

CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE AND TOURISM

**Venue: Town Hall, Moorgate
Street, Rotherham. S60
2TH**

Date: Wednesday, 6th February, 2013

Time: 1.30 p.m.

A G E N D A

1. To determine if the following matters are to be considered under the categories suggested in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972.
2. To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.
3. Declarations of Interest.
4. Athletics stadium budget savings, 2013/14. (Pages 1 - 4)
5. Trees and Woodlands budget savings, 2013/14. (Pages 5 - 9)
6. Bowling Green savings, 2013/14. (Pages 10 - 12)
7. Grant Budget savings. 2013/14. (Pages 13 - 15)
8. Play Area Inspection budget savings, 2013/14. (Pages 16 - 18)
9. Date and time of the next meeting: -
 - Tuesday 12th March, 2013, to start at 10.00 am in the Rotherham Town Hall.

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Culture and Tourism
2.	Date:	5th February, 2013
3.	Title:	Athletics Stadium Budget Savings, 2013/14
4.	Programme Area:	Environment and Development Services

5. Summary

This report seeks approval to close the Herringthorpe Athletics Stadium for general use in order to make savings needed to help meet budget targets for 2013/14.

6. Recommendations

1 That Cabinet Member approves the closure of Herringthorpe Athletics Stadium for general use

2. That Officers enter into discussions with Rotherham Harriers Athletics Club in order to explore the possibility of establishing a license agreement to enable the stadium to continue as an athletics venue.

7. Proposals and Details

2013/14 budget savings proposals for EDS include the closure of the Herringthorpe Athletics Stadium for general use. This is necessary to achieve a budget saving of £60,000.

Herringthorpe Athletics Stadium was opened in 1960; it contains a 400 metre running track, grass pitch and facilities for field athletics including throwing and jumping, spectator areas and floodlighting. It also includes a building comprising changing rooms, showers, toilets and a room available for meetings and indoor activities. In the centre of the track is a football pitch that is regularly used for hire. The changing rooms also serve users of the adjacent Herringthorpe Playing Fields. A separate modular office building was installed recently, providing accommodation for stadium and Sports Development staff.

Current and proposed stadium usage

	Current Usage (2012/13)	Proposed Usage (2013/14)
Rotherham Harriers Athletics Club,	<u>Summer</u> : evening training sessions: 2 per week, attended by up to 50 juniors and 20 adults. 6 club athletics meetings.	Explore potential for continuation under license
Rotherham Rockets junior athletics sessions	<u>All year round</u> : Saturday morning sessions - up to 25 participants. <u>Summer</u> : midweek sessions - up to 25 participants.	Cease, unless arrangements can be made with the athletics club
Schools	<u>Summer</u> : 3 schools use the stadium regularly in for P.E. and athletics <u>October</u> : Cross-country final attended by around 1200 runners.	Cease, unless arrangements can be made with the athletics club
Events & Activities (2012)	36 days of junior sports camps - 869 participants. 14 school sports events 'Race for Life' 'Mega Active' Summer Games for young people 3 other events	Cease, unless arrangements can be made with the athletics club
Stadium sports pitch (2012)	<u>Winter</u> : 4 evenings per week - football and rugby club training Saturday and Sunday football club fixtures One-off knock-out competitions. 14 pre-season football games	Cease, unless arrangements can be made with the athletics club
Changing rooms for users of Herringthorpe Playing Fields	<u>Winter</u> : 2 teams across 19 Sunday fixtures. Clifton School on 22 midweek occasions. Others on 3 occasions.	Employ games attendants to open up and supervise use of changing rooms. Additional cost approx

		£17 per 2.5 hour session.
Office accommodation	Stadium and Sports Development staff	Explore potential to retain as base for Sports Development staff

Closure of the track would put 4 staff at risk of redundancy.

Loss of the facility will impact on wider sports development activity as it is currently used to provide a base for the Sports Development team and accommodation for groups such as the 'Active Always' walking group. It would also impact on teams using Herringthorpe Playing Fields who would no longer have access to changing facilities and therefore alternative access arrangements need to be explored.

