



<b>Subject:</b>	Tropical Ravine Update
<b>Date:</b>	9 October 2018
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Nigel Grimshaw, Strategic Director, City and Neighbourhood Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Rose Crozier Director of Neighbourhood Services Jacqui Wilson, Business Manager, City and Neighbourhood Services

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
<b>After Committee Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>After Council Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Some time in the future</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Never</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	The Tropical Ravine, located in Botanic Gardens, has just completed a £3.8m refurbishment programme funded by Belfast City Council, Heritage Lottery Fund and Friends of Botanic Gardens. The Tropical Ravine has opened to the public since mid-April 2018 and the response has been unprecedented with approximately 142,000 visits to date
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	Committee is asked to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Note the update in relation to the operation of the Tropical Ravine and agree to the creation of the relevant post in line with the existing funding with the understanding</li></ul>

	that this will require BCC funding after the end of the grant period, supported by income generation opportunities.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.1	A report to committee last November set out the operational arrangements around opening/closing, staffing and programming. Due to the fantastic response to the facility management are reviewing these arrangements to ensure programmes are expanded and the offering to communities and tourist alike are built upon. The use of the facility to include the hire of the venue for events and hospitality needs to be developed and the appropriate resources and skills in place to ensure it will generate some income and repeat visits to the Tropical Ravine.
3.2	HLF are finalising their contributions to the scheme and on the basis of an agreed operational plan to the end of March 2021 they have confirmed the final funding available. This funding will be primarily focused on ensuring the sustainability of the operations and to improve the use of the venue. The current operational staff include part time Bot Crew and an Activities Officer whose role was to develop a programme of events/activities to support the community engagement and educational awareness of the Ravine. The temporary Activities Officer is no longer required as the focus is now on the day to day operations and development of the Tropical Ravine. A new job role will be required with a more commercial focus to drive events, programmes and tourism linkages and build on the existing work with communities and education.
	<u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u>
3.3	The staffing required to operate the facility will be provided from existing budgets and the balance on the grant funding however this will need to be mainstreamed potentially through income generation to ensure the sustainability of the facility going forward after March 2021. The Department will consult with the staff and Trade Union representatives regarding the proposed staffing changes and their input sought.
3.4	The volunteer policy has been agreed through committee and JNCC and has a vital role in getting people active and to build skills and experience.
3.5	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u> There are no known equality or Good relation/rural needs implications.

<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	None.