



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Parks and Leisure Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Mountain Tea House
<b>Date:</b>	10 February 2011
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Mark Challis, Zoo Manager

<b>1.</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
	<p>The Committee is reminded that the Zoo's Mountain Tea House was destroyed in a fire in June 2009. Since that time a number of reports have been presented to committee and at its meeting in August 2010 it was agreed to proceed with a like for like replacement facility. This decision was ratified by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.</p> <p>In subsequent discussions between council officers and the design team it was noted that the mountain tea house was constructed at a time when zoo visitor numbers were in the region of 190,000 annually however, as members will be aware, the annual number of visitors is now in the region of 300,000.</p> <p>While the proposed replacement facility can cater for up to 48 guests seated inside the building, it has been suggested that an extension to the external patio area could provide additional picnic type bench seating for an additional 30 guests. Given the location of the facility and the unobstructed views of the lough, the cityscape and the hills, it is believed that this additional area would be popular and well used, of course there would be an element of weather dependence.</p> <p>The design and procurement process for the replacement building is underway and the expenditure costs (less a £10,000 excess) will be met through our insurers. The insurance policy permits only minor changes to the structure, hence the decision to replace like for like.</p> <p>However, the opportunity exists to consider the option to increase capacity at a reasonable and competitive cost.</p> <p>Sufficient ground is available in the area immediately adjacent to the current tea house footprint. While the ground slopes quite steeply, and is</p>

	<p>currently a heavily planted area of mature shrubs, our design team has established that the work is feasible. This would allow for an additional 18 tables, and thus 108 seating spaces (covers) which would extend the current planned cover provision (48 inside and 30 outside) of 78 covers to 186 covers (ie an increase of 140%).</p> <p>The estimated cost for this option is approximately £58,000.</p>
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<b>2.</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
	<p>The key issue for the committee is whether it wishes to support these additional works.</p> <p>Since the end of 2005 (210,830 visitors) there has been a significant increase in visitor numbers to 304,085 (at end of 2009), which represents an increase of 44% in 4 calendar years.</p> <p>There is a window of opportunity which would enable us to undertake the additional construction work to provide a patio area which would facilitate increased customer use at the facility;</p> <p>It is estimated that, given the anticipated increase in sales and income generation (estimated at £10,000 per annum additional income), the payback period will be 5.8 years (see outline business case Appendix 1)</p> <p>The committee is asked to consider two options:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. agree to the proposal to extend the patio area at the mountain tea house and commend it to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration subject to the Gates process, with the additional cost to be met from within the capital programme; or</li> <li>2. reject the proposal and proceed with the like for like replacement facility only.</li> </ol>

<b>3.</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
	<p><u>Financial</u> The estimated cost for this option is approximately £58,000. Agreement for funding via the Council's capital programme will be sought from the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u> None</p> <p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u> The development would significantly enhance the property, increase customer use and potential for increased income .</p>

<b>4.</b>	<b>Equality and good relations implications</b>
	None.

<b>5.</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
	The Committee is requested to approve the extension to the patio area at the Zoo's mountain tea house facility and to commend it to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration as a variation to the proposal currently included in the capital programme subject to the gates process.

<b>6.</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
	The Zoo Manager will report back to the Committee towards the end of the construction phase of the replacement tea house facility, currently programmed to be during the summer of 2011.

<b>7.</b>	<b>Key to Abbreviations</b>
	None.

<b>8.</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	Appendix 1: Outline business case