Rotherham Harriers Athletics Club is a key partner on site and in order to support their continued operation it is proposed that officers enter into discussions with them to explore the possibility of establishing a license agreement. A possible arrangement could be for the club to manage their own use of the stadium and to take responsibility for all related costs (e.g. electricity, water, etc). They would also need to take responsibility for all internal repairs and maintenance of the buildings that they would need access to and for the maintenance of the field area in respect of their use. The Council could then retain responsibility for the external repair and maintenance of the buildings, the running track and for general grounds maintenance work.

The club may also wish to explore the possibility of generating further income by facilitating hire of the site to other third parties.

A partnership approach with the Athletics Club would help to maintain the stadium site in good order until such time as the Council is able to take forward its plans to develop the whole of the Herringthorpe Leisure Site.

The net budget for the site, excluding costs relating to the ongoing maintenance of the external buildings, facilities and grounds maintenance and usage identified above, is approximately £60,000.

Consultation:

Appropriate consultation will be carried out with Unions and staff.

Discussions will take place with Rotherham Harriers Athletics Club in respect of a possible license agreement.

Current users will be informed of the proposed closure and where possible support will be given to identify alternative arrangements.

This has been discussed with the Council's Community Engagement Officer and the appropriate F1 form and Equality Analysis has been undertaken.

8. Finance

The projected savings from the above proposal will be approximately £60,000 in the next financial year. This will contribute to overall savings that need to be made by the Council in the light of reduced funding from central government.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

There is an overall risk to the Council's reputation in respect of its commitment to support improvements in health and wellbeing. This is because the closure of the site will remove access to sport and physical activity opportunities for a number of groups and individuals.

Loss of this budget and current business at the site may have an adverse effect on the Council's broader plans to develop the Herringthorpe Leisure Site at some point in the future.

It is likely that the reduced use of the site and the absence of a regular staff presence will lead to increased problems of anti social behaviour and vandalism

To date no discussions have taken place with Rotherham Harriers and as such it is not possible to determine their desire or capacity to enter into a license agreement. **If an agreement cannot be reached the stadium and site would be completely closed.** This would significantly increase the general deterioration of the site and mostly likely lead to greater problems of anti social behaviour and vandalism.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The proposal has the potential to have a negative impact on Council's stated vision in respect of enjoying 'a healthy and active life' and in terms of the following statements relating to 'what we want to achieve':

- 'More people are physically active and have a healthy way of life'
- 'People enjoy parks, green spaces, sports, leisure, and cultural activities'

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Officers in Financial Services have seen the report and had the opportunity to comment.

Contact Name: *Steve Hallsworth – Leisure & Community Services Manager, Extension 22483, e-mail steve.hallsworth@rotherham.gov.uk*

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Culture and Tourism
2.	Date:	5th February, 2013
3.	Title:	Trees and Woodlands Budget Savings, 2013/14
4.	Programme Area:	Environment and Development Services

5. Summary

This report seeks approval to reduce the budget for the Trees and Woodlands service by £70,000 such that it will become a reactive only service for the council's tree assets, in order to make savings needed to help meet available budgets for 2013/14.

6. Recommendations

6.1 That Cabinet Member approves the reduction in the Trees and Woodlands Service budget by £70,000.

7. Proposals and Details

2013/14 budget savings proposals for EDS include a reduction in the Trees & Woodlands service budget and a recommendation that it becomes a reactive only service. This is necessary to achieve a budget saving of £70,000.

The Council owns 80,000 individual trees (approximately) in highways, parks, open spaces, school grounds and the curtilage of Council house properties and 482 hectares of woodland with open access.

The associated legal responsibilities are as follows:

- Under Highways Acts the Council has a duty to ensure that public thoroughfares are safe for use. This relates specifically to trees within the highway, but it also has implications for anything on adjoining private land that could affect the highway.
- Under the Occupiers Liability Act 1957 and 1984 the Council has a duty to take care to ensure safety of visitors with regard to its trees in parks, woodlands, open spaces and around other Council properties.
- Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Council is responsible for the health and safety of employees and others who may be affected by its undertakings, including the care and maintenance of trees.
- As a last resort the Council may be served notice to exercise its discretionary powers under section 23 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, in respect of other unsafe trees on private property.
- Precedents established in the courts indicate an expectation that land owners and their managers, which includes local councils, will act responsibly and inspect their trees regularly.

