

Departmental Plan 2011/12

Parks and Leisure Department



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1.0 Introduction

The Parks and Leisure Department manages many of the Council's major assets including leisure centres, parks, open spaces, cemeteries and the region's only crematorium.

Leisure Services is responsible for our 10 leisure centres sports development and a range of community based sports and activity programmes. The Parks and Cemeteries Service manages over 140 sites including over 50 parks, 75 playgrounds, Belfast Zoo, Malone House and Belfast Castle.

The Department plays a crucial role in delivering the Council's health and wellbeing objectives and is currently developing a strategic approach to achieving an 'Active Belfast' in partnership with the Belfast Health Development Unit and other stakeholders. The Department will also assume responsibility for the Connswater Community Greenway and currently owns and manages much of the parks and open space along the greenway.

Forthcoming Parks and Leisure developments also include a new playing pitch strategy, a review of the provision for burials and cremations, and a renewed strategic focus on community access to outdoor activities in community gardens and allotments. In the next year the Department will continue its internal change management programme to improve service delivery in a modern Parks and Leisure environment.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The corporate plan embodies what the council intends to achieve. It sets out Members' ambitions for the city and their commitment to improving the quality of life for everyone who lives in, works in and visits the city. It is based upon an assessment of need in the city, the views of residents on what the council's priorities should be and a commitment to strong political and executive leadership.
- 2.2 Whilst the corporate plan focuses on issues which cut across council departments it also reflects the importance of the quality of the vital services that are provided on a daily basis.
- 2.3 The corporate value creation map (VCM) is a performance management framework which is used to implement the corporate planning process and encourage services to work together across the council to improve quality of life and the different elements that contribute to this aim.

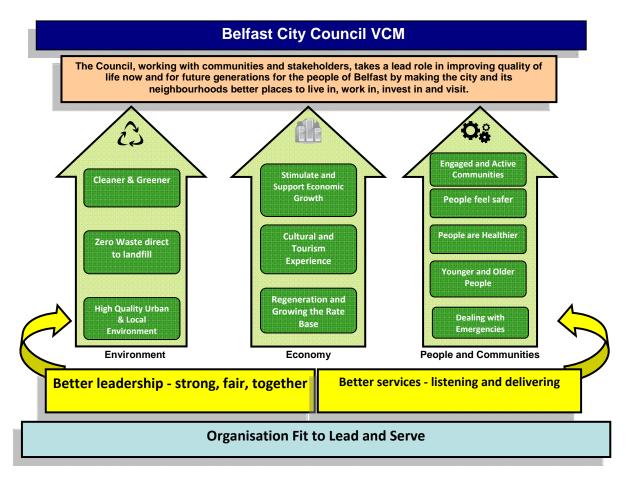


Figure 1: Corporate VCM

- 2.4 This departmental plan describes how the Parks and Leisure Department's purpose, vision, values, objectives, activities and KPIs for the year 2011/12 complement those outlined in the corporate plan. This plan is the basis for management of the Department by Committee and senior management. It highlights the alignment and linkages between departmental activities and the corporate plan.
- 2.5 The Council's Scheme of Delegation (Part 2, Section 2.6) gives authority to the Director to "implement those actions, initiatives and events which are planned for the relevant forthcoming year provided that the Departmental Plan has been approved by Committee prior to any decision being taken." For the 2011-12 period, the Director of Parks and Leisure intends to use this authority to implement all the activities outlined in section 7 (Pg 17-21) and as well as any additional related activities. In particular the Director intends to use delegated authority to;-
 - (i) implement those actions derived from the improvement programme;
 - (ii) authorise unforeseen or reactive events in any parks or leisure facility;
 - (iii) engage any relevant consultancy expertise required to deliver the actions outlined in Section 7 of the plan subject to adherence to the Council's procurement protocols and the necessary budgetary allocation having been made;
 - (iv) set nominal entrance fees or charges or waive fees for the Department's activities or events in those cases where an appropriate case has been made e.g summer schemes and interface programmes.
 - (v) approve charitable collections and fund raising activities of partner organisations who contribute to the achievement of the council's vision and objectives in Parks and Leisure facilities.
- 2.6 Progress update reports will be submitted to the Parks and Leisure Committee quarterly which will be generated from the corporate performance management system CorVu.

