



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Parks and Leisure Departmental Improvement Programme – Operational Reviews
Date:	9 August 2012
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
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1.	Relevant Background Information
	<p>As part of the Departmental improvement programme, operational efficiency reviews have been ongoing since January 2010 and have resulted in a number of recommendations being approved by committee including new management arrangements for Parks and Leisure operations and reviews of the Business Support function and Landscape Planning and Development Unit.</p> <p>Current reviews include a review of the Open Spaces and Active Living Unit (OSAL), operational efficiency in Leisure Services and a review of Belfast Zoo.</p> <p>Whilst the operational reviews of individual elements have been continuing, work has commenced on reviewing the department's senior management tier.</p> <p>This report proposes a way forward in the review of the senior management tier of the department and makes recommendations on the OSAL review.</p>

2.	Key Issues
2.1	Key Issues for Parks and Leisure Senior Management Tier <ul style="list-style-type: none">The structure of the Parks and Leisure department can be defined as having three functional areas of responsibility: Growth and

Development, Business Management and Operational Delivery.

- Each of these areas requires strong leadership and management to ensure effective delivery of members' ambitions and value for money services.
- Given the current priority for delivery of the investment programme and the significance of the Parks and Leisure agenda within that, it is proposed that priority is given to the Growth and Development strand with further work being undertaken to bring together the Parks and Leisure operations and to examine management of the Departments' commercial businesses, i.e. Belfast Castle, Malone House and Belfast Zoo.
- This work will seek to ensure the integrated management and planning of effective service delivery in support of Active Belfast and area based planning. Proposals on these functions will be brought to committee at a later date.
- Given the priority in relation to the growth and development strand it is proposed that a permanent senior management post of Growth and Development Manager is created to ensure the strategic management and oversight of delivering the development functions of the department as well as delivery of key strategic programmes of work (such as the Parks and Leisure elements of the Council's Investment Programme). It is vital that this new role ensures that the department is actively engaged with local communities and delivering to local needs through the effective use of our open space and leisure assets.
- Functions that will potentially come under this remit will be:
 - Policy and Business Development Unit
 - Leisure Development Unit
 - Open Spaces and Active Living Unit
 - Landscape Planning and Development Unit
 - Capital projects.
- It is proposed that once the Growth and Development Manager is appointed priority will be given to defining the structure to support the function.

2.2 Key Issues for Open Spaces and Active Living Review (OSAL):

The context of the OSAL review and detailed recommendations can be found in Appendix 1 and the current and proposed structure in Appendix 2.

- There have been a variety of reviews conducted over the past year on the monitoring and reporting of Facility Management Arrangements (FMA's) resulting in recommendations for much tighter controls of the FMA process. Much of the responsibility for the management of this

	<p>function lies with the Open Spaces and Active Living Manager; it is apparent however that support at an appropriate level is required to assist with the management of FMA's.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further to this, a recent study of the allotment service showed that while operational responsibility for allotments resides with the Community Parks Managers, there is a need for improved management and more effective and efficient processes in this area. • There are currently three Outdoor Leisure Officers carrying out an outdoor leisure function. There are however no substantive post holders in this role. Two of these are employed through an agency and the third officer, whilst a permanent member of staff, is covering this role on a temporary basis. The review has concluded that there is a need to put in place wider permanent roles. It is therefore proposed to cease the use of these agency staff and create two permanent posts with a broader remit relating to open spaces and active living – i.e. an Open Spaces and Active Living Officer and an Open Spaces and Active Living Co-ordinator • There is currently no substantive post holder in the post of Events Co-ordinator. • The emphasis of the unit has changed to become more focussed on delivering to the Active Belfast agenda and will fulfil a coordinating role for all outdoor recreation. As the marketing function of the unit has moved to the Policy and Business Development Unit the post of Marketing Officer will be deleted and replaced with the post of Events Officer. • This renders the post of Marketing Officer redundant and no suitable alternative employment currently exists in the organisation. Consequently, the option of voluntary redundancy has been discussed with the post holder and the Trade Union's and this has been accepted in the event that this structure is approved.
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3.	Resource Implications
3.1	<p><u>Finance</u></p> <p>The cost of creating a Development and Growth Manager is £56,695 (top of SCP 65) and will be funded from corporate resources repaid from departmental efficiency savings to be realised through an agreed action plan.</p> <p>The overall financial implications of the OSAL review are as follows:</p> <p>Cost of re-designating posts: £ Nil Cost of creating new post of Events Officer: £ 36,160 Total cost: £ 36,160</p> <p>Savings from deleting post of Marketing officer: £ 36,160 Net Cost: £Nil</p>

