



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Services Committee
Subject:	Phase II Review of Business Support
Date:	16 September 2010
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Jacqui Wilson, Business Manager

Purpose of the report

To update the Parks and Leisure Committee on phase II of the review of the department's business support function and to set out recommendations for its approval.

Relevant Background Information

At the Parks and Leisure committee on 11 February 2010 approval was given for a new centralised business support structure. The review referred to Phase II of the process which would address the posts at Scale 6 and below within the structure including those posts considered to be in Directorate Support.

As part of the Parks and Leisure Improvement programme, and specifically the review of business support across the Department, a review of Directorate Support was also undertaken to assess the impact of the ongoing change programme and the appointment of the Head of Parks and Leisure (HOS).

As reported to Members in February 2010 this stage of the review is considered Stage I of Phase II in order to address structural and operational anomalies with the staff based centrally graded at Scale 4 to Scale 6.

Key Issues

The key issues are outlined in detail in the report attached (Appendix 1) and include:

- Clarification of roles and responsibilities around the HR and Finance functions;
- Provision of a more effective management support structure including support to the Director and Senior Management Team.
- Full integration into one departmental resource to provide a greater

- degree of flexibility within the team;
- Effective communication; and
- Improved management decision making.

An assessment of the business support requirement within leisure centres is also included as part of the review of Business Support. A 3 month pilot will assess the support requirements in leisure regarding receptionist, clerical and Business Assistant duties, including membership management, key performance and management information and the linkages with business support in the centre of the department. It is essential to address the anomalies within the central business support team before the start of the three month Leisure pilot in order to fully realise the potential efficiencies to be achieved.

Committee should note that all parties have been consulted throughout this process to date including the Trade Unions and are all in agreement with the recommendations contained in the review.

Recommendations for Phase II stage 1

In respect of the posts within the centralised business support unit the following recommendations are made:

- Delete the post of Finance Assistant (Income) Scale 4
- Delete the post of Finance Assistant (Expenditure) Scale 4
- Delete the post of Business Assistant (Creditor and Income) Scale 6
- Create three new generic posts of Business Assistant (Finance/Systems) Scale 6
- Delete the post of HR and Quality Officer, Scale 6
- Delete the post of HR Assistant, Scale 6
- Delete the post of Administrative Assistant, Scale 6
- Create three generic posts of Business Assistant (HR/Admin) Scale 6
- Extend the FTC of the post of Business Assistant (Income) until such times as the Pilot review within Leisure has been completed and review the status of this post at that time.
- Re designate the existing MSA Sc4 to a Secretarial Assistant Sc6

In addition, the job description of the MSA Sc4 reporting to the BSA Sc6 should be amended to better reflect the departmental responsibility and therefore the section of the job description be re-titled to read "Directorate" to ensure consistency with the other posts within the section and any reference made to reporting to the "Human Resources/Administration Officer" or "Human Resources/Administration Manager" be changed to reporting to the "Business Support Assistant". The job description of HR Assistant Sc 4 should be amended to better reflect the departmental responsibility and the updated reporting lines.

The duties that the BSA Sc6 is carrying out are in accordance with the duties that are detailed in the post holder's job description with some additional staff supervision and work planning. Therefore no change is required. The duties that the PA/Secretary is carrying out are in accordance with the duties that are detailed in the post holder's job description and no change is therefore required.

In line with the corporate agenda and the desire to move to more flexible and generic job descriptions, BIS would recommend that a generic job description is developed for the **Business Support Assistant** role which will enable greater flexibility between the support posts across the new unit in the two key functions i.e. Finance/Systems and HR/administration. Two new generic job descriptions will cover all aspects of each strand and will therefore enable staff to be trained in the full range of the role which will provide greater flexibility to the service. Draft job descriptions have been developed and an indicative job evaluation has shown this grade to be Scale 6.

Resource Implications

Human Resources

Consultation will continue with all relevant stakeholders including HR, trade unions and staff to develop an implementation plan which is fully in accordance with all HR policies and procedures. The affected post holders will be subject to the council's categorisation procedure and it should be noted that all affected post holders should sign and agree the new job descriptions prior to implementation.

Financial Implications

Whilst there is a cost associated with the proposed structure, this will address the anomalies with grades that currently exist across both services and are currently having a detrimental effect on the daily operations of the service. Furthermore, within the recommendations there remains an **opportunity to reduce the headcount by one** with the potential removal of the additional Business Assistant which has been recruited on a fixed term contract. This will be subject to the recommendations of the Leisure Pilot.

Savings:

Business Assistant Sc6 (4 months savings following the end of the Leisure pilot)
£7,902

Costs

3 X Sc4 to Sc 6 grades: £13,746
Total cost: £5,844

However although there is a cost associated with Stage I of Phase II it is essential to address the operational issues that are prevalent due to the grading differences between staff previously based in the separate Parks and Leisure Services.

By addressing these issues it is anticipated that savings over and above the cost of Stage I will be achieved following the Leisure pilot and therefore provide overall savings as a result of the Phase II review. Members will be presented with this information at the end of the Leisure Pilot.

Additionally, the creation of two generic job descriptions i.e. that of the Business Assistant (Finance/Systems) and the Business Assistant (HR/Admin) has

reduced the number of designations within the structure from seven to three.

A copy of the proposed structure is attached at Appendix 1.

Recommendations

Committee is asked to approve the recommendations as listed above.

Decision Tracking

The responsible officer for overseeing the implementation of the recommendations will be the Business Manager

Key to Abbreviations

None.

Documents Attached

Appendix 1: BIS report including:

- Parks and Leisure Services Directorate current structure
- Parks and Leisure Services Directorate proposed structure