3.0 Purpose, vision and values

3.1 Our department's purpose is:

To work with people across Belfast and its neighbourhoods to create an active, healthy and vibrant city.

The work of the department is reflected in the VCM below, which clearly reflects how we contribute to the objectives of the council:

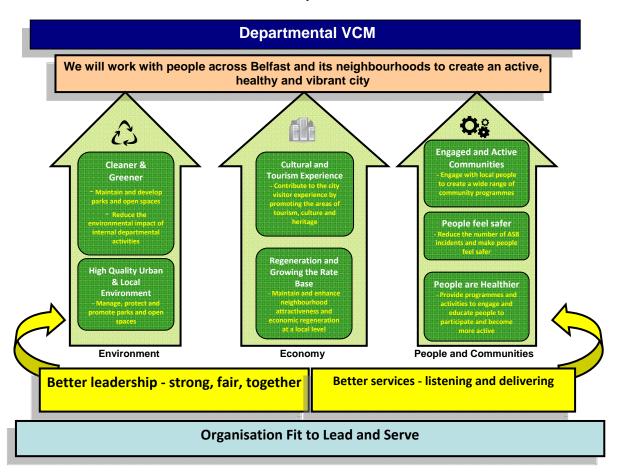


Figure 2: Departmental VCM

3.2 Our vision is:

The **people** in Belfast will be active and healthy and everyone will use leisure, parks and open space facilities across the city. They will participate in local events and play an active part in community life.

We will have pride in our work and be passionate about our purpose. The city and its neighbourhoods will be attractive and vibrant **places** to live in, work in and visit. We will continue to engage with local people and partners to make sure that people are offered the best possible facilities and services in a safe environment.

We will protect the natural environment of Belfast and educate people on the importance of a green city. With our partners, we will work hard to connect the city and integrate our services. The range and quality of our facilities and services will be accessible and valued by citizens and visitors alike. Those who use our services and participate in programmes and events will be very satisfied with their experience.

We will be flexible and efficient. We will prioritise community involvement, customer focus and value for money. We will strive to understand the city and identify innovative **possibilities** and creative solutions to deliver excellent services.

We are about people, places and possibilities.

- 3.3 The council's values are central to the way in which we work. As a council, we will:
 - Focus on the needs of customers, have a 'can-do' attitude, be problem solvers;
 - Provide value for money and improve services;
 - Work together:
 - Respect each other, be fair, promote equality and good relations;
 - Act sustainably;
 - Ensure the highest standards of health and safety; and
 - Value our employees.
- 3.4 We fully subscribe to the council's values and in particular we will adhere to the values outlined below. These values will underpin everything we do:

We are proud, passionate and professional:

Values	What we mean
Proud	Having pride in our work, the city and our environment. Being open and transparent and developing trust by doing what we promise. Having a 'can do' attitude and being empowered to deliver.
Passionate	Being positive, active and helpful in working things out. Celebrating success and promoting our achievements. Treating each other with respect and dignity.
Professional	Learning and developing as employees. Being willing to accept responsibility for our work and performance. Communicating openly about expectations and decisions taken.

4.0 Strategic themes

- 4.1 The corporate VCM defines six strategic themes. These were chosen as priorities for the council in the context of a wider analysis of need in the city, the views of the public, and the statutory and strategic challenges and opportunities that are likely to impact on the council over the next three years. The themes are:
 - City leadership strong, fair, together
 - Better opportunity for success across the city
 - Better care for Belfast's environment
 - Better support for people and communities
 - Better services listening and delivering
 - Better value for money a can-do, accountable, efficient council
- 4.2 The last of these themes underpins all of the council's work, and is further defined by the following strategic elements within the VCM:
 - Corporate human resource management
 - Corporate financial planning
 - Corporate information management
 - Corporate planning and performance
 - Corporate communication and engagement
 - Corporate assets
 - Corporate governance and risk

5.0 Changes in internal and external environment

The Parks and Leisure department is one of the largest departments within the council and will experience significant internal and external changes in 2011/12. We have developed a flexible and adaptable approach to manage the ongoing changes. A summary of the key changes in the year ahead are outlined below:

5.1 Internal changes

The financial environment

- Increasing pressure on current budget allocation
- Need to improve links between financial and business planning
- Improving efficiency and value for money (VFM)
- Need to maximise commercial income set against the external environment
- Succession planning, voluntary redundancy (VR) and associated costs
- Recommendations from the Improvement, Collaboration and Efficiencies working group and the Organisation Development panel.