Responsibility for Council-owned trees, including budgetary provision, tree inspection and maintenance rests with individual Directors. The exception is trees in school grounds, which are under the control of each Head Teacher. The Council currently manages its trees and woodlands through the Trees and Woodlands team within Streetpride, who act as the Authority's principal source of advice on trees and woodlands, and who assist and support Service Directors and Head Teachers.

Tree works are undertaken on behalf of the Council through a contract with Glendale Countryside Ltd, managed by the Trees and Woodlands team. The contract started in 2010 and runs until December 2014. The value of works undertaken through this contract can vary from year to year depending on the extent of works required, for example due to extreme weather events. However, the contract conditions state that subject to the Contractor's performance being satisfactory and the Council not being subject to an event of Force Majeure, the anticipated minimum amount that the Council will spend under the contract in each financial year will be £118,000

The Trees and Woodland team currently comprises four officers (a Team Leader, Senior Officer and two Tree Officers) based within the Leisure and Community Services section.

The main risks connected with trees include death and injury from failure of poorly maintained trees, damage to property due to tree roots and overhanging branches, loss of grant income due to failure to manage woodlands to the required standards, complaints and reputational damage.

The current main functions of the team along with the proposed change of emphasis / priorities to deliver the necessary budget savings are identified below:-

Current Functions (2012/13)	Proposed functions (2013/14)
Responding to contacts from customers and elected members and, where necessary, undertaking inspections, specifying and monitoring works to trees. In 2012 there were 680 contacts leading to 629 inspections.	Continue
Undertaking planned inspections and instructing and monitoring planned maintenance works to trees in highways and public open spaces.	Significantly reduce
Responding to requests for assistance from external bodies including Parish Councils, schools etc, leading to inspection, specification and monitoring of works to trees.	Continue
Supporting Planning Dept (Development Control) on applications affecting existing trees (approximately 200 per year), or where new tree planting is required, and making Tree Preservation Orders (approximately 10 - 20 per year).	Reduce
Management of all Council-owned woodland, including inspection, specifying and monitoring maintenance works, preparation and implementation of management plans, securing external funding, and procuring and administering works contracts.	Significantly reduce
Managing the Glendale tree works contract.	Continue

These proposed changes will result in the following:

- a. Possible loss of one FTE officer post
- b. Reduced budget for contract works
- c. Reduced budget for woodland maintenance
- d. Reduced other miscellaneous operational budgets

The total cash saving arising from these proposals would be £70,000.

It is also important to note that these changes will mean that the team will not have the capacity to deliver a previously agreed budget saving proposal to reduce net spend by increasing income through work for external bodies by £5,000 It is therefore suggested that a net saving of £65,000 should be sought.

The proposed change to focusing on reactive works is considered a high-risk approach for the Council. Details of the principal risks are given in section 9 below.

Consultation:

Appropriate consultation will be carried out with Unions and staff.

8. Finance

The projected saving from the above proposal is estimated at £65,000. This assumes that current levels of income from work for Parish Councils, schools and other service departments are maintained. However, this may be difficult to achieve with a reduced team size.

The saving would contribute to overall savings that need to be made by the Council in the light of reduced funding from central government.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Any reduction in the level of planned inspection and maintenance of trees in public places will lead to increased rate of undetected tree weakness and associated risk of catastrophic failure that can lead to death, injury and damage to property, which in turn could lead to criminal prosecution under any of the legal provisions listed in section 7 above.

Officers in Insurance Services have advised that regular inspection and maintenance regimes make it possible for the Council to prepare strong defences of claims and, in the vast majority of cases, to repudiate claims. In addition they advise that any deterioration in claims experience could potentially have a negative impact on the premiums that the Council has to pay.

Reduction in the amount spent on the tree works contract could lead Glendale Countryside Ltd to seek an above inflation increase in their rates or even termination of the contract on the basis that the total value of work available would fall below the level indicated in the original contract. The current contract rates are seen as being extremely competitive and beneficial to the Council. However, Legal Services have advised that under clause 47 of the contract the Council does have the right to reduce the services required; upon serving reasonable notice upon the Contractor.

