



Subject:	Proposal for summer schemes for children with additional needs
Date:	6 th February 2024
Reporting Officer:	David Sales, Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Cormac McCann, Lead Officer

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.	
Insert number <input type="checkbox"/>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Information relating to any individual2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime	
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	
Sometime in the future	
Never	

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

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the current provision of summer schemes for children with additional needs in the Belfast area, and to outline a proposal to provide funding for additional schemes.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	Members are asked to consider the contents of the report if agreeable, request funding for support additional summer schemes from Strategic Policy & Resources Committee.
3.0	Main Report
	Background information
3.1	Members will recall that a report was presented to the November 2023 meeting of the People and Communities Committee which provided an overview of 2023 leisure centre holiday recreation schemes delivered by GLL. This report noted that the holiday schemes had developed steadily throughout 2023 and that participation had grown steadily, as well as noting that it was anticipated that the 2024 schemes would be further expanded and that participant numbers would continue to grow. Members were provided with an overview of activities and participant numbers at each centre.
3.2	During discussion of the report, a Member highlighted that children with special needs were often not able to avail of these schemes due to their high support needs. It was agreed that a report would be submitted to a future meeting which would consider the inclusion of children with special needs in the holiday scheme programme.
	<u>Current provision</u>
3.3	It is recognised that provision for children with complex needs is very challenging due to the diversity of the specific participant needs, the need for one-to-one carer support and general difficulties in integrating those with complex needs into the broader scheme activities which, whilst are highly desirable, are often undeliverable due to the broad range of considerations when aligned with available resources.
3.4	Council's community centre and play centre schemes and GLL's leisure centre schemes aim to be inclusive. Support needs are identified through the registration process. The varied nature of the identified need means that we can upskill staff and offer places without requiring additional support staff, we can also offer places with the additional support of parent/carers. Places are not offered where the additional support cannot be reasonably met by centre staff. In 2023, 850 children were registered on our community centre and play schemes including 124 with additional needs. Leisure centre growth in demand was reported previously to committee and GLL will continue to work with sporting organisations to develop inclusive or specific schemes e.g. the current autism swimming offer, wheelchair basketball, powerchair football and learning disability football with IFA.
3.5	In addition to direct provision council funds community summer schemes through grant provision. Applications for 2024 summer scheme are being assessed currently, with 102

	<p>applications received and 14 of these applications referring to supporting children with special needs within their aims and priorities.</p>
3.6	<p>Through engagement with Family Support Hubs and meetings with partners including the Education Authority (EA), officers are aware that there are a growing number of young people presenting with additional needs and a lack of provision to support their participation in activities. Youth workers and community organisations report that they are struggling with these issues and the associated impacts on their insurance, health and safety, risks and their staff not being adequately trained in working with these young people. It is important to recognised that EA provides funding for voluntary summer scheme provision with around 450 applications from primary, post-primary, special schools and EOTAS settings.</p>
3.7	<p>A number of organisations including Kids Together, Sólás, the Cedar Foundation, Mencap NI, NI Autism Centre, Autonomy and the NOW Group deliver summer schemes for children and young people with additional needs. Mitchell House, Fleming Fulton and Harberton special schools provide summer schemes.</p> <p><u>Proposed pilot</u></p>
3.8	<p>In order to contribute to addressing this gap in provision, it is proposed that a request is made to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for funding for specialist providers to facilitate four additional summer schemes for children with additional needs, one each in North, South, East and West Belfast at a total cost of £80,000 (maximum £20,000 per scheme), which would allow increased numbers of children to participate in summer schemes which are suitable for their needs.</p>
3.9	<p>If funding is agreed, officers will undertake initial engagement with the relevant organisations to scope the potential to procure provision of four additional summer schemes for children with additional needs in summer 2024.</p> <p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p>
3.10	<p>It is proposed that a request for £80,000 is made to deliver four summer schemes for children with additional needs – one each in North, South, East and West Belfast.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p>
3.11	<p>This decision will impact positively on access to summer scheme provision for children with additional needs.</p>
4.0	Appendices
4.1	None