

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

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.

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