



Subject:	Belfast Zoo – Update on Performance
Date:	4th March, 2020
Reporting Officer:	Ryan Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Kelly Gilliland, Neighbourhood Services Manager (North) Alyn Cairns, Belfast Zoo Manager

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

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

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update on the Zoo's performance for Quarter 3 of the 2019-20 financial year.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is requested to note the Zoo's performance for the period October – December, 2019.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	Detailed within this report is an overview of the Zoo performance for Qtr 3 (19/20) across the following business areas; <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visitor Services• Education Services

- Animal Collection
- Marketing and Events, and
- Financial performance.

Visitor Services

3.2

- At the end of Qtr 3, footfall was recorded as 142K, 48K lower than last year, which represents a 25% decrease compared to the same quarter in the previous year. This is a significant fall in footfall which can primarily be contributed to poor weather, and significantly lower visitor numbers during November and December.

As requested by Members the table below provides a more detailed overview of visitor numbers for the past 5-years.

	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
Jan	4700	2501	5386	3282	3450	2761
Feb	9711	4935	6556	7961	9153	6044
Mar	8740	9671	11,119	30,459	14,438	15,595
Apr	24,011	22,807	34,521	15,675	44,906	40,301
May	15,663	34,082	27,106	32,649	24,896	23,234
Jun	17,997	27,062	23,187	23,478	39,254	32,581
Jul	29,393	43,445	37,141	39,328	38,460	48,216
Aug	30,104	35,091	37,239	50,222	49,008	43,134
Sep	9537	11,527	9248	11,083	12,958	17,396
Oct	8773	9455	8916	12,090	15,203	3135
Nov	3324	5084	5417	6080	3135	4743
Dec	3122	3969	2829	4400	3241	4411
Yearly Total	165,075	209,629	208,665	236,707	258,102	241,551

Qtrs 1-3 141,924 192,522 185,604 195,005 231,061 217,151
April - Dec

- To mitigate against the fall in visitor numbers in recent years, the Zoo Management Team is continuing to look at other ways of increasing revenue mainly via organising and marketing unique experiences and targeted events, some of which are outlined below as well as in 3.1.5. However, investment is required in order to be able further develop the Zoo as a competitive visitor attraction for both the City and the Region.
- The Zoo continues to offer interactive animal experiences, 'Keeper For a Day' (KFD) experiences and daily keeper talks and feeding times. Junior KFD income increased significantly during November and December, 30k by the end of Qtr 3, with Qtr 3

income of 16.5K. Adult KFD had reduced availability from September to December 2019 (inclusive) due to operational priorities.

- Membership remains the single best performing commercial product obtaining sales of £41.5k by end of Qtr 3.
- The team continue to look at new product developments and corporate packages will be launching in January 2020. A volunteer package, 5-15 people, minimum donation of £150. Corporate team building day for 10-30 people, £30 per person.
- The Zoo's accessible Zoo-mobile transport service is aiming to develop a hop on hop off service and relaunch of Zoo-mobile tours beginning of April 2020.

Education Services

3.3

- Corporate volunteering continues to be successful. We had eight separate volunteering days with several companies participating including Citi, Santander, Ulster Bank, Allstate Insurance.
- In October, Education officers had four outreach visits to schools, nine discovery sessions and ten groups undertaking self- guided educational tours at the Zoo. In November, Education officers had nine outreach visits to schools, two discovery sessions and three self- guided groups at the Zoo. In December, we had two discovery sessions and two self- guided groups at the Zoo.
- November the education department submitted its application form for the Festival of Learning which will take place over two days in March and generated significant interest last year

Animal Collection/Welfare

3.4

- The Zoo launched its 'Extinction in Focus' campaign in November 2019 entitled "Extinction is real, Extinction is now." The purpose is to inform and educate visitors about the real threat that our wildlife and habitats are facing. It will also allow us to highlight the role of a modern zoo and show case Belfast Zoo centring on some of our most endangered species.

- We were delighted to announce the Birth of a female Eastern Bongo calf born in December 2019. This beautiful but much-endangered African Antelope is a welcome addition to the European Endangered Species Programme.
- Belfast Zoo has been keeping and breeding the endangered Goodfellow's tree kangaroo from 2013. We were the first zoo to breed them in Ireland and the UK and we were delighted to welcome our fifth baby in October 2019.

The tables below outline the movement throughout our animal collection during the period Oct-Dec 2019 as a result of births, acquisitions, deaths and dispositions.

Births	
Animal	Number
Mammals	44
Birds	0
Reptiles	0

Transfers in (from other facilities)	
Animal	Number
Mammals	1
Birds	0
Reptiles	2

Transfers out (to other facilities)	
Animal	Number
Mammals	0
Birds	0
Reptiles	0

DEATHS				
Animal	Category			
	Natural Causes	Medical	Accidental	Listed below are the details of the accidental deaths listed,
Mammals	4			
Birds	3			
Reptiles	2			

**This does not include amphibians and invertebrates.*

***This does not include neonatal deaths - animal deaths up to a week after birth.*

Marketing and Events (Qtr 3)

3.5

- The Zoo ran its annual 'Boo at the Zoo' and Christmas weekend with visitor numbers for both events similar to last year. The Zoo again received a fantastic response to the donation of Christmas trees, and was featured on BBC radio extra.
- The Zoo announced its photographic competition winners in October 2019 - a record number of high quality entries were submitted this year (an additional 200 this year).

