



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Parks and Leisure Improvement Programme - Review of Management Arrangements for Leisure Services
Date:	10 February 2011
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Rose Crozier, Head of Parks and Leisure

1. Relevant Background Information

The strategic review of leisure has highlighted the need to examine the cost of leisure provision and to challenge us to use resources more effectively to engage our communities in healthy activities.

A review of management arrangements including roles and responsibilities and an expression of interest for voluntary redundancy (VR) were considered to be priorities in the first phase of the leisure improvement programme. Other work streams include a review of opening hours, pricing and programming. Details of groups and their remits can be found at Appendix 1.

Outcomes from this first stage were presented to committee in January 2011 in the form of a management side position on a Leisure Services management structure. This included the rationale for allowing three members of staff to be released through VR. The committee agreed to adopt the proposed organisational structure subject to agreement by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and approved the recommendation for the deletion of four management posts and release of three staff through voluntary redundancy. This was supported at the Strategic Policy and Resources committee in January 2011.

The review has given us an opportunity to develop job profiles that enhance the delivery of leisure services; supporting staff development and providing increased flexibility whilst reducing operational cost.

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	

	<p>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 is a critical element of the new roles and responsibilities and will provide greater flexibility to enable Leisure Services to meet the needs of the community and deliver on the vision of an Active Belfast.</p> <p>The new role of the Neighbourhood Leisure Officer is a hybrid of the current Assistant Leisure Centre Manager and the Recreation Officer, which was identified as having very similar type roles in the current operation.</p>
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2.	Key Issues
	<p><u>Consultation with Stakeholders and Trade Unions</u> Throughout the Leisure Services Improvement programme extensive consultation has been ongoing with staff and trade unions.</p> <p>Since the January committee meeting further meetings have taken place with the People Group, the Assurance Panel which was established to scrutinise recommendations from the People Group and a number of peer groups representing Leisure Services Managers, Leisure Services Assistant Managers and Recreation Officers.</p> <p>The meetings have been focussed on developing further job descriptions and testing the operational fit of the proposed structure.</p> <p>There have also been weekly meetings with the leisure trade unions.</p> <p><u>Current Position</u> At this time the proposed leisure management structure as attached at Appendix 2 remains unchanged.</p> <p>There are still ongoing negotiations with trade unions on a number of issues. These are mainly about clarifying the Participation Officers' role, the split between operation and outreach and how we get the balance right, and the grade of the Neighbourhood Leisure Officer post.</p> <p>The engagement with staff representatives and trade unions has been constructive and issues that have been raised are considered by management not to be insurmountable.</p> <p>All staff and trade unions have agreed that further work needs to be done to refine job descriptions and address all issues raised. It has also become clear that whilst this work has concentrated on the management tiers, engagement with all other leisure staff needs to begin to assess the impact on other posts and to develop mechanisms to support the management structures.</p>

3.	Resource Implications
	<p><u>Financial</u> None</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u> Consultation with postholders, Human Resources and the Trade Unions is ongoing.</p> <p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u> None.</p>
4.	Equality and Good Relations Implications
	None.
5.	Recommendations
	It is recommended that Committee agree to implement the Leisure Services management structure to support the continuation of work on refining roles and responsibilities and their implementation, and to sustain the release of three staff from the current structure.
6.	Decision Tracking
	Responsible Officer – Head of Parks and Leisure. A progress report will be brought to April 2011 committee.
7.	Key to Abbreviations
	VR: voluntary redundancy.
8.	Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 - Leisure Operational Efficiency Groups Appendix 2 – Phase 1 Leisure Services Management Structure