Strategic focus

- Increasing focus on a strategic approach to service delivery, for example through the emerging Active Belfast and Open Spaces, Pitches, and Allotments and Community Gardens strategies
- Further developments in thematic working
- Progress in strategic partnership working, delivering projects on an interdepartmental basis and with the Belfast Health Development Unit
- Support the Manager and Officer Development programme ensuring that it is fit for purpose and transferable to departmental needs and requirements

Departmental improvement and structural change

- Managing change and influencing behavioural and cultural change
- Keeping staff, management and trade unions informed, involved and engaged
- Maintaining service delivery following VR
- Re-organising operational management and planning processes to include new and expanding areas of responsibility for example the Connswater Community Greenway and the North Foreshore
- Increased community and customer focus brought about through the departmental improvement programme

Election year

 Recent changes to council membership and the results of local government elections will impact on the composition of the council going forward. We will work closely with new members and support the Council Member Development programme

5.2 External changes

The financial environment

- The ever-tightening financial environment including limited capital investments
- Focus on public spending and providing VFM and efficient services
- Growing expectations among citizens and visitors

Strategic focus

 Improvements in strategic partnership working, such as the education sector, the Public Health Agency, sports governing bodies and the Community and Voluntary sector

Increased Central government focus on health and wellbeing

 Central government policy focus on promoting active, healthy lifestyles and tackling obesity

6.0 Departmental structure and assets

6.1 The Parks and Leisure department is one of five departments which together with the Chief Executive's Department, make up the structure of the Council. The various departments are shown in Figure 3 below.

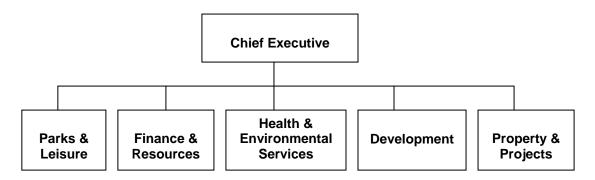


Figure 3: Council structures

The Parks and Leisure department is responsible for approximately 20% of the council's annual expenditure. The department is responsible for parks and leisure centre provision, leisure and sports development, conservation, landscaping, Malone House and Belfast Castle, crematorium and cemetery services, Belfast Zoological Gardens, events and extensive partnership working.

The department employs 813 staff, or 636.49 FTEs (full time equivalent, as many staff are part-time or casual employees). The organisation chart on Figure 4 is the high level outline of the structure operating within the department:

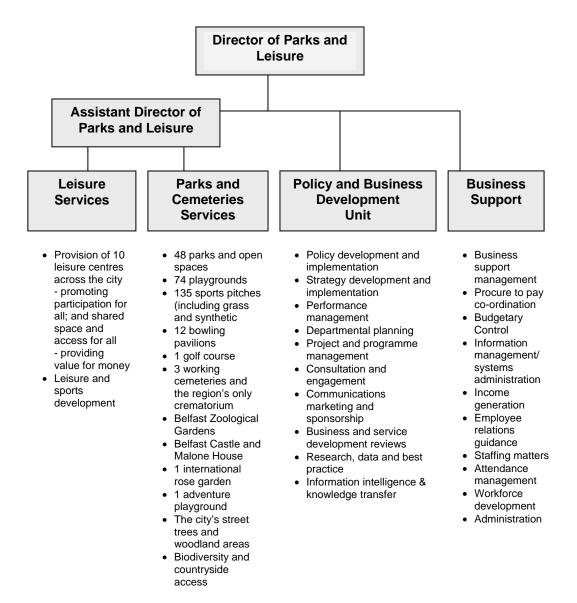


Figure 4: Departmental Structure

Our departmental assets are spread across the city and the majority of our staff are based in outlying areas either in our leisure centres, parks, pavilions, depots, and open spaces i.e. Malone House, Belfast Castle, crematorium and cemetery services and Belfast Zoological Gardens. A map of current Parks and Leisure assets are shown below in Figure 5.