Promotions and Events 2019/2020 (including planned)

3.6

At the last Committee meeting, Members also requested details of the annual programme of events delivered at the Zoo. Detailed below is a list of all events delivered and planned throughout 2019 and 2020, which demonstrates the variety of programmes and initiatives;

Easter Extravaganza	20 - 28 April 2019
Treasure hunt on Easter Monday and Tuesday, range of prizes including animal adoptions, memberships and animal experiences. Zoo partnered with Grand Opera House and one family won a family ticket (four seats) to 'Madagascar the Musical.'	
Love your Zoo week	25 May to 2 June 2019
Taps into BIAZA's national zoo week. Family fun event with added value activities e.g. touch tables, feeding times, animals trails, activity passport etc.	
Dreamnight	7 June 2019
Exclusive event for terminally ill children and their families to enjoy a visit to the Zoo, with some additional activities and entertainment provided in kind by external suppliers.	
Quiet Hour	27 April, 27 May, 29 June, 28 July and 25 August 2019
The Zoo will open one hour earlier (9am) on selected dates to allow visitors with sensory requirements to visit the Zoo at a quieter and less busy time.	
Explorers Club	29 July - 02 August and 12 - 16 August 2019
Five-day educational programme in the Zoo.	
Adopters' Day	10 and 17 August 2019
Early access guided tour, followed by free access into the Zoo and a discount on catering (provided by contractor). The event is split over two dates to accommodate higher number of adopters and good attendance.	
Sensory Day	7 September 2019
Following a successful sensory day in 2018, this event will continue to be offered. It will include early opening and activities for visitors with sensory requirements to enjoy.	
Boo at the Zoo	26 and 27 October 2019
Continue to offer Halloween event over two dates. Includes a special promotion: child goes free (when in fancy dress and accompanied by paying adult).	
Wildlife Wonderland	14 - 15 December 2019
Seasonal event: wrapping presents, watching animals open gifts, meet and greet with Santa on-site. No Grotto.	
Science behind the Zoo	15 and 22 February 2020
Extinction in focus workshops.	
Woo at the Zoo	14 - 16 February 2020
Special couples 2 for 1 offer and special singles discounted offer.	
March Madness	1 - 31 March 2020
20% discount on all memberships purchased.	
World Book Day	7 March 2020
Interactive story telling session with educational animals.	
Belfast Festival of Learning	25 - 26 March 2020
Extinction in focus workshops.	
Easter Extravaganza	13 - 17 April 2020
Extinction in focus workshops.	
Quiet Hours	26 April, 31 May, 28 June, 26 July, 30 August, 27 September 2020
The zoo will open one hour earlier (9am) on selected dates to allow visitors with sensory requirements to visit the Zoo at a quieter and less busy time.	

Love your Zoo**23 - 30 May 2020**

Taps into BIAZA's national zoo week. Family fun event with added value activities e.g. touch tables, feeding times, animals trails, activity passport etc.

Dreamnight**5 June 2020**

Exclusive event for terminally ill children and their families to enjoy a visit to the Zoo, with some additional activities and entertainment provided in kind by external suppliers.

Financial Performance

3.7

	Annual budget	Qrt 3 budget	Year to date actual	Variance
Income	-£1,902,035	-£1,760,203	-£1,473,804	£286,399
Expenditure	£2,842,409	£2,208,554	£2,191,346	-£17,197
NET TOTAL	£940,374	£448,340	£717,542	£269,201

- Income at Qtr 3 was below budget by £286k (16%). This is primarily attributed to lower footfall over peak season due to poor weather.
- General admissions remain as the main income generator at 69%, followed by retail at 20% and education at approximately 5%. Commercial products (animal experience, memberships, adoptions etc.) contribute 4% of income, and commissions (catering and photography) account for the remaining 2%.
- Memberships were the best-selling commercial product in Qtr 3 with sales of £41.5k by the end of the period, followed by Junior Keeper at £30k and animal experiences at £19k.
- Average spend per head is £13.77 which is an increase of over £1.27 compared to the same period the previous year.
- Zoo net expenditure at Qtr 3 is £2.19m, which is on target against budget. Staff costs remain the highest cost area at with an overspend of £83k due to seasonal staff, absence cover and temporary cover. The Zoo continues to work hard to reduce expenditure in other areas to offset this area of overspend, however the Zoo is faced with significant unplanned spend associated with necessary health and safety works from the independent safety report e.g. £25k of tree removal works.
- The Zoo has also recently appointed a new Franchise Caterer and it is hoped that as a result there will be opportunities for the 'spend per head' by visitor to grow.

3.8	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The Qtr 3 net expenditure position is £269k overspent with a forecast overspend position of £230k by year end.</p> <p>As noted in the previous Qtr 2 report the poor weather over the summer, as well as the cost implications of implementing the recommendations and high priority actions (many of which focussed on addressing risk and improving health and safety), have played a part in the resulting overspend. As outlined, in 3.1.2 and 3.1.5 the Zoo Management Team is continuing to focus on improving and broadening the customer offer as well working with business support to reduce spend and make savings where possible.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p>
3.9	None.
4.0	Documents Attached
	None.