

Parks and Leisure Committee

Thursday, 15th April, 2010

MEETING OF PARKS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor O'Reilly (Deputy Chairman) (in the Chair); and Councillors Adamson, Hartley, Humphrey, B. Kelly, C. Maskey, McCann, McCarthy, McCabe, McKenzie, Robinson and Rodgers.

In attendance: Mr. A. Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure; Ms. C. Wilson, Policy and Business Development Manager; Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Committee Administrator; and Miss L. Hillick, Committee Administrator.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from the Chairman (Councillor Stoker) and Councillors Ekin, Kyle and Mac Giolla Mhín.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 11th March were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st April subject to:

- (i) the amendment of the minute under the heading "Cliftonville Playing Fields" to provide that, recognising that studies for the development of a rational approach to the provision of sport and leisure facilities indicate that, amongst other imbalances, a shortage exists of playing fields in North and West Belfast, the Council agrees to approve the provision of temporary changing accommodation at Cliftonville Road and that this decision be prioritised due to the Child Protection issues arising from the current management arrangements, on the condition that the Council is not responsible for the costs of supervising or managing the facility or for the removal of the same, should that be required. Further, the Director of Parks and Leisure be instructed to pursue the urgent completion of a comprehensive strategy to help rationalise the provision of sport and leisure facilities in Belfast by the Council and others. In addition, that a detailed financial report on all aspects of the Cliftonville Playing Fields project, and in particular outlining where finance for the provision of the temporary changing accommodation will be found and the implications for this and for other Parks and Leisure projects, be submitted to the Committee at its meeting in April; and

- (ii) the amendment of the minute under the heading “Elite Facilities Programme”, to provide that steps be taken by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to ensure that processes and procedures be introduced which would prevent the possible recurrence of this situation.

Councillors McCabe and Robinson

The Deputy Chairman welcomed to the Parks and Leisure Committee Councillors McCabe and Robinson.

Cliftonville Playing Fields

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Purpose

The purpose of the report is to outline for Committee how it is proposed that the provision of temporary changing facilities at Cliftonville Playing Fields is to be funded.

Relevant Background Information

The Committee is reminded that the proposed development of facilities at Cliftonville Playing Fields has been discussed on several occasions in the past. At its meeting on 6 February 2007 the former Community and Recreation (Parks and Cemeteries) Sub Committee adopted the recommendation that:

- 1. The Sub-Committee agrees to proceed with the sale of the land to the Bunscoil in respect of the 1.3 acres at a price of £355k; and agrees to proceed with the grant of rights to the Bunscoil in respect of the 0.54 acres for £75k to facilitate the development of shared car parking, access etc to be funded through the Department of Education; and*
- 2. The Sub-Committee agrees to the development of a new pitch on the residue of the land at an estimated cost of £510k.*

This decision sets the context for any works on the site. The current position is that the Department of Education has informed the Bunscoil that the economic appraisal has been approved by the Department and that the preferred option is for a replacement school on a new site (Cliftonville Playing Fields). There is a review of capital schemes within the Department and the Bunscoil has been informed that they will be contacted once this review has been completed and advised on a way forward. In short, our understanding of this is that there is no time scale set for construction of the new school and we await clarification from DENI.

The Committee is asked to note that the figures contained in the report of February 2007 will need to be revised given the passage of time and to reflect the current prevailing market conditions.

The Committee is reminded that at its meeting on 11 March 2010 it received a report on proposals to provide temporary changing facilities at Cliftonville Playing Fields. The Committee agreed to progress on the basis of Option 4 which was to progress the proposal as part of a group scheme of similar projects within the context of the developing pitches strategy.

At the Council meeting on 1 April 2010 the following proposal was agreed:

That the decision of the Committee be amended to provide that, recognising that studies for the development of a rational approach to the provision of sport and leisure facilities indicate clearly that, amongst other imbalances, a shortage exists of playing fields in North and West Belfast, the Council agrees to approve the provision of temporary changing accommodation at Cliftonville Road and that this decision be prioritised due to the child protection issues arising from the current management arrangements, on the condition that the Council is not responsible for the costs of supervising or managing the facility or for the removal of the same, should that be required. Further, the Director of Parks & Leisure be instructed to pursue the urgent completion of a comprehensive strategy to help rationalise the provision of sport and leisure facilities in Belfast by the Council and others.

The Council also agreed:

That a detailed financial report on all aspects of the Cliftonville Playing Fields project, and in particular outlining where the finance for the provision of the temporary changing accommodation will be found and the implications of this for other Parks and Leisure projects, be submitted to the Committee at its meeting in April.

Current context

The Committee report stated that the estimated cost of the interim measures to refurbish the pitch and to construct temporary changing facilities would be in the region of £100k. This is based on approximate and estimated costs of:

£20,000 for pitch refurbishment;
£40,000 for the unit / changing facility; and
£40,000 for installation.

It was also stated that a secure by design report was awaited at the time and that an estimated cost of the security measures would be provided at the meeting. Unfortunately the information was not available in time for the meeting.

Finally, the report noted that there was no provision in the revenue estimates for such work and that it was likely that the proposals would be capital; however, this would need to be tested given the temporary nature of the arrangement.

Following the meeting it was agreed that the works, as they were deemed to be temporary and non permanent, could be considered as revenue items.

No specific provision has been made for these works in the 2010/11 revenue budgets, however there are two possible sources of funding streams within the departmental budgets from which the money could be found. These are:

- The playground refurbishment budget; and
- The property maintenance budget.

This would require the re-prioritisation of projects in both areas.

We are currently completing the playground inspection survey which will form the basis for the improvement programme for 2010/11. It is anticipated that the programme will be finalised by June 2010 and at this time it will be possible to see where potential savings could be made.

We are also currently finalising with parks managers planned maintenance, this includes looking at one off projects to be funded out of the departmental property maintenance budget. These will be re-prioritised to include the Cliftonville project.

At this stage, it is not possible to identify specific items of work that won't happen this year but this could be provided once available.

Key Issues

The key issue for the Committee to note is that Officers have been instructed by Council to undertake this work, as a matter of priority, and to do so from within the existing revenue budget. So as to minimise the impact on routine maintenance, it is proposed that the money be found from within the playground improvement budget and from the property maintenance budget.

Resource Implications

Financial

There are no additional financial implications associated with this report.

Human Resources

There are no additional human resource implications.

Asset and Other Implications

The proposed work would provide an improved facility for the area.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Committee note the report.”

After discussion, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

Parks and Leisure Improvement Plan

(Mrs. R. Crozier, Change Programme Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee agreed to note the contents of a report in relation to the progress which had been achieved in relation to the Parks and Leisure Department's Improvement Programme. In addition, the Committee noted that further reports in relation to the Programme would be submitted for its consideration at its monthly meetings scheduled to be held on 13th May and 10th June.

Draft Parks and Leisure Departmental Plan 2010/2011

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to:

- (i) present a draft Parks and Leisure Departmental Plan 2010-11 to Members for review and comment;
- (ii) summarise the approach taken to develop the draft plan; and
- (iii) seek Member approval for the draft plan.

Relevant Background Information

In June 2008 Members agreed the first integrated Departmental Plan 2008-09 for Parks and Leisure. Since its inception there has been considerable effort invested in the development of a robust approach and process to planning and performance management within the department.

The standard corporate planning and financial timeframe and guidance were used to define the planning and performance management approach for the department. The main focus for the department this year was to:

- 'refresh' the current Value Creation Map (VCM);
- update the service and centre/site/business unit plans accordingly; and
- concentrate on defining and agreeing a suite of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to be fed into the corporate performance management system – CorVu.

As part of the performance management process, an extended Departmental Management Team (DMT) participated in two departmental workshops in order to develop a suite of KPIs to effectively report on the performance of the Department.

Key Issues

The draft Departmental Plan for 2010-11 reflects the significant role which the Parks and Leisure Department has in the delivery of all corporate strategic themes and objectives for the Council.

This draft Departmental Plan 2010-11 provides staff and Members with a single reference point on the current position and priority actions for the department. It is also a guide for managers and officers to take decisions and allocate resources in line with the objectives and activities agreed and within the current climate. In the event that 'new' or unplanned activities are identified to be undertaken, this may have an impact on the delivery of other activities outlined in the plan.

Development of the Plan

All of the department's managers were asked to undertake business planning at a unit/centre/site level with their own teams so that this could be fed into service plans. Service plans were then used to inform the developing Departmental Plan 2010-11.

Structure of the Plan

The draft Departmental Plan 2010-11 details the Parks and Leisure Value Creation Map (VCM). It also highlights a number of specific activities for which the Director is seeking authority to use the delegated authority afforded under the Council's Scheme of Delegation.

The draft Departmental Plan 2010-11 outlines the corporate values and strategic themes applicable to the department; internal and external changes facing the department in the coming year; provides information on the key achievements of the department over the past year and places the department's objectives and activities, programmes and projects for the year ahead within the corporate context.

For each of the corporate strategic themes, the Department has developed a suite of KPIs to measure its success in 2010-11. The department still has some additional work to do in order to set up more meaningful systems and ways of recording and monitoring information and data. The department will further explore the potential of closely monitoring and evaluating the value, impact and outcomes that its wide range of services and targeted programmes/activities are delivering for the people of Belfast.

The department's budgeted net expenditure for 2010-11 is also outlined with information on the monitoring and review mechanisms in place and key contact information for the department's officers.

There is a Parks and Leisure VCM summary 'read across' summarises the activities, projects and programmes for 2010-11 and identifies the associated expenditure, lead officer, owner and timescales for delivery. The action plan includes ongoing items of work alongside new and developmental project.

Resource Implications

Financial

Section 9.0 outlines the department's budgeted net expenditure for 2010-11. Section 4.0 highlights some of the internal and external financial changes facing the department in the year ahead.

Where it has been possible at this stage to do so, the activities, programmes and projects contained within the body of the plan, set clearly against the allocated budget/associated expenditure, delivery date, owner and lead officer.

Human Resources

Delivery of most of the activities planned for the year ahead will require dedicated officer time and will be recorded and reflected within service and individual business unit/centre/site plans.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- (i) review the draft departmental plan proposed for 2010-11 and comment as appropriate;
- (ii) agree the draft departmental plan 2010 -11 (subject to any amendments agreed).

Key to Abbreviations

VCM: Value Creation Map
KPI: Key Performance Indicator
DMT: Departmental Management Team
PBDU: Policy & Business Development Unit"

Following discussion, the Committee approved the Parks and Leisure Departmental Plan 2010/2011. A copy of the principal sections of the Plan, with the exception of a number of diagrams, is set out hereunder:

"1.1 Purpose of the departmental plan

The purpose of the departmental plan for 2010 -11 is to outline the vision and objectives of the Parks and Leisure department in the context of the council's corporate plan and Value Creation Map (VCM).

It demonstrates for both Members and staff the key role that the department can play in delivering the council's vision and objectives for the City of Belfast. This plan will:

- **outline the key strategic themes within the corporate plan which the Parks and Leisure department contributes to**
- **highlight the current internal and external changes which will impact on the department**
- **summarise our key departmental achievements for the last year 2009 -10**
- **outline our key activities, projects and programmes for 2010 -11**
- **seek delegated authority for the Director to undertake the list of activities detailed in Section 1.4, and**
- **seek Members' approval of the key objectives, activities, projects and programmes contained within the plan.**

1.2 Corporate context

The council's corporate plan and VCM outlines the Members' high level vision for the city. It is a commitment to improving the quality of life for everyone who lives in, works in and visits Belfast.

1.3 Parks and Leisure Department Value Creation Map (VCM)

In line with the corporate planning process, we have examined the corporate plan and VCM to identify which of the corporate objectives the department can play a key role in delivering.

