



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Parks and Leisure Improvement Programme -Review of Management Arrangements Leisure Services
Date:	13 January 2010
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Rose Crozier, Head of Parks and Leisure

1.	Relevant Background Information
	<p>As committee are aware, the Parks and Leisure improvement programme is focused on building capacity and delivering better services and better outcomes for communities in Belfast. This is being achieved through:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Reviewing management arrangements and operational efficiency2. Bringing the Parks and Leisure functions of the department together to integrate community development and to work more closely in planning and service delivery. <p>The programme has a number of work streams;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parks Improvement• Leisure Services Improvement• Review of Business Support• Marketing and Communications Review• Business Development Review. <p>Given the scale of the reviews a phased approach to streamlining management arrangements and achieving operational efficiency has been adopted. Reports have been brought to committee recommending improvements for Business Support and the Parks improvement work streams including management arrangements, a review of Parks Team Leaders and a Presence in Parks pilot.</p> <p>This report provides recommendations from the conclusion of the first stage of the Leisure Services improvement work stream. Work has been</p>

	<p>ongoing for a number of months with the initial focus on the review of management arrangements and operational efficiency in line with the Parks work stream.</p> <p>As noted in the committee report of the 16 September 2010 the Leisure Improvement programme has been initiated with staff briefing sessions and engagement of Trade Unions to set the context for the review.</p> <p>A number of staff led task forces have been established to examine the following areas:</p> <p>People Subgroup Aim: To review current working arrangements. Recommending potential areas of development which will enhance the current level and quality of leisure provision across the City. Ensuring Leisure Services deliver on our Departmental vision and Corporate priorities.</p> <p>Programming Subgroup Aim: To develop a city wide participation plan that will increase community engagement and improve the health and well being of its residents within the context of the Council's aims of improving the quality of life, for now and for the generations to come.</p> <p>Pricing Subgroup: Aim: To review and amend the present annual scale of charges and review. The Boost membership scheme in terms of Fit for Purpose and how it aligns with corporate objectives and overall Health & Well being agenda.</p> <p>Opening Hours Subgroup: Aim: To review the current opening hours arrangements and develop quick wins to increase income, reduce expenditure and increase throughput and community engagement.</p> <p>There are clear dependencies between each of the subgroups and although the outcomes from each one have not yet been finalised, the research emanating from each subgroup has been taken into account when developing the proposals contained within this report.</p> <p>Staff and trade unions have been widely consulted, the latest staff briefing day being held on the 21 December when each Task Lead explained the progress of each subgroup and the management strand proposal was circulated to staff and the rationale behind it explained.</p>
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2.	Key Issues
	People Subgroup

The People Subgroup have been meeting on a weekly basis since the beginning of October with the aim of recommending a management structure which will enhance the current provision of leisure.

The subgroup membership consists of Leisure Centre Managers, Assistant Managers, Recreation Officers, Receptionists and representatives from the Leisure Development Unit.

The group have reviewed several previous management structures together with the current structure. Best practice information has also been presented to the group to help inform their recommendations from other local authority areas and neighbouring leisure providers.

The group has developed a Leisure Services Management Structure which can be found in **Appendix 1**. The proposed structure reduces the number of tiers in Leisure Services management from four to three:

Current structure	Proposed structure
Leisure Operations Manager	City Leisure Manager
Leisure Centre Manager	Area Leisure Manager
Assistant Leisure Centre Manager	Neighbourhood Leisure Officer
Recreation Officer	

In the proposed structure the roles of Area Leisure Manager and Neighbourhood Leisure Officer would be generic to allow for dedicated staff to work across the areas of operations (facilities) and participation (outreach). This will provide greater flexibility to enable Leisure Services to meet the needs of the community and deliver on the vision of an Active Belfast. The new role of the Neighbourhood Leisure Officer is a hybrid of the current Assistant Leisure Centre Manager and the Recreation Officer, which the group have identified as having very similar type roles in the current operation.

Members should note that as the work on improvement continues it is likely that there will be further refinement of the structure in a number of subsequent phases.

Draft job descriptions have been developed by the group which are still at a high level and the detail of these will be developed in consultation with staff and trade unions in order to ensure there are clear lines of responsibility and accountability.

For the purposes of this report notional grades have been evaluated to allow members to assess the overall financial impact of the new proposed structure. This has shown that the post of City Leisure Manager and Area Leisure Manager would remain at the current level of PO8 and PO3 respectively. The notional grade for the Neighbourhood Leisure Officer is SO1; this shows a differential for the current 20 Recreation Officers who are currently on Scale 6. However the remaining 15 Assistant Leisure Centre Managers are currently SO2 and although it will be the intention to recruit any vacancies in the future at SO1 the current Assistant Leisure Centre Managers would continue to receive their current grade of SO2 as personal to holder. All grades are subject to evaluation against the job descriptions once finalised.

Voluntary Redundancy (VR) Exercise

Parallel to the work of the People Subgroup a VR exercise was conducted with

	<p>all Leisure Services management. A total of three staff have expressed an interest in availing of the VR exercise and consequently three VR II forms have been submitted. This would result in the deletion of these posts should the proposed structure be agreed. A fourth post, which is currently being covered on a temporary basis, would also be deleted with the postholder returning to their substantive post.</p> <p>Investigations have ascertained that given the reconfiguration and redefinition of the areas within Leisure Services, these posts could be deleted with no detrimental impact on the management of the service.</p> <p>Consultation with Stakeholders and Trade Unions Throughout the Leisure Services Improvement programme extensive consultation has been ongoing with stakeholders and trade unions. A number of stakeholders have been involved in the People Subgroup and wider review group. All stakeholders have also been invited to attend a Leisure Management briefing session held in November and a full Leisure Services staff briefing session held in December.</p> <p>Consultation with the Trade Unions continues on a bi-weekly basis with engagement from all the main trade unions.</p>
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3.	<p>Resource Implications</p> <p><u>Financial</u> Cost VR costs for three members of staff: £244,541 20 Sc 6 posts to 20 SO1 posts: £84,258 Total Cost: £328,799</p> <p>Savings: Deletion of three posts (1xPO3 and 2xSO2) : £140,485 Deletion of one temporary Leisure Centre Manager post: £51,664</p> <p>Overall Cost: £136,649</p> <p>Payback Period: 1.71years (This is in line with the corporate target of 2.3 years)</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u> Consultation relating to the proposed Phase 1 structure has been undertaken with the postholders, Human Resources and the Trade Unions.</p> <p>At this time the trade unions have stated that agreement cannot be given on the proposed structure until they have consulted with their Branch and members.</p> <p>At the last Trade Union meeting it was agreed, that, given the timeframe, a management side position would be taken to committee while further consultation takes place. This will include work on defining the roles and responsibilities for the posts of City Leisure Manager, Area Leisure Manager and Neighbourhood Leisure Officer.</p> <p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u> None.</p>
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4.	Equality and Good Relations Implications
	There are no equality implications.

5.	Recommendations
	Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Note the progress of the improvement programme; and Agree the adoption of the proposed organisation structure for Leisure Services subject to agreement at Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, to approve the recommendation for the deletion of four management posts and to release three staff through voluntary redundancy

6.	Decision Tracking
	Responsible Officer – Head of Parks and Leisure. A report to be brought to February committee with outcomes from the consultation process.

7.	Key to Abbreviations
	None.

8.	Documents Attached
	Appendix 1: Phase One Leisure Services Management Structure