Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	**Parks and Leisure Departmental Improvement Programme – Operational Reviews**
Date:	14 February 2013
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure

1.	**Relevant Background Information**
	The Parks and Leisure improvement programme was initiated in January 2010 and focused on building capacity and delivering better services and better outcomes for communities in Belfast. The approach centred on:

1. reviewing management arrangements and improving operational efficiency and performance
2. bringing the Parks and Leisure functions of the department together to integrate community development and to work more closely in planning and service delivery.
2.

The improvement programme comprised a number of work streams; Parks Improvement, Leisure Services Improvement, Review of Business Support, and an emerging Development Strand made up of policy, planning, development and community focussed services. Given the scale of the reviews the following phased approach to streamlining management arrangements and achieving operational efficiency was adopted :

Phase I
- Agreement and implementation of the Parks Management operational structural tier; and
- Agreement and implementation of Parks and Leisure Business Support management tier.

Phase II
- Operational review of Parks and Leisure Business Support including the leisure centre staff;
- Parks operational review to include: the review of the role of Team Leaders or "Parks Supervisors"; review of boundaries and numbers of staff; requirements for driving and playground inspections; development of processes; quality monitoring; and implementation of systems.
- Operational review of the Outdoor Leisure function

- Development of a Parks Community Resource (i.e. Community ~~Park~~ Warden);
- Review of the estates function including Belfast Castle and Malone House (this will include the exploration of a coordinated estates/commercial function across the Parks and Cemeteries Service);
- Review of the Development function of Parks and Leisure
- Review of Bereavement Services
- Review of Customer service and investment in training
- Establishment of a staff development programme to support the implementation of change and including investment in leadership.

Phase III
- Review of the management strand within Leisure Services; and
- Review of the operational strand in Leisure Services
- Review of operation at Roselawn Crematorium
- Review of Landscape Planning and Development Unit
- Review of Marketing and Communications
- Review of operations at Belfast Zoo
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2.	Key Issues
2.1 2.2	• **Phase 1** was completed in January 2010 with agreed management side and trade union positions on the way forward. Proposals have been implemented with the establishment within existing resource of City Park Managers, Community Park Managers and Outreach Managers • **Phase II** has been completed with the exception of the review of the estates function including Belfast Castle and Malone House and the operational review of playground inspections. • Significant improvement has been realised in the delivery of the Parks function and the service has in the last three years achieved 10 Green Flag awards which reflects the improvement and high quality of the service. • The review of the Development Strand now referred to as Neighbourhood and Development has commenced with the appointment of the Neighbourhood and Development Manager in January 2013. Given the priority for delivery of the investment programme and the significance of the Parks and Leisure agenda within that, priority will be given to this review with further work being undertaken to bring together the Parks and Leisure operations and to establish management of the Departments' commercial businesses, i.e. Belfast Castle, Malone House and Belfast Zoo through the appointment of a Commercial Manager. • 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 • The review of the OSAL unit is currently being implemented and the review of the Biodiversity function which was outstanding from the OSAL review will be completed in April 2013. • The review of playground inspections as part of the operational efficiency review is ongoing and will be reported to committee at a later date.
2.3	• **Phase III** has been completed with the exception of the operational review of

	Leisure which now forms part of the transformation of the function under the Strategic Review of Leisure.

3.	**Resource Implications**
	Finance Summary of financial implications to date: Phase I Deletion of 7 posts including 2 business support posts with a net saving of £217,685 per year. Deletion of Parks and Cemeteries Senior Manager and Leisure Manager posts and the creation of an Assistant Director post resulting in a net saving of £50, 797 after an initial payback period of 1.6 years. The operational review of driving requirement in the Parks function has resulted in a net saving of £39,730. Phase II Deletion of 2 posts with the creation of a new Open Spaces and Active Living Coordinator and Quality Manager giving a net saving of £43,018 after a payback period of 2.13 years. The value of the proposed new Park Warden role and Team Leader role resulted in an increase of approximately £40,000 on operational staff costs which is accommodated within existing budgets. Increased capacity at Roselawn Crematorium cost £100,000 but will be paid for in year one of operation. Growth in income in the first quarter of operation is £55k, however it should be noted that this is partly due to the increase in crematorium changes. Phase III After covering costs of reviewed posts and payback of 1.71 years deletion of 3 Leisure management posts with a saving of £140,485 and deletion of one temporary Leisure Centre Manager post saving £51,664. A management led job evaluation of Landscape Planning and Development Unit resulted in a number of posts being upgraded with a net cost of £14,405. The cost was met by the savings generated from the deletion of 3 x posts from the structure and also from the termination of a number of agency contracts within the unit. The cost of creating a Neighbourhood and Development Manager was £56,695 and was funded from corporate resources repaid from departmental efficiency savings to be realised through an agreed action plan. The financial implications of the OSAL review were as follows: Cost of re-designating posts: £ Nil Cost of creating new post of Events Officer: £ 36,160 Total cost: £ 36,160 Savings from deleting post of Marketing officer: £ 36,160 Net Cost: £Nil

As part of the OSAL review there was a one off cost of £70,806 for voluntary redundancy. This was funded from existing departmental budgets. The payback period is 1.92 years and met with corporate criteria.

The Zoo review financial implications were as follows:

Cost of redesignating posts	£14,358
Cost of creating new posts	£255, 858
Savings from deleting posts	£106,447
Total cost	£163,769

The Zoo operation has been dependant on agency staff at a cost per annum of £213,088. These agency costs have been met from direct employee costs and are included in the revenue estimates for 2013/14 which will cover the cost of new posts however agency costs will need to be tightly managed going forward.

The Zoo review has contributed to the Council's commitment laid out in the investment programme to create job opportunities in particular at basic entry level.

Human Resources

Staff and Trade Unions have been consulted throughout the review process and an agreed position on proposals has been achieved as they have been developed and brought forward to committee.

Asset and Other Implications

None

Recommendations

Members are asked to note the updated position on the departmental improvement programme.

Decision Tracking

Assistant Director Parks and Leisure

Key to Abbreviations

OSAL – Open Spaces and Active Living

Documents Attached

None