This in turn has helped develop the agreed Departmental VCM for 2010 -11 (Figure 2 below).

The departmental VCM demonstrates clearly for Members and staff the extensive role which Parks and Leisure plays in delivering the real quality of life improvements for ratepayers in the city.

1.4 Delegated authority

The Director of Parks and Leisure intends to use the delegated authority afforded under the council's Scheme of Delegation to undertake the following activities:

- deliver the key objectives and projects outlined in this plan
- deliver the lists of planned activities outlined in Section 7.0
- progress the next steps emanating from the Departmental Improvement Programme
- complete the business support structural review
- develop and implement the appropriate policies and procedures for the management of events in all the department's facilities
- implement any relevant service changes required in preparation for the transfer of functions under the Review of Public Administration (RPA), and
- deliver Support for Sport and associated hospitality grants schemes according to the criteria agreed by the Committee.

This approval will be subject to regular reports to the parks and leisure committee outlining the detail and implications of the exercise of the delegated authority.

2.0 Corporate values

The corporate values are integral to the way in which we work. These values underpin everything that our Councillors and employees do and the way we will deliver our corporate themes and objectives. As a council, we need to:

- Focus on the needs of customers, foster a 'can do' attitude and be problem solvers – providing first class services which are responsive to citizens needs and continuing to ensure that the council is a place where things happen
- Provide value for money and improve services – delivering high quality, value for money services at all times and continually improving our services
- Work together – working with our partners across Belfast to ensure that our combined efforts contribute to the continued success of our city
- Respect each other, be fair, promote equality and good relations – improving access to our services; valuing diversity, ensuring that everyone shares in the city's success and tackling discrimination in all its forms by treating all communities and people equally
- Act sustainably – using our resources effectively and efficiently and promoting the principle of sustainability in all our activities
- Ensure the highest standards of health and safety – maintaining the highest possible standards of health and safety at all times to ensure we protect our employees and all those who use our services
- Value our employees – continuing to support all our employees to help them fulfill their potential.

3.0 Strategic items

We have examined the corporate strategic themes depicted in the corporate VCM and which the Members have expressed as their ambition for the city. Within the context of these strategic themes, we have examined key activities, projects and programmes we hope to achieve in the next year and aligned these accordingly:

- Better leadership
- Better care for Belfast's environment
- Better opportunities for success across the city
- Better support for people and communities
- Better services, and
- Better value for money.

The Parks and Leisure department supports cross cutting themes and priorities and we play a key leadership and support role contributing to the work of the thematic groups. The Director of Parks and Leisure is responsible for championing the following cross-cutting themes and priorities:

- People are healthier, and
- Older people.

This departmental plan also supports and summarises the cross cutting activities, projects and programmes which are important for the year ahead. These are linked to the following corporate thematic priorities:

- People feel safer
- People are healthier
- Older people
- Children and young people
- Good relations, and
- Better care for Belfast's environment.

The Parks and Leisure department is one of the largest departments within the council that is undergoing significant internal and external changes in 2010-11. We have developed a flexible and adaptable approach to manage the ongoing changes. A summary of the key changes in the year ahead is outlined below:

4.1 External changes

The financial environment

- The ever-tightening financial environment
- The focus on public spending and providing Value For Money (VFM) services
- End of date freeze on regional rate
- Funding pressures
- Growing expectations among citizens

Election year

- Forthcoming election period

External political uncertainty and likely delay of RPA

- No decision on boundaries
- Wider political tensions within the NI Executive and Stormont

Increased Central government focus on health and wellbeing

- **Imminent responsibility for Community Planning at some level**
- **Central government policy focus on promoting active, healthy lifestyles and tackling obesity**

4.2 Internal changes

The financial environment

- **Need to build reserves and pressures on current budget allocation**
- **Succession planning, voluntary redundancy (VR) and associated cost**
- **Need to develop stronger links between finance and business planning**
- **Improve VFM and efficiency**
- **Need to maximise income set against the external environment**

The strategic review of leisure

- **Maintaining momentum of the review**
- **Complete the new leisure strategy and roll out implementation plan**

Implementing the recommendations of the playing pitches audit and strategy

- **Need to consider the development of full size multi-purpose, flood-lit 3G pitches**
- **Need to explore and develop partnership working with private providers, government bodies and the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB)**
- **Develop and implement a framework to manage existing and future Facilities Management Agreements**

Implementing the recommendations of the departmental review of marketing and communications

- **Need to review marketing and communication functions in the department – structure, delivery and how budgets are managed and administered**

Departmental Change Programme, including structural re-organisation

- Change management and influencing behavioural change
- Maintaining service provision following VR, loss of experience and reducing budgets
- Re-organising operational management to include new and expanding areas of responsibility, for example Connswater Community Greenway

5.0 Current position

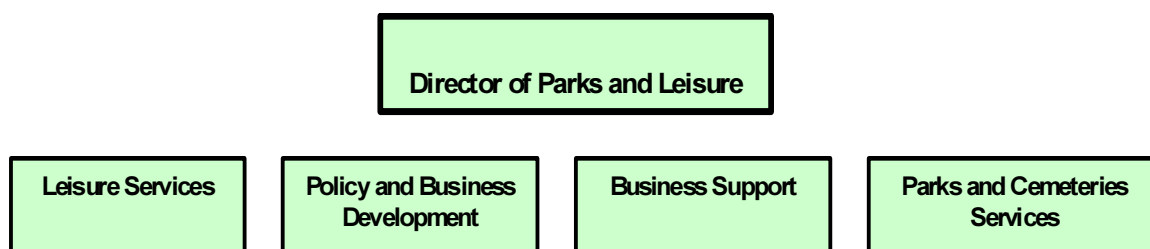
5.1 Departmental structure

The Parks and Leisure department is responsible for approximately 24% of the council's annual expenditure.

The department is responsible for parks and leisure centre provision, leisure and sports development, conservation, landscaping, Malone House and Belfast Castle, crematorium and cemetery services, Belfast Zoological Gardens, events and extensive partnership working. The department is supported through directorate by a central Business Support Unit and a Policy and Business Development Unit.

Departmental Structure

The organisation chart below is the high level outline of the structure operating within the department:



The department employs 758.56 staff, or 627.39 FTEs (full time equivalent, as many staff are part-time or casual employees).

Our department has responsibility for:

- 10 leisure centres across the city
- 48 parks and open spaces
- 74 playgrounds
- 135 sports pitches (including grass and synthetic)
- 12 bowling pavilions
- 1 golf course
- 3 working cemeteries and the region's only crematorium
- Belfast Zoological Gardens
- Belfast Castle and Malone House
- 1 international rose garden
- 1 adventure playground
- the city's street trees and woodland areas
- biodiversity and countryside access
- bereavement services
- sports development
- landscape planning and development
- event planning and management

Leisure Service

The Leisure service currently employs a total of 411 staff, or 294 FTEs and manages 10 leisure centres. Leisure Services has a centrally-based development unit which supports both council-owned centres and external sports clubs and organisations.

Parks and Cemeteries Service

The Parks and Cemeteries service currently employs 305.5 staff, or 319.6 FTEs. It is responsible for the day-to-day operational management of all the city's parks, open spaces and cemeteries, the park ranger service, events, educational and outreach activities and all of the support functions which enable these activities to happen.

Business Support

Business Support currently employs 35 staff, or 41.66 FTEs and is responsible for supporting, promoting and effectively managing people, finances, administration and systems within the department.

The department has commenced a process to bring together the separate business support units which have historically existed, one in Leisure services and one in the Parks and Cemeteries service. This process will seek to change reporting lines, as the previous posts reported to Heads of Service, and to make improvements in the service and find efficiencies where possible.

Policy and Business Development

In supporting the department, the Policy and Business Development Unit employs seven staff and assists departmental managers in business planning and performance management and the development of policy, processes and procedures to improve our business management disciplines. The unit also co-ordinates all departmental communications activity and coordinates the Safer Neighbourhood Antisocial Behaviour Programme.

5.2 Departmental assets

Our departmental assets are spread across the city and the majority of our staff are based in outlying areas, either in our leisure centres, parks, pavilions or depots. A map of current Parks and Leisure assets is shown below in Figure 3

6.0 Key achievements 2009-10

6.1 Departmental activities, programmes and projects 2009-10

Set against a background of ongoing change and increasing pressure on financial resources, the department has made significant progress on a number of activities, programmes and projects in the last year, many of which are now coming to fruition and others which have been successfully completed. In the last year the department has, among other achievements:

Strategic theme 1: Better leadership

- Commenced work on the strategic review of leisure with a draft strategy to be completed later in 2010
- Commenced the allotment strategy; and playing pitch review and report
- Developed and implemented the departmental funding strategy (and associated plan)
- Managed the ongoing new cemetery project
- Contributed to the development of the Connswater Community Greenway project
- Delivered and evaluated the bonfire management programme, and
- Commenced development of a departmental consultation framework to align with the developing corporate consultation and engagement strategy.

Strategic theme 2: Better care for Belfast's environment

- Completed Phase 1 of the path improvement work at Cavehill Country Park
- Completed and implemented a framework for the development of Public Equipped Play Areas in the city
- Promoted the importance of parks and local environments by successful publication of the book 'If trees could talk' through the Forest of Belfast initiative
- Established the Divis to Dixon walking link with external partners
- Implemented the actions in year 3 of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan
- Organised a parks waste collection service to encourage recycling within parks and establishing a baseline for future monitoring and review
- Developed and extended the 'Watch this Space' environmental education programme
- Successfully organised and planted approximately 300 semi-mature trees on five arterial routes through funding from the Department for Social Development (DSD)
- Successfully secured £42,600 funding from the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) Central Energy Efficiency Fund to carry out insulation works in five leisure centres
- Commenced the Waterworks development programme
- Completed condition surveys of trees and tree surgery works within Botanic Gardens, Orangefield Playing Fields and Greenville Park
- Commenced a strategy for the management of trees within the city
- Established a working group to secure Heritage Lottery Funding for the tropical ravine and Botanic Gardens, and
- Developed a draft policy for dealing with and managing public art in departmental facilities.

Strategic theme 3: Better opportunities for success across the city

- Developed and delivered a range of events in our facilities through our co-ordinated departmental events programme
- Opened new Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) at Blythfield

- Completed a new 3G pitch at Ballysillan Leisure Centre
- Developed a heritage trail for the city
- Aligned departmental policy with regeneration and development priorities in the city, and
- Recorded the best ever visitor numbers at the Zoo for calendar year 2009 with over 300,000 visitors (an increase of 9% from 2008).

