

# Parks and Leisure Department



Internal document



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## 1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Corporate Plan embodies what the council intends to achieve from 2012-15. It is ambitious yet realistic and demonstrates how Members' are committed to improving quality of life for everyone who lives in, works in and visits Belfast. It is based upon an assessment of need in the city, the views of residents on what the council's priorities should be and a commitment to strong political and executive leadership at both a city wide and neighbourhood level.
- 1.2 While the Corporate Plan focuses on issues which cut across Council departments, it also reflects the importance of the quality of the vital services that we provide on a daily basis.
- 1.3 The corporate plan is illustrated in figure 1 below, showing our key priorities for the city over the next 3 years are:
- Leadership
  - Environment
  - Economy
  - People & Communities
  - Improving our Services

**Fig 1: Corporate Value Creation Map**



1.4 This Departmental Plan describes how the Parks and Leisure Department's actions and targets for 2013/14 complement the Corporate Plan. This Plan sets the strategic direction for the department and will ensure focused and effective management of the department by the Committees and senior managers. It provides explicit links between core departmental activity and corporate strategy.

1.5 Preparations are well underway for the reform of local government, which will take place by April 2015.

The Local Government Reorganisation Bill is set to be introduced to the Assembly in the coming months and there is already a significant programme of work being undertaken by all departments to prepare the organisation for the changes ahead. The Parks and Leisure Departmental Plan includes preparations for this work but once the legislation is introduced into the Assembly, there may be further actions which will need to be considered. Any additional actions will be incorporated into the Departmental Plan and updates will be provided to Committee accordingly.

1.6 Under the council's Scheme of Delegation, the Director of Parks and Leisure has been given the delegated authority to undertake the activities as outlined in section 6. Progress update reports will be submitted to the Parks and Leisure Committee twice yearly.

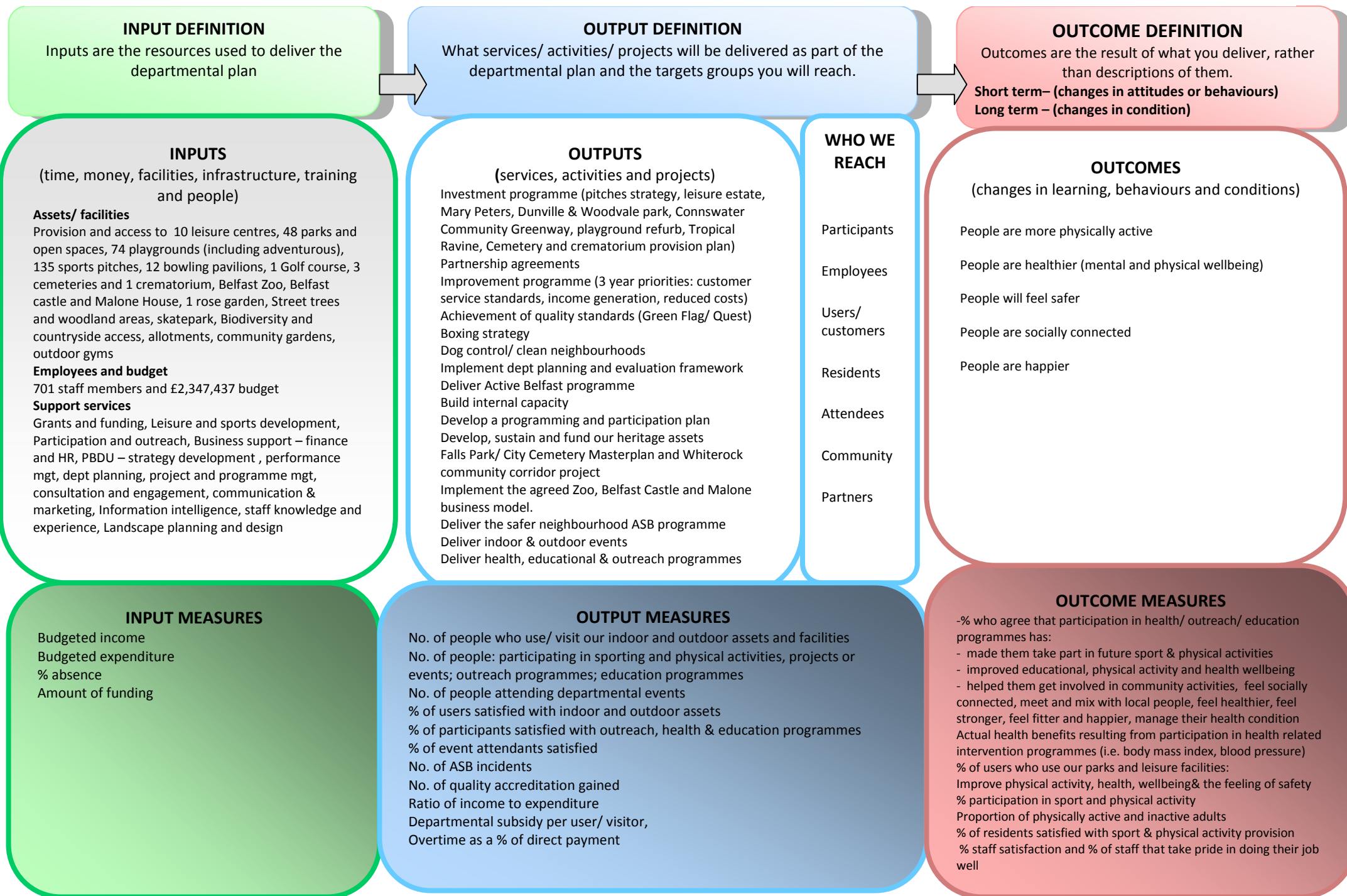
1.7 For the 2013-14 period, the Director of Parks and Leisure intends to use this authority to deliver the departmental plan, implementing all the activities outlined in section 6 (Pg 13-21) and as well as any additional related activities. In particular the Director intends to use delegated authority to:-

