



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Parks and Leisure Departmental Improvement Programme – Operational Reviews
Date:	13 September 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 2012 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
	<p>Key Issues for Parks and Leisure Senior Management Tier</p> <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 and further work being undertaken to bring together the Parks and Leisure operations and to examine management of the Department's 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 for 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.

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 Agreements (FMAs) resulting in recommendations for much tighter controls of the FMA process.
- The proposed changes are a key element of an action plan to improve the process which is being monitored by the Council's Audit Panel. Much of the responsibility for the management of this function lies within 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 FMAs.
- 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.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 an 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 the 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 Unions and this has been accepted in the event that this structure is approved.
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3	<p>Resource Implications</p> <p><u>Finance</u></p> <p>The cost 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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of re-designating posts: £ Nil • Cost of creating new post of Events Officer: £36,160 • Total cost: £36,160 • Savings from deleting Marketing Officer post: £36,160 • Net Cost: £Nil <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><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 arrangements for the line management of this post will be reviewed.</p>
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	<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><u>Asset and Other Implications</u> None</p>
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4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
	There are no equality implications.

5	Recommendations
	<p>Members are asked to approve :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

6	Decision Tracking
	Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure

7	Key to Abbreviations
	<p>OSAL – Open Spaces and Active Living FMA – Facility Management Agreement</p>

8	Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix1 – Context OSAL Review Appendix2 – Current and proposed structures for the Open Spaces and Active Living Unit</p>