Strategic theme 4: Better support for people and communities

- Funded 26 organisations under the parks events small grant scheme, which over 17,850 attended
- Organised a varied programme of outdoor events in parks, which over 100,000 attended
- Delivered art in the park projects e.g. Chilean mural and Poetry in the Park
- The Safer Neighbourhood Antisocial Behaviour programme has been mainstreamed across the department and permanency secured
- Organised the first Parks Heritage Week programme of public walks
- Total direct debit membership of our leisure centres has increased by 55% since the introduction of Boost in April 06, and direct debit income has increased by 83%
- Increased summer scheme participation to 13,597
- Implemented the first grassroots football games development programme in Ballysillan and this is being expanded to Whiterock Leisure Centre
- Completed a draft Countryside Recreation Plan, subject to consultation
- Completed a policy for events and management guidelines for holding events in parks and leisure facilities
- Delivered a series of 4-week outdoor activity classes during the month of June across the city
- Completed the masterplan and costings of Dunville and Woodvale Park
- Completed the active communities application and the department was successful in its funding application for a replacement main hall sports floor in Shankill
- Peace III funding was awarded for 'Growing together' community gardens project and the cultural diversity through sport contract

- Delivered the 'FRESH' programme in 3 leisure centres this year (Andersonstown, Shankill and Avoniel) An evaluation indicates the programme has been successful in its objective to minimise the weight gain of those children taking part
- Assisted 3 families lose weight and become healthier through the 'Fit Families' programme and this programme will be extended across the city
- Enabled approximately 1,100 children each week to learn swimming through the 'Make a Splash' programme
- Delivered the citywide activity programme with over 300 classes per week
- Staged the ladies' over 16 futsal tournament and the Belfast primary schools' cross-country championships and athletics championships
- Helped 900 clients involved in the Healthwise referral exercise scheme
- Increased fitness suite participation by 26,000 visits during the first 10 months of this financial year compared to the same period last year
- Launched Wildcats multi-skills clubs in all leisure centres
- Awarded £224,000 in grant funding through the Support for Sport scheme
- Delivered the cardiac rehab programme which is provided in 2 leisure centres offering 4 classes per week. To date a total of 60 clients have successfully completed the programme
- Organised the Belfast Physical Activity and Sports Development conference
- Implemented new 'out of hour' programme to assist elite athlete development.

Strategic theme 5: Better services

- Completed the development, refurbishment and upgrade work on playgrounds, parks and memorial gardens
- Shankill and Whiterock Leisure Centre retained Quest accreditation
- Achieved Quest accreditation in the Leisure Development Unit
- Achieved Green Flag accreditation at Cavehill Country Park
- Achieved Charter Mark accreditation for Belfast Castle and Malone House

- Indoor Tennis Centre and Ozone Complex was re-accredited Investors in People (IIP) award, and
- Elected to the Council of European Association of Zoos and Aquaria.

Strategic theme 6: Organisation fit to lead and serve (OFTL&S)

- Raised profile of parks through regular articles in City Matters and Intercom
- Completed and celebrated the Adlumen Operational Leadership and Management programme
- Introduced and implemented the departmental business planning process
- Implemented new processes for estimating and financial control
- Completed the cemetery archive project
- Completed the departmental plan for 2009-10
- Introduced and implemented the departmental planning framework / approach for 2009/10 and the process for 2010-11 is well underway
- Progressed the departmental performance management agenda. Developed and agreed a suite of departmental KPIs which will be fed into the corporate performance management system CorVu
- Approximately 40 managers attended finance for non financial managers training organised by the department to provide support and training to managers in their financial management role
- Commenced the review and development of key processes and implementation of the corporate attendance policy
- Computerised the crematorium booking system
- Implemented the TLMS system in the Zoo and made improvements in Leisure, and
- Contributed to the development and roll out of SAP and clockwise system.

7.0 Key actions 2010-11

This section of the plan describes in more detail the departmental objectives, activities, projects and programmes which we plan to work on in the year ahead. For each of the corporate strategic themes, we have tried to identify what this means for our department and have set out our plans in line with a number of questions under each theme:

- What will our objectives be?
- How we will do it?

| Strategic theme 1: Leadership | |
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| What will our objectives be? | How we will do it? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing our place shaping role by better use and planning of the city's assets | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead the RPA boundaries operational group Agree the new leisure strategy and action plan and commence implementation Manage the ongoing development of the new cemetery project |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve internal and external partnership working that will help us enhance current service provision and contribute to modernising our services and improving Belfast's environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Influence the development of regional and local policies and projects which benefit parks and leisure provision and contribute to the delivery of departmental objectives (for example green corridors) Represent the objectives of the department on inter-departmental projects and in external projects Work in partnership to develop capital enhancement projects including the development of a plan with appropriate partnership from Sport NI to upgrade and regenerate the Mary Peters Track in order to facilitate the 2013 police and fire fighter games |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead the development of good relations in the city | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide leadership in the delivery of the bonfire management programme Through the commissioned partner deliver the Peace III funded Cultural Diversity in Sport |

| Strategic theme 2: Better care for Belfast's environment | |
|---|---|
| What will our objectives be? | How we will do it? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain and develop parks and leisure services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roll out the Green Flag standard in the city's parks and cemeteries Launch and implement a tree strategy for the council Maintain the city's tree database which establishes the type, age and condition of the city's tree population Develop an action plan to tackle dog fouling in parks |

| | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the environmental impact of internal departmental activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to council policy position on relevant environmental issues and activities within the sustainable development action plan • Commence collation of information and develop performance measures on energy consumption, waste generation and reduction, and use of materials and natural resources in the department • Install recycling facilities for plastic bottles at all leisure sites • Develop staff awareness of environmental issues and their role in improving departmental environmental performance |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and promote our natural and built heritage within parks and leisure services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a programme of events and activities which involve people and communities in the protection and enhancement of our natural and built heritage • Develop a Countryside Recreation Plan • Evaluate the 'Watch this Space Programme' in the context of the development of community and educational activity and extend it to South Belfast • Enforce the Access to the Countryside Order 1983 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and promote our natural and built heritage within parks and leisure services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver programmes to increase the awareness of the benefits of growing you own food and encourage participation in horticulture • Develop three Peace III funded community gardens, with associated community engagement activities • Contribute to the protection and promotion of the Belfast Hills and Lagan Valley Regional Park • Review the Local Biodiversity Action Plan and implement year 4 of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan • Continue preparation of the Heritage Lottery Fund heritage grant application for the development of the Tropical Ravine and Botanic Gardens • Manage restored heritage buildings to ensure they are conserved, utilised, operated efficiently and attract visitors • Develop and implement a policy on the control of invasive species and investigate how to quantify success |

| Strategic theme 3: Better opportunities for success across the city | |
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| What will our objectives be? | How we will do it? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and promote services in areas of culture, tourism and heritage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop the partnership with Northern Ireland Tourist Board to encourage tourism to our parks, open spaces, zoo, leisure and other facilities and ensure integration with the council's tourism strategy 2010 – 2014 • Develop and deliver site tours of the City Cemetery • Develop a visitor attraction portfolio and action plan to promote the heritage buildings, historical feature, landscapes, plant collections and archaeological sites in parks and open spaces |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve the department in all local planning and development activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review major planning applications adjacent to existing leisure and open spaces • Provide departmental direction and coordinate the planning of parks and leisure provision in strategic regeneration frameworks, concept masterplans and neighbourhood regeneration plans |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and maximise opportunities to secure income | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine and develop the potential for franchise, secondary income concessions and sponsorship opportunities • Examine and develop the potential for funding from Government departments other than through competitive routes • Review the business model for Belfast Zoological Gardens |

| Strategic theme 4: Better support for people and communities | |
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| What will our objectives be? | How we will do it? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and involve people and communities, providing services and programmes that are shared and accessible by all | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise, promote and deliver community and corporate events in parks • Support local communities to undertake events in parks through the Parks Small Grants Scheme • Implement a suite of policies relating to events and associated management handbooks, guidance and forms • Complete and implement the allotments strategy |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide programmes and services to make people feel safer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the Safer Neighbourhood Antisocial Behaviour Programme • Identify and implement actions arising from the corporate Safer City group |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase usage and participation levels of parks and leisure services and encourage people to become more active | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the actions from the Belfast Physical Activity and Sports Development Strategy • Develop sports development plans for all leisure centres • Develop and commence implementation of a departmental participation plan • Organise Belfast sports development conference • Develop an interagency 'Active Belfast Plan' • Host an 'Active Belfast Conference' • Through relevant partners, deliver the Active Communities programme • Deliver Support for Sport grant programmes • Develop programmes to increase participation in connection with 2012 Olympics to maximise the Olympic legacy • Organise day of sport with Eurosport health partnership • Sustain support for participants on the Healthy Families programme and complete quarterly assessments and evaluation of the programme |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver targeted health programmes and services that reduce deprivation and health inequalities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend access to HealthWise and Cardiac Rehab programme through additional funding from Public Health Authority (PHA) • In partnership with BHSCCT provide free access to leisure facilities for 200 people in two of the most health deprived wards in Belfast |

| Strategic theme 4: Better support for people and communities | |
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| What will our objectives be? | How we will do it? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver high quality parks and leisure opportunities with targeted programmes in place for young people and older people | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the new Bridges Sports Park and associated urban sports development activities • Ensure that each local facility provides targeted programmes for younger and older people |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the following programmes and activities aimed at younger people: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 'Make a Splash' swimming lessons ○ Extend the citywide parent & toddler programme ○ Wildcats multi-skills programme for children aged 7–11 ○ 'Watch this Space' programme ○ Grassroots programme, and ○ Young at Art programme • Deliver the following programmes and activities aimed at older people: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Wellness class ○ Seniorcise 50+ ○ Senior fitness class ○ Senior tennis ○ Old time dance, and ○ Seniors yoga • Extend physical activity programme for young people with mental health problems on successful completion of pilot • Expand Teenage Kicks dance and personal development programme to include children who are looked after • Deliver active communities targets for young people, older people, females and people with disabilities • Operate a bus service for the older persons to Roselawn Cemetery |
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| Strategic theme 5: Better services | |
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| What will our objectives be? | How we will do it? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a strategic approach to customer focus | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out customer focus groups and customer exit surveys within our leisure facilities as part of a co-ordinated and departmental approach to consultation and engagement and the strategic review of leisure • Ensure compliance with corporate complaints procedures • Develop and agree a customer charter for the department |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate that the department provides a modern and value for money approach to service delivery | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out a survey of the quality of existing playgrounds and put in place an improvement programme • Secure value for money supplies and services necessary for the operational delivery of parks and leisure services • Extend our leisure 'out of hours' use to bank holidays for Sports Development • Develop an inspection system for paths and park furniture to improve staff and public safety • Develop an inspection system for playgrounds to increase staff and public safety |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate that the department provides a modern and value for money approach to service delivery | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an action plan to improve the quality standards of the burial and cremation service • Achieve external quality accreditation at all our leisure sites • Develop a service quality standard for both parks and cemeteries service and leisure service • Implement the construction, replacement and refurbishment schedule for our playgrounds, play areas and open spaces. • Maintain the path infrastructure within our parks and open spaces |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the city and its neighbourhoods are well served and connected | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to progress improvements in our parks by completing the Dunville and Woodvale Park development programme • Promote and involve Friends Groups in line with the agreed policy • Play a key role in the development of the Connswater Community Greenway |

