



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Parks & Leisure Departmental Plan 2012-13 update
Date:	6 December 2012
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
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1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide a six month progress report on the 2012-13 departmental plan highlighting key achievements during this period and to ask for Members input into the development of the 2013-14 departmental plan.
1.2	The Parks and Leisure departmental plan 2012-13 was approved by Committee on 14 June 2012 with agreement that a six month update report would be presented to Committee at the mid-year point. This update is for the period April 2012 to October 2012.

2	Key Issues
2.1	The departmental plan describes how the Parks and Leisure Department's purpose, vision, values, objectives, activities and key performance indicators for the year 2012-13 complement those outlined in the Corporate Plan and the Investment Programme. Project, Programme and Activity update 2012-13
2.2	Lead officers were asked to provide updates on the status of their service/unit projects, programmes and activities under each of the departmental objectives, providing commentary if necessary. As many of the department's projects involve land re-development, repair and improvement, a number of the projects continue to feature on an ongoing basis in the department's plan.

Progress and achievement against Departmental and Corporate Investment projects, programmes and activities are summarised under each of the corporate strategic themes below.

Investment Programme

2.3

Leadership

In the Parks and Leisure Department this theme is about partnering and leading. The Parks and Leisure Department takes a strategic lead role on behalf of the Council in working with other partner organisations and communities to realise the city's full potential as outlined in the Investment Programme 2012-15.

2.4

A range of strategic capital enhancement and programming projects have been progressing successfully. A plan for the management and maintenance of the **Connswater Community Greenway** sites was submitted to the relevant Connswater Coordination Group for this year and is now being implemented. A risk workshop on the project was held in October 2012. The procurement of the design team for the **Tropical Ravine** is complete and work is underway on procuring other services. The **Mary Peters Track** and field are complete and have been handed over to the Council. The upgrade work is due for completion in January 2013 and due to open in April 2013. The department continues to deliver year two actions of **the Playing Pitches Strategy**. A design team has been appointed and a phased approach for the construction of playing pitches has been agreed by the Parks and Leisure Committee in February. Initial construction work began in September 2013 and final completion is due in October 2015. Work is also ongoing in the development of a delivery process around the £750,000 fund for the enhancement of educational facilities in order to increase community usage.

2.5

The Department continues to manage a robust plan of work relating to strategic **cemetery and cremation** development in Belfast. In line with the Investment Programme 2012 - 15 work is ongoing in relation to reviewing the options for renewing **the leisure estate**.

Additional Corporate Priorities

2.6

Better care for Belfast's environment

In the Parks and Leisure Department this theme is about protecting and linking the city through its parks, open spaces and leisure centres. In protecting our sites which are important for biodiversity, we will help to deliver a cleaner and greener environment for the city's ratepayers.

2.7

In 2012-13 the department achieved 3 new Green Flags and retained 7 – bringing the total achievement to a record 10. The development of management plans for two additional sites: Grove playing fields and Lagan Meadows are now underway. In partnership with the Roads Service and the Department for Social Development we have secured funding for new street tree planting and we are currently working on new project management agreements. The department is developing capacity to deliver improvements in dog services and dog control in parks in line with new Clean Neighbourhoods Legislation.

