

## **INTERNATIONAL YOUTH GAMES – 2010/11 AND BEYOND**

### **OFFICER BRIEFING NOTE**

*'The decision to withdraw funding from the International Youth Games in 2009-10 was taken reluctantly by Cabinet last December, due to the severe constraints then affecting the City Council's budget. This decision was taken at an early stage in the 2009-10 budget process as Lancaster was to have been the host in 2009, and detailed plans needed to be finalised to send to our participating twin Cities.*

*There was no debate or discussion at the Budget Council meeting on 4 March on the decision to withdraw support from the International Youth Games in the years 2010-11 and 2011-12, and Council now affirms its long term commitment to the International Youth Games, and asks Cabinet in the forthcoming budget process to propose restoring funding for the years 2010-11 and 2011-12. '*

### **Background**

Funding to enable acceptance of invitations to and participation in the International Youth Games each year is contained in the Democratic Services budget. The revenue budget approved at the Council meeting of 4th March 2009 deleted (albeit without specific debate) this item from the budget for future years, the implication being that any invitation from our twin towns to attend the event in the future would be declined.

The budget has previously varied from year to year, dependant largely on the cost of travel to different countries. The contribution asked of participating young people has been kept at a consistent level, resulting in a larger subsidy by the City Council when more costly travel is involved.

The initial estimates for 2010/11 (Almere) and 2011/12 (Aalborg) were £8,000 and £12,000 respectively.

In past years, a report has been submitted to the relevant individual Cabinet Members on receipt of an invitation and at this point a more accurate estimate would be established based on the actual numbers included in the invitation and available travel options. The decision last year for example was:

*'That the invitation to participate in the 2008 Games in Rendsburg be accepted, on the basis of:*

- (a) A civic delegation comprising the Mayor and Mayoress (or consort), a Member chosen by ballot and an officer; and*
- (b) A sporting and cultural delegation to be led by the Head of Cultural Services, or his representative in conjunction with local volunteer individual sports leaders, the size of the party to be determined to a maximum of 120 subject to the net cost of travel being contained within the 2008/09 budget allocation and taking into account availability of volunteer leaders and suitable transport.'*

However other options can be considered at that time which may reduce the cost.

## **Implications**

Should Council approve the motion set out above and should, ultimately, future years' funding for the Youth Games be restored, additional savings estimated at £8,000 and £12,000 for 2010/11 and 2011/12 would need to be identified during the 2010/11 budget process in order to meet the Council's financial targets.

Members should note that the motion requests Cabinet to propose restoring the funding for 2010/11 and 2011/12 during the budget process later in the year. Should the Council receive an invitation from Almere to participate in the 2010 Games, this is likely to be forthcoming prior to the commencement of the budget exercise sometime between July and September. Any decision to attend these Games would require referral to Council, as such a decision would be outside the current Budget Framework. It would not be possible to wait until the 2010/11 budget is set in March 2010 to make a decision on whether or not to participate.

## **Monitoring Officer Comments**

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

## **Section 151 Officer Comments**

In the short time since Budget Council, nothing material has changed regarding the Council's medium term financial prospects. In short, they remain bleak, with major risks and uncertainties attached. During the budget process, the s151 Officer's advice included the following:

'With regard to options to produce a budget in line with preferred Council Tax levels, any proposals put forward .... should be considered alongside the development of ... priorities, and emphasis should be very much on achieving recurring reductions to the revenue budget...'

This advice still stands. Should Council wish, ultimately, to reinstate future years' support for the Youth Games, then more savings would be needed from other areas. Based on current approved budgets, in order to achieve 4% year on year increases in Council Tax, existing savings requirements already stand at £1.053M for 2010/11, and £1.302M for 2011/12.

**Head of Democratic Services**  
**26<sup>th</sup> March 2009**