| Strategic theme 6: Organisation fit to lead and serve | |
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| What will our objectives be? | How we will do it? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop appropriate HR strategies, policies and procedures to ensure people are effectively recruited, recognised, trained and supported • Improve employee capacity and capability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the attendance policy across the department and link it to a training database for the department • Build management capacity regarding employee relations issues • Manage and plan vacancies and recruitment for the department |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share knowledge and skills across the organisation • Continue to improve the structure and functions of the department, to deliver service improvements and to co-ordinate and align services • Review and improve the effectiveness and value for money of our human resource management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review with the council’s Health and Safety Manager the departments approach to the management of health and safety at work • Roll out consistent PDP process throughout the department with linkages to a training database for the department • Participate in the process for obtaining corporate IIP – implementing systems and processes ensuring the department can achieve IIP standards • Implement the business support review • Implement recommendations of the Parks Operational review • Implement any agreed actions emanating from the review of the corporate centre • Monitor, manage and report on agency and overtime as required |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the financial management capability for Members and officers • Effectively plan and manage our finances, assets and resources • Secure financial and other resources, including external funding, that will enable us to deliver and develop parks and leisure service provision | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the compensation claims process and information flow through sharing the learning from cases • Comply with corporate timeframes for completing budgets, quarterly outturns, variance analysis etc. • Comply with corporate policies and process on financial matters • Review the financial management processes and improve the provision and timeliness of information • Carry out a strategic review of Boost and review the Boost pricing scheme • Assist in the review of fees and charges and advise on opportunities to maximise income • Review cemeteries and cremation fees • Carry out a review of departmental grant schemes and link to the corporate review • Implement the funding strategy • Investigate the development of a Grants Management System • Ensure procurement is managed strategically throughout the department to ensure VFM |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a strategic approach to information management • Make best use of technology to deliver our priorities and support the delivery of increasingly effective and 'Value for Money' services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out an audit of HR and finance information • Work to improve the performance of key systems including SAP, clockwise, SRM, PSE and CorVu and Archibus • Roll out and implement corporate systems such as CorVu, Clockwise, Envoy and Business Intelligence tool • Ensure compliance with the corporate complaints procedure and FOI legislation and ensure clear audit trails of same • Review and improve the use of IT systems in the department including business process re-engineering (BPR) of current processes • Introduce and implement the CRM system to record, monitor, review and analyse incidents or complaints of antisocial behaviour |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the delivery of corporate objectives through the provision of an efficient policy and research service • Introduce an integrated departmental planning cycle linked to corporate planning, budget and rate setting process • Embed performance management across the department • Build a robust approach to programme management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out a departmental policy audit to create a policy baseline and identify any gaps • Implement the departmental improvement programme • Manage, monitor and review the departmental and business planning approach • Provide unit/centre/site planning and service planning direction and identify any gaps • Complete the departmental plan • Refresh the departmental VCM • Improve the link between financial estimates and business plans • Develop, collate, monitor and review a suite of departmental KPIs (review on a quarterly and an annual basis) • Establish a departmental performance management working group • Implement the project planning approach in relation to the gateway process for capital projects |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market and promote the work of the department and the council • Ensure an effective and efficient one council approach to communications • Facilitate better internal communication within the department and with other departments across the council • Ensure that information is accessible to the public | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the departmental marketing, communications and events plans to best promote the work of the department • Participate and advise on consultation and engagement with trade unions through service and departmental forums and review effectiveness • Complete and implement a departmental consultation and engagement framework aligned to the corporate approach • Ensure all research and consultation data is shared departmentally and corporately according to relevancy • Reinforce communications procedures and ensure full compliance within the department • Review the employee forum and reconfigure as appropriate • Ensure effective deliver of corporate team brief and frequent addition of departmental information • Assist in the improvement of communication within the department through improving information management, the maintenance of up-to-date records and investigate all costs further (use of PDAs, mobile phones and web conferencing) • Maintain currency of departmental information on Interlink |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market and promote the work of the department and the council • Ensure an effective and efficient one council approach to communications • Facilitate better internal communication within the department and with other departments across the council • Ensure that information is accessible to the public | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage and involve relevant community stakeholders in all departmental consultation within the emerging corporate consultation and engagement strategy • Participate in the corporate Getting People Connected project in both facilities and leisure centres • Ensure timely delivery of information and updates from the Director, particularly in relation to the departmental Change Management Programme • Develop procedures to maintain accuracy of employee contact database and team brief cascade map • Improve and develop internal communications structures and processes • Prioritise online transactions within available budgets and system functionality |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the department's use of social media • Develop the use of email, viral and SMS marketing • Develop the cemetery archive records into a facility which is available to the public • Maintain currency of departmental data sets in compliance with data protection legislation • Further develop departmental use of the B brand • Ensure all marketing spend within the department is evaluated |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to the development of the council asset strategy • Develop appropriate governance mechanisms for the planning, prioritisation and delivery of asset management key actions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that recommendations from the asset management strategy is implemented and contribute to the development of the council Asset Management Plan • Facilitate the review of departmental capital asset base, and subsequent identification of capital funding • Implement the gateway process for capital projects • Carry out a condition survey of parks buildings and structures • Develop and implement a pitches strategy for the council in conjunction with the relevant partners • Participate in the council's revised capital and financial prioritisation of projects • Prioritise departmental capital needs in a strategic capital plan which includes a building or asset upgrade programme • Prioritise Year 1 actions from the leisure building condition survey • Identify and secure funding to develop 3G pitches within the city |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet legislative requirements and best practice in relation to risk management, governance and independent assurance • Enable the council's Audit Panel to provide an independent assurance on the adequacy of the council's risk management framework and associated control environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete and monitor the departmental risk register and risk management plans and ensure linkages with business plans • Review the department's arrangements for the activation of and running of rest centres etc. and to ensure that appropriate staff are trained as part of the council's emergency plan • Implement agreed audit recommendations (where applicable) |

The Director also champions a number of key corporate projects which will be ongoing in 2010-11:

- The development and implementation of a strategy and action plan for older people
- The development and implementation of a Healthier City plan for Belfast.

8.0 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) 2010-11

For the past two years the department has relied on KPI information coming from quantitative data derived from surveys (collected via the parks survey and the leisure survey) which are conducted on an ad hoc basis. This data is not robust enough to inform decision making or strategy or policy development. The department has recently defined and agreed a suite of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which will be used to monitor and report departmental progress and success. The agreed indicators are balanced consisting of:

- qualitative and quantitative measures, and
- inputs, outputs and outcome measures.

As part of the Parks and Leisure planning and performance cycle for 2010-11 the agreed focus for the department is performance management and measurement, namely:

- gathering accurate baseline, target and benchmarking KPI information and data
- aligning KPIs corporately, at a service and unit, centre, site level
- allocating and agreeing KPI reviewers, owners and inputters, and
- collecting, monitoring and reporting KPIs (via the corporate performance management system, CorVu).

The following corporate and departmental KPIs will be used to measure and monitor departmental progress and success.

| Strategic theme 2: Better care for Belfast's environment | |
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| Corporate KPIs collected by the department | Departmental KPIs collected by the department |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of street trees • Tonnage of green waste recycled • Energy consumed expressed in Gigajoules per hour per square meter |

| Strategic theme 3: Better opportunities for success across the city | |
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| Corporate KPIs collected by the department | Departmental KPIs collected by the department |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of visitors to the Zoo • No. of events organised, funded or facilitated by the department • No. attending events • No. of functions held at Belfast Castle • No. of functions held at Malone House |

| Strategic theme 4: Better support for people and communities | |
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| Corporate KPIs collected by the department | Departmental KPIs collected by the department |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of leisure centre members • No. of users of indoor leisure facilities (throughput) • No. of users of outdoor leisure facilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of 'outreach' activities or programmes delivered • No. of participants involved in outreach programmes (outreach throughput) • No. of reported incidents of antisocial behaviour (ASB) • % of users who use leisure centres twice+ per week • No. of health programmes delivered • No. of people participating in health programmes • No. of (Means Tested Benefit) MTB users • % of leisure centre members/users who are classified as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Young people (under 16) - Older people (60 and over) • No. of departmental programmes, initiatives and events targeted towards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Young people - Older people |

| Strategic Theme 5: Better Services | |
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| Corporate KPIs collected by the department | Departmental KPIs collected by the department |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of formal complaints received – All • Number of formal complaints received – stage 1 • Number of formal complaints received – stage 2 • Number of formal complaints received – stage 3 • % of complaints that met response target – all • % of complaints that met response target – stage 1 • % of complaints that met response target – stage 2 • % of complaints that met response target – stage 3 | |

| Strategic Theme 6: Organisation Fit to Lead and Serve | |
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| Corporate KPIs collected by the department | Departmental KPIs collected by the department |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overtime as a % of overall staff costs* • Agency costs as a % of overall staff costs* • Average number of working days per employee lost due to absence (absence data provided by HR) • % variance between gross expenditure and budget • % variance between gross income and budget • % variance between net expenditure and budget • Gross expenditure • Gross income • Net expenditure • % Non compliance of GRN's after invoicing (by service) • % Non compliance of purchase orders raised on time (by service) • % of employee leaver information received within 5 working days of leaving the council (by service) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of staff carrying out essential skills development • No. of quality awards maintained or achieved • Net expenditure (commercial subsidy) Indoor Leisure • Net expenditure (commercial subsidy) Zoo • Net expenditure (commercial subsidy) Castle • Net expenditure (commercial subsidy) Malone House • Net expenditure (commercial subsidy) Crematorium • Net expenditure (commercial subsidy) Cemetery • Ratio of expenditure: income (Depart) • Ratio of expenditure: income – Zoo • Ratio of expenditure: income – Castle • Ratio of expenditure: income – Malone House |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• % of properly completed overtime sheets received per the timetable (by service) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ratio of expenditure: income – Indoor Leisure• Ratio of expenditure: income – Outdoor Leisure• Total income from fees and charges• Total net cost per ‘recorded user’ Zoo• Total net cost per user (indoor leisure)• Total net cost per user (outdoor leisure – sports pitches and bowling pavilion)• Staffing as a % of income (leisure centres)• % of individual plans delivered in line with departmental planning process• No. of unique visitors to departmental websites• No. of departmental procedural non-compliances recorded by Corporate Communications |
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***Overtime and Agency costs are going to be collected and reported centrally in the same way that Absence and Finance is collected – wording of indicators to be agreed by HR”**

Belfast Festival at Queen's Events

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to seek Committee approval for two events to be held on Council property as part of the Belfast Festival at Queen’s in October 2010.

Key Issues

Belfast Festival at Queen’s has requested that the Committee consider supporting two events for the 2010 festival programme. The Festival Director, Graeme Farrow is seeking to host two large-scale productions in Belfast in 2010 and has approached the Director regarding the possibility of staging these in partnership with the Council.

**Black Watch theatre production –
Shankill Leisure Centre**

Black Watch is an internationally acclaimed play based on interviews from former soldiers who have served in Iraq in 2004 as part of the Black Watch regiment. The National Theatre of Scotland's production has won numerous theatrical awards and has had a sell-out tour across the world.

It is described as a thought-provoking play which examines what it means to be a soldier, serving in Iraq and the emotional journey home. Belfast Festival at Queen's will work with the National Theatre of Scotland to ensure that there is positive and stimulating debate around the production's first visit to Belfast as well as a diverse audience attending over the course of the seven performances.

It is a large-scale production (30m x 25m playing space) which requires a suitably sized venue for the specially built stage. It plays to an audience of 700 per night and takes them on a journey from Scotland to the Iraqi desert. The highly physical performance incorporates pipe music, songs and physical action sequences.

After extensive research, the Festival is seeking to stage the show in the Shankill Leisure Centre. They have met with the Shankill Leisure Centre manager to discuss the practicalities of staging the production there. They are requesting support in-kind from the Council by seeking a discount on the market value of hiring the space. They require the space from 24 October – 1 November 2010; this includes set-up and removal times.

Two porta-cabins would be installed for dressing room and office facilities in addition to the use of the main hall. A full risk assessment would be undertaken by Belfast Festival at Queen's with the co-operation of the National Theatre of Scotland. The production would be covered by the Festival's public and employee liability insurance.

Belfast Festival at Queen's is requesting a discounted hire fee for the duration of the production. The standard full hire charge for the main hall would be £11,200 (£1400 x 8 days). This does not include additional staffing costs and the use of changing facilities. However, it assumes 100% capacity during the period and at a comparable time last year the main hall income was approximately £3,000.

It would therefore be possible cover all actual costs, if the Council were to offer the facility at £7,500. This would cover loss of income for the main hall and associated rooms, the additional staff required for out-of-hours cover and the stand-by electrician.

The production company will sign a standard hire contract which will include clauses regarding making good any damage. It will be marketed by the Festival at Queen's, who will also handle ticket sales and provide front-of-house staff.

