

**REPORT TO:** Cabinet Member for Leisure and Tourism

**DATE:** 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2011

**SUBJECT:** Summary of Savings from Parks Budgets 2011/12

**WARDS AFFECTED:** All

**REPORT OF:** G. Bayliss. Director of Leisure and Tourism

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Phil Esseen. Head of Landscape Development and Management. x2392

**EXEMPT/CONFIDENTIAL:** No

**PURPOSE/SUMMARY:**

To inform the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Tourism of the total savings in Parks budgets to be made in 2011/12, and to allow consideration of the effect on bowling green facilities in the borough.

**REASON WHY DECISION REQUIRED:**

To achieve approved savings to the 2011/12 budget

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

The Cabinet Member for Leisure and Tourism: -

1. notes the savings which have been approved for parks budgets in 2011/12, and notes that a detailed report on their impact will be presented at a future Cabinet Member meeting;
2. approves the approach taken to reduce the costs of maintaining bowling greens, as detailed in the report.

**KEY DECISION:** No

**FORWARD PLAN:** No

**IMPLEMENTATION DATE:** Following expiry of the call-in period

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

IMPLICATIONS:

Budget/Policy Framework:

Financial:

<u>CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</u>	2009/ 2010 £	2010/ 2011 £	2011/ 2012 £	2012/ 2013 £
Gross Increase in Capital Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton Capital Resources				
Specific Capital Resources (S106)				
<u>REVENUE IMPLICATIONS</u>				
Gross Increase in Revenue Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton funded Resources				
Funded from External Resources				
Does the External Funding have an expiry date? Y/N	When?			
How will the service be funded post expiry?				

Legal:

Risk Assessment:

Asset Management:

**CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN/VIEWS**

FD704 – The Head of Corporate Finance and ICT has been consulted and her comments have been incorporated into this report.

CORPORATE OBJECTIVE MONITORING:

<u>Corporate Objective</u>		<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community		√	
2	Creating Safe Communities			√
3	Jobs and Prosperity		√	
4	Improving Health and Well-Being			√
5	Environmental Sustainability		√	
6	Creating Inclusive Communities			√
7	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening local Democracy			√
8	Children and Young People			√

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS RELIED UPON IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT

Minutes and Agendas for:

Cabinet, 16<sup>th</sup> December 2010, Transformation Programme and Further Options

## 1.0 Background

- 1.1 As part of the Council-wide 'Tactical Savings' for 2011/12, Cabinet and Council have approved the following reductions in Parks-related budgets:

<b>Budget</b>	<b>Saving</b>
Nursery budget	100K
Grounds maintenance	100K
Infrastructure Maintenance	50K
Floral Bedding in parks	40K
<b>Total</b>	<b>290K</b>

Whilst several different budgets are identified separately, they combine to provide a single, comprehensive Parks service, which manages the hard and soft landscape, people, user groups etc.

- 1.2 In addition, Leisure and Tourism receives funding from Highways to manage landscape elements in the highway which require specialist attention, such as floral roundabouts in key locations, and trees on the highway. These Highways budgets have been cut as follows:

<b>Budget</b>	<b>Saving</b>
Highways trees maintenance	40K
Floral roundabouts	35K

- 1.3 As these budgets are used for a variety of purposes, work is on-going to try and determine the best ways to achieve the savings and minimise the impact on the local community. This includes negotiations with the Grounds Maintenance and Arboriculture Contractors. However, there will unavoidably be some effects on service delivery, and full details of these will be presented at the next Cabinet Member meeting, when negotiations have been concluded.

## 2.0 Bowling Greens

- 2.1 A significant cost within the parks budgets is incurred by the management of bowling greens, and therefore it is necessary to include these when making savings from the wider budgets. The savings which were approved by Cabinet and Council (16<sup>th</sup> December 2010) therefore indicated a reduction in the number of bowling greens maintained by 6.
- 2.2 Due to the high profile of this area of service, it is considered appropriate to make Cabinet Member aware of how it is proposed to make these savings.
- 2.3 Leisure and Tourism currently maintain 23 bowling greens across Sefton, at a total cost of approximately £170,000; however, the income received from the facilities is only £7,000.

