

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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