Over the seven performances, they anticipate a sell-out audience of 4,900. This potentially could benefit the Council in bringing non-users into the Shankill Leisure Centre, promoting it as a shared space, as well promoting access to the wider neighbourhood. In line with our corporate objectives, it will be a high-quality contribution to the cultural and tourism experience in the city, attracting visitors from across and outside of Belfast. It is anticipated that there will be significant media interest in bringing this production to Belfast for the first time. The Council's involvement in staging the production will be suitably reflected in the publicity for the event. The Council may also use it as an opportunity to promote simultaneously its leisure services, including the Boost scheme.

**Leon and the Place Between circus production –
Botanic Gardens**

Belfast Festival at Queen's is keen to work in partnership with the Council to develop a regular Botanic-based festival event. To this end, they are proposing that Cahoots NI perform a new version of the children's tale Leon and the Place Between in a circus-style big top, located on the main lawn opposite the Palm House in Botanic Gardens. They require the location from 11 - 26 October 2010; this includes set-up and removal times.

The 'big top' has a footprint of 25m x 18m. A complete risk assessment will be undertaken by Cahoots NI and Belfast Festival at Queen's. It will be staffed by appropriately trained Festival staff, as well as a 24-hour security officer. It would be a condition of hire that the final location of the tent and any additional accommodation would be agreed with the relevant Parks Officer.

Belfast Festival at Queen's has requested that the Committee considers waiving any hire charge for the site. This would include covering the re-instatement costs of the lawn, following the removal of the tent. This is likely to be in the region of £2,000 (18m x 25m x £4.50 per sq m).

Over the course of 24 performances in 11 days, Cahoots anticipate a total audience of 2,400. It will be marketed by Belfast Festival at Queen's as the key children's event in their programme, targeting families and schools.

The Council's involvement in staging the Cahoots NI production will be suitably reflected in the publicity for the event. This would consolidate the Council's work in promoting the park as a vibrant, shared, open space, connecting with the re-opened Ulster Museum and the nearby Lyric Theatre.

Enchanted Evening lighting installation

Belfast Festival at Queen's has also suggested that the Council might consider re-staging the lighting displays which were installed as part of the popular 'Enchanted Evenings' production.

They propose that the Council would benefit from the marketing support they would offer, as well as the guaranteed footfall for the Cahoots production. In total, would create a very attractive cultural product in the park, targeted at children and young people, drawing visitors from across and beyond Belfast.

The cost for the lighting installation would be borne by the Council. The cost of the lighting displays would be in the region of £14,500. This would include installation (£11,000); stand-by electrician costs (£2,500) and out-of-hours staffing costs for the park (£2,000).

Conclusion

Both of these events have the potential to demonstrate the reach of the Parks and Leisure Committee across all the corporate objectives of the Council. They will be high-profile features of the Festival programme, generating positive publicity for the Council as well as introducing Council facilities to many non-users.

Resource Implications

Financial

- Shankill Leisure Centre – loss of revenue from external hire and/or hire of hall fees
- Botanic Gardens – reinstatement costs in the region of £2,000
- Lighting installation – in the region of £14,500. This will be covered by existing revenue budgets.

Human Resources

- Shankill Leisure Centre – Additional staff cover for out-of-hours use and stand-by electrician. This is covered in the proposed fee to be charged.
- Botanic Gardens – Additional staff cover for out-of-hours use and stand-by electrician.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

1. Grant authority for 2 events to be held on Council property as part of the Belfast Festival at Queen's in October 2010, subject to satisfactory terms being agreed with the Director of Parks and Leisure and on the condition that:
 - The event organisers resolve all operational issues to the Council's satisfaction;
 - An appropriate legal agreement, to be prepared by the Director of Legal Services, is completed; and
 - The event organisers meet all statutory requirements including entertainments licensing.
2. Approve a discounted hire fee of £7, 500 as outlined above for the use of the Shankill Leisure Centre for the Belfast Festival at Queen's staging of Black Watch (24 October – 1 November 2010);
3. Agree to waive the hire fee at Botanic Gardens for the purposes of the Cahoots NI production of Leon and the Place Between (11 – 26 October 2010); and
4. Approve the staging of a version of the Enchanted Evenings at Botanic Gardens, to coincide with the Belfast Festival at Queen's period, as outlined above."

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations and granted authority to the Director to approve an appropriate discounted hire fee for the use of the Shankill Leisure Centre for the Belfast Festival at Queen's staging of Black Watch.

Northern Ireland Assembly's Culture Arts and Leisure Committee – Sport and Physical Activity Inquiry

The Committee was advised that the Assembly's Culture Arts and Leisure Committee was seeking the Council's views in relation to that Committee's Inquiry into Participation in Sport and Physical Activity. The Policy and Business Development Manager outlined the remit of the Inquiry which included:

- identifying the main groups within the adult population which had lower levels of participation than the average rate for adults;
- identifying the issues particular to those groups which acted as a barrier to participation;

- identifying solutions particular to each of the main groups which would encourage higher levels of participation, including consideration of examples of best practice from other countries and regions; and
- advising the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure as well as other stakeholders of the recommendations thereon.

She reported that the Parks and Leisure Department had co-ordinated a draft written response and had sought input from the Health and Environmental Services Department and, in particular, the newly established Belfast Health Development Unit in relation to the Council's submission.

After discussion, the Committee agreed that the undernoted comments be forwarded to the Northern Ireland Assembly's Culture, Arts and Leisure Committee as the Council's response, subject to details on the number of users utilising the Council's Leisure Centres being incorporated therein:

"Belfast City Council

**Belfast City Council submission to the
Department of Culture Arts and Leisure committee,
Inquiry into participation in sport and physical activity**

Belfast City Council welcomes this opportunity to contribute to the inquiry on participation in sport and physical activity. In general, the Council supports the committee's aim which is to identify, and analyse the current position in particular with adult participation in sport and physical activity. The Council commends the intention to arrest the decline and focus on barriers to improve participation over a short period of time.

The Council is committed to improving the quality of life for now and for future generations for the people in Belfast. Within this, we are working to improve the health and well-being of all those who live, work and visit Belfast. We do this through the provision of a range of services, including the provision and programming of quality parks, open spaces and leisure environments that people value and use.

Most recently, we have launched the Belfast Health Development Unit. Its aim is to reduce the 'health gap' (variations in life expectancy and disease/disability free years between those who live in the more deprived areas and those who live in affluent areas) which exists in Belfast. The Unit is sponsored by the Council, the Public Health Agency and Belfast Health and Social Services Trust, but will involve a much wider partnership in the development of a health and wellbeing plan for the city. This plan will specify a

number of key priority areas of work which all partners can unite behind, and physical activity has already been identified as one of these priorities, where the focus will be on improving wellbeing and tackling the increasing problem of obesity. This development represents a 'community planning' approach to health, with the health and wellbeing plan for the City being aligned with the Local Commissioning Plan.

As the inquiry concludes, the council would welcome opportunities for discussion on areas of future collaboration as the inquiry's recommendations move into implementation.

1. Background

The Council concurs with the general findings in the Inquiry's research paper 112/09. The decline in participation levels in Belfast, as in the rest of Northern Ireland are of concern to the Council. The need to address the levels of physical inactivity by promoting an active lifestyle is well recognised, and the following report reflects this acceptance of the role of physical activity well documented across the UK and further afield:

'There is a growing awareness of the significant contribution that sport and physical recreation can make to improve society'

(OFMDFM [February 2005] Poverty & Social Exclusion Project – Lone Parent Households in Northern Ireland,

In line with the policy and programme agenda which has been emerging since the 1990s, most recently through the Sports and Physical Recreation Strategy, the Council has taken significant steps to reflect policy aims in its own physical activity strategies and service provision.

2. Belfast City Council: Current Role and Opportunity

The Council is currently completing a strategic review of leisure and one of the key recommendations is on generating a more active city. Elected members will be considering in the next few months how to strategically lead and develop - through effective partnership working – the improvement in levels of activity, health and wellbeing citywide and what service and facility provision will achieve this. This will be linked to the work of the Belfast Health Development Unit mentioned above.

The City Council recognises its key role in leading the development of an active and healthier city. This is reflected through its commitment to an improved quality of life for our residents and visitors, underpinned as a key action under the Better Leadership theme of within the Council's 2010/11 Corporate Plan.

In terms of delivery, the Council currently provides a wide range of services within communities which impact or have the capacity to impact on levels of activity and on people's health and wellbeing. These include leisure services, community services, environmental health, good relations, community safety, city development, parks and open spaces, pitches and playgrounds, services for children and young people and older people, good relations, economic development, regeneration, and culture and arts.

This inquiry is emerging at a time when the Council is proactively affirming its role in contributing to an active Belfast through the evolving RPA and with the emergence of the joint Belfast Public Health Development Unit and Belfast Local Commissioning Group. It is inevitable that decisions about budgets, contracts and service finance in relation to active living and wellbeing will determine a greater need for effective strategic partnership working which the council will drive for the future generations in the city.

Developing effective commissioning work with central government departments and Sport NI is also an increasing role for the Council in relation to generating active communities. This role involves giving advice, lobbying in relation to policy and responding to consultations, delivering grant aid or availing of capital funds to develop provision. Recent examples have included responses to the inquiry into obesity; administration of the Active Communities grant aid and the installation of high-specification floor for Shankill Leisure centre.

As part of the council's current strategic review of leisure, the Council is aware that it has an ageing stock of leisure centres which is difficult to continue to resource at current levels. It also acknowledges the cultural shift required in terms of moving from straight-forward leisure provision to being a key mechanism through which to improve health and well-being in the city. This review will inform how the Council will provide and 'partner to provide' for a broad range of leisure and physical activity outcomes, potentially over the next 20-30 years.

We are committed to strategically leading the development of a positive leisure vision for the city and believe we are well-positioned to deliver a significant role in improving activity levels given our related range of services, including:

- Open access and activity programmes in our leisure provision where over 5,000 people access our facilities per day;
- 'Support for Sport' and Park Event grant aid which supports local community initiatives;

- BOOST leisure membership scheme which incorporates an ability to pay principle which is important in reaching those who have affordability issues
- A portfolio of leisure assets including leisure centres, parks, pitches, playgrounds and open space;
- Health programmes, such as the GP referral scheme under the 'Healthwise' initiative and Healthy Families pilot programme to target fitness and obesity levels respectively in target groups;
- A focus on food safety, healthy eating and nutrition through our Environmental Health Service as well as the provision of allotments and increasingly community gardens;
- Generating economic and social development through funding and programmes of support e.g. Neighbourhood Renewal & PEACE funds to deliver healthier communities and places to live;
- our ongoing work in education and participation across all our services.
- Programming to attract a wide range of groups to take part in physical activity – young people, older people etc.

3. The council's supporting analysis

The Council supports immediate action to redress the ongoing decline in participation levels and as it seeks to confirm in its future strategy on how to plan participation citywide it realises the cost to society which inaction will bring:

- When cost of physical inactivity is added to that of obesity, the cost to the Northern Ireland economy in 2010 is likely to exceed £500m (DHSSPS [March 2002] Investing for Health).
- A Department of Health report (July 2006) suggests that the current levels of obesity among UK men (22%) will rise to 33% by 2010 unless action is taken (Department of Health [July 2006] Forecasting Obesity to 2010).
- Data from 2004/05 indicates that in Northern Ireland 24% of young children are overweight or obese (DHSSPS & DE [December 2005] Fit Futures: Focus on Food, Activity and Young People).

