

Response of Council Cabinet to the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission on the 2008/9-2010/11 proposed Revenue and Capital Budget

Appendix 5 – Recommendations of the Climate Change Commission

Recommendations on the Draft Revenue and Capital Budget 2008-2011 by the Climate Change Commission

Recommendation 1

That the Council should not reduce facilities and subsidies on parks activities by a total of £81,000 over the period 2008/9 to 2010/11 and should instead seek other means of making this saving. No decision to close or fail to refurbish play areas should be made without the Climate Change Commission being consulted on the play areas proposed for closure and on the costs/savings of refurbishment and closure.

CABINET RESPONSE

We have considered all types of savings for this difficult 3 year period and unfortunately have not been able to identify alternatives. Much of this £81k is due to facilities being barely used but regularly maintained and follows on from the savings identified last year. In regard to Play Area consultation, the relevant Neighbourhood Forums are to be consulted directly.

Reasons

The Commission is aware of and supports the proposals contained in the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy (Forward Plan item 28/07). Members are concerned that the proposed reduction in facilities and subsidies on parks activities will prevent the effective delivery of the Strategy and will have a detrimental effect on the City's parks and detract from their attractiveness to the public. The proposal to reduce the facilities and subsidies on parks activities does not support the Council's priorities for 2007/10 of:

- Making us proud of our neighbourhoods
- Leading Derby towards a better environment
- Helping us all to be healthy, active and independent
- Giving you excellent services and value for money

Children's play areas provide an important facility for families and contribute to the achievement of the Council's objective of 'Helping us all to be healthy, active and independent'. It is accepted that some play areas may be underutilised but the Commission still wishes to be consulted on any

proposed closures.

Recommendation 2

The Commission recommends that recycling bring sites that are well used by the public should not be closed and that any programme of closure of the bring sites should be based on current levels of usage and not on the assumption that the sites are not needed because the Council now provides kerbside collection facilities.

CABINET RESPONSE

Disagree. Because our 'Rethink Rubbish' and kerb side collection systems are working well, there is less of a need for some of our 'bring sites' and to withdraw some of these facilities will be a very positive signal to the public that our 'green' policies are working. Our reasons for doing this will be communicated to our public through the relevant neighbourhood forums.

Reasons

The Commission is aware that some of the City's recycling bring sites are underutilised and that there are problems of antisocial behaviour at some of the sites. Members can consequently understand the reasons for a programme to rationalise and consolidate the number of recycling bring sites in Derby. However members consider that the closure of all recycling bring sites in the City no matter what their level of usage, would deny the public an important facility and would have a detrimental effect on the level of recycling in Derby. No figures have been provided to the Commission to justify the proposal to close all the recycling bring sites and members have requested a list of the sites, and information on the amount of material deposited at each site. It is considered that a rational decision about the sites to be closed cannot be made without this information. The proposal to close all the recycling bring sites in Derby would not support the Council's objectives of:

- Leading Derby towards a better environment
- Giving you excellent services and value for money.

Recommendation 3

The Commission recommends that the proposal to close the Council run public conveniences in the City centre and elsewhere in Derby is re-examined to see whether it will be possible to retain some of the City centre facilities.

CABINET RESPONSE

Agreed.

Reasons

The Commission understands the reasoning for the proposal to close the Council run public conveniences in Derby. Members are aware of the problems of vandalism and antisocial behaviour that affect some of these

public conveniences and support in principle their closure. Members are however concerned about the impact that the closure of all the Council run public conveniences will have on residents and visitors to the City. This proposal will penalise law abiding members of the public when they need toilet facilities. Not all of them may be happy with using the facilities in commercial premises, and if they are visitors to the City, they may not know where those facilities are. The closure of Council run public conveniences in the City centre would not support the Council's objective of:

- Creating a 21st century City centre

The Commission accepts the need to close certain public conveniences in Derby. However it is suggested that the implications of the proposal to close all Council run public conveniences requires further consideration and that some City centre facilities should be retained.

Recommendation 4

The Commission recommends that the budget pressure of £70k arising from reduced income from golf operations is covered by increasing the charge to players at the Council's golf courses.

CABINET RESPONSE

Whilst we are in sympathy with the opinions of the Commission on golf, the difficulty is by putting up the price too much would lead to less people playing and therefore increase the loss.

Reasons

Commission members consider it would be reasonable to address the budget pressure by increasing the charge to players at the Council's golf courses. Members have suggested that off setting this budget pressure in this way might partially remove the requirement to reduce facilities and subsidies on parks activities. It is considered that increased golf charges would still satisfy the Council's objective of:

- Giving you excellent services and value for money.

The Climate Change Commission made no specific recommendations on the draft Capital Budget proposals that fell within its portfolio.