2.4 The bowling greens are located at the following sites:

<b>Site</b>	<b>Number of greens</b>
Crossens Community Park, Southport	1
Botanic Gardens, Southport	2
Crowland St, Southport	2
Bedford Park, Southport	1
Sandbrook Lane, Southport	1
Kings Gardens, Southport	2
Victoria park, Southport	3
Duke St Park, Formby	1
Hatton Hill Park, Litherland	1
Killen Green, Netherton	1
Moorside Park, Crosby	1
Coronation Park, Crosby	2
Victoria Park, Crosby	2
Derby Park, Bootle	1
Johnsons Bowling Club, Bootle	1
Crescent Bowling Club, Bootle	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>

### **3.0 Reduction in Number of Bowling Greens**

3.1 In order to identify potential savings, a set of strategic criteria were developed against which all the bowling greens could be assessed. These criteria were:

- whether there is more than one green on the site
- level of usage of the green
- the proximity of other bowling facilities in the area
- whether its use contributes to the wider local community and park life (i.e. whether the club engages with other members of the local community).

3.2 Each of the Bowling Clubs and Bowling User Committees (which manage the allocation of greens at most sites) was informed of the need to make savings in this part of the service. They were asked for their views and feedback on how these savings could be achieved, and whether they would be willing and able to take on some of the maintenance themselves. 31 responses were received. A summary of responses is given in Appendix A.

3.3 The general response from the bowling community was that they understandably did not want to lose any greens, but some acknowledged that they understood why savings need to be made. Some suggestions were made about how savings could be achieved in the future.

- 3.4 Using the strategic criteria, and where possible taking into account the views expressed by the bowling community, a number of greens were identified as being the most suitable for taking out of maintenance, whilst still trying to provide as broad a service as possible.

### **Sites with Multiple Greens**

- 3.5 The first approach was to look at those sites with more than one green, and to consider taking one out of maintenance. This would still enable bowling to continue at these sites, albeit on a reduced scale.
- 3.6 Of the six sites with multiple greens, it is therefore proposed to close one each at Crowland St in Southport, and Victoria Park and Coronation Park in Crosby.
- 3.7 It is proposed to retain the two greens at Botanic Gardens, as these have very high usage, and are located in the Borough's main 'tourist' park. It is also proposed to retain the two greens at Kings Gardens, as this is the subject of a major Heritage Lottery Fund project.
- 3.8 There are 3 bowling greens at Victoria Park, Southport, which are located on land leased to the Southport Flower Show Company, although the Council maintains them. Discussions with the Flower Show Company are on-going to explore future arrangements for this facility.
- 3.9 Also in Victoria Park, Southport (on land under the Council's direct control), is a croquet facility which is used by Southport Croquet Club. There are also high costs associated with maintenance of this facility, which covers a large area of land. This therefore corresponds to those bowling facilities which have multiple greens, and it is proposed to open discussions with the Club to reduce these costs significantly.

### **Usage**

- 3.10 The second approach was to look at the level of usage. The number of season tickets sold at each site gives some indication of this. The three sites with significantly lower usage are Victoria and Coronation Parks in Crosby (where it is proposed to remove one green, as described above), and Killen Green in Netherton.
- 3.11 It is therefore proposed to close the bowling facility at Killen Green.

## **Stand-Alone Greens**

- 3.12 In addition, those greens which 'stand-alone', and are not based within a wider park or open space were considered. These only provide facilities for a limited number of people and do not contribute towards a park's wider function; they do not provide opportunities for general park users, nor help to promote informal surveillance / contribute to the general success of a wider park.
- 3.13 The Crescent Bowling Green in Bootle was identified as a possibility for closure under this approach. Initially, one of the clubs which use it indicated they would be willing to take on the maintenance of the site themselves. However, they have since withdrawn their offer. Officers have arranged to meet with them to explore this issue further.