- £886 per head of population per year in providing what amounts to a 'national sickness service' and we spend £1 per person per year on sports and physical activity which could actually prevent a lot of that sickness (Health Select Committee [May 2004] Obesity – Report of the House of Commons Health Committee).
- The National Audit Office (National Audit Office [February 2001] Tackling Obesity in England) estimated that the direct and indirect cost of obesity to the UK economy was approximately £3bn in 1998; latest projections suggest this figure will have risen to £7bn in 2010 – in Northern Ireland this would equate to an annual figure of £196m.
- In the period 1997-2004, the incidence of overweight or obese boys has increased from 13% to 19% and among girls has risen from 20% to 27%.
- The council has reviewed data from the government committee reports which suggests more than 2000 deaths per annum can be attributed to physical inactivity.
- In the NI strategy for Sport and Physical recreation 2007-2017 it was noted that with 'the rise in overweight/obesity rates as an "epidemic" – a word traditionally used to describe the spread of infectious diseases. One consequence of this obesity epidemic has been the increasingly early onset of type 2 diabetes among children as young as ten years old, with the attendant risk that for the "first time in modern history....a generation of children may not live as long as their parents"(53)'
- The 2005/06 NI Health & Social Well-being Survey reported that 'being overweight or obese reduces life expectancy by 9 years and it significantly increases the risk of developing coronary heart disease and cancer.'

It is difficult to assess the cost to the economy and to an individual's educational, social and personal development of growing inactivity or the positive contribution physical activity makes to an individual and a community. What follows is an outline of the cost if this trend is not reversed:

- (DHSSPS [March 2002] Investing for Health report confirmed that without tackling levels of activity a wider cost to the Northern Ireland may be:

- An increasingly unhealthy population
- Lost opportunities to improve educational achievement among children and young people, especially those who feel marginalised
- Lost opportunities to improve social cohesion and achieve 'A Shared Future'
- Sport and physical recreation can make a significant contribution to local communities and achieving the vision of 'A Shared Future', the aim of which is to promote good relations between the people of NI (University of Stirling [on behalf DCAL] October 2005,
- Through volunteering, individuals can develop a range of skills which are transferable into the broader community context (DSD [June 2003] A Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal – People and Place, DSD [October 2004] Investing Together – A Report of the Taskforce on Resourcing the Voluntary and Community Sector).
- Sport and physical recreation, as forms of physical activity, can play a vital role in improving public health. They can, for example, contribute to reductions in incidences of obesity, cardiovascular disease, Type 2 diabetes, colon cancer, osteoporosis, anxiety and stress (Department of Health [April 2004]
- Within an educational environment, there is early evidence to suggest that participation in sport and physical recreation can contribute to a child's improved academic performance and perceived self-esteem (University of Edinburgh [February 2003] Primary School Children and Sport in Northern Ireland) and are effective vehicles for re-engaging marginalised young people (Centre for Leisure Research [on behalf of SNI] [June 1999] An evaluation of Youth Sport NI).
- Coach education and sports volunteer support programmes make significant contributions to the skills and competencies available to the community and to employers (Home Office [January 2006] In the Boot Room Second Interim National Positive Futures Case Study Research Report). Participation in sport and physical recreation equip people with transferable knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes to enable them to make a positive contribution to society (Home Office [October 2004] Report of the Russell Commission on Youth Action and Engagement).

- There are over 12,500 people employed in sport and physical recreation industries in NI (SNI [October 2001] The Value of Sport).
- In recent years there has been growing recognition of the added value that sport and physical recreation can bring to communities. Good examples exist of sporting organisations developing their community and increasingly community-centred organisations are delivering many of their objectives through sport and physical recreation (SNI [November 2005] Community Sport: Developing a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and Baseline Findings).
- It contributes to young people being involved in positive activities, often diverting them away from antisocial behaviour.

4. The nature of participation

There is a clear passion for and interest in sport and physical recreation across NI (Genesis Strategic Management Consultants [on behalf of DCAL] [May 2006] Strategy for Sport in Northern Ireland Testing Report).

The most recently available data indicates that 53% of the population aged 16 and over claim some level of participation in sport and physical recreation in the last 12 months (NISRA [March 2006] StatisDCAL – Sports Bulletin 2/2006 [findings from the 2004/05 Continuous Household Survey]). This contrasts with the previous data [1999] that put participation at 59% - a decline of 6% in as many years.

This data only measures participation ‘at least once in the last 12 months’, contrasting with the recommendation of the Chief Medical Officers in the UK that ‘all adults should take part in a minimum of 30 minutes moderate intensity physical activity at least 5 times per week in order to achieve health benefits (Department of Health [April 2004] At least five times a week – Evidence on the impact of physical activity and its relationship to health – A report from the Chief Medical Officer).

The ‘Ten Year Strategy for Children and Young People in NI 2006-2016’ reports only 36% [aged under 16] participate in sport/physical activity 3-5 times per week (OFMDFM [March 2005] A Ten Year Strategy for Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2006-2016). This figure contracts with the estimated 1 in 3 young people in NI who are overweight/obese (DHSSPS & DE [December 2005] Fit Futures: Focus on Food, Activity and Young People).

There are continuing disparities in participation rates between:

- Men and women (NISRA [March 2006] StatisDCAL – Sports Bulletin 2/2006 [findings from the 2004/05 Continuous Household Survey) – in 2004/05 there was a 13% gap between the number men and the number of women participating in sport on a regular basis.
- People from higher and lower socio-economic groups (Economic and Social Research Centre [November 2005] Sports Participation and Health among Adults in Ireland) – approximately 70% of ABC1 compared to 54% of C2 and 32% of DE participating in sport on a regular basis.
- People with and without a disability (SNI [February 2006] Disability Mainstreaming [unpublished paper]) – people with a limiting, long-standing illness are less than half as likely to participate in sport compared to the rest of the population [30% cf. 63%]
- Older people [aged 60+ years] and younger people [<60 years] – recent data suggests that while up to 64% of people under 60 years of age have participated in sport [including walking] at least once in the last 12 months, this drops to 28% for people aged over 60 years (NISRA [March 2006] StatisDCAL – Sports Bulletin 2/2006 [findings from the 2004/05 Continuous Household Survey, Belfast Healthy Cities [April 2006] Older People: Health, Social and Living Conditions)

5. Patterns of Physical inactivity

The Council seeks to improve its monitoring and measurements of patterns of activity; participation; progression. In so doing, we aim to measure the contribution of the Council to reversing trends in inactivity and poor health, developing an outcomes-focussed service. It is critical that local government is able to quantify its enormous contribution to promoting activity and well-being.

The Council would welcome a co-ordinated approach to measuring participation and progression in sport and physical activity as well as guidance on measuring the outcomes of intervention, in order to assess the true picture taking place locally and regionally.

6. **Belfast practice - examples of Belfast City Council contributing to increased participation of adults**

6a. *Boost leisure discount scheme*

The introduction of the Boost leisure discount scheme has seen an increase in both registered users of leisure centres and leisure centre throughput. In April 2006 the number of registered leisure centre users was 10,506. By April 2009 this figure had increased to 38,244, an increase of over 200% in 3 years. The number of registered users has continued to rise and as of February 2010 stood at 41,723.

Leisure centre throughput has seen a similar increase during this period. In January 2007 total leisure centre throughput was 1,218,750. By January 2010 this figure had increased to 1,704,321 an increase of almost 50%.

6b. *Healthwise*

An exercise referral scheme for sedentary adults, who have been referred from a primary healthcare professional. Adults can be referred for any of the following, but not exclusive to:

- BMI greater than 25
- Diabetes
- High blood pressure

In 2008/09 Belfast City Council worked with over 1,000 sedentary adults through the Healthwise Scheme. For 2010/11 Belfast City Council has increased its capacity to deliver this scheme through the employment of 2 full time coaches dedicated exclusively to exercise referral.

6c. *Cardiac Rehab phase 4*

An exercise referral scheme for adults following a coronary episode and the successful completion of a hospital based Cardiac Rehab phase 3 programme. 2009/10 saw the introduction of this scheme in the Belfast area. During this time over 100 adults participated in this scheme.

6d. **Healthy Families**

A family based intervention programme to promote healthy eating and physical activity. This programme will initially work with 25 families to assess the impact of the programme.

6e. Centre based activity programme

Belfast City Council leisure centres provide a diverse range of physical activity programmes across 10 sites within Belfast. The extent of the activity programme varies dependant on the time of year, but in any given week we provide between 200 to 300 activity classes for adults. Attendance at these classes ranges from 1,500 to 3,100 adults per week. We attract over 285,000 fitness suite visits per year.

The range of physical activities has greatly improved over the past 15 years with greater awareness of the benefits of everyday activities such as walking, gardening etc. Organisations have made great strides in providing different activities to appeal to those uninterested in main stream sports such as yoga, pilates, salsa dancing, walking groups, old time dancing, Tai Chi, activities in the park etc.

Over 13,500 children attend our leisure centre-based summer schemes each year and about 1,000 children a week participate in the 'Make a Splash' swimming programme.

6f. Support for Sport grant aid and club development

Support for Sport provides £180,000 of funding annually to local sports clubs and community organisations participating in physical activity. Grants range from £1,000 to £5,000. The areas covered in the funding include coach education, new club/section start up costs, Try-it events to attract new members and sport festivals for competitive opportunity.

In the 2009/10 financial year Support for Sport has impacted 14,464 participants. Of this 6,612 are over the age of 16. Participation could be through a range of categories such as coach education or actual physical activity events/competition. However we make the assumption that were there is coach education undertaken, it benefits the whole of the club by providing increased opportunity for continued quality participation.

Club development initiatives encourage clubs to become 'Fit for purpose' and enable them to function more effectively. It also ensures correct procedures are in place e.g. Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults, Code of Conduct etc.

On the whole there is greater focus on getting women and young girls into physical activity than men due to the unbalanced participation levels. Activities have been set up in such a way that they are more accessible in terms of time, cost by finding funding

to offer the activity reduced or free of charge, free child care is often offered and women only sessions available. One option used in a community setting is to bring the activity to the women where the physical activity happens on their doorstep i.e. local church, community hall etc.

6g. *Partnership involvement*

The council's existing business involves activity programme in indoor leisure sites alongside outdoor provision of activity classes during summer months.

Other opportunities for internal partnership working include:

- Promotion of health and physical activity through the Belfast Health Development Unit.
- Work with Public Health Agency on delivery of Healthwise Scheme.
- Work with community services on delivery of Healthy Families.

The council has developed partnership delivery and working with a range of governing bodies including:

- Swim Ireland in promoting women into swimming;
- ethnic minorities in women only pool sessions,
- women's learn to swim programme and introduction to Waterpolo
- NI Athletics Federation – establishing initiatives like 'Walk a Mile Run a Mile' targeting female walkers and encouraging them to move into a more structured exercise programme in a safe environment
- Special Olympics – establishing clubs based out of Leisure Centre
- Working with Bowls associations to access funding and helping to draw up development plans etc. that will attract younger members
- Working with Health Trusts and Community organisations to promote armchair aerobics, Boccia, walking leaders etc.

8. Conclusion

The Council is in a unique position to provide support, guidance and opportunities for participation simultaneously in order to prevent, manage and overcome inactivity through co-ordinated and community led action. We would welcome the opportunity to work closely with the Department as it makes its final recommendations in relation to this timely inquiry.

