



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Update on 2010/11 Departmental Plan
Date:	14 October 2010
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Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to:

- provide a six month progress report on the 2010/11 departmental plan; and
- update Members on the potential change to the format of future update reports.

Relevant Background Information

The Parks and Leisure Departmental Plan 2010/11 was approved by Committee on 15 April 2010 with agreement that a six month update report would be presented to Committee at a later date. This update is for the first six months of 2010/11 (for the period 1 April – 30 September 2010).

The department continues to work through the delivery of key services and a number of programmes and projects of work in order to bring together the previous Leisure Service and Parks and Cemeteries Service into a modern 'fit for purpose' department – with an integrated vision, purpose statement and objectives for the future.

Key Issues

The department continues to work through the delivery of key services and a number of programmes and projects of work in order to bring together the previous Leisure Service and parks and Cemeteries Service into a modern 'fit for purpose' department – with integrated vision, purpose statement and objectives for the future.

In line with new procedure, we will bring quarterly updates to Committee in future, based on the Council's corporate performance management system – CorVu. The CorVu reporting approach is being rolled out to all Committees within the next couple of months and the first quarterly update report for Quarter 3, will be presented to Parks and Leisure Committee in January 2011.

Lead officers in the Department were asked to provide updates on the status of their service/unit projects, programmes and activities under each of the departmental objectives, providing commentary if necessary.

Summary of Interim progress

For the purposes of this report a brief commentary and narrative of the key findings and achievements are summarised under each of the corporate strategic themes below:

1. Better Leadership

In general the department has completed a number of individual activities however progress is still ongoing, on a range of activities. Examples of ongoing work include work on the development of the new cemetery project; partnership work to deliver the Peace III funded cultural diversity in sport and the delivery of a leisure strategy for the department. The plan to upgrade and refurbish the Mary Peters track is not yet committed within the capital programme however is currently being considered by Members as part of the capital programme prioritisation exercise.

2. Better Opportunities for Success Across the City

There has been ongoing success in the development of heritage trails; partnership working with Northern Ireland Tourist board by the Zoo and flagship city park events such as Rose Week; integration with the Council's Tourism Strategy 2010/14 and aligning departmental policy with regeneration and development priorities in the City. Work is currently underway to review the business model for Belfast Zoological Gardens.

3. Better Care for Belfast's Environment

Musgrave Park successfully achieved Green Flag Award accreditation and Cavehill Country Park retained Green Flag Award accreditation for the second year running. Progress is still ongoing as part of the departmental improvement programme to apply for the Green Flag Award in a further three parks and open spaces in January 2011. A draft countryside action plan has been completed which will be consulted on within the next six months. The three Peace III funded community gardens at Glen Road, Glenbank and Suffolk have been successfully designed and built and a conference on community managed gardens took place with four guest speakers and 75 participants attending. Representatives from within the department currently sit on the Sustainable Development Steering group contributing to the development of Belfast City Council Sustainable Development strategy.

Development of the Heritage Lottery Fund grant first round application is underway for the development of the Tropical Ravine, Botanic Gardens and due for submission late 2010 early 2011. If successful a full application will be developed in the following 18 months.

4. Better Support for People and Communities

There has been ongoing success in supporting 26 local community groups to undertake events in parks through the parks small events scheme. As part of the Support for Sport grant programmes the total spend to date includes the following:

- £70,000 on large development grants
- £56,500 on small development grants
- £24,300 on hospitality.

A total of 2,699 participants took part in the 'Make a Splash' programme over the summer months. An Olympic taster day was held at Ormeau Park and the Indoor Tennis Centre and Ozone Complex on the 23 June with over 450 young people attending. A day of sport was successfully organised with Eurosport Health partnership with a total of 7,700 participants attending. A total number of 14,938 participants registered for the summer scheme programme across all Leisure Centres an increase of 9% from last year. Sub groups have been set up to successfully deliver the actions from the Belfast Physical Activity & Sports Development Strategy. A suite of policies relating to events and associated management handbooks/ guidance and forms have been completed and implemented. Work is ongoing in relation to promoting 'Bridges' Urban Sports Park with building work scheduled within the next couple of months.

An Active Belfast Consortium Business Plan 2010/15 has been developed and work is ongoing in relation to the activities outlined within the plan. The delivery of the Active Communities programme will largely form part of the Active Belfast Consortium arrangements which are in final stages of planning and agreement with Belfast Community Sports Development Network being the key delivery partner.

5. Better Services

Work is currently ongoing in the development of the Connswater Community Greenway. A draft management plan and maintenance schedule was completed in August 2010. The management structure is to be agreed and implemented from September – December 2010. As part of the departmental improvement programme a draft customer charter is currently being developed and work is ongoing to embed and apply service quality standards and processes to service delivery for example Green Flag. A detailed planning application for Dunville and Woodvale development programmes have been completed and full planning approval is pending.

6. Organisation Fit to Lead & Serve (OFTL&S)

The department has recently completed an audit of financial procedures across all leisure centres. The funding strategy was implemented in January 2010 with approvals process in operation for funding applications. Refinement and development of the funding strategy and associated guidance is currently under way. Work is currently ongoing to complete an Information Strategy; to rollout clockwise across leisure centres and to apply the B brand in line with brand guidelines.

The Team Brief is currently being delivered with additional departmental information added. Evaluation is being conducted through Corporate Communications and areas of inconsistent delivery identified and rectified. A communications plan has been developed and implemented for communication regarding the departmental improvement programme and a staff newsletter was developed to support this.

A PDP process is in place and line managers are continuing to ensure its delivery. Some work remains in relation to integrating this with a departmental training database. The department remains fully committed to the achievement of IIP and are currently participating in the corporate review process. Systems and project plans for achievement of IIP have been developed as part of the departmental change programme.

The department continues to develop key items of business from the departmental plan but is flexible and agile in its approach in terms of the current economic climate.

Resource Implications

There are no additional resource implications.

Recommendations

Members are asked to note:

- The update of the departmental plan for the period (1 April – 30 September 2010);
- Potential change to the format of future update reports

Decision Tracking

There is no decision tracking attached to this report.

Key to Abbreviations

PBDU – Policy and Business Development Unit
DCAL – Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
PDP – Personal Development Plan
IIP – Investors in People

Documents Attached

None.