	<p>There is a one off cost of £70,806 for voluntary redundancy. This can be funded from existing departmental budgets. The payback period is 1.92 years and meets corporate criteria.</p> <p>3.2 <u>Human Resources</u></p> <p>Staff and Trade Unions have been consulted throughout the review process. We have an agreed position with the exception of the work which remains, namely to review the Biodiversity function, the Biodiversity Officer job description and structural position in the organisation. Interim arrangement for the line management of this post will be reviewed.</p> <p>All job descriptions within the open spaces and active living unit (and where appropriate job titles) will be refreshed to ensure that the posts are now more relevant to the unit's overall remit and further ensure that support is provided at the appropriate level.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that all affected post holders will be required to sign and agree amended job descriptions to take account of changes to roles and responsibilities and reporting lines.</p> <p>3.3 <u>Asset and Other Implications</u></p> <p>None</p>
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4.	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>Members are asked to approve :</p> <p>The creation and recruitment of Growth and Development Manager post The creation and recruitment of an Active Living and Open Spaces Officer post The creation of an Active Living and Open Spaces Coordinator post The deletion of the post of Marketing officer with the release of the post holder on VR The creation and recruitment of an Events Officer post. The Open Spaces and Active Living structure as appended at Appendix 2.</p>
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5.	<p>Decision Tracking</p> <p>Assistant Director Parks and Leisure</p>
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6.	<p>Key to Abbreviations</p>
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7.	Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 Context of OSAL Review Appendix 2 Current and proposed structures for the Open Spaces and Active Living Unit

Appendix 1

Context of OSAL Review

The review took place following the operational review of Business Support (Leisure) which recommended that responsibility for outdoor leisure bookings would become a remit of the business support function.

Outdoor Leisure is a function within the department which focuses on the planning and staffing of outdoor sports facilities for association football gaelic games, rugby, cricket, bowling etc. The operation of the Outdoor Leisure function was returned to Parks Services following the removal of the client/contract split and is under the management of the Principal Parks & Cemeteries Services Manager.

The responsibilities of the OSAL unit currently includes:

- The planning and delivery of events within parks including fun days in parks across the city and 3 main events per year; the Spring Fair, Rose Week and the Autumn Fair.
- Management and control of Facility Management Agreements.
- Management of the small grants scheme for events
- Booking of facilities – pitches, cricket and bowling.
- Statutory duties for maintaining access to the countryside
- Statutory duties for biodiversity including policy, practice and environmental education.

Current staffing establishment:

The Open Spaces and Active Living Unit currently consists of 7 permanent posts:

- 1 x Open Spaces and Active Living Manager,
- 1 x Biodiversity Officer,
- 1 x Countryside Officer,
- 1 x Marketing Officer,
- 1 x Marketing and Events Co-ordinator,
- 2 x Industrial Placement Students.

OSAL Recommendations

- Following the review of business support within the leisure centres, capacity was identified amongst business support staff thereby giving the department an opportunity to provide much needed administrative support to parks management.

- Having given consideration to the duties set out in the post of Biodiversity Officer it would appear that the function of Biodiversity may have more synergy elsewhere in the department. A further review of this function is required.
- The post of Countryside Officer interfaces effectively with other posts within the department specifically the Sports Development Unit and Community Parks Outreach Managers. There is a requirement to further support the Open Spaces and Active Living Manager who has overall responsibility for the delivery of an environmental education programme.
- It will be required to delete the two existing posts of Outdoor Leisure Officer (scale 6) as the booking of outdoor pitches has been reallocated to the Business Support function and evidence suggests that support is required a more appropriate level to assist the Open Spaces and Active Living Manager with FMA's and effective management of allotments. Therefore the proposal is to create a new post of Open Spaces and Active Living Officer at SO2, and a new post of Open Spaces and Active Living Co-ordinator at Scale 5. These posts will fully support the Open Spaces and Active Living Manager and take a lead role as appropriate in the management of FMA's, the management of allotments, assisting with the organisation of events and other participatory activities and ensure the development and maintenance of appropriate IT systems for the unit.
- Following the recent review of Business Support provision within Leisure, two new posts of Business Assistant were created. It was agreed that one of these will service the Ozone Leisure Complex and take responsibility for the booking of outdoor leisure pitches. This responsibility was previously carried out by one of the Outdoor Leisure Officers. The reallocation of this function to business support permits the two new posts mentioned above to focus on the wider remit of Open Spaces and Active Living.
- The post of Countryside Officer should be renamed to better reflect the responsibilities of the post. We recommend the title of Outdoor Recreation and Education Officer as this takes account of responsibility for education programmes such as 'Watch This Space'. The JD will also be refreshed to reflect the important responsibility for networking with other officers in the department including the new participation posts within Leisure Services.
- There is no longer a requirement for a Marketing Officer post within Open Spaces and Active Living as this function now comes under the remit of the Policy and Business Development Unit.
- The post of Marketing Officer would be deleted from the structure as the responsibility for this function has moved to the Policy and Business Development Unit. A new post of Events Officer would be created. This new post will have responsibility for the development, management and delivery of a comprehensive, customer and community focused programme of events. This programme of events will not be limited to annual parks events e.g. Spring and Autumn Fair and Rose Week but will include the establishment of regular programmes, schemes, fun days and events to encourage the use of open spaces and promote active living across all Parks and Leisure facilities.

- The post of Events Officer will have accountability for providing advice and guidance regarding events and act as first point of contact for existing and potential customers.
- This post will also ensure that all relevant permissions are sought and that health and safety requirements, licences etc. are in place.
- The post of Events Co-ordinator has been refreshed to fully support the new post of Events Officer e.g. to assist with the development, management and delivery of a comprehensive, customer and community focused programme of events. It is anticipated that this post will now be externally recruited.