- implement those actions derived from the departmental improvement programme;
- authorise unforeseen or reactive events in any parks or leisure facility in accordance with the events policy;
- engage any relevant consultancy expertise required to deliver the actions outlined in Section 6 of the plan subject to adherence to the Council's procurement protocols and the necessary budgetary allocation having been made;
- set nominal entrance fees or charges or waive fees for the Department's activities or events in those cases where an appropriate case has been made – e.g. summer schemes and interface programmes.
- approve charitable collections and fund raising activities of partner organisations who contribute to the achievement of the council's vision and objectives in Parks and Leisure facilities.

1.8 To support all the departmental planning and performance efforts, the Parks and Leisure Department will focus in 2013/14 on the introduction of a robust departmental planning and evaluation support framework (see fig 2). The rationale for this is to help provide an understanding of the value the Parks and Leisure Departmental vision creates for people, places and possibilities within Belfast and how these contribute to the achievement of departmental outcomes.

- 1.9 This work will also enable the Department to deliver improvements while providing the opportunity to get our house in order and align to the ongoing corporate work in relation to the following key areas of work, including:
- the development of a city and neighbourhood outcomes framework;
  - the finalisation of the corporate consultation and engagement strategy and framework;
  - the development of local area working and planning; and
  - the delivery of the corporate plan and investment programme.
- 1.10 The departmental planning and evaluation support framework will be used to:
- clearly define what the Parks and Leisure Department means by inputs, outputs and outcomes;
  - align with the corporate themes;
  - determine the contribution we make to input, outputs and outcomes as a Department;
  - identify the departmental projects, programmes and activities provided or supported in order to deliver inputs, outputs and outcomes, considering the linkages and connections between these;
  - identify HOW we measure our inputs, outputs and outcomes, and
  - how we develop the evidence base/ data sources around them.

**Fig 2: Departmental planning and evaluation summary template**



## 2.0 Corporate Values

Our corporate values are integral to the way in which the Council works. These values underpin everything that our councillors and employees do and the way the Council will deliver our objectives.

- **Focus on the needs of customers, foster a 'can-do' attitude and be problem solvers** - providing first class services which are responsive to citizens needs and continuing to ensure that the council is a place where things happen
- **Provide value for money and improve services** - delivering high quality, value for money services at all times and continually improving our services
- **Work together** - working with our partners across Belfast to ensure that our combined efforts contribute to the continued success of our city
- **Respect each other, be fair, promote equality and good relations** - improving access to our services; valuing diversity, ensuring that everyone shares in the city's success and tackling discrimination in all its forms by treating all communities and people equally
- **Act sustainably** - using our resources effectively and efficiently and promoting the principle of sustainability in all our activities
- **Ensure the highest standards of health and safety** - maintaining the highest possible standards of health and safety at all times to ensure the Council protect our employees and all those who use our services
- **Value our employees** - continuing to support our employees to help them fulfill their potential

## 2.1 Parks & Leisure Departmental Vision & Values

The Parks and Leisure Department's purpose is 'To work with people across Belfast and its neighbourhoods to create an active, healthy and vibrant city'.

In Parks & Leisure our vision is that:

The **people** in Belfast will be active and healthy and everyone will use leisure, parks and open space facilities across the city. They will participate in local events and play an active part in community life.

We will have pride in our work and be passionate about our purpose. The city and its neighbourhoods will be attractive and vibrant **places** to live in, work in and visit. We will continue to engage with local people and partners to make sure that people are offered the best possible facilities and services in a safe environment.

