



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Parks and Leisure Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	'Watch this Space' education programme – proposed revision and next steps
<b>Date:</b>	15 September 2011
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Emer Boyle, Policy and Business Development Manager Elaine Black, Policy and Business Development Officer

<b>1</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(i) outline how the “Watch This Space” (WTS) programme is currently being delivered; and</li><li>(ii) present for Members’ review and agreement the proposed revisions and development of the programme which will be the basis of a forthcoming tender process.</li></ul>
1.2	<p>The history of the WTS Education programme is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• it was originally set up in 2007 in Shankill and Falls Parks where antisocial behaviour was prevalent and with the aim of linking ownership of parks amongst young people through an education programme. Victoria Park was also included as the programme developed.</li><li>• In January 2010 Members agreed to extend the programme in terms of the “Saturday clubs” to the south of the city at Ormeau Park.</li><li>• A full evaluation report on the programme was presented at the March 2011 meeting of the Committee and it was agreed that Ulster Wildlife Trust would continue to run the education programme to March 2012 whilst a revised education programme was scoped and a tendering exercise undertaken.</li><li>• In March 2011 Members also requested a further update be brought back on the development of the education programme’s objectives and content - which are contained within this report.</li></ul>
1.3	<p>An officer working group was established to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- the existing programme;</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- its evaluation by Sustainable NI and the council's requirements;</li> <li>- an overview of other council education approaches and programmes in particular Waste management's involvement with the Eco schools programme; and</li> <li>- consideration of external education programmes.</li> </ul> <p>In light of all of the above, officers have been developing the future programme's purpose and identifying the priority objectives for the future parks related education programme.</p>
1.4	<p><u>Management of the existing programme</u></p> <p>Two review meetings with the current programme provider have taken place and a meeting this month will confirm the arrangements for the programme until March 2012 to ensure that opportunities for participation are available across the whole city for the schools programme, community group activities and public events.</p> <p>As agreed by Members in January 2010 there is a city wide coverage available through Saturday clubs in each operational area with Ormeau park established over the past year as the venue for the Saturday club in the South of the city.</p> <p>The current provider is presently reviewing the format of the schools programme to enable opportunity to be offered in areas where historically no schools provision was targeted (south of the city) without adding to the total cost of the programme. An individual mail out to schools in the South offering single taster sessions has been requested by officers to extend the opportunity across the city for the schools programme. Appendix 3 illustrates the type of participation activity in the past year for the programme.</p> <p>The tender process for the new education programme will include a city wide approach as a pre requisite for future delivery.</p>
1.5	<p><u>Future programme development</u></p> <p>The officer working group has been developing the broad direction of the future education programme which will roll out from April 2012 onwards. Appendix 1 provides an outline summary. The key headlines from this are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purpose of the future programme will be to establish our parks as a resource for outdoor learning.</li> <li>• The new programme will encourage greater use of park sites for outdoor learning; in short parks are outdoor classrooms (appendix 2 is an excerpt from the audit carried out to assess the suitability of parks as outdoor learning resources and lists the immediate hubs in each operational area which can support the proposed revised approach).</li> <li>• There will be flexibility built into format and delivery of the programme where schools and educational organisations can choose how they can use parks as a learning resource either through supervised or self-managed visits.</li> <li>• Schools will also be able to identify which age range or stage in</li> </ul>

	<p>curriculum development they wish to target.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The future programme is being directly linked to the content of the schools curriculum (Education Order 2007) and the priority areas the programme will support are “Environment and Society (The World Around Us)”; “Science and Technology” and “Physical Education”. “Learning for Life and Work” is also an area in the curriculum that can benefit from visits and learning in our parks.</li> <li>• The three elements of the future programme are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A co-ordinated education programme which has a dedicated resource primarily for supervised educational visits from schools, community activities or events across the city</li> <li>2. A quality resource bank will be developed to support self managed educational visits to parks by education providers – schools; community groups; youth clubs; sports groups etc. (unsupervised learning).</li> <li>3. Capacity building opportunities to be developed to sustain the learning and develop ways in which parks are used effectively for all ages and sectors for outdoor learning.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
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<b>2</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
2.1	<p><u>Future delivery approach</u>  The working group shared the view that the council should in principle be able to deliver the education programme for itself, however it was also agreed that a period of time to up-skill in line with the ongoing departmental improvement programme would be required in the medium term. The planned tender period (of 1 year with an ability to extend the contract up to 3 years) would provide adequate time to invest in the training and capacity building for the council to be the primary delivery agent for the programme in the future. The availability of staff resources within the department to deliver the programme would also have to be assessed.</p>
2.2	<p><u>Integration of the programme with council business</u>  The proposed project team would continue to integrate the education programme with the ongoing outreach and developmental work taking place across the department. The ongoing management of the programme is an item for consideration within the department’s development review.</p>
2.3	<p><u>Consultation and engagement</u>  The revision of the education programme has been an internal exercise to date. Following committee the project team will engage with educational facilitators, specifically teachers in order that they can inform and be involved in the ongoing development of the revised education programme.</p>

<b>3</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
3.1	<u>Financial</u> Development of interactive resources may require support from other departments and may impact internal budgets
3.2	<u>Human Resources</u> Internal training investment may be required for parks staff with a remit for facilitating educational visits in parks and this is linked to the overall departmental improvement programme. Need to look at the staffing resources available to deliver the programme if that approach is taken.
3.3	<u>Asset and Other Implications</u> None – greater usage numbers may show a decrease in net cost per user.

<b>4</b>	<b>Equality and Good Relations Implications</b>
4.1	None.

<b>5</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
5.1	It is recommended that Committee approve the future direction for the revised educational programme as outlined in the report.

<b>6</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
A further report on the roll-out of the revised programme will be brought at the end of its first year – April 2013.	

<b>7</b>	<b>Key to Abbreviations</b>
WTS – Watch this Space UWT – Ulster Wildlife Trust	

<b>8</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
Appendix 1: Future programme outline Appendix 2: audit of parks suitable as an outdoor learning resource Appendix 3: Update on participation activity 2010/11	