

REPORT TO: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE ON 20 APRIL 2010

SUBJECT: 2010/2011 BUDGET SAVINGS – GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

BY: DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 The reason for the report is to inform the Committee of how the 2010/2011 Revenue Budget savings for Grounds Maintenance will be achieved.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to Revenue Budgets.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **It is recommended that Committee note the changes to be made to grounds maintenance operations, as identified in Item 3.3, in order to achieve the 1st year revenue budget savings of £30,000 in 2010/2011.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Moray Council at its meeting on 11th February 2010 agreed a revenue budget saving of £30,000 from rescheduling grounds maintenance operations.
- 3.2 As the Committee will appreciate, the main grounds maintenance tasks are from Spring to Autumn. To avoid having excess employees over the winter period, the service employs on average thirteen seasonal workers who are employed from April to September to support full time staff on the summer maintenance programme.
- 3.3 The £30,000 budget savings are to be achieved by reducing the period of employment of seasonal staff by six weeks.

The impact of this will be as follows:

- On a site by site basis, grassed areas currently cut on a medium frequency of eight cuts will be reprioritised to six cuts;
- Larger sites on a medium grass cutting frequency will receive only three cuts with only the sides of any paths cut on a six cut basis;
- Grass panels which are currently edged on a monthly basis will be edged every five weeks;
- There may be more evidence of weeds growing in streets and pavements;

- The biodiversity of some sites will be reduced as some poor quality shrub beds will be removed and turned into grass panels rather than being refurbished;
- A lower priority will be given to requests for non-routine works.

3.4 The £30,000 was brought forward from the £116,000 identified as a saving in 2011/2012 during the Budget Consultation Process. Work is ongoing to consider what reductions in services will be required to meet the additional £86,000 savings which are assumed to be required in 2011/2012, and will be the subject of a further report to this Committee.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Single Outcome Agreement/Service Improvement Plan

The service reduction could impact on the SOA National Outcome 12, 'We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect and enhance it for future generations'.

(b) Policy and Legal

The Grounds Maintenance Section is a Significant Trading Operation, which is required to break even over a three-year rolling period. Works are programmed on an agreed specification/standard and frequency, hence reductions in the Client Revenue Budget for grounds maintenance operations will involve a variation to the contract specification for the works.

(c) Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing and Property)

Implementation of the budget savings will have an impact on the Trading Account, which will have to be managed to ensure required rate of return is met.

No impact on full time staff employed.

Any reduction in grounds maintenance operations/standards will have a negative impact on the overall quality of some parks and open spaces which may lead to an increase in complaints.

(d) Consultations

None.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 The budget savings being met from a reduction of employee hours on summer maintenance will reduce standards and this may cause some concern to the public and users of our parks and open spaces.

ITEM:

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Author of Report: I D Bruce, Environmental Protection Manager

Background Papers: None

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Designation: Director of Environmental Services Name: Robert A Stewart