## **4.0 The Way Forward**

- 4.1 In order to achieve the immediate savings from the maintenance of bowling greens, it is suggested that the following approach be followed:
- Discontinue maintenance of one green at each of the following sites:
    - Crowland Street, Southport
    - Victoria Park, Crosby
    - Coronation Park, Crosby
    - Killen Green, Netherton
  - Continue discussions with user groups with a view to making further significant savings at the following sites:
    - Crescent Bowling Green, Bootle
    - Victoria Park, Southport
    - Southport Croquet Club

## **5.0 The Future of Bowling**

- 5.1 It is intended to thank the respondents from the bowling community for their contributions and to keep them updated on the current situation regarding savings.
- 5.2 The cost of maintaining the bowling greens and facilities across the Borough is proportionately a very costly element within the parks maintenance budgets. In order to make the provision of bowling more sustainable, and to try to avoid having to close further greens in the future, it is proposed to continue working with Sefton's Bowling Clubs and Bowling User Committees to explore different

options for reducing costs / increasing income. Meetings with representatives from the Bowling Community have been arranged to discuss this further in March 2011.

## **6. Recommendations**

The Cabinet Member for Leisure and Tourism: -

- 1 notes the savings which have been approved for parks budgets in 2011/12, and notes that a detailed report on their impact will be presented at a future Cabinet Member meeting;
- 2 approves the approach taken to reduce the costs of maintaining bowling greens, as detailed in the report.



**Summary of Responses from Bowling Clubs and Bowling User Committees**

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Summary of Comments</b>
Formby Park Bowling Club	Details of membership and usage of green
Southport District Ladies Bowling green	Opposition to closure of greens
Crossens Bowling green	Wanted information on maintenance costs
Botanic Gardens Bowls Club	Opposition to closure: requested more information on costs,
Moorside Park	Details of previous investment by club. Unable to maintain green themselves. Willing to pay more green fees. Details of members and usage.
Sandbrook Park Bowls	Propose closure of winter greens and increase management fees. Details of usage
Crowlands Bowling club	Volunteer to maintain green, details of usage.
Hatton Hill Park	Suggested closure waits until October -.details of use, details of costs requested
Crescent Pensioners	Details of use; willing to pay a small increase for use of green.
Crescent Bowling club	Details of grants and volunteer work and offer to do maintenance by a volunteer at the club.
Botanic Gardens Bowls Club	Details of their lease regarding their buildings
Bedford Park Bowling Club	Details of use; unable to take on maintenance
Derby Park	Willing to take on some maintenance tasks.
Friends of Derby park	Support of Derby Park bowls club
Formby Park Bowling Club	Close greens where more than one exist. Willing to pay more green fees
Victoria Park Bowling Club Crosby	Details of only 6 members. Volunteered in the past for minor tasks
Crossens Bowling green	Details use and volunteer work done; willing to work with the Council to reduce costs
Bedford St Johns Bowls Club	Details of use and costs
Botanic Ladies Bowls Club	Opposition to closure of greens
Sorted Bowling Section	Opposition to closure and propose increasing number of greens
Burscough and Lathoms Bowls league	Opposition to closures
Promenade Bowling Club	Concerned
Southport LV Bowls League	Opposition to closures
Waterloo Excelsior Ladies bowls club	Details of use and opposition to closure
Botanic Ladies Bowls Club	Details of use and opposition to closure of Botanic
Hermitage Ladies bowls club	Details of use, willing to contribute more fees
NSRBL	Details of use
Southport Bowling Club	Details of use and volunteer work
Mr Lunt	Requested more details on number of greens and costs
Botanic Gardens Mens Society	Details of use and opposition to closure of Botanic
Southport LV Bowls League	Proposed deferring closure until end September