We will protect the natural environment of Belfast and educate people on the importance of a green city. With our partners, we will work hard to connect the city and integrate our services. The range and quality of our facilities and services will be accessible and valued by citizens and visitors alike. Those who

use our services and participate in programmes and events will be very satisfied with their experience.

We will be flexible and efficient. We will prioritise community involvement, customer focus and value for money. We will strive to understand the city and identify innovative **possibilities** and creative solutions to deliver excellent services.

**We are about people, places and possibilities.**

### 3.0 Parks and Leisure values and purpose

3.1 The Department adheres to the council's values which state that we will:

- focus on the needs of customers, have a 'can-do' attitude, be problem solvers,
- provide value for money and improve services,
- work together,
- respect each other, be fair, promote equality and good relations,
- act sustainably,
- ensure the highest standards of health and safety, and
- value our employees.

3.2 In particular the Parks and Leisure Department will adhere to the values outlined below. These values will underpin everything we do:

**We are proud, passionate and professional:**

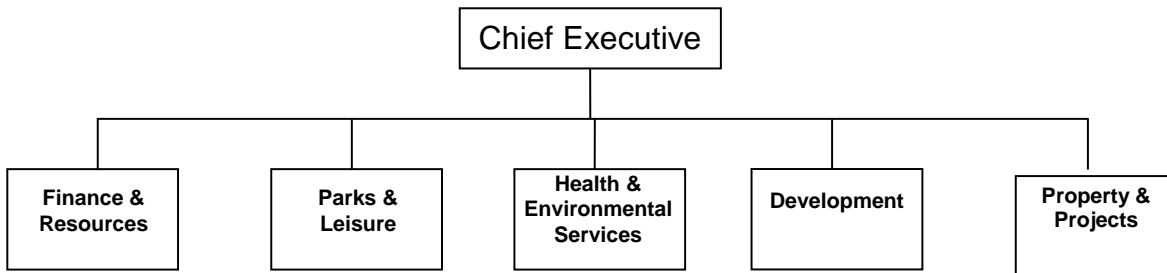
Values	What we mean
<b>Proud</b>	Having pride in our work, the city and our environment. Being open and transparent and developing trust by doing what we promise. Having a 'can do' attitude and being empowered to deliver.
<b>Passionate</b>	Being positive, active and helpful in working things out. Celebrating success and promoting our achievements. Treating each other with respect and dignity.
<b>Professional</b>	Learning and developing as employees. Being willing to accept responsibility for our work and performance. Communicating openly about expectations and decisions taken.



#### 4.0 Departmental structure

4.1 The Parks and Leisure Department is one of 6 departments which make up the officer structure of the council. The various departments are shown in Figure 3 below and Figure 4 sets out the Department's service structure.

