



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Summer Scheme Review
Date:	10 January 2013
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard
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1	Relevant Background Information
	<p>Each year, summer schemes are organised in leisure centres providing a programme of sporting and play activities to young people over the months of July and August.</p> <p>The summer schemes are extremely popular with almost all places across all centres being filled. All summer scheme users benefit from a subsidised service, funded through the rates.</p> <p>A full evaluation of the summer schemes has been undertaken by a working group led by the Leisure Improvement Manager. The issues which the group have addressed include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staffing• Registration• Publication and Communications• Operational Issues <p>This report details the recommendations for improvement of the summer schemes.</p>

2	Key Issues
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Staffing

In the past the summer scheme staff have been made up from a combination of existing centre staff plus agency staff providing a number of coordinators and support workers. To provide better services and improved staff development it is proposed for the 2013 summer schemes, and for future holiday schemes (including Halloween, Easter and Christmas), that the recruitment of the staff is brought in house through a casual recruitment initiative. There will be an initial recruitment cost for this exercise which can be covered by the department and will realise a saving in staff costs of £15,000 per annum. The recruitment exercise will support the objectives of the investment programme by creating Council posts. The recruitment process will start in February 2013 with a target completion date of mid April 2013 to allow for training and Access NI checks.

Registration

Recent years have shown that the Grove wellbeing centre is a particularly popular summer scheme. Parents have queued for places overnight and places have been allocated within hours of registration opening. This is the only centre with such popularity therefore a proposal for a pilot pre-registration scheme has been developed for the Grove only at this stage. The purpose of this exercise is to avoid the potential long overnight for queues. It will also allow staff to allocate as many places as possible to families. A pre-registration form will be available online and in the centre. Parents can then request a place for up to four children at the scheme. The pre-registration form can be posted in a box in the centre or submitted online on a specific date. This is not a first come first served service. On closure of the pre-registration, staff will then allocate places to the children.

The criteria for allocation of places will include allocating places firstly to BT15 residents, this is the immediate surrounding area of the Grove wellbeing Centre (Appendix 1). If places are still available they will be allocated to other rate payers of Belfast. In the unlikely event that after this stage places still remain they will be allocated to residents of other Council areas.

On applying this new geographical criteria and depending on demand, it may mean limiting the number of weeks per child to three or four weeks out of five to accommodate all the BT15 applicants. Consideration is also being given to bringing in more leaders and therefore increasing the number of places on this scheme depending on the uptake of the pre-registration pilot exercise.

When the demand is understood and has been assessed, those successful at the pre-registration stage will be invited to attend the centre to register their child at a specific time. The usual photographic and address ID will be needed.

The pre-registration process for the Grove will be open during the second week in April following the Easter Break. The full registration for all centres will then take place during the last week in April 2013 giving parents the option to apply for another centre. The process for pre-registration will be subject to evaluation to assess its effectiveness and to refine it for future years.

Publication and Communication

A mapping exercise was undertaken this year to show the addresses of the children attending the summer scheme in relation to any particular centre (Appendix 2 - Map attached). This exercise has highlighted that for many of the centres the children

attending the schemes are not from the immediate local area of the centre, with the exception of Whiterock. In order to attract more local children a coordinated and collaborative advertising campaign will be launched. The participation team will also engage with local schools and community organisations to attract local children.

Operational

The review has highlighted that where there is greater demand for places on schemes, employing additional staff could facilitate greater numbers. Although the ratios of children to adults is somewhat restrictive there is some potential for increasing numbers of places according to demand.

Last year a pilot sunrise club, accepting children from 8.30am was trialled in a number centres. The uptake was low and the evaluation forms showed that many parents were not aware of the sunrise club. With a coordinated advertising scheme and a specific programme for the sunrise club it is projected that higher numbers of children could be attracted. It is proposed that four sunrise clubs are planned for 2013, one in each area of the City, North, South, East and West.

The age limit for most schemes is eight years however in 2012, two schemes accepted children from five years old. This attracted many more children to the schemes. It is proposed that four schemes will accept children from five years of age in 2013. Again, one in each geographical area of the City.

Through the work of the Council’s internal summer intervention coordination group it is evident that our centres could provide a scheme to older children, particularly later in the day between 5pm and 7pm. At this time centres are typically quiet in the summer months. Therefore a pilot youth scheme is proposed for four centres, across the City. The scheme would be aimed at 12-15 year olds.

By increasing the numbers of children coming to the summer schemes by attracting younger and older children for a longer duration the staff costs will increase. These costs can be offset by additional income and by using the savings made in bringing the staff recruitment internal (£15,000).

Shankill Leisure Centre

During the month of August 2013 Shankill Leisure Centre will be used to host World Police and Fire Games events. The summer scheme in Shankill usually runs for five weeks following the 12 July holidays. However for 2013 only the summer scheme will run throughout July for five weeks from Monday 1 July – Friday 2 August 2013.

3	Resource Implications
	<p><u>Financial</u> The department will realise a saving of £15,000 per by bringing the recruitment of staff in house. The additional £15,000 will be used to provide additional staff for the sunrise club and pilot youth scheme.</p> <p>Recruitment costs will be covered by the Department within existing budgets</p>

	<p><u>Human Resources</u> Additional management of staff by centre managers</p> <p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u> None</p>
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4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
	<p>The alterations in the registration and selection processes will be subject to the council's existing equality screening process.</p> <p>Good Relations have been consulted regarding the revision in the Grove pre-registration scheme in that the summer scheme is available firstly to the local community of the centre, BT15.</p>

5	Recommendations
	<p>Members are asked to note the contents of the report and approve the proposed changes to the registration and operation of the summer schemes including;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A pilot pre-registration scheme for the Grove 2. Allocation of places on the Grove summer scheme firstly to BT15 residents, Belfast rate payers and others in this order 3. Four schemes will have sunrise clubs (N,S,E,W) 4. Four schemes will accept children from five years old (N,S,E,W) 5. A pilot youth scheme for four centres (N,S,E,W)

6	Decision Tracking
	<p>A review report will be provided to the Committee on the revised registration before the summer recess. An evaluation report will be provided to the Committee following the 2013 summer schemes.</p>

7	Key to Abbreviations
	None

8	Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1 - Map of BT15 and Belfast area</p> <p>Appendix 2 - Map of scheme users addresses</p>