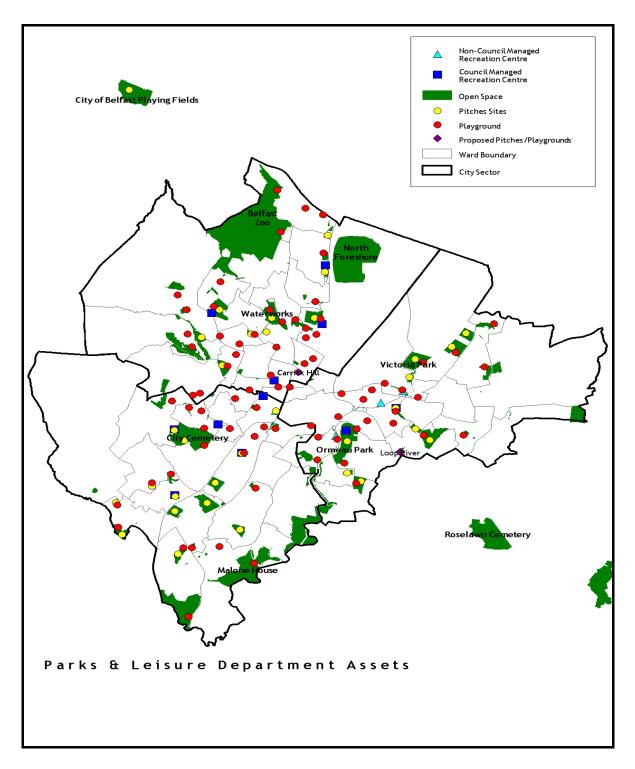


Figure 5: Departmental assets

7.0 Key achievements 2010/11

Set against a background of ongoing change and increasing pressure on financial resources, the department has made significant progress on a number of activities in the last year. Among other achievements, the department has:

7.1 City leadership

Key achievements

- Successfully delivered the Peace III funded Cultural Diversity in Sport programme, in partnership with Belfast Community Sport Development Network (BCSDN)
- Developed draft Playing Pitches strategy and commenced consultation
- Secured capital funding for enhancing playing pitches and the Mary Peters track
- Successfully delivered the Peace III funded Cultural Diversity in Sport project "Our SPACE" programme
- Continued working with Members and partners to develop an agreed approach to the Active Belfast and Open Spaces Strategy.

7.2 Better care for Belfast's environment

Key achievements

- Successfully implemented green flag management practices in our parks
- Delivered the Watch this Space environmental education programme, engaging almost 700 primary school children
- Took part in over 90 international breeding programmes for endangered animals
- Completed the first round funding application for the development of the Tropical Ravine and Botanic Gardens
- Contributed to corporate environmental and recycling initiatives
- Implemented year four of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan

7.3 Better opportunities for success across the city

Key achievements

- Aligned departmental policy with regeneration and development priorities in the city
- Ensured ongoing success in the development of heritage trails
- Belfast Zoological Gardens recorded its highest ever monthly visitor numbers in August 2010, with over 70,000 visitors having a 'zooper' day during this month
- Commenced review of the business model for Belfast Zoological Gardens
- Contributed to the council's strategic approach to integrated tourism
- We had 180,000 visitors to Belfast Castle and Malone House and hosted over 1000 events and functions

7.4 Better support for people and communities

Key achievements

- Began construction on the Peace III funded Bridges Urban Sports Park
- Funded 26 organisations through the parks events small grant scheme, helping to deliver events for over 38,000 attendees across 23 of our parks
- Commenced a review of the Support for Sport scheme
- Funded 138 local clubs and 23 different sports a total of £189,233 through the Support for Sport grant scheme
- Successfully delivered the Safer Neighbourhood Antisocial Behaviour programme
- Developed a youth participation initiative entitled 'People in Parks' as part of the wider approach to reducing antisocial behaviour in hotspot areas
- Funded, facilitated and organised a varied range of indoor and outdoor events and programmes, such as the primary schools cross-country, parks family fun days and health open days in leisure centres
- A total number of 14,938 participants registered for the summer scheme programme across all Leisure Centres an increase of 9% from last year
- Developed an Active Belfast Consortium Business Plan 2010/15 and commenced associated actions
- Provided free Boost membership for 200 people living in areas of high deprivation
- Received 1400 referrals for our Healthwise scheme; an increase of 40% on 2009
- Held 300 fitness classes a week at our 10 leisure centres
- Delivered an 'Active Belfast' conference, attended by 180 people
- Established the 'Are you fit for it?' personal development through sport programme
- Participated in the Active Communities programme with partners
- Developed Coach Education programme, including a comprehensive training programme
- Designed and built three Peace III funded community gardens at Lenadoon, Glenbank and Suffolk and participated in associated conferences