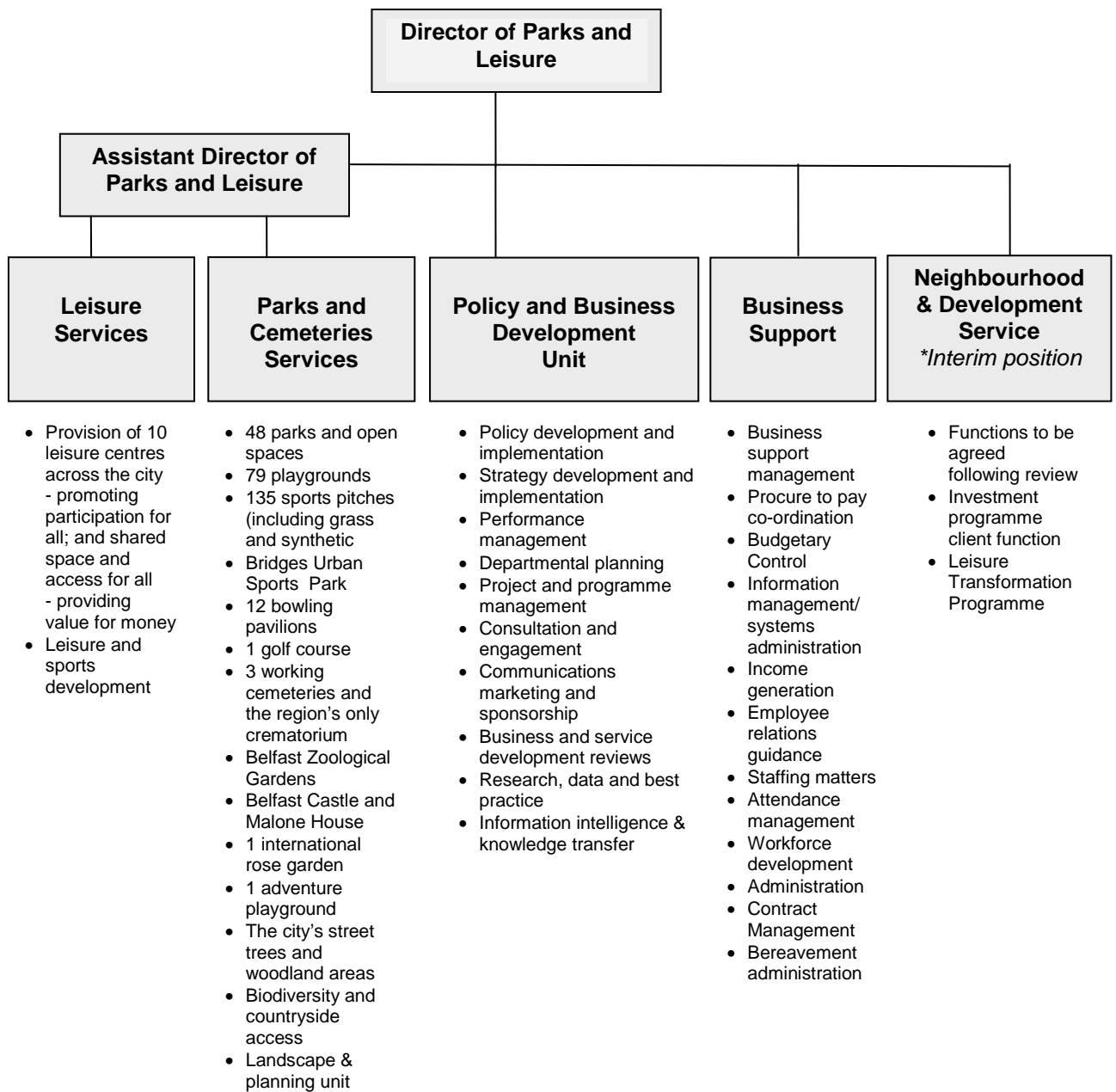
**Fig 3: Council Departments**



4.2 The Parks and Leisure department is responsible for approximately 20% of the council's annual expenditure. The department is responsible for parks and leisure centre provision, leisure and sports development, conservation, landscaping, Malone House and Belfast Castle, crematorium and cemetery services, Belfast Zoological Gardens, events and extensive partnership working.

The department employs 701 staff, or 611.80 FTEs (full time equivalent, as many staff are part-time or casual employees). The organisation chart on Figure 4 is the high level outline of the structure operating within the department:

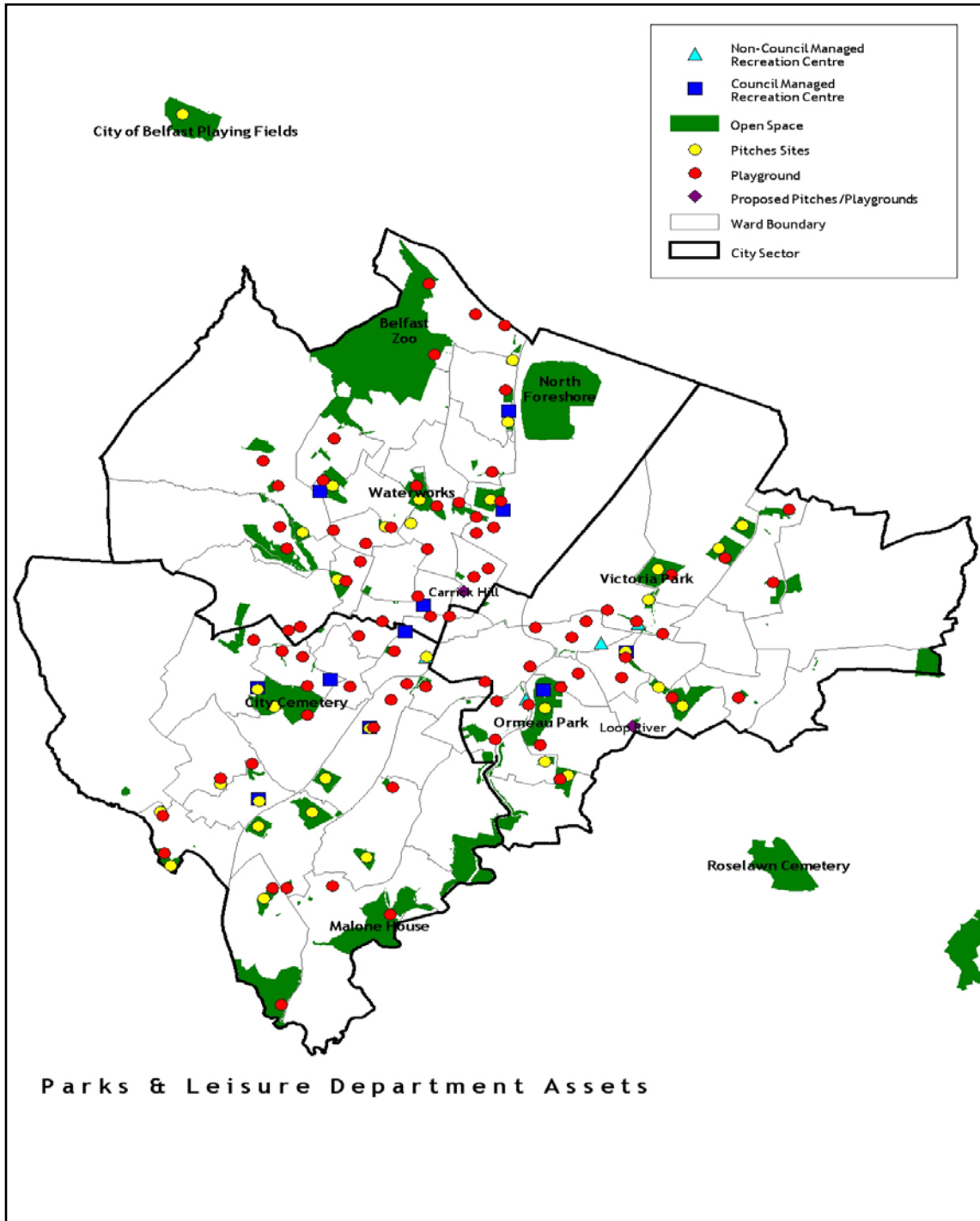
Fig 4: Parks and Leisure Department



***\*Parks and Leisure Department structure is currently under review.***

4.3 Our departmental assets are spread across the city and the majority of our staff are based in outlying areas either in our leisure centres, parks, pavilions, depots, and open spaces i.e. Malone House, Belfast Castle, crematorium and cemetery services and Belfast Zoological Gardens. A map of current Parks and Leisure assets are shown below in Figure 5.

Fig 5: Departmental assets



## 5.0 Departmental Budget

**PARKS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE****MAIN ITEMS OF ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE 2013/14**

	<b>Net Expenditure 2012/13</b>	<b>Net Expenditure 2013/14</b>
<b><u>Leisure</u></b>		
Leisure Centres	7,670,865	7,826,198
Leisure Development	549,243	642,992
<b><u>Parks and Cemeteries</u></b>		
Zoo	794,549	854,146
Landscape Planning and Development	1,847,757	1,935,307
Estates Mgt inc Belfast Castle/Malone House	252,215	339,042
P&C Development	177,906	138,893
P&C Services	1,284,501	1,204,121
Open Spaces & Active Living	546,894	658,461
Area East (Including Roselawn/Crem)	2,285,031	1,883,562
Area South West (including City Cem)	2,751,475	2,850,145
Area North	2,237,419	2,347,437
<b><u>Directorate</u></b>		
Anti Social Behaviour	253,545	253,917
PBDU	744,740	701,608
Business Support including bereavement admin	1,769,900	1,995,406
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>23,166,040</b>	<b>23,631,236</b>

## 6.0 Key actions for 2013/14

The Department's key actions have been defined against the background of the value creation map. Each key task has a relationship with one or more of the themes described in the departmental VCM. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the main outcomes expected are included at section 7. More comprehensive details of tasks, performance indicators and targets which contribute to the outcomes sought are contained in supporting Service Plans

### 6.1 City Leadership

#### Key actions

##### Investment Programme

Work in partnership to develop strategic capital enhancement and programming of projects as part of our delivery of the Investment Programme 2012 – 2015, including the following:

- Make arrangements for the management and maintenance of the Connswater Community Greenway (CCG), including the following:
  - Carry out pre-construction phase including tree removal and input into the design work.
  - Commence the physical work on the CCG in the Spring 2014.
  - Monitor and review the draft action plan and risk register developed to manage and maintain site work.
  - Work with the CCG Partnership to enhance the communication and engagement efforts surrounding the project.
- Establish a management committee for each park and develop and deliver a programme of activities and events for Dunville and Woodvale park
- Deliver the annual playground refurbishment programme including the development of a new playground at the Zoo which is being part-funded by the NITB
- Complete refurbishment and renovation of Mary Peters Track. Re-open and develop with an adjoining programme of activities
- Progress the HLF funded project to restore the Tropical Ravine in Botanic Gardens, including the following: –
  - Develop architectural and landscape design work to RIBA Stage D
  - Prepare an integrated conservation management plan and develop audience and interpretive plans
  - Carry out research and stakeholder engagement
  - Develop an activity plan
  - Submit final Heritage Grant application
  - Commencement capital and programming development (subject to funding approval).

