

CABINET

SERVICE REVIEW- Management of Parks / Open Space/ Public Realm

5 November 2013

Report of Chief Officer (Environment)

PURPOSE OF REPORT					
To update Cabinet on the progress of a service review and seek approval to continue with implementation of the review.					
Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Officer Referral	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Date of notice of forthcoming key decision				NA	
This report is public					

RECOMMENDATIONS OF COUNCILLOR SMITH

- (1) That Cabinet approves in principle for further development by the Chief Officer (Environment) the proposals outlined in the report.
- (2) That where required, further reports on the implementation of specific parts of the proposals are brought back to Cabinet or Personnel Committee as appropriate for approval.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 A review has been taking place to establish how the Council can best manage parks, open space and the public realm.

1.2 The review has taken place within the context of –

- The Council's corporate plan / priorities
- The Council's budget position

1.3 The aim of the review has been to bring forward options that-

- Generate ongoing savings
- Represent a more efficient and effective approach to management of parks and open space
- Allow for citizens to get more involved in the development of parks and open space

2.0 Proposal Details

2.1 The main proposal from the reviews is to merge the management of relevant

functional Health and Wellbeing service with related functions in Environmental Services to ensure a consistent approach to service delivery and to generate efficiencies by reviewing how the services operate once transferred. The functional areas affected include-

- Letting of playing fields / bowling greens to sports teams
- Letting of concessions on parks / open space
- Parks Patrol
- Beach Patrol
- Happy Mount Park splash park / concessions
- Promenade management / concessions
- Williamson Park (including café, butterfly house, car park, Memorial etc)
- Park / open space- planning / development / design.
- Cemeteries – grounds maintenance (not gravedigging)

2.2 The intention is that the delivery of the functions will be merged within the wider range of services that Environmental Services already deliver. Through the removal of duplication, focus on priority areas and economies of scale it is expected this approach will provide real and significant cashable savings.

2.3 As an example functions like parks patrol and the whole of maintenance of Williamson Park would be delivered from within the grounds maintenance / cleansing function. This will result in a net overall ongoing saving.

2.4 It is also the intention to bring forward specific proposals with regard to the café and butterfly house in Williamson Park as the current model of delivery is not sustainable.

2.5 To facilitate this merger it is necessary to restructure the existing management / supervisory arrangements across Environmental Services. Initial work indicates this will result in cashable savings. It will also clearly result in a loss of officer capacity and expertise and, of course, there are risks involved in reducing capacity and expertise. However it is expected that this can happen without a significant decrease in levels of frontline service delivery in priority areas.

2.6 Once this stage of the review has been completed consideration will also be given to how best deliver the remaining engineering functions the Council provides.

3.0 Details of Consultation

3.1 Appropriate consultation will take place as detailed proposals are developed.

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

4.1 Option 1- to approve the approach outlined above

4.2 Option 2- to not approve the approach outlined above

5.0 Officer Preferred Option (and comments)

5.1 The officer preferred option is option 1 for the reasons outlined.

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 The report sets out proposals that will generate savings to assist the Council's budgetary position and at the same time allow the Council to deliver its Corporate Plan and priorities.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

Clean, green and safe places are one the priorities of the Council's Corporate Plan

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, HR, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

The impacts of the proposals when developed further will be fully assessed.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None as a direct result of this report

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications directly arising from this report. The preferred option will potentially result in numerous operational and financial changes so therefore any recommendations arising will be reported to Cabinet and budgets updated as appropriate

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources:

The implementation of the proposals will have significant implications for affected staff

Information Services:

NA

Property:

NA

Open Spaces:

As set out in the report

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

none

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