7.5 Better services

Key achievements

- Developed a departmental customer improvement plan
- Provided for 1056 burials and 2731 cremations
- Successfully achieved Green Flag Award accreditation in two of our parks (Musgrave Park (achieved) and Cavehill Country Park (retained)) and applied for accreditation for Falls Park, Ormeau Park, Roselawn Cemetery, Botanic Gardens and Barnett Demesne
- Completed planning applications for Dunville and Woodvale development programmes with full planning approval pending
- Continued to play a key role in the development of the Connswater
 Community Greenway and assumed management and maintenance role
- Launched the online burial records search facility

7.6 Better value for money

Key achievements

Human Resources

- Implemented the attendance policy and introduced training for relevant staff across the department
- Rolled out a consistent PDP approach across the department
- Completed the review of business support, parks and leisure services
- Provided a leadership development course for managers

Finance

- Reviewed fees and charges identifying income opportunities
- Completed a review of the financial management processes and improved the provision and timeliness of information to budget holders
- Contributed to the corporate review of fees and charges

Information Management

- Upgraded the TLMS system
- Completed an audit of HR and finance information, as part of a wider departmental information audit.
- Developed an electronic events database to record, analyse and evaluate departmental events and programmes

Policy, Planning and Performance

- Developed, collated, monitored and reviewed a suite of departmental KPIs
- Successfully managed, monitored and reviewed the departmental and business planning approach

Communication and Engagement

- A communications plan was developed and implemented for communication on the departmental improvement programme and a staff newsletter was developed to support this
- Undertaken a departmental review of marketing and communications

Assets

- Implemented and trained relevant staff on the gateway process for capital projects
- Contributed to the development of the council's asset management plan

Governance and Risk

- Reviewed the department's business continuity plans
- Developed a departmental incident reporting protocol
- Commissioned an audit of overtime and agency compliance and justification by the Council's Audit, Governance and Risk Service.

8.0 Key actions for 2011/12

The department's key actions have been defined against the background of the VCM. Each key activity has a relationship with one or more of the themes described in the departmental VCM.

8.1 City leadership

In the Parks and Leisure Department this theme is about **partnering and leading**. The Parks and Leisure Department takes a strategic lead role on behalf of the Council in working with other partners and agencies to deliver an active, healthy and vibrant city.

Key actions

- Agree the next steps in the development of the new Active Belfast and Open Spaces (ABOS) strategy and commence delivery of year one actions
- Deliver year one actions in the pitches strategy
- Develop and deliver a robust plan for the development of cemetery and crematorium provision in Belfast
- Work in partnership to develop strategic capital enhancement and programming projects including:
 - Upgrading and regenerating Mary Peters Track in order to facilitate the 2013 police and fire fighter games
 - Sourcing funding for the re-development of the Tropical Ravine in Botanic Gardens and the Floral Hall in Belfast Zoological Gardens
 - o Develop strategic relationships with schools re recreational facilities
 - Make arrangements for the management and maintenance of phase one of the Connswater Community Greenway
 - Complete the Dunville and Woodvale park development programme and commence development works subject to agreement on funding

8.2 Better care for Belfast's environment

In the Parks and Leisure Department this theme is about **protecting and linking** the city through its parks, open spaces and leisure centres. Throughout the year we will be committed to delivering a sustainable approach to service provision, contributing to a cleaner, greener and healthier environment.

Kev actions

- Complete a Green Flag standard site assessment across the department's parks and open spaces
- Apply for the Green Flag Award for three additional sites
- Carry out a review of departmental environmental management processes
- Protect, promote and enhance the existing asset portfolio and integrate with capital enhancement project

8.3 Better opportunities for success across the city

In the Parks and Leisure Department this theme is about **physical** regeneration in **local** neighbourhoods and the department playing a key role in the local economy. The department will continue to develop ways of using our facilities and open spaces; to enrich the city's cultural, tourism and heritage offering.