A reduction in officer time and spend on management and maintenance of woodlands will increase the risk of tree failure, with associated health and safety risks, as well as increasing the risk of withdrawal of grants by Forestry Commission and others.

Reduced time spent on dealing with Planning consultations will increase the risk that the Council will fail to fulfil its statutory planning function, more planning appeals with associated costs, and reduced protection of trees at risk. In the majority of cases the advise / expertise would still be required and therefore it may be necessary for

consultants to be used, if the advice cannot be provided in house, which is likely to be a considerably higher cost to the Council than providing it in house.

All the above impacts bring with them increased risk of complaints and reputational damage for the Council, a degraded urban environment, reduced quality of life, and increased impacts from air pollution, climate change and extreme weather events.

As mentioned in the Finance section above, reduction in the size of the Trees and Woodlands team will also make it more difficult to achieve current income targets, and this could ultimately increase pressure on budgets.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The proposal has the potential to have a negative impact on Council's stated vision in respect of 'helping to create and safe communities' and 'improving the environment', and in terms of the following statements relating to 'what we want to achieve':

- People enjoy parks, green spaces, sport, leisure and cultural services
- Rotherham is prepared for present and future climate change
- Safer and well-maintained roads
- Reduced CO₂ emissions and lower levels of pollution.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Officers in Financial, Legal, Planning and Insurance Services have seen the report and had the opportunity to comment.

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ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Culture and Tourism
2.	Date:	5th February 2013
3.	Title:	Bowling Green Budget Savings 2013/14
4.	Programme Area:	Environment and Development Services

5. Summary

This report seeks approval, subject to consultation with bowling green users, to cease maintenance of all of the Council's remaining bowling greens, with the exception of those at Clifton Park, in order to make savings needed to help meet budget targets for 2013/14.

6. Recommendations

1. That Cabinet Member approves the cessation of maintenance of the following RMBC owned and managed bowling greens

Barkers Park
 Bradgate Park (x2)
 Greasbrough Park
 Maltby Coronation Park
 Valley Park (x2)

2. That Cabinet Member approves the issue of invitations to bowling clubs or other suitable and interested parties, to express interest in taking over responsibility for maintenance of affected greens at their own expense.

7. Proposals and Details

2013/14 budget savings proposals for EDS include a reduction in the number of crown green bowling greens that RMBC maintain across the Borough, from 11 to 4. This is necessary to achieve a budget savings target of £30,000.

The greens that would be affected are as follows:-

Barkers Park
Bradgate Park (x2)
Greasbrough Park
Maltby Coronation Park
Valley Park (x2)

As reported in February 2011 a strategic review of Bowling Green provision was undertaken in December 2010. Consequently, a decision was taken to cease maintenance of 8 Council-owned bowling greens, leaving 12. At Wath upon Dearne, it was proposed that maintenance cease on one of the two greens. However, an agreement was reached with the local bowls club for them to take on responsibility for the maintenance and management of both greens, and thus the total number of Council-owned greens being maintained by the Council fell to 11.

The current proposal would mean that the only Council-run bowling greens available for use would be the 4 greens at Clifton Park. However bowling greens continue to be provided by others, including Parish Councils and CISWO, at various sites around the Borough.

If the proposal is approved the decision would be communicated with all groups / clubs using RMBC operated greens as quickly as possible. Each would be invited to submit expressions of interest should they believe themselves to be in a position to take on responsibility for the maintenance of greens at their own expense, or to pay the full cost of maintenance.

Cessation of maintenance may put staff at risk of redundancy but it will not be possible to determine this until the full extent of fine turf work required from the Council in 2013/14 by external parties is confirmed later this year.

Consultation:

If necessary, appropriate consultation will be carried out with Unions and staff. Discussions will take place with relevant user groups.

This has been discussed with the Council's Community Engagement Officer and the appropriate F1 form and Equality Analysis has been undertaken.

8. Finance

The projected saving from the above proposal is estimated at £30,000. This assumes that seasonal games attendants would no longer be employed at affected sites. The saving would contribute to overall savings that need to be made by the Council in the light of reduced funding from central government.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

There is likely to be considerable public concern at a further loss of bowling greens.

In the event that any other body wishes to take on responsibility for the maintenance of any of the greens, then the Council would not be in a position to make any contribution towards green preparation and continued maintenance after May 2013.