- Develop the Leisure Transformation Strategy, including the following next steps:
  - Discuss with members the future leisure estate
  - Develop a phased implementation plan
  - Deliver the first years actions for the leisure estate implementation plan
  - Progress the leisure provision within the redevelopments of Windsor and Casement Stadia, in partnership with DCAL and the Property & Projects Department
  - Integrate pending boundary changes where applicable
  - Focus on delivering health outcomes and value for money
- Deliver the following actions in the playing pitches strategy, including the following:
  - Work with colleagues in other departments to deliver the agreed 3G pitches and changing rooms
    - Summit applications for all the identified sites to the planning service
    - Commence construction on 4 sites, subject to planning approval
  - Continue with the work to develop a Memorandum of Understanding with DENI, BELB and CCMS regarding the development and wider community use of recreational facilities at schools
  - Assess the applications received under the £750,000 fund to enhance educational facilities to enable increased community usage and process successful applications
- Progress the development of the Peace III funded Girdwood Hub and work with the Girdwood Hub Forum to enhance the engagement and communication activities around the Hub project
- Develop an implementation plan for the transfer of parks and leisure assets and liabilities
- Ensure appropriate consideration and due diligence of any transfer of assets and liabilities, staff and service convergence from both neighbouring councils and transferring function departments

### **Other key departmental projects**

- Develop and deliver a robust plan for the development of cemetery and crematorium provision in Belfast, including the following: -
  - Depending on the outcome of the discussions around the Dundrod site proceed with necessary ground testing
  - Bring forward the recommendations of the joint feasibility study with Newtownabbey Borough Council on developing a feasibility study on a sub-regional approach to crematorium facilities
  - Continue to examine the feasibility of making provision for natural burials
  - Continue the improvement and extension work at Roselawn Cemetery
- Complete the construction and bring into use the mountain bike track at Barnett Demesne in partnership with Outdoors NI

Together with Property and Projects, deliver the following:

- Conversion of the grass pitches at Marrowbone and Hammer to 3G pitches and the new pavilion at Suffolk
- Complete the replacement of the John Luke bridge
- Bring forward any suitable development proposals that are received in relation to Wilmot House
- Develop and progress the actions within the Falls Park/ City Cemetery Masterplan and Whiterock Community Corridor project and examine options for the funding of these
- Progress work at the Half Moon Lake and Drumglass Park

## 6.2 Environment

In protecting our sites which are important for biodiversity, we will help to deliver a cleaner and greener environment for the city's ratepayers. We play a key role in protecting and linking the city through our parks, open spaces, greenways and leisure centres. Throughout the year, we will be committed to a sustainable approach to service provision.

We will work towards delivering educational programmes for members of the public, groups and schools on topics such as biodiversity and conservation.

### Key actions

#### We will:

- Review and update the open spaces strategy for the Parks and Leisure Department
- Deliver improvements in dog control in our parks, taking account of the new Clean Neighbourhoods legislation
- Deliver arboriculture (trees) and minor horticultural (landscaping) works for the DRD Roads Service throughout the city and the Eastern Division
- Continue to implement the High Hedges legislation
- Complete a Green Flag standard site assessment across the department's parks and green spaces
- Retain 10 Green Flags and apply for Green Flag in 2 additional parks and open spaces

## 6.3 Economy

We believe all parts of Belfast should benefit from investment and growth and we will ensure that we contribute to neighbourhood renewal and regeneration initiatives across the city through our delivery of the Investment Programme 2012-15. We must continue to develop means of using facilities and open spaces, including cemeteries, to enrich the city's cultural, tourism and heritage offering.

Sustaining revenue generation in the difficult financial climate will be a key challenge for the department's commercial venues (Belfast Castle, Malone House and Belfast Zoo), but ongoing development of bereavement services presents opportunities for delivering new income streams.

### **Key actions**

#### **We will:**

- Develop and implement a commercial model for the future of Belfast Castle, Malone House and Belfast Zoological Gardens
- Identify sponsorship opportunities to enhance relevant projects, assets and initiatives
- Identify the roles and workplan for GAP placement opportunities in conjunction with Corporate HR
- Develop with partners an annual programme of parks and leisure focused citywide events across the city

## **6.4 People and Communities**

In Parks and Leisure, we are working hard to encourage more people to use our services and to have healthier, more active lifestyles. We want to make best use of our assets to contribute to creating safer, healthier, engaged and more active communities. Our new participation officers will support these objectives.