Key actions

- Develop an annual programme and plan of parks and leisure focused citywide events
- Improve parks and open spaces by developing with local communities and partners local area programmes linked to capital enhancement projects at Connswater Community Greenway, Dunville Park and Woodvale Park
- Contribute to the delivery of the Integrated Strategic Framework for Belfast Tourism

8.4 Better support for people and communities

In the Parks and Leisure Department this theme is about **participation** and **lifestyles**. The Department will continue to provide programmes and services to make people feel safer and encourage people to lead healthier and more active lifestyles.

Key actions

- To work with other Council Departments to develop an integrated approach to neighbourhood working to maximise the impact of existing and emerging neighbourhood and community development work
- Develop a plan to facilitate the delivery a range of programmes and activities with local communities
- Develop and deliver the Safer Neighbourhood Antisocial Behaviour plan and Programme
- Deliver and evaluate the Presence in Parks pilot
- Deliver phase two of the People in Parks initiative with Challenge Youth
- Deliver improvements in dog services and dog control in our parks
- Together with the Belfast Health Development unit and other partners develop an Active Belfast Partnership to develop and deliver year one actions for a more active Belfast
- Develop programmes to increase participation in connection with 2012 Olympics to maximise the Olympic legacy
- Complete and launch the new Urban Sports Park and deliver associated sports development activities
- Agree and implement an allotment and community garden strategy together with the Belfast Health Development Unit and the Public Health Agency (PHA)

 Deliver a range of health and wellbeing programmes and activities including; Parent and toddler swim classes, Make a splash swim programme, Summer schemes, Healthwise exercise referral scheme, Cardiac rehabilitation (Phase 4) programme, Work for health, Health for life scheme, Activ8 programme, Healthy families, Watch this space programme, Toddler to teenager programme and programmes for seniors and women.

8.5 Better services

In the Parks and Leisure Department this theme is about delivering a **proficient** service and **listening** to our customers. The Department will continue to deliver service improvement right across the department.

Key actions

- Improve the customer experience at Parks and Leisure venues by:
 - o Developing and implementing a customer improvement plan
 - o Implementing further service improvement pilots and programmes
 - Through operational reviews identifying and delivering improvements and efficiencies in our services
- Agree and implement the revised business model for Belfast Zoological Gardens
- Review, agree and implement a new business model for Malone House and Belfast Castle
- Continue to work with partners to develop and implement an improved model of community engagement to co-produce outcomes in the city's neighbourhoods
- In partnership with the PHA and BHDU develop a shared community gardens and allotments vision and strategy for Belfast. Improve service provision and support for allotments and community gardens across the city

8.6 Better value for money

In the Parks and Leisure Department this theme is about reviewing and improving our **processes** and creating a **learning** organisation. The Department will continue to invest and support our people by improving employee capacity and capabilities.

Key actions

Human Resources

- Ensure compliance and review effectiveness of corporate HR strategies, policies and procedures including attendance policy, vacancy control and health and safety
- Roll out consistent PDP process and participate in the process of obtaining corporate IIP

Finance

- Adhere to corporate processes and development of financial planning, management and control and review effectiveness
- Secure and manage funding from external sources for major initiatives, including Peace III (i.e. Belfast peace plan phase 2), DSD (BRO) and the Heritage Lottery Funding (i.e. Heritage grants, parks for people)

Information Management

- Implement and review corporate information management systems, including clockwise, TLMS, CorVu, Clikview and SRM
- Review and improve the use of IT systems in the department including Business Process Re-engineering (BPR) of current processes

Policy, Planning and Performance

- Manage, monitor and review the departmental planning approach and improve the link between financial estimates and business plans
- Hold quarterly DMT performance meetings with senior managers to monitor and review departmental priorities and financial management

Communication and Engagement

 Develop and deliver the departmental marketing and communications strategy to best promote the work of the department

Assets

 Ensure that recommendations from the asset management strategy are implemented and contribute to the development of the council's asset management plan

Governance and Risk

• Complete and monitor the departmental risk register and risk management plans and integrate into business planning process

9.0 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) 2011/12

The following departmental KPIs will be used to measure and monitor departmental progress and success:

The department has developed the following set of KPIs for collection, monitoring and reporting (via the performance management system - CorVu) throughout the 2011/12 financial year. Where applicable and available target data has been provided quarterly and annually. Baseline data is still to be established for some of the KPIs outlined below.

The indicators outlined below will be monitored quarterly by the DMT and will be reported on a quarterly basis to Chief Officer Management Team (COMT) and the Parks and Leisure Committee.

