

Decision Pathway – Report



PURPOSE: Key decision

MEETING: Cabinet

DATE: 01 May 2018

TITLE	Parks and Green Spaces – future funding model 2018-2020		
Ward(s)	All		
Author: Gemma Dando	Job title: Acting Director of Commercialisation		
Cabinet lead: Councillor Asher Craig	Executive Director lead: Alison Comley		
Proposal origin: <i>Other</i>			
Decision maker: Cabinet Member Decision forum: <i>Cabinet</i>			
Summary of issue / proposal: By April 1 st 2019 the parks and green spaces revenue budget will be reduced to £1.6m, a £2.868m reduction since April 2017 and a £4.35m reduction since April 2014. In order to continue to provide and maintain the current estate of green spaces in Bristol and many of their facilities including play and sports, an innovative solution is needed to this budget reduction. During 2017 a plan was developed to maximise income from parks, green spaces and related services such as cemeteries and crematoria, the horticultural nursery, and woodfuel in order to minimise the need for service reductions. In 2017/18, the £963k saving was delivered through a combination of increasing the income from existing businesses within parks and green spaces, and reducing the repairs and investment revenue budget. The budget reduction plan for 2018 – 2020 includes a further £1.415m in income proposals and £490k service reduction proposals. Between 6 th November 2017 and 29 th January 2018 a citywide engagement and consultation exercise took place on the proposals for generating income and making efficiencies in order to continue to maintain the city's parks and green spaces with a reduced budget. The consultation and engagement exercise asked citizens whether they supported a variety of income generation and service reduction options for parks. There were opportunities for detailed feedback about the proposals throughout the document. Drop in sessions took place in neighbourhoods and the survey was actively promoted by the parks forum and via social media and other media channels. 2659 people responded to the consultation and engagement. Detailed responses were also received from partner organisations and community groups, including the Bristol Parks Forum and Avon Wildlife Trust. One petition of 3307 signatures was received which opposed the proposal to introduce advertising into parks. The consultation broadly supported the income generation plan put forward by the council, and supported some of the service reduction proposals. Taking in to consideration the outcome of the consultation and engagement process, this report recommends that the income generation and service reduction plan proceeds according plan in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to improve and increase income from existing businesses in parks and green spaces portfolio• Increase income from cafes and concessions (e.g. ice cream vans) and provide more of these in our parks• Introduce new, competitive fees and charges for any business operating from a park or green space. This includes fitness instructors, dog walkers, balloon flights, and any other business using public open space.• Introduce new fee-paying activities into parks and allow private businesses to operate pay-to-use facilities from parks			

- Increase money from events in the parks of the city.
- The operation of chargeable sports facilities and other facilities in public parks only when they generate no cost to the Council.
- Reduce the level of grounds maintenance on parks or parts of parks across the city where it is appropriate to do so.
- To no longer provide hanging baskets in some parks and in parts of the city centre and Clifton and to replace formal bedding displays with more floral meadow displays across the city.
- Look for opportunities for community groups and organisations and businesses to manage, maintain or enhance local green spaces
- Increase the number of pay and display parking spaces in parks, and increase the parking charges on sites that already have pay and display parking

This report recommends that proposals about advertising and replacement of play equipment are developed in more detail, and further engagement with any local areas that are relevant to the proposals will take place.

This report recommends that proposals about reduction in opening times and days of Hengrove Play Park, and other parks and facilities are not taken forward in 2018-19 and are revisited according to budget requirements in 2019-20.

This report seeks to gain approval for the income generation plan that was consulted on, and to request that procurement decisions related to this income generation, including decisions for up to £1.3m in capital investment and up to the EU threshold for commercial and concession procurement and contracts are delegated to the Executive Director of Communities in consultation with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for parks and green spaces to allow the speed of delivery required to meet the income targets. This includes decisions about grants received, capital spend on income generation initiatives and any other parks investment; for example the award of the contract to carry out works funded by a Countryside Stewardship grant and the Stoke Park Dowry in Stoke Park.

Evidence Base:

- National and international health and environmental evidence shows that green infrastructure, including parks and green spaces, is a vital contributor to citizen health, clean air, flood management and population wellbeing.
- However, the amount of funding available to run public services is decreasing which puts non-statutory services such as parks and green spaces at risk.
- Finding alternative ways to subsidise parks and green spaces, including commercial initiatives, enable parks and green spaces provision to be more sustainable for the future.

Recommendations:

1. To approve the proposals set out in this report for meeting the budget reduction in parks and green spaces
2. To delegate to the Executive Director of Communities, authority to enter in to commercial and concession procurement and contracts in consultation with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for parks and green spaces up to the EU procurement threshold.
3. To delegate authority to the Executive Director of Communities to make investment decisions in parks for values up to £1.3m in consultation with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for parks and green spaces – specifically for capital investment, grant money, match funding and other non-revenue fund money. Within this delegation will include award of the contract for Stoke Park Estate capital investment.

