



Belfast City Council

Report to: Parks and Leisure Committee

Subject: **Update on Mountain Tea House at Zoo**

Date: 15th October, 2009

Reporting Officer: Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure

Contact Officer: Mark Challis, Zoo Manager

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with updated information regarding the Zoological Gardens' Mountain Tea House, and work undertaken since the initial report in August 2009.

Relevant Background Information

Members will recall the committee received a report at its August meeting regarding the fire that destroyed the Zoo's Mountain Tea House in June 2009. The report in August outlined a range of options which might be considered in terms of replacement of the asset. At Members' request, this report outlines work undertaken since the August report.

Current context

Remedial work at the site has almost been completed. At the tea house site itself, an asphalted surface and fencing has provided a safe area for a limited catering service, which is provided via a temporary mobile facility.

While temporary toilet facilities were in place through the summer, work is now underway to repair the original damaged toilets at the tea house. Pending a final decision on the future direction for the whole tea house facility, a temporary repair will allow for toilets of an adequate standard through the winter and into next season.

Officers continue to meet with the appointed loss adjustors, and currently await a final agreed figure for the replacement of the facility. The insurance cover was such that the Council will pay the original excess (c. £10,000), and the insurance cover will provide for the total 'like for like' replacement costs.

It is intended to commission through the Council's Project Management Unit a business case report to review the options for catering in the zoo. This will include a review of the tea house, and it will look at options regarding its replacement. As reported in August, these options will include the tea house's replacement with an identical facility, or a larger facility and will consider the options for the supply of catering to the new facility.

A strategic outline case will be prepared for submission to the Project Management Unit for inclusion in the capital programme, subjects to gates and approval at Strategic Policy and Resources.

Additionally, meetings are ongoing with Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) and other appropriate organisations that are relevant to this project to assess the potential development of the catering requirements of the zoo and the potential funding opportunities.

Key Issues

Members are asked to note the following key points:

1. Work is ongoing to review the future for the tea house and longer term provision of catering in the zoo;
2. The Council's Project Management Unit and the NITB are involved in this project;
3. A strategic outline business case is being prepared for Project Management Unit for possible inclusion in the capital programme;
4. The cost of a business case report by the Project Management Unit is likely to be in the region of £5,000.

Resource Implications

Financial

The immediate additional costs will be approximately £5,000 for the Project Management Unit's business case review.

Human Resources

There are limited human resource implications currently, though this project has meant an increased workload for zoo officers since the fire in June.

Asset and Other Implications

A new permanent building, of whatever size, will inevitably increase again the Council's building asset ownership and associated liabilities.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and the action taken to date.
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Decision Tracking

The Zoo Manager will report back to Committee by April 2010.
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Key to Abbreviations

None.

Documents Attached

None.

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