



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Parks and Leisure Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Parks Improvement Programme: Team Leaders
<b>Date:</b>	14 October 2010
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Rose Crozier, Head of Parks and Leisure

### Relevant Background Information

At the February 2010 Parks and Leisure committee Members were advised of the outcomes of the first phase of an operational efficiency review of Parks management arrangements. The review was undertaken to streamline and reconfigure the duties and responsibilities of Area Managers and Park Managers in order to more effectively and efficiently deliver the Parks and Cemeteries service.

As part of the operational efficiency review a number of significant changes have taken place within the service with operational boundaries redrawn; roles and responsibilities redefined, job profiles established for City Park and Community Park Managers and implementation of the voluntary redundancy trawl.

A further stage of the operational efficiency review has examined the allocation of Team Leaders within Parks operational areas. This report sets out the findings and recommendations from the review.

### Key Issues

There is a requirement for parks and leisure services to be highly responsive and tailored to the needs of the community – an effective approach to community and customer engagement is required at the point of delivery as well as effective supervision of staff for the delivery of operational tasks.

The culture of the department generates a tendency towards upward delegation and a lack of decision making at the appropriate level for the Parks and Cemeteries Service. It is vitally important that decisions are made whenever

possible at the point of service delivery in order to deliver a responsive, customer focussed service. For this reason it was important that the role of the Team Leader was thoroughly examined.

### Team Leaders

Following on from the review of management arrangements, the Team Leader role has also been reviewed to assess the operational impact from the management tier and to identify further opportunities for efficiency and service improvement. It has been identified that the Team Leader post is underutilised and that the operation could be provided effectively with a reduction in numbers and a change to working practices.

It has been necessary to reconfigure the duties of the post to a new role with a designation of Community Park Supervisor at a notional grade of Scale 6. This will enable a clearer supervisory role within the parks newly defined geographical areas which will reflect the work of the newly created Community Parks Managers. This approach will promote additional accountability for the delivery of effective services on site and support the need for a more customer focused approach.

There are currently 26 Team Leader posts within the structure (plus an additional two who have been recruited on long term secondment). This recommendation will result in the Team Leader posts being reduced from 26 to 20. The additional two members of staff on secondment should be returned to their substantive posts. It is also recommended that the duties and responsibilities of this post are reconfigured and renamed as Community Parks Supervisors. There is agreement with staff and trade unions that this is the preferred proposal to improve efficiency, service and to empower supervisors at a local level. However to achieve this would require a voluntary redundancy exercise. The department has already asked for expressions of interest for voluntary redundancy and to date six members of staff have completed the VR2 forms.

It was reported to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 24 September 2010 that the year end forecast for the council was currently £2.9m. Given that it is difficult to make an accurate forecast so early in the year, the Committee agreed to consider specific proposals for use of the forecast underspend of up to £1.9m at its meeting on 22 October 2010. It would be intended to submit this voluntary redundancy proposal as part of that process, subject to the P&L Committee approval. Should the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agree to fund this VR proposal from the 2010/11 underspend, this would impact positively on the rate setting process for 2011/12.

Should it not be agreed by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to fund this VR proposal from the 2010/11 underspend, further options for consideration will be reported back to the Parks and Leisure Committee at its November meeting.

## **Resource Implications**

### Financial

The financial implications of the deletion of these posts will result in a saving of £159,952. The estimated cost of voluntary redundancy is £248,097 with a claw back period of 1.55 years. Should the notional grade of the Community Park Supervisor post change to Scale 6 this would incur an additional cost of £43,780 and a claw back period of 2.2 years. This would be subject to the costs of £291,877 for this proposal being agreed by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to be funded from the 2010/11 underspend. If this is the case, then the savings will be available for 2011/12.

### Human Resources

The department and human resources have been fully involved in the development of these recommendations and the Trade Unions have also been fully consulted with and have agreed to the proposals contained within this report. The recommendations therefore comprise an 'agreed' position by both management and the Trade Unions.

The trade unions and staff will be fully consulted on the allocation of the new posts of Community Park Supervisors.

### Asset and Other Implications

None.

## **Recommendations**

Committee is asked to:

- note the outcomes of the review of Team Leaders in Parks; and
- approve the submission of this proposal for the deletion of six Team Leader posts and the release of staff through voluntary redundancy for consideration for funding from the 2010/11 underspend by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 22 October 2010.

## **Decision Tracking**

Action to be taken by Head of Parks and Leisure.

## **Key to Abbreviations**

None.

## **Documents attached**

None.