



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Parks and Leisure Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Departmental Improvement Programme – Review of Landscape Planning and Development Unit
<b>Date:</b>	13 October 2011
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Norman Neill, Organisational Development Unit, Human Resources

1.	Relevant Background Information
	<p>As part of the Parks and Leisure improvement programme, the Organisational Development Unit was requested to undertake an operational review of the Landscape Planning and Development Unit. The original structure is attached at appendix 1.</p> <p>The Landscape Planning and Development Unit is responsible to the Principal Parks and Cemeteries Services Development Manager for the design and implementation of landscape and minor civil engineering work associated with parks, open spaces, playing fields and play areas.</p> <p>It was agreed at the Parks and Leisure Committee meeting of 12 August 2010 that the post of Principal Parks and Cemeteries Services Development Manager be re-designated to the post of Departmental Portfolio Programme Manager.</p> <p>It was also agreed at the committee meeting of 12 August 2010 that the posts of Woodland and Recreation Manager, Woodland and Recreation Officer and Woodland and Recreation Assistant be transferred to the Landscape Planning and Development Unit. As a result of this structural change, the unit now also has responsibility for the provision of urban forestry and recreation services.</p> <p>Following the transfer of the 3 Woodland and Recreation Unit posts and also following the re-designation of the post of Principal Parks and Cemeteries Services Development Manager to that of Departmental Portfolio Programme Manager, reporting lines and structural positions have changed for all posts across the unit.</p>

	<p>There has been no recruitment of Industrial Placement Students since September 2006.</p> <p>The unit's project portfolio continues to expand and there is an ongoing demand for resources – projects that staff are currently involved in include the following :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Playing Pitches Strategy</li> <li>- Connswater Greenway</li> <li>- Refurbishment of Woodvale and Dunville Parks</li> <li>- Green Flag standards</li> <li>- Park Management Plans</li> <li>- Inspections of Roads and Footpaths</li> <li>- Play Refurbishment and independent inspections</li> <li>- Tree Health Condition Surveys</li> <li>- Tree Preservation Orders</li> </ul> <p>There will also be additional work for the Unit once the High Hedges Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 becomes operational (within the next 6 months). However capacity will have to be determined once the extent of the workload is known.</p>
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<b>2.</b>	<p><b>Key Issues</b></p> <p>The operational review of the Landscape Planning and Development Unit has been completed and recommends that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All job descriptions are updated to better reflect the structural changes that have already occurred. New job descriptions will also take account of current and anticipated workload (for example the management of the High Hedges legislation).</li> <li>• All job description are also updated to build on the synergies already present with the Project Management Unit (PMU) and Portfolio Office in the Property and Projects Department in order to deliver a co-ordinated, high quality project managed portfolio for Parks and Leisure Department.</li> <li>• The posts of Landscape Planner and Landscape Architect are amalgamated to a new post of Senior Landscape Planning and Development Officer thereby increasing flexibility across the unit and reducing the number of posts.</li> <li>• The posts of Assistant Landscape Planner and Assistant Landscape Architect are amalgamated to a new post of Landscape Planning and Development Officer thereby increasing flexibility across the unit and reducing the number of posts.</li> </ul> <p>A management (desktop) job evaluation exercise carried out on updated job descriptions has indicated the following grades:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Landscape Planning and Development Manager, PO 7</li> <li>- Senior Civil Engineering Officer, PO 3</li> <li>- Senior Landscape Planning and Development Officer, PO 3</li> <li>- Civil Engineering Officer, SO 2</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Landscape Planning and Development Officer, SO 2</li> <li>- Senior Woodland and Recreation Officer, PO 3</li> <li>- Woodland and Recreation Officer, SO 2</li> <li>- Woodland and Recreation Arboreal Officer, SO 1</li> </ul> <p>The review also recommends the deletion of 2 Industrial Placement Students and 1 currently vacant Assistant Architect from the structure thereby reducing the overall staffing establishment from 14 to 11.</p>
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<b>3.</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
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	<p><u>Finance</u> It is proposed to re-grade the posts within the Landscape Planning and Development Unit following a management led job evaluation exercise. The proposed new structure is attached as Appendix 2. The net cost of the proposed upgrades is £14,405. It is anticipated that this cost will be met by the savings generated from the deletion of 3 x posts from the current organisational structure (see section 2) and also from the termination of a number of agency contracts within the unit.</p> <p>The proposed change to grades have been incorporated into the 2012/2013 budget estimates.</p> <p><u>Human resources</u> Staff from the Landscape Planning and Development Unit and their trade union representatives have been consulted throughout the review process and all staff in substantive posts are in agreement with the proposed structure.</p>
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<b>4.</b>	<b>Equality and Good Relations Implications</b>
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<b>5.</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
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	Committee is asked to agree the proposed organisational structure and that work continues with staff and trade unions to implement the agreed structure.
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<b>6.</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
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	Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure responsible for implementation.
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<b>7.</b>	<b>Key to Abbreviations</b>
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	None.
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<b>8.</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
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	Appendix 1 Current organisational structure for Landscape Planning and Development Unit
	Appendix 2 Proposed organisational structure for Landscape Planning and Development Unit