

APPENDIX F

Policy Scrutiny Committee 20 March 2013

38. Medium Term Financial Strategy 201318: Proposal to Withdraw and Close the Commons Warden Service

John Bibby, Director of Housing and Community Services

- a. presented the Detailed Business Case on the proposed changes to close and withdraw the Commons Warden Service in order to contribute to the required budget savings targets set out in the Councils Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- b. highlighted the key drivers underpinning the review as detailed at paragraph 3 of the report and advised on the staff consultation that had taken place.
- c. gave an overview of the Business Case and highlighted the following:
 - Scope and Objectives of the Review
 - Summary of Existing Services
 - Proposal Summary
 - Detailed Appraisal of Option
 - Staffing Issues
 - Stakeholder Responses
 - Analysis of the Service Implications, Risk and Equality Impact Assessment
 - Implementation Plan
 - Key Decision Required
- d. referred to the Stakeholder Consultation undertaken through the Commons Advisory Panel and summarised the views that were expressed.
- e. highlighted the further views and comments that had been received from individual organisations listed at paragraph 5.2 of the report.
- f. referred to Part 2 of the report and presented the detail behind the overall summary figures within the Business Case including the impact on savings targets.
- g. advised on the staffing implications and detailed the proposal of the deletion of one full time post from the staffing establishment.
- h. referred to the supplementary paperwork circulated at the meeting and highlighted the comments received from staff.

Question/ Comment 1:

Members asked if it was feasible for a 'watch scheme' to be introduced with volunteers providing the service.

Response:

The Director of Housing and Community Services advised that Park Advisory Groups, Commons Advisory Panel, Stakeholders and other community groups were committed to preserve these facilities and if the decision was taken to withdraw the service a group of volunteers could come forward to assist to monitor the open spaces.

Members felt that whilst it was appreciated that there were savings that needed to be made, a joined up solution to combine the two services would possibly alleviate the problems of withdrawing the service.

It was therefore, proposed by Councillor Kerry and seconded by Councillor J Kirk, which was debated:

- Committee recommends to the Executive that the proposals in the business case be rejected and that the Executive consider a proposal to join the urban ranger service and the commons warden service together to provide some kind of cover.

RESOLVED that

1. the Executive be recommended to reject;
2. and that the Executive consider a proposal to join the Urban Ranger service and the Commons Warden service together to provide some savings but which would mitigate the risks across the city if the service was withdrawn completely.