### **Key actions**

#### **We will:**

- Continue to deliver and monitor activities outlined within the Growing Communities Strategy (2012 – 2022), including the following: -
  - develop and support community gardening across the city
  - design and facilitate a range of community growing sessions
  - continue to work with partners and stakeholders throughout the delivery of the strategy
  - engage with the community to ensure participation in community gardens
  - deliver staff training in facilitating community growing
  - design and deliver a range of community growing events
- Subject to approval, deliver the year 1 actions of the amateur boxing strategy, including the following: -
  - Appoint two sports development officers with a primary focus on boxing
  - Undertake a piece of work to explore the potential to use the Council's assets to give clubs security of tenure and to deliver programme of activities
- Manage and maintain the 10 leisure centres across the city



- Provide 48 parks and open spaces and maintain more than 1,100 hectares of open spaces
- Provide and maintain quality standards for the community at 135 sport pitches, 74 playgrounds, 12 bowling pavilions, 3 cemeteries and a crematorium, a golf course and an adventure playground
- Invest in our neighbourhoods by developing a range of programmes and events to be delivered locally
- Work in collaboration internally with other departments and externally to develop action plans for pilot projects as identified through the PCN Board
- Implement Year 2 of the Peace III funded Growing Respect programme
- Deliver the Active Belfast vision, strategy and plan of work, including the following:-
  - Contribute to the development and implementation of an Active Travel action plan for the City
  - Implement the new structure for Physical Activity Referral Pathways and develop condition specific pathways
  - Work with communities to co-design and co-deliver a series of community led health and wellbeing programmes
  - Provide funding opportunities to support local communities in addressing the barriers to participating in physical activity
  - Contribute to the development and carrying out of robust research and evaluation on the impact of Active Belfast initiatives
  - Co-ordinate physical activity opportunities to address inequalities in participation levels i.e. people living in areas of high deprivation, older people, females, etc
  - Promote physical activity opportunities within the natural resources of the City i.e. walking trails, cycle lanes, etc
  - Promote the benefits of physical activity and advocate the role it can play in addressing inequalities within the City.
- Work in partnership to develop and deliver the Safer Neighbourhood Antisocial Behaviour Programme
- Support the development of existing and new Friends Groups and encourage volunteering
- Develop the process around new 'partnership agreements', including the following:-
  - Commence the transition from Facility Management Agreements (FMAs) to Agreements for Use on selected playing pitches sites
  - Agree the process for joint management board arrangements
- Deliver sports development activities at the Urban Sports Park
- Develop a city wide outreach and participation plan
- Implement the Clubmark and Coachmark schemes
- Deliver coach education programmes across the city
- Deliver sport specific regional development squads

- Manage the support for sport fund
- Deliver the Belfast Sports Awards through the Active Belfast consortium work programme
- Deliver a range of health and wellbeing programmes and activities including:-
  - Parent and toddler swim classes
  - Make a splash swim programme
  - Children's holiday schemes
  - Activate programme
  - Teenage Kicks
  - Senior games
  - School and club cross country competition
  - Cycle events and training
  - Community rowing programme

## 6.5 Better Services

As we improve the structure and alignment of parks and leisure services through our departmental improvement programme, we continue to improve our services. Our new customer-focused agenda and our new customer charter will help us to ensure that we deliver to the highest standard and we will develop mechanisms for assessing our performance in this area. We aim to ensure that all our staff feel involved in the strategic direction for the department and are aware of our vision in relation to people, places and possibilities.

### Key actions

#### We will:

- In the context of the Leisure Transformation Programme develop and deliver the the following:-

#### *Improving the customer experience;*

- develop and adhere to customer and service delivery standards,
- measure customer and service delivery standards
- roll out customer care training for all staff

#### *Identifying and delivering operational efficiencies and improvements in our services*

- deliver and evaluate the Community Park Warden initiative
- review opening hours
- develop participation and outreach plans
- carry out a review of the leisure product offering (classes and programming)
- carry out leisure service improvement (compliance, standards and quality)

*Carrying out neighbourhood and commercial/ income service reviews*

- implement the Open Spaces and Active Living (OSAL) recommendations
- implement the development strand recommendations
- implement the revised business/ commercial model for the Zoo
- implement the recommendations and revised business model for Malone and Belfast Castle
- prepare for community planning and area based planning

## **6.6 An Organisation Fit to Lead and Serve**

By establishing clearly defined processes and procedures of working, we can build on progress made in raising standards across the department. We must also focus on improving efficiencies, financial management and effectiveness in managing human resources. It is imperative that we support our staff through training, personal development and performance management to improve our skills base.