	<p>An update on the implementation of Dog Control Orders was brought to the Parks and Leisure Committee in November 2012 outlining the proposed implementation of two further dog control orders in April 2013.</p>
2.8	<p>Better opportunities for success across the city In the Parks and Leisure Department this theme is about physical regeneration in local neighbourhoods and the department playing a key role in the local economy.</p> <p>The department continues to develop means of using our facilities and open spaces, including cemeteries, to enrich the city's cultural, tourism and heritage offering including flagship city park events such as Rose Week, Spring fair and heritage trails.</p>
2.9	<p>Our operational staff continue to work with the Departmental Portfolio and Programme Manager to develop local communities' programmes for the Connswater Community Greenway, Dunville and Woodvale Park with anticipated commencement in June 2013. Discussions are currently ongoing with local community representatives in order to implement future management arrangements. In November 2012 the Parks and Leisure Committee agreed the operational approach and structure for implementation at the Belfast Zoo over the next 6 months.</p>
2.10	<p>Better support for people and communities In the Parks and Leisure Department this theme is about participation and lifestyle. We want to make best use of our assets to contribute to creating safer, healthier, engaged and more active communities.</p>
2.11	<p>The department will continue to provide programmes and services to make people feel safer and encourage people to lead healthier and more active lifestyles. The Park Warden Pilot plan was produced and was formally launched in April 2012. The Parks and Leisure Committee agreed a report in November 2012, which outlined the current position, the progress to date of the Park Warden Pilot and recommended that the role of Park Warden becomes a permanent role within the Department.</p>
2.12	<p>A range of Olympic activities were held including city hall taster sessions in eight sports to coincide with local Olympians on Live Site Screen. A paralympic flame festival was held at Andersonstown Leisure Centre and a sports festival at Orangefield Park. An opening ceremony event was also held at Ormeau Park in which 400 attendees participated.</p>
2.13	<p>We have managed and maintained 10 leisure centres and maintained more than 1,100 hectares of open spaces and delivered a range of health and wellbeing programmes and activities in order to reduce health inequalities across the city. Participation levels include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 12,725 participants (including 7872 females, 2744 disabled and 1,895 older people) have been involved in the Active Communities Programme (which involves 8235 hrs coaching); ▪ 155 attendees attended the annual sports conference; ▪ 19,400 children registered on the summer scheme programmes - an increase of 40% since 2008; ▪ 3250 patients referred to the Healthwise scheme;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2275 patients completed the Cardiac Rehabilitation programme; ▪ 345 children participate in the Activ8 programme; ▪ 2,977 children participated in the Make a Splash scheme; ▪ 200 Young people took part in Teenage Kicks 2012, with five schools participating including two special needs schools; ▪ Delivered coach education training to over 161 coaches and volunteers; ▪ A total of 27 clubmark clubs have been accredited for good practice management, safety and quality sports opportunities; ▪ Hosted 2,300 children at 14 Parks Fun days to promote exercise; ▪ Introduced the parks 'Mile Walk' across 8 parks attracting 960 participants; ▪ Over 650 people participated in a wide range of urban sports events at Bridges Urban Sports Park.
2.14	<p>The Parks and Leisure Department have also delivered the Primary Schools Athletics Programme in June 2012 and extended the "Park Run" to include Falls Park. We have also facilitated two 'Try It' themed sports events to date with 460 children involved in a host of sporting opportunities linked to our clubmark clubs and partner sports organisations. The department has facilitated the delivery of community programmes and activities through Support for Sport grants, including the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Large Development grants – 13 grants of £5,000; ▪ Small Development grants - 150 successful awards totalling £140,000; ▪ Hospitality fund- 22 awards totalling £23,200 allocated. £1,800 remaining; and ▪ 27 Elite athletes offered support ranging from £250 to £1,000.
2.15	<p>The draft Growing Communities strategy has completed a 12 week consultation phase and the final strategy will be presented to the Parks and Leisure Committee in February 2013. An internal operational steering group has been set up to take forward the internal management and operational requirements of the Growing Communities strategy. A small Growing Communities implementation group will be created, consisting of delivery partners who will monitor and review the delivery of the strategy.</p> <p>A draft boxing strategy for the city has also been endorsed by the Parks and Leisure Committee and is currently undergoing a period of public consultation which will close on the 8 February 2013.</p>
2.16	<p>Better Services</p> <p>In the Parks and Leisure Department this theme is about delivering a proficient service and listening to our customers. As part of the Parks and Leisure Improvement programme we will continue to improve the structure and alignment of parks and leisure services. Our new customer-focused agenda and the implementation of our customer charter has enabled us to deliver our services to the highest standards. Further work is ongoing to develop robust mechanisms to measure performance in this area.</p> <p>The Department will continue to deliver service improvements right across the department. Operational reviews identifying and delivering improvements and efficiencies in both Parks and Leisure Services are currently underway.</p>
2.17	<p>An Organisation fit to lead and serve</p> <p>This theme enable the Parks and Leisure Department to establish clear</p>

	<p>defined processes and procedures of working, building on progress made in raising standards across the department. As a department we also focus on improving efficiencies, financial management and effectiveness in managing our human resources. It is important that the department supports staff through investment in training personal development and performance management to improve our skills based.</p>
2.18	<p>Human Resources</p> <p>Managing Conflict training has been developed and is being delivered to all Managers across the department. Customer complaints and Data Protection awareness training has been developed and is being rolled out across the Department. An absence improvement plan and a stress action plan have also been developed and implemented by the department.</p> <p>The PDP process and departmental induction has been developed and implemented and we are currently in the process of developing Community Park Supervisors IT skills training course - to be delivered by March 2013. The department is currently in the process of implementing the recommendations stemming from operational reviews including the driver/gardeners, outdoor leisure and leisure management reviews.</p>
2.19	<p>Finance</p> <p>The department continues to identify opportunities and implement initiatives to maximise income most notably through launching a new Boost pricing policy to increase leisure membership. We have successfully delivered procurement management training session for operational managers and completed a procurement plan for the year. We have improved governance and engagement around financial monitoring and reporting by operational managers. The draft revenue estimates have been submitted for 2013 -14.</p> <p>The department continually strives to source, secure and manage external funding from a variety of sources, recent successes include the following: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Commission Through the 2012 Preparatory action: European action on sports we have secured €20,000 for the WAP walking people project and €16,000 for the promoting urban sports for all project. • Heritage Lottery Fund We have secured a total of £4,450 for biodiversity Olympics project and £11,650 for the hedgerow hopes project. • The department has also submitted applications to the Reconciliation / Anti-sectarianism fund and the European Union Peace III Programme which are pending outcome at the moment.
2.20	<p>Policy, Planning and Performance</p> <p>The department continues to develop, monitor and review its business planning and performance management processes in line with corporate priorities and linked to the corporate outcomes framework and consultation and engagement strategy. A planning and evaluation framework was been agreed by the Departmental Management Team (DMT) in October 2012. This framework suggests a new set of more relevant outcome/impact measures for the department to measure going forward in 2013-14 and work will progress in the new year to establish systems and process to support this</p>

