

**Appendix 1: Future Parks Service Education Programme
Outline direction for tender specification**

Purpose of project	The purpose of the future programme is to establish learning in our parks realising the benefits of our parks as a resource for outdoor learning.
Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks are for life; Parks are for learning is the key principle for the programme. • To integrate the programme with existing council community outreach, education and developmental work. • Recognising parks are a key resource for outdoor learning in effect they are outdoor classrooms. • Primary school age is the key focus of the programme
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 2. A quality resource bank is developed to support self managed educational visits to parks by educational facilitators – schools; community groups; youth clubs; sports groups etc. (Unsupervised learning) 3. Capacity building opportunities to be developed to sustain the learning and develop ways in which parks are utilised effectively for all ages and sectors for outdoor learning.
The approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preference shown to encouraging educational visits to parks rather than learning offsite. In short parks are outdoor classrooms. • All of the learning opportunities where the curriculum can be supported through the city's parks will be compiled and circulated to show what is on offer to schools and other educational providers. • Choice and flexibility encouraged in how parks can be used as a learning resource either through supervised or self managed visits.
Priority delivery areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinated schools programme of onsite supervised visits, the format of which is up to 2 visits per school class in the same year to support retention of visitor and open up opportunity citywide. • Resource bank - commission a minimum range of resource materials each year of the tender to support the priority areas and ages for learning. • Integrate interactive learning where possible to meter the impact of the weather and ensure learning is current and relevant to the curriculum. • Capacity building - agree capacity building plan over the lifespan of the project to realise opportunities to build capacity internally and externally.
Content,	<p>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:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Environment and Society (The World Around Us); 2. Science and Technology and 3. Physical Education. <p>Learning for life and work is also an area in the curriculum that can benefit from visits and learning in our parks.</p> <p>The future programme should be available to support all stages of learning in the schools curriculum from foundation stage through all the key stages where practical learning could be supported through visits and activities in the parks service. It was considered more effective if schools were encouraged to identify the type and stage of learning parks could support.</p> <p>Where resources are in demand priority will be targeted towards primary level.</p> <p>The content of the programme will be focused on the practical learning parks can support in terms of the environment; science and being active. The wider learning appeal is that through the programme it connects the park to the surrounding</p>

	community who can make best use of the neighbourhood asset.
Format	<p>As part of the tender process applicants will have to demonstrate how flexibility of format in terms of duration and methods of delivery can be programmed to build wider opportunity, repeat visits by participants to parks and retention as users in the future.</p> <p>The previous programme had one format applied to the schools programme where one class could receive up to 5 supervised visits (2 in parks; 3 in schools) a preferred model at present is for up to two supervised visits per class to allow greater opportunity for more schools to access supervised visits across the city and manages any new demand there may be from extending the offer to all ages of children.</p>
Delivery methods	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A supervised programme for educational activity will be developed to support schools and education providers to the city's parks and be available citywide. 2. Stand alone resource materials to be developed to form a resource bank. These materials would be related to the stage of curriculum learning and officers are keen to develop the interactive nature of the learning materials to meet the quality and standards teachers and educational facilitators are used to expect. Interactive learning also supports the more practical learning experience parks can offer. 3. The capacity building plan will identify opportunities for internal staff and all other educational facilitators to be able to self manage educational visits in the city's parks.
Integration	The existing programme will be managed by Ulster Wildlife Trust until March 2012 and be followed by the tender of the education programme for either one up to 3 years. The officer working group consider the education programme could be integrated into mainstream parks and leisure business and this will be monitored as the contract is reviewed annually.
Management	Management of the programme: It is suggested that a project team is established (formerly the Officer working group) to manage the development of the new programme and its ongoing delivery and performance.
Monitoring and evaluation	The working group continues to consider the monitoring and performance indicators, targets and results it is seeking from the new programme in preparation for the tender. The number of learning hours or sessions along with wider outcomes around the ownership and integration of the park into its local community are all being considered for the tender specification.
Budget and cost analysis	The budget will be prioritised to support the co-ordinated education programme and its management; supervised visits and development of the resource bank. The capacity building plan is likely to require internal training investment for council staff as part of the ongoing improvement programme of the parks service.