



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Parks and Leisure Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Parks and Leisure Improvement Programme
<b>Date:</b>	9 June 2011
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure

### 1.0 Relevant Background Information

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:

1. reviewing management arrangements and operational efficiency;
2. bringing the Parks and Leisure functions of the department together to integrate community development and to work more closely in planning and service delivery.

The programme currently has a number of work streams; Parks Improvement, Leisure Services Improvement, Review of Business Support, and a Marketing and Communications Review. Given the scale of the reviews the following phased approach to streamlining management arrangements and achieving operational efficiency has been adopted :

#### Phase I

- Agreement and implementation of the Parks Management operational structural tier; and
- Agreement and implementation of Parks and Leisure Business Support management tier.

#### Phase II

- Operational review of Parks and Leisure Business Support including the leisure centre business support staff;
- Parks operational review to include: the review of the role of Team Leaders or "Parks Supervisors"; review of boundaries and numbers of staff; development of processes; quality monitoring; and implementation of systems.
- Operational review of the Outdoor Leisure function
- Development of a Parks Community Resource (i.e. Community Park Warden);
- Review of the estates function including Belfast Castle and Malone

	<p>House (this will include the exploration of a coordinated estates/commercial function across the Parks and Cemeteries Service);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of the Development function of Parks and Leisure</li> <li>• Review of Bereavement Services.</li> </ul> <p><b>Phase III</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of the management strand within Leisure Services; and</li> <li>• Review of the operational strand in Leisure Services</li> <li>• Review of operation at Roselawn Crematorium</li> <li>• Review of Marketing and Communications</li> <li>• Review of operation at Belfast Zoo</li> </ul>
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<b>2.0</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
	<p><u>Progress to Date</u></p> <p><b>Phase I</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phase 1 was completed in January 2010 with agreed management side and trade union positions on the way forward. Proposals have been implemented with the establishment within existing resource of City Park Managers, Community Park Managers and Outreach Managers.</li> </ul> <p><b>Phase II</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A review of Bereavement services was completed in conjunction with the review of management arrangements and operational efficiency for Parks. Recommendations have been implemented.</li> <li>• A review of parks operational boundaries was completed which included more efficient deployment of staff and use of equipment. Work on reviewing the staffing allocation in each parks operational area is continuing with a focus on the roles of ROSPA and driver /gardeners. Recommendations for a Parks operative role will be brought to committee in August 2011.</li> <li>• Recommendations from the review of the development strand of the Parks operation were made to committee in June 2010 with proposed further work to be done on the post of Principal Parks and Cemeteries Development Manager. The post has been developed and redesignated as Departmental Portfolio Manager. The review of Landscape Planning and Development Unit is nearing completion and will be reported to August 2011 committee. The proposed review of the Departmental Development Strand is continuing and it is expected that outcomes will be reported in October 2011.</li> <li>• Work on reviewing and defining roles and responsibilities for the Parks operation is well progressed. The development of a Community Park Supervisor post has been completed and the roles of Community Park Warden and Community Park Safety Warden are in development through the Presence in Parks pilot. As planned two additional Community Park Safety Wardens have been appointed from the existing Park Rangers however there was a lack of take up from existing gardening staff for the role of Community Park Wardens.</li> </ul>

The pilot is proceeding with the existing Park Ranger resource and the role of Community Park Warden is being revisited. A further update on Presence in Parks will be brought to the August 2011 committee.

- The operational efficiency review of Parks is continuing with the implementation of a plan of improvements to reduce overtime and agency costs.
- The Green Flag standard has been adopted and a framework has been developed to improve all parks and open spaces in the city. Five new submissions were made for the standard in January 2011 and assessments are taking place in June 2011 with results to be announced mid July. The submissions were for Botanic Gardens, Ormeau Park, Falls Park, Barnett's Demesne and Roselawn Cemetery. Cavehill Country Park and Musgrave Park have already achieved Green Flag status and Musgrave Park is being reassessed in June 2011.
- Phase I of the review of Business Support has been completed and implemented. The second stage of Phase II of the review of business support will examine the provision of business support within leisure centres. A Pilot Review in three leisure centres (Grove Well Being Centre, Shankill LC and Andersonstown LC) will be completed by end of June 2011. This will identify any areas where there may be additional capacity in business support which could then be utilised across other areas of the department will be identified.
- The review of the Estates function has commenced and will examine opportunities for increasing income across the Parks estate.
- Communication and engagement has been an ongoing priority delivered through staff briefings, the production of a newsletter, staff representation on task forces and reference panels and frequent engagement with trade unions.

### **Phase III**

- The review of Leisure Management arrangements has been completed and a new structure agreed by committee in January 2011. Work is ongoing with staff and Trade Unions to refine job descriptions and move to implementation of new roles.
- An operational efficiency review of the Leisure function has commenced with particular emphasis on overtime and agency costs.
- A review of the crematorium operation has taken place with recommendations made to Committee in April 2011 to improve the service by extending openings hours and increasing staff. The recommendations will be implemented by September 2011.
- The review of marketing and communications in the department is nearing completion and proposals for change are at the consultation stage. It is envisaged that proposals will be brought to the August 2011 committee.
- An operational review of Belfast Zoo will commence in August 2011.

<b>3.0</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
	<p><u>Financial</u> Summary of savings to date:</p> <p><b>Phase I</b> Deletion of 7 posts including 2 business support posts with a net saving of <b>£217,685</b> per year. Deletion of Parks and Cemeteries Senior Manager and Leisure Manager posts and the creation of an Assistant Director post resulting in a net saving of <b>£50,797</b> after an initial payback period of 1.6 years.</p> <p><b>Phase II</b> Deletion of 2 posts with the creation of a new Open Spaces and Active Living Coordinator and Quality Manager giving a net saving of <b>£43,018</b> after a payback period of 2.13 years</p> <p>Increased capacity at Roselawn Crematorium cost <b>£100,000</b> but it is anticipated that this will be paid for in year one and allow for future growth in income.</p> <p><b>Phase III</b> After covering costs of reviewed posts and payback of 1.71 years deletion of 3 Leisure management posts with a saving of <b>£140,485</b> and deletion of one temporary Leisure Centre Manager post saving <b>£51,664</b>.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u> Throughout the Parks and Leisure Improvement programme extensive consultation has been ongoing with stakeholders and trade unions. Consultation with the Trade Unions continues on a bi-weekly basis with engagement from all the main trade unions.</p> <p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u> None</p>

<b>4.0</b>	<b>Equality and Good Relations Implications</b>
	None.

<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
	Committee is asked to note the progress of the Parks and Leisure Improvement programme

<b>6.0</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
	Responsible Officer – Assistant Director, Parks and Leisure. Further report to be presented to August 2011 meeting.

<b>7.0</b>	<b>Key to Abbreviations</b>
	None.

<b>8.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	None.