9.1 Better Care for Belfast's Environment

	Annual Target
No. of parks and green spaces to attain green flag accreditation	3
Tonnage of green waste recycled	TBC*
 Energy consumption expressed in gigajoules per hour per sq metre (Parks and Leisure Department) 	TBC*

9.2 Better Opportunities for Success across the city

	Annual Target
No. of visitors to the zoo	300,0000

9.3 Better Support for People and Communities

	Annual Target
No. of leisure centre members	TBC*
% of users who use leisure centres twice + per week	TBC*
 Programme participation levels (outreach and health) 	TBC*
 No. of people who use/ visit our indoor and outdoor leisure facilities 	TBC*
Participation levels at events	TBC*
No. of reported ASB incidents	TBC*

9.4 Better Services

	Annual Target
Hectares of parks and open spaces with green flag accreditation per resident	TBC*
 % residents that live within 1000m of green flag rated parks 	TBC*
 Number of complaints received - All 	TBC*
 % complaints that met response target - All 	TBC*

9.5 Better Value for Money

Human Resources	Annual Target
 Average number of working days per employee lost due to absence (measured against agreed targets) 	TBC*
 Variance between actual direct employee costs and budget 	0
 Variance between actual Staff Number and agreed establishment 	0

Financial Planning	Annual Target
% Variance between net expenditure and budget	+1 / -3%
 % Variance between planned net expenditure and forecasted net expenditure 	+1 / -3%
 % Variation between forecast outturn at period 6 and actual outturn at period 12 	+ 1 / -1%
 % Non compliance of Goods Received Notes (GRNs) after invoicing 	TBC*
 % Non compliance of Purchase Orders raised on time 	TBC*
 Total net cost per user (indoor) 	TBC*
 Total net cost per user (outdoor leisure) 	TBC*
 Total net cost per user (Belfast zoo) 	TBC*
 Ratio of income to expenditure (Rate of recovery) (Parks and Leisure Department) 	1: 0.28
Total net cost per ratepayer	£93.60

Corporate Policy, Planning & Performance	Annual Target	
% PIs with valid data collected and reported upon	85%	
% Pls on target	TBC *	

(*Target to be confirmed)

10.0 Financial Information

The Parks and Leisure Department manages 20% of the council's annual budget, totalling a budgeted net expenditure of £22,940,266. Employee costs account for 65% of this expenditure.

Main Items of Estimated Expenditure 2011/12

	Net Expenditure 2010/11	Estimated Net Expenditure 2011/12
Leisure	8,287,520	8,193,619
Parks and Cemeteries	11,916,101	12,381,227
Parks and Leisure Directorate	2,097,253	2,365,420
Total	22,300,874	22,940,266

11.0 Monitoring and review arrangements

The council has introduced an integrated performance management system - CorVu that enables regular, up-to-date reporting to be undertaken at corporate, departmental and service level.

A number of KPIs and projects have been identified as corporately significant and are contained in the corporate plan. They will be reported on a quarterly basis to COMT to ensure ongoing management of the key priorities.

The Director of Parks and Leisure has the responsibility of monitoring, reporting and reviewing the progress of KPIs and projects within the departmental plan to the Parks and Leisure Committee (quarterly), Chief Officers' Management Team (COMT) (quarterly) and the Departmental Management Team (DMT) (weekly).

12.0 Committee membership

The Parks and Leisure Committee is responsible for the key decisionmaking and direction of the department. The Members of the Parks and Leisure Committee are:

Committee Chair: Councillor Corr, Sinn Féin Deputy Committee Chair: Councillor Kelly, SDLP

Councillor Austin, Sinn Féin

Councillor Haire, DUP

Councillor Hargey, Sinn Féin

Councillor Hendron, All

Alderman Humphrey, DUP

Councillor Kyle, PUP

Councillor Mallon, SDLP

Councillor McCabe, Sinn Féin

Councillor McKee, DUP

Councillor McNamee, All

Councillor McVeigh, Sinn Féin

Councillor Mac Giolla Mhín, Sinn Féin

Councillor Mullan, SDLP

Councillor A. Newton, DUP

Councillor O'Neill, Sinn Féin

Councillor Robinson, DUP

Alderman Rodgers, UUP

Councillor Thompson, DUP