

**ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL  
REPORT TO COUNCILLOR GERALD SMITH  
CABINET MEMBER FOR TOWN CENTRE & ECONOMIC GROWTH &  
PROSPERITY**

<b>1.</b>	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>CABINET MEMBER MEETING</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>5 March 2012</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Regulate the Operation of All Saints Fountain, Town Centre</b>  <b>Town Centre</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Programme Area:</b>	<b>Environment and Development Services</b>

## **5. Summary**

Presently the All Saints Fountain is in operation constantly throughout the day and night and over recent years there has been a gradual increase in anti-social behaviour and safety problems in and around the fountain area; this has led to additional maintenance visits required by both the Council's pump technician and Town Centre cleansing team.

It is proposed that the fountain is regulated by turning off the fountain at night between the hours of 18:00 hours and 08:00 hours the next day, and during winter months between December and March, to minimise the anti social behaviour problems and to prevent any future potential injury to the public caused by the freezing icy conditions, and damage to the fountain, associated pumps and ancillaries.

## **6. Recommendations**

**It is recommended that:**

- 6.1 All Saints Fountain be regulated by turning off the fountain at night between the hours of 18:00 hours and 08:00 hours the next day, and during the winter months between December and March, to minimise the anti-social behaviour problems and to prevent the risk of injury or damage.**

## **7. Proposals and Details**

All Saints Fountain is one of the main attractions situated in the Town Centre and provides a good amenity area for the people of Rotherham including children.

The fountain is in constant use and operates throughout the day and night. Unfortunately over recent years there has been a gradual increase in maintenance problems to the fountain caused by anti-social behaviour and vandalism problems to the fountain and the immediate area. Some of the vandalism caused has led to various safety problems which has seen an increase in maintenance costs year on year. The main concern however is maintaining the safety of the fountain, which is regularly used by children paddling in the fountain during the summer months. Some of the more serious vandalism caused is broken glass or bottles found in the paddling area of the fountain, which has been thrown into the fountain during the night.

Over the years there has been an increase in reports of anti social behaviour in and around the fountain and the majority of the damage appears to occur at night and at weekends. There is a wide range of vandalism and damage caused to the fountain such as foam or washing up liquid being poured into the fountain, broken glass or bottles, fast food and litter being dropped into the fountain, and damaged to the grids on the peripheral to the fountain causing the edge of the grids to be raised with sharp edges. In addition the fountain appears to attract people on mountain bikes and skate boards at night which again causes damage to the fountain area.

The Council has seen an increase in maintenance costs for the fountain year on year because of the anti social behaviour and in maintaining the safety of the fountain. In February 2012, the Council dealt with a large quantity of washing up liquid which was poured into the fountain during the night and has led to the Council's technician spending several days de-foaming the fountain and cleansing the pumps filter system at a cost of approximately £500 - £600.

During the winter months, mainly between December and March, there are problems relating to the adverse weather conditions causing the water within the fountain and surrounding pedestrian access way to freeze and ice over. The latest incident was on Saturday 11 February 2012 when the Council's pump technician and Town Centre cleansing team, were called out to turn off the fountain and grit the pedestrian access way in All Saints Square, because the freezing weather conditions had caused the fountain and surrounding area to become icy and dangerous to pedestrians. During the freezing weather conditions there is always the danger that serious damage to the pumps operating the fountains can occur when the water can no longer be pumped because it is frozen.

It is proposed that the fountain is operated by turning off the fountain at night between the hours of 18:00 hours and 08:00 hours the next day, and during winter months between December and March, to minimise the anti social behaviour problems and to prevent any future potential injury to the public, and damage to the fountain, associated pumps and ancillaries.

## **8. Finance**

In 2011/2012 the annual revenue budget for the maintenance of the All Saints Square fountains was £22,055, this includes an allowance for water and electricity charges. It is estimated that there is likely to be a deficit in the Council's revenue budget in 2011/2012 for the maintenance of the fountain of approximately £3,500.

The actual maintenance costs for the fountain are increasing year on year and this is likely to be the case in the future with the gradual increase in anti-social behaviour and damage to the fountains, essential safety measures required for the protection of the public, and an ageing pumping apparatus which are presently requiring regular maintenance works. It is estimated that there could be an additional pressure on the Council's revenue budget for routine maintenance costs of £3,000 to £4,000 per annum.

It is also estimated that it is likely that the continual damage caused to the fountain by the adverse freezing weather conditions and vandalism to the fountain, will require major repairs or replacement of the pumps and ancillaries in the near future. It is estimated that the replacement costs of the pumps and ancillaries are approximately £10,000 - £15,000.

If the fountain was turned off at night (e.g. between 18:00 hours and 08:00 hours the next day), and during the cold winter months (e.g. between December to March), then this would lead to a saving of approximately £9,000 per annum. These costs are based on the projected costs for maintaining the fountains, keeping the fountain safe and reducing the risk of anti social behaviour over the next 2 to 3 years.

A similar comparison of savings has been made with some of the fountains in Sheffield City Centre where it is understood that some of these fountains are also turned off at night.

Please note any requirements for additional revenue funding are not reflected in the current medium term financial strategy.

## **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

The reduced operation of the fountain will safeguard the public against adverse weather conditions where the fountain and surrounding area are known to ice over making it dangerous for the public and minimise the risk of possible personal injury claims against the Council.

The fountain appears to attract anti-social behaviour at night and at weekends, by turning off the fountain at night and weekends should minimise the risk of damage and vandalism to the fountain and surrounding areas.

It is likely that there will substantial costs incurred by the Council in the future for the continual damage caused to the fountain by the adverse freezing weather conditions and vandalism to the fountain, its pumps and ancillaries.

By reducing the operation of the fountain will also comply with the Council's environmental and energy saving commitments and targets.

The Council's proposal to turn of the fountain at night and during the winter months would compare with Sheffield City Council, where it is understood that they also turn off some of their fountains off at night with varying success.

## **10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

The issues contained within this report support the Council's main Corporate Priorities.

## **11. Background Papers and Consultation**

None

Ward Members have not been consulted.

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