

# BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## REPORT TO CABINET

1 SEPTEMBER 2015

### REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES

#### SPORTS PAVILIONS CARETAKING REVIEW 2015

#### 1. Purpose of Report.

1.1 The purpose of the report is :

- i. to present to Cabinet the outcome of consultation conducted on proposals for changes to the current management and caretaking arrangements for sports pavilions, and
- ii. to seek Cabinet approval for the implementation of changes to the current management and caretaking arrangements for sports pavilions in light of the outcomes of consultation.

#### 2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

2.1 The proposals for changes to the management and caretaking arrangements for sports pavilions, embrace and recognise the objectives detailed in the Corporate Plan under Priority 5 - (Working Together to Tackle Health Issues and Encourage Healthy Life Styles), to maintain, healthy living and vibrant places.

2.2 The parks pavilions review forms part of the Communities Directorate response to reconciling the current financial settlement with operational levels of service. This proposal is in accordance with the improvement priorities detailed in the Corporate Plan under Priority 6 - (Working Together to Make Best Use of Our Resources).

#### 3. Background.

3.1 As part of the Council's response to the cuts to public service funding, measures to achieve savings against the provision of the Council's Parks and Playing Fields Service have been included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). COM7 identifies a saving of £100k for 2016/17. In order to achieve part of these savings, it has been deemed necessary to review the current operational arrangements for opening, closing and cleaning of the Council's sports pavilions.

3.2 The Council at present manages and operates 80 individual outdoor sports facilities, which are serviced by 34 pavilions. These facilities are used by 65 clubs for a range of winter and summer sports and also by a variety of non-sporting groups, such as pre-school playgroups and craft groups.

3.3 The £100k annual saving for 2016/17 is the element of saving expected to be made from the review of the pavilion arrangements. The total annual cost of managing and operating these pavilions is in excess of £400,000, this figure includes £188k for caretaking services, the remainder being the costs attributed to holding and

maintaining the fixed assets. The annual income taken for hire of these buildings is around £32,000. The Council is, therefore, significantly subsidising the use of these facilities - in excess of 90% of the 'running costs'.

- 3.4 In order to reduce the current level of expenditure, the changes proposed involved the delivery of a basic level of pavilion cleaning through the use of mobile teams rather than the 'static' caretaking arrangements currently operated. Any additional cleaning required over and above that provided through the amended level of service would be a user responsibility. Opening and closing would also have to be a user function.
- 3.5 Any proposals to amend the operating arrangements for parks pavilions need to take into account the views of the community and users of the facilities. To accommodate this Cabinet at its meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> December 2014 approved proposals to formally consult with the public and users of the facilities on the arrangements for servicing the pavilions. At the same time, pavilion caretakers were advised, through an informal engagement exercise, that this consultation would be taking place.

#### **4. Current Situation**

- 4.1 Consultation on the proposed changes commenced on the 16<sup>th</sup> February 2015, and was available to the public on and off line for a period of eight weeks. Comments were also invited via letter, email and phone calls. The Council tweeted its 5100 @BridgendCBC followers and posted to the 800 users who have liked our Facebook page to raise awareness of the consultation.
- 4.2 The consultation consisted of three elements; section one sought information on the demographics of respondents; section two related directly to the proposals, and section three provided respondents with the opportunity to elaborate on their responses and also included standard equalities questions suggested by Welsh Government. A total of sixty responses were received.
- 4.3 The headline figures from the consultation were:
- 57 per cent disagreed with the introduction of a mobile cleaning team.
  - The most supported proposal was users being responsible for the opening and closing of facilities.
  - Users being responsible for cleaning over and above the basic level of service received the highest level of 'strongly disagree' responses. The most popular qualitative response, however, was that clubs should be more responsible.
  - Cost saving suggestions received the lowest level of responses - the most popular answer was to allow users / partners to take over the pavilions.
  - Respondents wanted more clarity on the proposals stating that this will have a large impact on their level of support for any potential changes.
- 4.4 A significant outcome of the consultation was the overall acceptance at club level that pavilion users should be more responsible for the facilities in which they operate. An increase in user participation in service delivery was acknowledged, however, that said, there was a clear concern expressed about users carrying out any additional cleaning required. The consultation also appeared to demonstrate a level of acceptance and understanding by users of the financial pressures and the

difficult decisions facing the Council. A full copy of the final report is provided as **Appendix 1**.

- 4.5 While the principle of mobile cleaning did not appear to be too contentious, there was some concern expressed by users with regard to the self-cleaning implications of the proposals. This view seemed to conflict with the support expressed by users / partners to take on more responsibility for the pavilions, which would involve a more substantive cleaning role. In light of this, Cabinet are asked to give their approval to the introduction of mobile cleaning teams to replace the current caretaking arrangements and subject to compliance with appropriate agreements to be drawn up, that users become key holders to the facilities and take on responsibility for the opening and closing of the pavilions when being used. It should be noted that under this arrangement, users of the pavilions will be expected to carry out some cleaning of the pavilions following their use.
- 4.6 Replacing the resources attached to the opening, closing and cleaning of the pavilions with two mobile facility cleaning vehicles manned with two operatives in each vehicle and equipped with appropriate cleaning materials, will result in each pavilion being cleaned on a rotational basis once or twice a week depending on the overall usage of individual pavilions.
- 4.7 The cost of this service will be approximately £88k and will generate the saving of £100k identified in the MTFs when set against the staffing budget of £188k for the provision of caretaking services. Utilising this staffing arrangement will also allow some flexibility with regard to the deployment of the resources and any future need to make budget savings. The introduction of this change will be subject to the outcome of appropriate formal staff consultation, which will take place if Cabinet is minded to approve the recommendations of this report. It should be noted that informal engagement with staff and union representatives has already been undertaken to ensure staff are aware of the consideration being given to the proposed change.

## **5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules.**

- 5.1 This report has no effect on Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.

## **6. Equality Impact Assessment**

- 6.1 The consultation referred to in this report discharged the Council's commitment and duty under the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 to consult with appropriate groups and individuals on proposed changes to service provision. The initial screening EIA identified that although a large group of people could potentially be affected by the policy change, the change will impact in the same way on groups with 'protected characteristics, and the need to carry out a full EIA was, therefore, deemed of a low priority i.e. a full EIA to be conducted within three years of the introduction of any service changes.

## **7. Financial Implications.**

- 7.1 The current staffing budget for the provision of caretaking services is £188K. The proposals identified above would cost approximately £88k to implement and would

therefore result in a saving of £100k against the Communities Directorate MTFS savings set against the service area for 2016/17.

## **8. Recommendations.**

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 8.1 Note the outcomes of the consultation;
- 8.2 Subject to the outcome of appropriate consultation with caretaking staff, approve the introduction of mobile cleaning operatives in place of the existing caretaking arrangements;
- 8.3 Subject to the outcome of appropriate consultation with caretaking staff, approve users of pavilions becoming key holders for outdoor sports pavilions, in accordance with agreements to be developed in consultation with the Assistant Chief Executive Legal and Regulatory Services.

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**Background Papers:** None