	framework.
2.21	<p>Information Management</p> <p>The Parks and Leisure Department have upgraded the TLMS system used in leisure centres to also manage three of our customer facing services, namely indoor leisure, pitches and event bookings and the zoo and work continues on the rollout of clockwise. Bespoke reporting software has been developed to assist in the provision of accurate and relevant management information. The department are piloting the use of Qlickview as a reporting tool to gain effective management information on absence, agency use and overtime. An electronic booking and managements system has also been introduced within Bereavement Admin. The system has allowed us to streamline processes and, it is intended, will lead to the development of improvements such as online booking for funeral directors.</p>
2.22	<p>Communication and Engagement</p> <p>The Parks and Leisure Department have improved awareness of and compliance with the council's communications policies both internally and with our partners. This has been achieved through educational sessions with our staff and by highlighting our corporate standards to partners. This year to date we have delivered £30,000 of modernised signage in our Green Flag parks and we are working with the Parks Quality Manager to ensure that a tender is put in place so that this process continues as required.</p> <p>We have delivered several internal staff newsletters this year and made greater use of the Getting People Connected screens located in remote venues. These have been well received by staff. The Parks and Leisure Department are currently carrying out Leisure product research and development with a view to a Boost brand refresh. The main purpose of this project is to review the current Boost leisure marketing approach and develop a strategic plan to ensure effective marketing across Belfast.</p>
2.23	<p>Performance update 2012-13</p> <p>Work is ongoing on a revised departmental planning and evaluation framework. This framework defines a draft set of new outcome/impact measures for the department to measure in 2013-14. The department is currently piloting some of the evaluation techniques in order to go live in April 2013. A snapshot of the Department's performance has been outlined below. The KPIs illustrate the value that Parks and Leisure deliver for the city of Belfast.</p>
2.24	<p>Quality Up</p> <p>The Department has successfully achieved 10 Green Flags making it the best performing local authority in Northern Ireland. Green Flags are a measure of high standards of quality, management and community engagement in our parks and open spaces. Provided and maintained quality standards for the public at 135 sport pitches, 74 playgrounds, 12 bowling pavilions, 3 cemeteries and a crematorium, a golf course and an adventure playground.</p>
2.25	<p>Visits Up</p> <p>The Department has provided services to more than 9,444 'Boost' members at our leisure centres. We have attracted over 202,000 visitors to Belfast Zoo</p>

2.26	<p>and almost 104,000 people have participated in events organised by our parks. Provided a service for almost 1 million indoor and outdoor leisure facilities users. Almost 96,000 people participated in outreach and health programmes, delivered by the Department throughout Belfast.</p> <p>Planning for 2013 - 14</p> <p>Work has already commenced on the development of a draft departmental plan and improvement programme for 2013 -14. It is proposed that a draft will be presented to the Committee in Feb-March 2013. Key priorities for action will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continuing with the Parks and Leisure Improvement Programme to modernise service delivery in line with customer expectations; • implementation of the actions within the “Growing Communities”, “Boxing Strategy” and the Active Belfast Strategy; • retaining 12 green flags (current 10 plus 2 in 2013) and attaining 2 additional in 2014; • ongoing development and regeneration of our parks and open spaces; • delivery of local neighbourhood programmes and events; • agile local programme development and diversionary provision to deal with anti-social behaviour in and around our sites; • active development of friends groups in a number of sites. <p>This list is not exhaustive and input from Members would be welcome.</p>
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3	Resource Implications
	<p>There are no additional resource implications at this time. The 2012 –13 Departmental Plan will be developed in line with the department’s allocated budget.</p>

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
	<p>Where necessary all projects, programmes and activities contained within the Departmental Plan have been subject to equality screening in line with the Council’s processes.</p>

5	Recommendations
	<p>Members are asked to note this update report for the 2012-13 period and advise if there is anything they feel should be addressed in the draft departmental plan for 2013-14.</p>

6	Decision Tracking

	There is no decision tracking attached to this report.
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7	Key to Abbreviations
	Departmental Management Team (DMT) Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

8	Documents Attached
	None