### **Human Resource Management**

#### **Key actions**

- Continue to deliver the Parks and Leisure Improvement programme, including the following:
  - Implement the findings of operational reviews including developing training, roll out PDP process and participate in the liP process
  - Ensure any recommendations from the Organisation Development Strategy are implemented
  - Manage and review employee absence including stress, overtime and agency

### **Financial Planning**

#### **Key actions**

- Implement further improvements in the departments financial monitoring and control process
- Deliver the 14/15 revenue estimates on time, taking consideration of service need, the wider efficiency agenda, and changing customer expectations
- Undertake research into potential alternative methods of service or programme delivery to generate income or provide service efficiencies.

### **Information Management**

#### **Key actions**

- Develop enhancements to the functionality of existing departmental IT systems
- Contribute to the corporate IT programme and the roll out of any new systems
- Undertake a departmental information audit, with the view to producing an Information Strategy

## Planning & Performance

### Key actions

- Implement the departmental planning and evaluation support framework, including consultation and engagement approaches and methodologies.
- Hold quarterly SMT and DMT performance meetings with senior managers to monitor and review departmental priorities and financial management
- Review and refine departmental KPIs in line with departmental and corporate direction and objectives

## Communications - external

### Key actions

- Reinforce communications procedures throughout the department and encourage greater compliance with the council's communications policies by partner organisations
- Continue the departmental effort to rationalise printed publications and generate cost savings
- Ensure that the department's web, email marketing and social media presence is developed within the new corporate website and in line with the recommendations of the 2013 SOCITM assessment
- Continue to review and modernise departmental signage
- Continue to deliver marketing campaigns/messages to inform the public and increase access to our departmental services and activities
- Ensure that the department's physical Investment Programme projects are effectively promoted across a range of communication channels

## Communications - internal

### Key actions

- Improve internal communications throughout the department

## Marketing - departmental services

### Key actions

- Develop and deliver a three-year marketing strategy for Parks and Leisure

## Assets

### Key actions

- Implement any recommendations from the asset management strategy and contribute to the Councils asset management plan

## Governance and Risks

### Key actions

- Update and monitor the departmental risk register and risk management plans
- Deliver in house audit reviews of 2 key services / locations
- Work with AGRS in relation to any departmental or corporate audit projects.

## 7.0 Key performance indicators for 2013/ 14

### 7.1 Environment

Performance Indicator	Annual Target
% of residents that live within 1000m of green flag parks	71%
Carbon stored (trees)	TBA

### 7.2 Economy

Performance Indicator	Annual Target
Subsidy per visit (Belfast Zoo)	£3.05
Participation levels at events (city wide and local events)	150,000
% participant satisfaction with city wide events (Rose Week, Autumn and Spring fair)	92%

### 7.3 People and Communities

Performance Indicator	Annual Target
Number of reported incidents of ASB (Department)	976
No. of visits to indoor and outdoor facilities (Throughput)	TBA
Ratio of full payment to concessionary (Department including the zoo)	TBA
Subsidy per user (Indoor leisure)	£4.41
Subsidy per user (Outdoor leisure)	TBA
% utilisation rates (Estates)	40%

### 7.4 Better Services

Performance Indicator	Annual Target
% agreed H&S recommendations implemented	80%

7.5 Organisation fit to lead and serve

<b>Human Resource Management</b>	<b>Annual Target</b>
<b>Performance Indicator</b>	
Average number of working days per employee lost due to absence (measured against agreed targets)	TBA

<b>Financial Planning</b>	<b>Annual Target</b>
<b>Performance Indicator</b>	
% compliance of purchase orders raised on time	90%
% compliance for GRN against the supplier invoice	70%
% Variance between actual net expenditure and budgeted net revenue (in year)	+1 / - 2
% Variation between forecast net revenue expenditure and actual net revenue expenditure (year/end)	+0.5 / -2%
Overtime as % of total direct payroll	5.9%
Rate of Recovery (Income: Expenditure)	29.34%

<b>Planning &amp; Performance</b>	<b>Annual Target</b>
<b>Performance Indicator</b>	
% PIs with valid data collected and reported upon	85%
% PIs on target	70%

<b>Governance &amp; Risk</b>	<b>Annual Target</b>
<b>Performance Indicator</b>	
% of agreed H&S recommendations implemented	80%

## 8.0 Committee membership

### Parks & Leisure Committee

**Chairman:** Cllr Gerard McCabe

**Deputy Chairman:** Cllr Bernie Kelly

#### **Committee Members:**

Councillor Steven Corr  
Councillor Matt Garrett  
Councillor Tom Haire  
Councillor Tom Hartley  
Councillor Máire Hendron  
Councillor John Kyle  
Councillor Nichola Mallon  
Councillor Gareth McKee  
Councillor Laura McNamee  
Councillor Caoimhín Mac Giolla Mhín  
Councillor Kate Mullan  
Councillor Adam Newton  
Councillor Niall Ó Donnghaile  
Councillor Gerard O'Neill  
Councillor Guy Spence  
Councillor Naomi Thompson