduled to commence from June 2017. The Committee highlighted that it would welcome the opportunity to consider the appropriateness of other potential sites across the city as part of this next round, including Greenville and Orangefield Parks.

3.4 Finally, the Committee concluded that neither Ligoniel nor Tullycarnet Parks were suitable for designation as Quiet Areas due to their soundscapes and as a consequence of the Council's longer-term leisure and other objectives for these Parks. These Parks were identified as Candidate Quiet Areas by DAERA as part of an earlier consultation exercise conducted during September 2015. The Committee agreed however to reconsider Ligoniel and Tullycarnet Parks during subsequent rounds of Quiet Area designations in light of updated DAERA Policy Guidance and screening criteria.

#### **Main Issues**

3.5 Quiet Areas can make a beneficial contribution to public health, particularly for people living in noisy city areas. Accordingly, END requires Member States to 'preserve environmental noise quality where it is good' through the identification and protection of Quiet Areas within agglomerations. An agglomeration is a geographic area having a population in excess of 250,000 persons, a population density equal to or greater than 500 people per km<sup>2</sup>; and which is considered to be urbanised. Once designated, councils are required to manage the local noise environment within Quiet Areas to avoid increases in noise from sources covered by END.

3.6	In its consultation document, DAERA has confirmed that it is content to put forward the Lagan Meadows as a Quiet Area instead of either Ligoniel or Tullycarnet Parks, noting that the Council has agreed to reconsider both these areas following the next round of noise mapping which is scheduled to commence from June 2017.
3.7	In addition, DAERA has highlighted that during an earlier Quiet Area consultation exercise of September 2015, a total of 42 consultation responses were received. Of the 42 consultation responses, 25 included requests to have the Lagan Meadows designated as a Quiet Area.
3.8	<p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p> <p>There will be a requirement for officers to periodically monitor noise levels within the Lagan Meadows to ensure that the Quiet Area is protected. This cost is included within existing revenue estimates. Financial and resource implications will be reassessed should the designation of additional Quiet Areas be proposed.</p>
3.9	<p><u>Equality &amp; Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>There are no relevant equality considerations associated with the proposal of the Lagan Meadows as a Quiet Area.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
4.1	<p>Appendix 1 - Draft letter of response to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs.</p> <p>Appendix 2 - Lagan Meadows Boundary</p>