Cessation of maintenance from affected bowling greens will mean that seasonal games attendants are no longer required. This may increase the risk of vandalism and anti-social behaviour at the sites concerned.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The proposed consultation period is in line with the Council's Community Engagement Framework. The reduction in bowling green maintenance is proposed to help meet the significant budget challenges faced by the Council.

The proposal has the potential to have a negative impact on Council's stated vision in respect of enjoying 'a healthy and active life' and in terms of the following statements relating to 'what we want to achieve':

- 'More people are physically active and have a healthy way of life'
- 'People enjoy parks, green spaces, sports, leisure, and cultural activities'

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Report to Cabinet Member for Culture, Lifestyle, Sport & Tourism, 18th February 2011

Officers in Financial Services have seen the report and had the opportunity to comment.

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ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Culture and Tourism
2.	Date:	5th February, 2013
3.	Title:	Grant Budget Savings, 2013/14
4.	Programme Area:	Environment and Development Services

5. Summary

This report seeks approval to remove two grant budgets (Third Party Funding Grant and Space for Sports & Arts Fund) in order to make savings needed to help meet budget savings targets for 2013/14.

6. Recommendations

6.1 That Cabinet Member approves the removal of the Third Party Funding Grant and the Space for Sports & Arts Fund

7. Proposals and Details

2013/14 budget savings proposals for EDS include the removal of two grant budgets (Third Party Funding Grant and Space for Sports & Arts Fund). This is necessary to achieve a budget saving target of £30,000.

Third Party Funding Grant

The annual budget for the Third Party Funding Grant is set at £16,646. The grant is administered by Leisure and Community Services on behalf of the Council and is used to facilitate the release of funding for environmental projects through the Landfill Community Fund. This is made available from a number of environmental bodies (Biffaward, WREN, Veolia etc.). The service works in partnership with local Friends groups, TARAs, BTCV and Groundwork in order to maximise the benefit to Rotherham from these sources. The availability of this budget has been beneficial in releasing grant funding to local communities in Rotherham (approximately £155,000 in 2011/12) and the general trend in uptake does appear to be increasing.

Recent Performance

Because of the carry forward of previous year's under-spend, recent budgets have been significantly under-spent and the forecast outturn position for this year suggests another significant under-spend. This is in part because while funds were allocated against defined projects, these projects have not always been successful. The funding applications for this year have totalled approximately £210,000, but only £62,000 has been granted by the funding bodies. The outturn figure would have been significantly different if these applications had succeeded.

One particular project (the Rotherham Rivers project) will be put at risk if the budget is withdrawn. This is part of the Living Don programme (underway since 2009) and identified by the Yorkshire & Humber Biodiversity Forum and the South Yorkshire Biodiversity Forum as a Priority Landscape-Scale Project Area. The programme aims to bring about the pro-active management of the upper part of the River Don catchment in South Yorkshire. To date there has been limited focus on the main River Don corridor in Rotherham and the River Rother, which is a key tributary. The Rotherham Rivers project has been designed to address this gap. An invitation has been received from WREN to apply to their Biodiversity Action Fund (funding up to £250k) and the application for completion is underway. A third party funding a contribution of 11% (£20,000 to £25,000) is required and RMBC is an eligible funder. The proposed removal of the Third Party Funding Grant will mean that a contribution cannot be made and unless an alternative funding source can be identified the project will not go ahead.

Space for Sports & Arts (SSA)

The budget for the Space for Sports & Arts Fund is £15,000. This fund was set up on the completion of the SSA programme (an external funding stream used to build spaces in Primary Schools for school and community use). The purpose of the fund was to subsidise community access in order to support and develop use outside of school hours.

Recent Performance

In 2010-11 the SSA budget was used only partially to subsidise community use of the three SSA facilities at Rawmarsh, St Ann's and Ferham schools (£750-£800 per facility), with the remainder being used for community sports coaching. There has been no adverse reaction to this change. In 2011-12 the entire SSA budget was used to support community sports coaching. In 2012-13 the SSA budget ceased to be used in this way as a separate 'Special Projects' budget was used instead. Consequently, the SSA budget has remained largely unspent on out of school hours access in the current financial year.