Corporate Strategy alignment:

- Working towards an independent, sustainable funding model for parks which relies less on public funding helps to meet the objective of keeping Bristol on course to be run entirely on clean energy by 2050 whilst improving our environment to ensure people enjoy cleaner air, cleaner streets and access to parks and green spaces as it helps to financially future-proof the existence and maintenance of parks and green spaces.
- The proposals within the future funding model for parks and green spaces also prioritise community development and enable people to support their community.

City Benefits:

- Sustainably funded Parks and Green Spaces have clear benefits for the city as they provide free spaces for every citizen to play, relax, exercise and take part in community activities. A full health inequalities impact

assessment has been carried out on the parks budget reduction, which highlights the need to retain and maintain existing parks and open spaces as they provide a wide array of health benefits.

- Parks and green spaces contribute to sustainability outcomes including carbon reduction and clean air outcomes. Finding a sustainable funding model allows these outcomes to continue.
- When developing the future financial model for parks, care will be taken to ensure that income generation activities do not have a negative impact on equalities groups such as older people or young people (who could be excluded or marginalised from some activities). Equalities impact of each of the proposals will be regularly assessed. The proposals also offer an opportunity to increase the breadth of the cultural and recreational offer in parks to better cater for all equalities groups.

Consultation and engagement Details: (attached in Appendix B)

- 12 week citywide consultation, drop-ins, engagement, social media, partnerships as described above and in consultation report.
- Engagement with parks and green spaces scrutiny task and finish group.
- Ongoing engagement and communication with Bristol Parks Forum, Avon Wildlife Trust, VCS and community partners throughout the consultation and beyond to share details of proposals and to ensure that feedback is incorporated so that any negative impacts on citizens, nature and wildlife are minimised.

Revenue Cost	£n/a	Source of Revenue Funding	
Capital Cost	Up to £1.3m	Source of Capital Funding	Parks capital budget identified within capital programme
One off cost <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ongoing cost <input type="checkbox"/>	Saving Proposal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Income generation proposal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Required information to be completed by Financial/Legal/ICT/ HR partners:

1. Finance Advice:

The Parks and Green Spaces service has delivered £1.0m savings in 17/18 and is committed to delivering incremental savings of +£0.6m in 18/19 and +£1.3m in 19/20.

Having taken in to account feedback from a recent (Nov '17-Jan '18) city-wide consultation, this paper proposes a suite of initiatives, predominantly income generation but also a combination of service efficiencies and service reductions, in order to deliver these savings.

Note that the service may seek to access capital budget and grant funds for initial investment where recurrent reductions in maintenance are planned. These will be proposed on a case by case basis.

Note also that the financial impact of income generation has been based on market information and professional advice has been sought however it still represents 'estimates' at this time. Progress against these estimates throughout 18/19 must be closely monitored and responded to in order to ensure that budget delivery is secured.

Finance Business Partner: Jemma Prince – Finance Business Partner – 12/3/18

2. Legal Advice:

The decision maker needs to take in to consideration the outcome of consultation and engagement when making a decision on the recommendations, and must also comply with the Public Sector Equality duty to consider the need to promote equality for persons with "protected characteristics": age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

In order to do this the decision maker will need to have sufficient information about the effects of the proposed changes on the aims of the Equality Duty. The Equalities impact assessment is designed to assist with compliance with this duty and so the decision maker must take this in to consideration.

Legal Services will need to be instructed on the detailed procurement and concession proposals to advise on the correct EU threshold applicable in each case and the relevant statutory and internal governance and procurement

procedures to be complied with.

Legal Team Leader: Nancy Rollason Head of Service 10th April 2018

3. Implications on ICT: None

ICT Team Leader: Ian Gale

4. HR Advice: The report recommends a number of income generation and service reduction initiatives to achieve the savings. It is likely that changes to the service provision could impact workforce numbers and roles, but the detail is not currently known. A managing change process in line with council HR policy would be implemented should there be any changes that impact staff.

HR Partner: Celia Williams, HR Business Partner, 26/3/18

EDM Sign-off	Pam Wharfe	14/3/18
Cabinet Member sign-off	Councillor Asher Craig	15/3/18
CLB Sign-off	Jacqui Jenson	20/3/18
For Key Decisions - Mayor's Office sign-off	Mayor's Office	29/03/18

Appendix A – Further essential background / detail on the proposal	YES
Appendix B – Details of consultation carried out - internal and external	YES
Appendix C – Summary of any engagement with scrutiny	NO
Appendix D – Risk assessment	NO
Appendix E – Equalities screening / impact assessment of proposal	YES
Appendix F – Eco-impact screening/ impact assessment of proposal	YES
Appendix G – Financial Advice	NO
Appendix H – Legal Advice	NO
Appendix I – Combined Background papers	NO
Appendix J – Exempt Information	NO
Appendix K – HR advice	NO
Appendix L – ICT	NO