

**CABINET RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF THE ECONOMY &  
CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ENTITLED "FUNDING OF PARKS"**

***Recommendation 1***

Cabinet agrees a clear vision statement for the Parks Service that defines its purpose, focus and direction and thereby determines the scale and scope of required income generation and cost reduction.

**RESPONSE : The recommendation is accepted.**

***Recommendation 2***

The vision statement for Parks Services, and consequent scale and scope of required income generation and cost reduction, reflects the impact of the reduction in available Commuted Sums for Parks Services and that a plan be put in place to mitigate the impact of this reduction.

**RESPONSE : The recommendation is partially accepted.**

The Council will endeavour to mitigate the impacts of the reduction in commuted sum payments and through the budgetary framework / budget setting process for 2020/21 and beyond.

***Recommendation 3***

Cabinet tasks officers to undertake an options appraisal of the potential mechanisms to generate income and reduce costs, with the evaluation criteria to include: the fit of the mechanism with the agreed vision statement for Parks Services; anticipated amount of income generated; ease of generating income; availability of resources required; impact on existing services; and level of risk.

**RESPONSE : The recommendation is accepted.**

The report sets out the progress made to date in reducing costs and increasing income, over time. Many of the mechanisms identified within the report for achieving such have been implemented as part of previous budget rounds with savings generated. Action plans based on functions

of the parks service are in place and those opportunities identified through options appraisal will be incorporated into these action plans. Some of the opportunities for income generation / cost reduction are also being explored through the service review, which is currently being undertaken by the Capital Ambition Delivery Team.

#### **Recommendation 4**

Cabinet tasks officers to use the evidence provided by this Inquiry to inform the options appraisal of the mechanisms identified as able to deliver savings/ generate income.

#### **RESPONSE : The recommendation is accepted.**

The evidence generated through the scrutiny exercise can be used along with other sources of evidence that the service obtains from stakeholders / comparators.

#### **Recommendation 5**

Cabinet tasks officers to develop a detailed plan for implementing the preferred mechanisms identified by the option appraisal that sets out the resources identified to achieve implementation and resultant timescales.

#### **RESPONSE : The recommendation is accepted.**

In line with the response to Recommendation 3, action plans based on functions of the parks service are in place and those opportunities identified through the options appraisal will be incorporated into these action plans.

#### **Recommendation 6**

Cabinet, ahead of the options appraisal as a matter of urgency, tasks officers to expedite the application for Welsh Government grant funding for energy efficiency measures at Bute Park nursery.

#### **RESPONSE : The recommendation is partially accepted.**

The Welsh Government funding available takes the form of an interest free invest to save scheme, £ 2 Million has been secured for Phase II of the Scheme and the Bute Park Nursery is a candidate building under the re-fit framework for this phase. The identification of buildings to be taken forward under Phase II will be determined by Asset Management Board in September 2018.

### **Recommendation 7**

Cabinet ensures that any additional concessions in Parks are of a high standard, sustainable and add to the reputation of Cardiff's parks.

**RESPONSE : The recommendation is accepted.**

### **Recommendation 8**

Cabinet tasks officers to liaise with the sports pitch users' representatives that responded to this Inquiry expressing an interest in taking on responsibility for grounds maintenance and land management, with a view to establishing viable key holder agreements, leases and/ or asset transfer arrangements that deliver savings/ generate income for Parks Services.

**RESPONSE : The recommendation is accepted.**

A wide range of agreements have been reached, over time with sports clubs, local leagues, governing bodies and the private sector. These agreements have enabled the Council to reduce costs, attract investment in infrastructure / facilities and have ensured the sustainability of sporting provision. The service will continue to respond to interest from users.

### **Recommendation 9**

Cabinet considers smaller events utilise sites throughout the city, including school sites subject to the approval of their governing bodies, taking into account sustainable travel plans, hard surfaces/ standing and utility requirements.

**RESPONSE : The recommendation is accepted.**

Such sites will be considered in conjunction with event promoters / organisers taking into account the nature and scale of the specific event and its requirements.

## **Recommendation 10**

Budget realignment takes place as a matter of urgency to ensure that the Parks Services budget reflects the true position in terms of income generated and costs incurred, to include:

- a. The income earned from concessions in Parks goes into the Parks budget, rather than the central corporate pot
- b. The costs incurred by undertaking works for Highways are reimbursed to the Parks budget
- c. The charges from CTS reflect the work undertaken and the reduction in the number of Parks vehicles.

### **RESPONSE : The recommendation is partially accepted.**

- a. The income earned from concessions in Parks goes into the Parks budget, rather than the central corporate pot.  
*This recommendation is rejected, the current arrangements for income relating to parks based concessions follow the Corporate Landlord approach agreed previously by Cabinet.*
- b. The costs incurred by undertaking works for Highways are reimbursed to the Parks budget.  
*The recommendation is rejected - The cost of highway related grounds maintenance works, undertaken by the parks service should be noted and needs to be separated in calculations that show the cost of the parks service. Notwithstanding this the impact of reimbursing such will apply pressures elsewhere.*
- c. The charges from CTS reflect the work undertaken and the reduction in the number of Parks vehicles.  
*The recommendation is accepted – A reconciliation of accounts has been completed.*

## **Recommendation 11**

There are no further cuts to the park keeping budget (which covers the park ranger services) and that the Cabinet identifies mechanisms to increase the budget available to park rangers, as their services are vital to ensure Cardiff's parks are safe, secure, well managed, inclusive and of a high quality for the residents and visitors to Cardiff. Members are particularly mindful that park rangers enable Friends Groups to contribute thousands of hours of volunteer time and expertise, which is critical to

sustaining the excellence of Cardiff's Parks and Green Spaces.

**RESPONSE : The recommendation is rejected.**

The important role played by the Park Ranger Service is both understood and valued, any growth and / or financial pressures that the service faces will be managed through normal budget processes. Cabinet cannot allow budget decisions to be tied into specific Scrutiny recommendations.

**Recommendation 12**

A communication plan be developed and implemented to ensure that there is a shared understanding of the vision and direction for Parks Services amongst staff, partners, businesses and residents.

**RESPONSE : This recommendation is accepted.**

**Recommendation 13**

In order to develop the vision statement, deliver agreed recommendations and any other work arising from the agreed vision statement, Cabinet ensure that the Operational Manager time available for Parks is increased, along with other resources as required.

**RESPONSE : The recommendation is accepted.**