



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Parks and Leisure Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Belfast Zoological Gardens Adoption Package Review</b>
<b>Date:</b>	12 September 2013
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Mark Challis, Zoo Manager

<b>1.</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
	<p>Belfast Zoo currently offers an animal adoption package to interested parties for the purpose of promoting awareness of animal conservation issues and to develop the public's involvement in the Zoo. A priority highlighted in the recent structural review of the Zoo outlined the need for the facility to be more commercially focused. One area under commercial review is the animal adoption package on offer and this report highlights research findings and recommendations for future growth in the scheme.</p> <p>All the animals in the Zoo are available for adoption and The Zoo currently offers 3 levels of adoptions Bronze £50, Silver £150 and Gold £300 and all provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• personalised certificate</li><li>• copy of the Zoo's magazine, Zoo Crack</li><li>• car sticker</li><li>• fact sheet about the animal of your choice</li><li>• Belfast Zoo pen</li><li>• free subscription to our e-newsletter</li><li>• an invitation to an exclusive sponsors' evening.</li></ul> <p>The Silver package includes additional items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• four free individual tickets to the zoo</li><li>• Zoo keyring</li><li>• photo of your chosen animal</li><li>• guided tour of the Zoo (during July or August only for a maximum of eight people)</li></ul>

	<p>The Gold package includes all of the above and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• eight free individual tickets to the Zoo</li> <li>• the chance to meet the Zookeeper who manages your chosen animal and learn about how it is looked after</li> <li>• you may also gain access to areas which are normally restricted to the public.</li> </ul> <p>Adoption figures for the past three years show a significant decrease in purchases in the area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2010 – 121 adoptions</li> <li>• 2011 – 94 adoptions</li> <li>• 2012 – 70 adoptions</li> </ul> <p>Approximately 90% of these are the bronze package. Reasons for the falling adoption rates are unknown but it is assumed from the research that has been carried out that it is due to a combination of factors including the current economic climate (this is a luxury item), the expense involved and also perceived value for money of the adoption levels in connection with the benefits the Zoo offers.</p>
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<b>2.</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
	<p>Recent research carried out across a number of Zoos in the UK and Ireland highlighted that the current adoption package at Belfast Zoo is expensive and benefits need revised in comparison (research and benchmarking data available within the department).</p> <p>After analysing the current package on offer by Belfast Zoo against packages on offer across other Zoos it is apparent that Belfast Zoo needs to improve its animal adoption offer in order to be competitive and increase adoption figures.</p> <p>Officers have investigated how and where this offer can be improved in conjunction with considering any resource implications. A new basic gift package designed as a gift for children is recommended at £25 including a bag of gifts and information related to the Zoo, free entrance and a personalised certificate of adoption.</p> <p>The existing Bronze, Silver and Gold packages have been updated and will include a name at the enclosure and an animal adoption gift bag as well as all the items originally included. The invite to the sponsor evening has been removed from the Bronze package however the price has been reduced to reflect this (appendix 1).</p> <p>Specific marketing initiatives will be delivered to promote the revised packages.</p>

<b>3.</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
	<p>The Zoo's income has been under pressure for the last few years and it is hoped that the review of the adoption packages and the promotion around</p>

	<p>these can help to stimulate their use. A new package aimed at children has been recommended and the price of the Bronze package has been reduced to reflect the benchmarking information. All these changes will be reflected in the fees and charges for the Zoo which will be brought to committee in the Autumn. The new prices will be effective from April 2014 however the use of previously agreed delegated authority from the Director may be required for any special promotions and in particular to launch the new basic package in time for the Christmas period. A review of membership packages is also underway and will be included in the fees and charges report referred to.</p>

<b>4.</b>	<b>Equality Implications</b>
	There are no equality implications identified at present.

<b>5.</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
	It is recommended that the revised adoption packages be approved.

<b>6.</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
	<p>All actions will be completed by April 2014. Adoption figures will be monitored monthly and performance targets reported to the director.</p>

<b>7.</b>	<b>Key to Abbreviations</b>
	None

<b>8.</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	Appendix 1 Animal Adoption Packages recommendations August 2013