8. Finance

The projected savings from the above proposal will be £30,000 in the next financial year. This will contribute to overall savings that need to be made by the Council in the light of reduced funding from central government.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Loss of the Third Party Funding budget will mean that community led projects including those on Council land, may not go ahead where TPF is required before a grant offer is made.

Possible loss of the Rotherham Rivers project as identified above.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Minor. The Council will reduce its budget in line with government targets.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Reports to Cabinet Member for Lifelong Learning and Culture, 10th April 2012, An End of Year Report on achievements of the Third Party Funding budget.

Officers in Financial Services have seen the report and had the opportunity to comment.

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ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Culture and Tourism
2.	Date:	5th February, 2013
3.	Title:	Play Area Inspection Budget Savings, 2013/14
4.	Programme Area:	Environment and Development Services

5. Summary

This report seeks approval to introduce charges to Parish Councils for the Play Area inspection service, in order to make savings needed to help meet budget savings target for 2013/14.

6. Recommendations

6.1 That Cabinet Member approves the new charge to Parish Councils for play area inspections.

7. Proposals and Details

2013/14 budget savings proposals for EDS include the introduction of a charge to Parish Councils for the Play Area inspection service. This is necessary to achieve a budget savings target of £9,000.

The Green Spaces service currently provides play area inspections for Parish Council owned play areas free of charge. The proposal is to charge parish councils £20 per month per play area for inspections. The programme of inspections is identified below along with the future annual cost for each parish council.

Parish Council	Play Area	Total Annual Cost (2013/14)
Anston	Anston Parish Hall Lockwood Rec Ground Whitegates Rec Ground	£720
Aston-cum-Aughton	Aughton Rec Ground Burgoyne Park Fair View Drive Falconer Lane	£960
Bramley	Flash Lane	£240
Brampton Bierlow	Bierlow Park Holly Bush Park	£480
Brinsworth	Brinsworth Rec Ground Howarth Road Millenium Park	£720
Catcliffe	Catcliffe Rec Ground Highfield View	£480
Dalton	Magna Lane Ruby Cook Rec Ground Sunnyside	£720
Harthill with Woodall	Doctor Lane Woodall Lane	£480
Laughton-en-le-Morthen	Firbeck	£240
Orgreave	Orgreave Rec Ground	£240
Ravenfield	Hollings Lane	£240
Thorpe Salvin	Sorby Memorial Field	£240
Thurcroft	Brampton Road Gordon Bennett Rec Gnd Hangsman Lane	£720
Todwick	Goosecarr Lane Lindley Croft	£480
Treeton	Washfield Lane	£240
Ulley	Poynton Ave	£240
Wales	Mansfield Road Stoney Bank Wales Recreation Ground	£720
Wentworth	Occupation Road	£240
Whiston	Cowrakes Lane	£240
Wickersley	Bob Mason Rec Ground Warren Road Rec Ground	£480
Woodsetts	Gildingwells Road	£240

If all Parish Councils continue to instruct the Green Spaces Team to carry out these inspections the total annual income and therefore budget saving would be around £9,000 per annum. However some may choose to undertake their inspections in other ways, which would reduce the level of potential budget saving. It is not possible to determine at this point the level of uptake.

It is proposed that Parish Councils be advised of the new charges as soon as possible to allow them sufficient time to decide whether they wish to continue to receive this service from RMBC after 31st March, 2013.

8. Finance

The projected saving from the above proposal is estimated at £9,000. This assumes that the current level of inspection work for Parish Councils is maintained. The saving would contribute to overall savings that need to be made by the Council in the light of reduced funding from central government.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Some parish councils may object to the withdrawal of free safety inspections by the Borough Council. Consequently, some may choose not to pay for such inspections. This would lead to a reduction in the amount saved by the proposal. If Parish Councils fail to maintain their play areas adequately, then there is an increased risk of death and injury and associated claims.

Parish Council's may have set their budgets for the financial year 2013/14 in advance of receiving confirmation of this new charge, and this may cause them some difficulties. However the charge to each Parish Council is a relatively small amount and should be manageable.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The introduction of inspection charges is proposed to help meet the significant budget challenges faced by the Council.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Officers in Financial Services have seen the report and had the opportunity to comment.

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