The Council would welcome the following elements within the recommendations emerging from the inquiry into participation in sport and physical activity:

- (i) Clarification of an agreed target for improving levels of physical activity and arresting inactivity with a regional participation plan with targets that can be effectively measured;
- (ii) A commitment to change the focus of resources from dealing with the results of inactivity to promoting activity at the outset. An examination of an integrated financial management approach to promote and provide opportunities for activity and participation from social to elite progression is a recommended action for all statutory agencies involved;
- (iii) Confirmation of the priority targets to be addressed collectively for example the levels of inactivity during early years, at school leaving age and into adulthood;
- (iv) Recognition of the tri-partite nature of the problem whereby levels of activity, nutrition and education of weight management will arrest inactivity, obesity and are intrinsically interlinked. There is a need to co-ordinate effective partnership working to effectively address through programmes and opportunities for activity, weight management or intervention programmes and education;
- (v) Examination of the current statutory powers with a precise aim to ensure the built environment, transport modes and regeneration promotes activity of all citizens;
- (vi) The feasibility of the application of international best practice at a local level and where the relevant roles and responsibilities should lie;

- (vii) A co-ordinated and agreed referral process for intervention programmes and guidance on target areas e.g. post school leaving age, adulthood and women;
- (viii) Interlinking intervention with attractive events and activities which naturally motivate people e.g. the World Cup; athletic championships; Olympic games etc and to support and co-ordinate activities around these key dates;
- (ix) Focus on outreach to those 'hard to reach' groups.

The council hopes this response provides an insight into the issues, barriers and opportunities for solutions and the council welcomes further approaches as part of the inquiry in participation in sport and physical activity.

For further detail on the council's response to the inquiry into participation in sport and physical activity please do not hesitate to contact Elaine Black on 028 9027 0445 or blackel@belfastcity.gov.uk. Please note this draft response has been submitted by the Parks and Leisure Committee and is subject to Council ratification on 1 May 2010."

Review of Support for Sport Scheme and Hospitality

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"Purpose

The purpose of this report is to:

- (i) Seek Members' approval of draft terms of reference for a review of the Support for Sport grant scheme, and
- (ii) Seek Members' approval to request quotations for appropriate external assistance to carry out this work.

Relevant Background Information

Members will be aware that since 2005 the Director of Parks and Leisure has held delegated authority to approve support for sport hospitality and small development grant awards and that Members may, each year, approve a limited number of large development grant awards.

At the Parks and Leisure Committee meeting on 10 September 2009, Members granted officers authority to undertake a review of the Support for Sport Scheme in line with the Council's updated corporate thematic objectives. This seeks to maximise the impact of this funding in delivering the goals of the Belfast Physical Activity and Sports Development Strategy and Departmental plan whilst aligning with other funding opportunities.

Key Issues

Records would indicate that the Support for Sport scheme has made a valuable contribution to sports development in Belfast. This is broadly in line with the goals of the Belfast Physical Activity and Sports Development Strategy and the Parks and Leisure Departmental Plan, as well as other Council thematic areas including health and well-being, good relations, community safety and engaging children and young people.

Given the length of time the scheme has been operating and the developments in Departmental and Council strategy which have taken place during this period, it is now timely to undertake a comprehensive review of the Support for Sport scheme. In particular, there is a need to ensure the scheme's alignment with the developing strategy for leisure.

It is proposed that a suitably qualified external provider is commissioned to undertake the review, in order to ensure a fully independent perspective can be brought to any recommendations made on changes to the scheme.

To this end, draft terms of reference have been prepared which will form the basis of any request to provide quotations for undertaking the review. In summary, key elements include the following:

Review aims

- To determine the scheme's effectiveness as a means of promoting participation in physical activity and providing support to sports clubs and relevant community organisations; and
- to ensure the scheme aligns with current and future Council and Departmental strategies, aims and objectives.

Key activities

- Review of similar funding to establish best practice;
- review of the scheme's fit with existing strategies and plans;

- assessment of the impact of Support for Sport to date;
- review the distribution of grants awarded;
- assessment of the relevance of the scheme to the needs of clubs;
- review of the current governance and administration of the scheme;
- assessment of the level of complementarity/conflict with other relevant funding streams;
- engagement with user groups, elected representatives and other relevant stakeholders on the review; and
- consideration of the alignment of the scheme with emerging leisure strategy.

Key outcomes

- Recommendations on any necessary changes to Support for Sport taking into account the requirement that grant provision should reflect future leisure strategy objectives.

Resource Implications

Financial

It is estimated that there will be a cost to the Department of no more than £30,000 in consultancy fees for carrying out this work, which would be provided from 2010/11 revenue budgets.

Human Resources

There will be no additional human resources required at this stage. Direction of any selected provider would be conducted using existing officers' time.

Asset and Other Implications

Any proposed changes to the existing scheme as a result of the review, and the implications of these, would be subject to Members' approval.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- (i) **Consider the draft terms of reference for a review of the Support for Sport grant scheme, and to approve these subject to any required amendments, and**
- (ii) **Authorise officers to invite quotations for external assistance to carry out this work.**

Key to abbreviations

None.”

After discussion, during which several Members expressed the view that there was enough experience and knowledge within the Council by means of Elected Member and officer input to allow the review to be carried out in-house, the Committee approved the draft terms of reference for the review and agreed that it be undertaken by a Working Group of Council officers and one representative from each Party Grouping on the Council, with a view to a revised Support for Sport Scheme being implemented from 1st April, 2011.

Centre for Ageing Research and Development in Ireland – Universal Design Principles

The Committee noted the contents of a report in connection with a learning and development programme which the Council had been invited to become a partner. Other partners would include Queen’s University (School of Architecture), PLACE and Dublin City Council. The Policy and Business Development Manager pointed out that initially this would involve workshops based on a Universal Design Model which focused on a set of design principles aimed at the production of buildings, products and environments which could be utilised by all Parks users, including those persons with disabilities. Botanic Gardens would be utilised as a case study for the purposes of the research. In addition, the Committee agreed that, should funding become available following the learning and development programme, the Director investigate the possibility of utilising a Park other than the Botanic Gardens for the Scheme.

Quarterly Vandalism Report

(Ms. J. Wilson, Business Support Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee agreed to note the contents of a report in relation to the number of incidents of vandalism which had occurred at the Council’s Parks and Leisure facilities during the period from January till March, 2010.

Grove Wellbeing Centre Update

The Committee agreed to note the contents of a report in relation to the progress which had been achieved in respect of the operation of the Grove Wellbeing Centre for the period from January till March, 2010.

**Royal British Legion Event –
Ballysillan Leisure Centre**

The Committee was advised that an application had been received from the Oldpark/Cavehill Branch of the Royal British Legion in connection with the holding of an event at the Ballysillan Leisure Centre on 30th May. The Director reported that, following the unveiling and dedication of a memorial on the Hightown Road area in memory of three off-duty soldiers who had been killed during 1971, the Legion wished to hold a Memorial Service for up to 1,000 people. It was anticipated that the unveiling would be followed by a parade to the Ballysillan Leisure Centre where a one-hour Drumhead Service would be held. The organisers had indicated that 120 Branches of the British Legion and members of the Armed Forces and other guests, including the First Minister, the Lord Mayor and Members of Council would be invited to attend.

The Director pointed out that the organisers had requested the use of the main hall at the Leisure Centre on 30th May and had indicated that a large number of Police would be in attendance. It was anticipated that the event would commence at 3.00 p.m. However, due to the nature of the event, it would be necessary for the Centre to close to the public from 1.00 p.m. All guests attending the event would be issued with passes and the Legion had indicated that marshals would be provided in the car parking area. Charges for the use of the facility would be applied in line with the Council's approved pricing policy and would include charges for the early closure of facilities and any additional staff costs incurred. Accordingly, he recommended that the Committee approve the use of the Ballysillan Leisure Centre on 30th May by the Oldpark/Cavehill Branch of the Royal British Legion, subject to the event organisers liaising with the Council's Health and Environmental Services Department and complying with all statutory requirements.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Filipino Community Event – Inverary Playing Fields

The Committee was informed that a request had been received from FilCom-NI, Filipino Communities in Northern Ireland requesting permission to hold a one-day event at the Inverary Playing Fields. The organisers were proposing to hold an open air cultural event at the site on 3rd July which would attract approximately 3,000 people.

It was anticipated that entertainment representing the Filipino culture would be a major component of the event and, whilst participants would be able to purchase food and soft drinks, no alcohol would be sold and no admission charge would be levied. Accordingly, the Director of Parks and Leisure recommended that the Committee grant authority for the Filipino Communities in Northern Ireland to hold a one-day event on 3rd July at the Inverary Playing Fields, subject to satisfactory terms to be agreed with the Director of Parks and Leisure on the condition that:

- (i) the event organisers resolve all operational issues to the Council's satisfaction;
- (ii) an appropriate legal agreement, to be prepared by the Director of Legal Services, is completed; and
- (iii) the event organisers meeting all statutory requirements, including entertainment licensing.

The Committee granted the approval sought and noted that, as with all such events, an Event Management Plan would be required to be prepared by the organisers to the satisfaction of the Council, incorporating Health and Safety and Public Liability matters.

Big City Park – Children's Television Series

The Committee noted that, in accordance with the authority delegated to him, the Director of Parks and Leisure had, in consultation with the Chairman, granted approval to Sixteen South Television Limited to film a children's series entitled "Big City Park" at the Ormeau Park site commencing on 5th April for a period of eleven weeks.

Mountain Biking

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"Relevant Background Information"

The Committee is reminded that in recent years it has received a number of reports regarding mountain biking in parks; the problems and issues associated with this activity and possible ways of addressing the problems. A brief review of these reports is outlined below.

The Committee received a report on 10 April 2008 which highlighted that:

- mountain biking is an increasingly popular sport,
- there are currently no off-road facilities in Belfast, a situation that has contributed to unauthorised trails being established by the bikers themselves at Cave Hill Country Park, Barnett Demesne and Mary Peters Track.
- the Council's response up to that time had been to remove potentially dangerous trails and jumps.

The report further brought to the committee's attention the possibility of funding from the Sports Lottery to build a purpose designed down-hill mountain biking facility; at that time it was suggested that the facility be located at Cave Hill.

However, following consultation with the Countryside Activities and Access Network (CAAN) and local residents represented through the Cave Hill Conservation Group it was concluded that a facility at that location would attract unsustainable numbers of mountain bikers to the area and cause nuisance and possible risk to other park users such as walkers.

Following the decision of the Committee, in August 2008 a report was commissioned from a professional off-road cycling trail designer, Dafydd Davis. Following site visits, it was concluded that the existing path system at Cave Hill could not accommodate sustainable dual use for both mountain bikers and pedestrians and that conflict between users would be a continuing problem. It was recommended in the report that Mary Peters Track/Barnett Demesne would be a more suitable option for a purpose built off-road biking facility.

A further report on mountain biking was again brought to the Committee's attention on 14 May 2009, this report

- reinforced the growing popularity of the sport and the continued lack of authorised facilities;
- reminded Members of the main issues around the continuing unauthorised construction of mountain bike jumps and trails in the parks mentioned above and the associated costs and risks; and
- informed Members that officers had been liaising closely with those involved in mountain biking making them aware of the issues, and as a result there had been a significant reduction in the unauthorised use of Cave Hill Country Park.

At that meeting it was agreed that officers should further explore the option of creating a purpose built biking trail. It was agreed that the preferred location would be at Mary Peters Track/Barnett Demesne. The facility would include a jump and skills area that would meet local need and reduce the amount of unsanctioned jumps being built, both in the South and the North of the city.

In the intervening period since the report the number of people participating in mountain biking has continued to increase, and the problems have re-emerged at Cave Hill in particular. This is illustrated by the number of vehicles with specially fitted bike carriers on site in the evenings and at weekends and by feedback from other park users.

Cave Hill Country Park is a very important recreation resource for the people of the city of Belfast, but it is also clear that mountain bikers are having significant impacts on the site and the people who use it and that this is to some extent devaluing the site for the majority of users.

The conflict of interest between the mountain bikers and other park users is due to:

- near misses
- the speed at which the bikers travel
- damage to paths and the forest floor
- the building of dangerous jumps which other children not involved in the sport might be tempted to try out
- cutting of fences for easier access
- the attitude of some bikers towards other park users

Due to the potential risk to the public from the bikers and upon receipt of numerous complaints, officers have sought to engage continually with the bikers, looking for an accommodation that would be to everyone's benefit. Signs displaying the current bye-laws have been displayed at all entrances. Park rangers have tried to be on site as often as possible, but due to having to deal with issues across North Belfast this resource is stretched. Meanwhile the bikers have taken ownership of the hill.

Key Issues

The main issues for the Council can be summarised as follows:

- Mountain biking is now an official Olympic Sport, and is becoming increasingly popular within the Belfast area.
- There is a lack of provision of suitable authorised facilities;
- Unauthorised trails continue to be constructed by bikers at both Cave Hill Country Park and at Mary Peters Track and Barnett Demesne.
- Officers have been meeting regularly with local bikers and clubs to try and proactively discourage the building of unauthorised trails. This has resulted in a reduction in the trails being built at Mary Peters, but unfortunately at Cave Hill, possibly due to the scale of the site, the unauthorised construction and use has continued and in some areas is worse than before.
- There is no authorised official governing body for the sport in NI which makes consultation and engagement difficult and therefore reaching an agreed position is also difficult.
- Officers have also been addressing local need and trying to accommodate organised events within the parks where ever possible and very successful events have been held at Sir Thomas & Lady Dixon Park and Ormeau Park.

It is proposed to take steps to address the issues created by mountain biking with a two fold approach:

1. Initiating steps to tackle the problems at Cave Hill and to deter mountain bikers from using this park
2. Working with external partners to explore the possibilities of providing a purpose built off-road biking facility in Barnett Demesne/Mary Peters Track.

Officers have been working with the Countryside Access and Activities Network (CAAN), which has a remit for providing countryside recreation such as mountain biking. CAAN has submitted an application for funding to develop a mountain bike trail to the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme (NIRDP). In line with the previous off-road cycling report (2008) their preferred site for this would be Barnett Demesne/Mary Peters. They have applied for approximately £221,000 and would hope to hear by the end of March 2010 whether they have been successful. The cost of providing a mountain biking facility however would be greater than this, and additional funding is being sought via the BIFFA Landfill Communities Fund and Belfast City Council Capital Fund which would be subject to the Council's normal approval processes for capital schemes. There have been approximately 230 letters of support from mountain bikers, all over Ireland, in support of this project.

The development of such a facility would

- help to meet a growing demand, not only among young people but users of a wide age range,
- attract 'out-of-state' users
- enhance the value of the Mary Peters Track/Barnett Demesne property
- link in with the Lagan Valley Regional Park's Management Plan
- link with Belfast Activity Centre and Belfast Urban Sports in their Sports Development Programme and youth programmes
- help to alleviate the problem of unauthorised jumps and mountain biking courses being built in our parks in south Belfast, and would hopefully reduce the unauthorised use of Cave Hill Country park. However, it would need to go hand in hand with other measures listed below to deter mountain biking on Cave Hill

Any design would have to comply with any current management plans for the sites, and would be sited and constructed in such a way as not to conflict with other users of the park or the biodiversity within the area.

The facility would also be designed for low maintenance, along the lines of the family oriented mountain biking/cycle track at Craigavon.

Members are asked to note that this project is all subject to being able to attract the necessary funding.

Resource Implications

Financial

The total estimated cost of a purpose designed and built mountain biking course is approximately £340,000.00.

This would be met from various sources (all figures are approximate)

| | |
|------------------------------------|----------|
| NI Rural Development Programme | £221,000 |
| Landfill Communities Fund | £48,000 |
| Belfast City Council, Capital Fund | £71,000 |

The annual maintenance for such a project would include spraying, cutting back, strimming and recording inspections. During the winter there will also be work on path maintenance including stoning etc. Based on the Craigavon it is estimated that this would be in the region of £8,000.

Human Resources

Tackling unauthorised use would require a dedicated staff presence, this would cost in the region of £16,500 p.a.; alternatively staff could be relocated from other sites. This option would need to be explored further.

Asset and Other Implications

A reduction in the use of Cave Hill by mountain bikers would improve the physical conditions in the park and also make it more attractive to other users, hence increasing its inherent value to residents and tourists

A dedicated trail system would enhance provision in the city and would support the promotion of Mary Peters Track/Barnett Demesne. It would encourage mountain bikers into Belfast, in particular from across the province and from the mainland, therefore adding to the economy of the area.

Recommendations

It is recommended that

- Members note the report;
- The Committee agree in principle to support the application by CAAN's application;
- Authorise officers to continue to work in partnership with CAAN;
- Support the forwarding of the proposal to the Asset Management Group for inclusion on the list of potential capital schemes, subject to Gates;
- Agree to deploying extra resources to enforce the bye-laws at CHCP. This would include employing Park Rangers at the weekends and summer evenings.

Key to Abbreviations

CHCP – Cave Hill Country Park

CAAN – Countryside Access and Activities Forum

NIRDP – Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Shankill Graveyard – Scattering of Cremated Remains – Review of Charges

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to provide information to the Parks and Leisure Committee regarding the review of the charges agreed by the May 2009 Parks and Leisure Committee, with specific reference to the scattering of cremated remains at Shankill Graveyard.

Relevant Background Information

The Committee may be aware that memorialisation is the term used to describe a scheme whereby families can purchase a type of commemoration after the death of a loved one. Some types of memorialisation can include the provision for the disposition of cremated remains within the memorial.

Representatives from the Shankill area of the City had approached the Parks and Cemeteries Service in 2008 with the idea of developing a cremated remains memorialisation area within Shankill Graveyard. Officers from the Parks and Cemeteries Service have met with the representatives, had site visits to Shankill Graveyard and discussed their requirements.

It was concluded at a meeting between officers and representatives in April 2009 that the Memorial Stone Book option currently on order for the City of Belfast Crematorium (which was agreed at the June 2008 Parks and Leisure Committee) was the favoured form of memorialisation. The Memorial Stone Book contains 208 plaques which can then be engraved.

It was agreed at the May 2009 Parks and Leisure Committee that a Memorial Stone Book be purchased and erected in Shankill Graveyard. An area beside the Shankill Memorial Stone Book site was to be made available for the scattering of cremated remains. Burying cremated remains was also considered at Shankill, but then disregarded because this would take up valuable space and the designated area for the cremated remains would soon be full. With scattering there is no limit to the numbers of cremated remains that can be scattered on the designated grassed area.

It was further agreed at the May 2009 Parks and Leisure committee meeting that Belfast City Council introduce to the public the following stated charges in relation to Shankill Graveyard:

- scattering in the Garden of Remembrance: £69 (increased to £72 from 1 April 2010)
- scattering in the Garden of Remembrance and purchase of a memorial stone book tablet with engraving: £250

Key Issues

The Memorial Stone Book for Shankill Graveyard is at the supplier's premises in Carlisle, England and is due to arrive on site in April 2010. The foundation is currently in place. Landscaping has taken place around the Memorial Stone Book site and an area has been laid out in turf on which cremated remains can be scattered.

Currently the price for cremation of a person at the City of Belfast Crematorium INCLUDES the scattering or burying of the cremated remains in the adjoining Garden of Remembrance. Therefore if a member of the public chooses to scatter remains in the Garden of Remembrance at the City of Belfast Crematorium there would be no additional charge.

However, if a person wants to scatter the cremated remains of a loved one at Shankill Graveyard, who had been cremated at the City of Belfast Crematorium, currently they would incur an additional charge of £72 as previously agreed.

A fee is currently charged for the scattering of cremated remains at Roselawn which are not from City of Belfast crematorium. This is currently £72.

Having reviewed the costs involved it is now considered that an additional fee of £72.00 to scatter the cremated remains from the City of Belfast Crematorium in Shankill Graveyard is excessive and that a more appropriate fee would be £25.00 to cover the cost of a member of staff being available to carry out this service.

Resource Implications

Financial

There would be an income of £25.00 per scattering of cremated remains to cover the cost of a member of staff being available to carry out the service.

Human Resources

There are no Human Resource implications other than having a member of staff available when required, this would be met by the fee of £25.

Assets

None.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Committee approve that the current charge of £69.00 for scattering of ashes from City of Belfast Crematorium in Shankill Graveyard be reduced to £25.00.

It is also recommended that Committee approve the fee for scattering of cremated remains at Shankill Graveyard, from any other crematoria, is the same as charged in City of Belfast Crematorium scale of charges, (£72.00).”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Alderman Tommy Patton Memorial Park

The Director reported that a number of complaints had been received from Elected Representatives and Parks users in relation to dog fouling at the football pitches located at the Alderman Tommy Patton Memorial Park. In addition, those complaints had been highlighted in the media. In this regard, several meetings had taken place with representatives of the East Belfast Soccer Junior Football Club, Elected Representatives, Dog Wardens and Parks Managers to identify and implement procedures which could be put in place to monitor and reduce dog fouling at the site.

The Director pointed out that, as a result of those meetings, it was proposed that a 1.2 metre high fence be installed around pitches 1 and 2, which would assist in reducing dog fouling on the pitches, improve community relations, allow provision for better and safer facilities at the park and reduce the number of complaints received. The erection of a fence would be welcomed by the current Facilities Management Agreement holders, the East Belfast Football Club and the East Belfast Junior Football Club. He explained that the Alpha Programme, of which the Council was a Steering Group partner, distributed funds in the form of landfill tax credits to projects within a ten mile radius of the Mullaghglass Landfill Site, and it was proposed that an application be made to that Programme for funding.

The Director reported that the Programme assessed applications quarterly and that the next opportunity to apply for funding would be during June, 2010. The total cost for supply and erection of the fencing was estimated at approximately £26,500, with 90% of the cost being provided from the Alpha Fund, if successful. The remaining associated costs could be provided from the Parks and Leisure Department's Property Maintenance Budget. Accordingly, he recommended that the Committee grant approval for the erection of the proposed fencing, subject to funding being obtained from the Alpha Programme.

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendation and authorised officers from the Department to submit an application for funding to the Programme.

Alderman Tommy Patton Memorial Park – Toilet Facilities

In accordance with Notice on the Agenda, Councillor Rodgers raised concerns in relation to the lack of public toilet facilities at the Alderman Tommy Patton Memorial Park and referred also to the Child Protection and Health and Safety issues associated therewith. He stated that provision for the toilets had been made within the Capital Programme and requested that the Committee agree that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee be requested, as a matter of urgency, to bring the scheme forward.

After discussion, the Committee agreed that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting scheduled to be held on 23rd April, be recommended to advance as a 'committed' capital project the Alderman Tommy Patton Memorial Park public toilet scheme, as a matter of urgency.

Request for Exhumation

The Committee was informed that a request for the exhumation of remains at the Roselawn Cemetery had been received.

The Director of Parks and Leisure outlined the reasons for the request having been made and recommended, having considered all the circumstances, that the request for exhumation be granted.

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendation, subject to the consent of the Department of the Environment having been obtained in relation to the exhumation of the remains and noted that all costs associated therewith would be met by the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

Media Report

(Mrs. A. Donegan, Media Relations Officer, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee agreed to note the contents of a report which outlined the amount of media coverage and extent of press and media enquiries received concerning the work of the Committee during the period from December, 2009 till March, 2010.

**Support for Sport – Small Development Grants
and Hospitality Applications**

The Committee noted a Schedule of Support for Sport applications in relation to Small-Scale Development Grants and hospitality applications which had been approved by the Director of Parks and Leisure in accordance with the authority delegated to him. A copy of the Schedule was available on Modern.gov.

Chairman