

**Report of the Cabinet Members for  
Environment & Transportation and Wellbeing & Healthy City**

**Cabinet - 15 December 2016**

**COMMISSIONING REVIEW - PARKS & CLEANSING**

<b>Purpose:</b>	This report outlines the background to the Parks & Cleansing Management Commissioning Review and sets out the findings and recommendations from the review.
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	<i>Sustainable Swansea – fit for the future</i>
<b>Reason for Decision:</b>	Approval is sought to proceed with implementation of the recommendations.
<b>Consultation:</b>	Cabinet Members Corporate Management Team Legal, Finance and Access to Services
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) That the recommendations 1 to 5 detailed in Section 8.0 as measures to improve performance, make the service more robust , and make savings, are appropriate to take forward to implementation pending relevant consultation.</li></ol>
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# Commissioning Review Option Appraisal Report PARKS & CLEANSING SERVICE

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## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 This report has been produced following the approval by BPRG at Gateway 2 to present the findings of the Commissioning Review to the Cabinet for approval.

## **2.0 THE REVIEW SO FAR**

### **2.1 Scope**

The Scope of services to be included within the Parks & Cleansing Commissioning review was set out in Stage 2 of the process and consists of:

- Grounds Maintenance, Burials, Play and Workshop
- Cleansing
- Specialist Parks
- Tree Services

### **2.2 Outcomes**

The outcomes identified at Stage 2 consisted of:-

- A. The City & County of Swansea has aspirations to deliver on its Healthy cities & Wellbeing agendas and the wellbeing goals of the Well Being of Future Generations Act
- B. To provide clean streets and other public realm for the residents and visitors of Swansea
- C. To maintain accessible and safe playgrounds and outdoor sports facilities for everyone
- D. To maintain parks, beaches and open spaces which are attractive, inviting and safe for all
- E. Ensure Services provide best value for money

### **2.3 Emerging Key Issues From Stage 2**

The emerging key issues identified at Stage 2 of the review were:-

- Interdependency of Parks & Cleansing to other internal departments
- Housing developments and increase in open space and play
- Sustainable capital funding for Parks machinery
- Loss of knowledge and experience from ER/VR of Senior Management
- Review of working patterns within Cleansing Service
- Need to effectively target reducing resources
- Depot rationalisation and potential disposal of depots such as Home Farm and Pipehouse Wharf
- Wellbeing of Future Generations Act
- Dementia Friendly Parks & Open Spaces
- Sustainability of formal play areas
- Open Space Strategy
- Ash Die Back

### 3.0 SERVICE COMPARISON

As part of the review process a service comparison stage has been completed to compare the current service models, costs, outputs and performance with others. Areas which have been assessed cover

1. What other services providers do to deliver outcomes?
2. Identify examples of good practise
3. What innovation is there in service design and delivery in this area?
4. What evidence from case studies research and user feedback from elsewhere tell us?
5. How does the current service model compare with similar councils?

Further information can be found in Appendix A

### 3.1 Key findings and Summary

In 2016 the City & County of Swansea was awarded 6 green flag awards for Parks under their control and also one for Penllergaer Woods, this makes Swansea 4th in terms of awards issued to other councils within Wales.

The service previously undertook a customer satisfaction survey via face to face interviews at selected Parks throughout the county council area. In the region of 1200 questionnaires were completed , respondents were asked to rate a number of aspects throughout the Parks Service. The most recent survey completed in 2012 resulted in a satisfaction score of 87%, which was an increase from 2008 when the score was 81%

Association of Public Excellence (APSE) previously undertook a review on the Parks Service, and a number of their findings were as follows:

- The Grounds Maintenance Unit is providing value for money in terms of competitiveness and quality of service
- Benefiting from strong management leadership, motivated workforce ....

In the previous three financial years the Parks service has effectively managed budget savings of £1.4m, with the Cleansing Service achieving a further £100K.

The above has been met by changing how the service is delivered by amending a number of operational processes as well as establishing and developing its' highly acclaimed wild flower scheme and Knot Weed team.

The wildflower scheme has increased from two sites of 1364m<sup>2</sup> on inception over 5 years ago, to 189 sites currently covering 40,354m<sup>2</sup>. Due to the success of this scheme the Swansea In Bloom association presented the service with a prestigious award for its efforts.

During 2015/16 the service launched its Knotweed Team and comparisons for 15/16 against current year 16/17 can show how successful the launch and scheme is. In fact we have been receiving correspondence from other councils such as Belfast & Wigan who want to discuss how we set up and manage the team so they can establish a similar project.

The floral decorations scheme has gone from strength to strength over the years and meets a number of the Council's priorities such as creating a vibrant and viable city and economy and building sustainable communities. Income has increased from £85k in 13/14 to almost £117k for 16/17.

In 2015/16 the authority were 14<sup>th</sup> out of 22 Welsh authorities for removal of fly tip within 5 working days, with a percentage rate for Swansea of 95.11%, which is considered very reasonable.

The percentage of highways inspected of a high or acceptable standard of cleanliness for 15/16 Swansea scored 94% yet were still only 15<sup>th</sup> out of 22 authorities. Scoring in undertaken by internal officers and is very subjective, and the Council will need to determine what level of cleanliness it can afford.

The Parks and Cleansing Service also contributes towards the 4 Blue Flags awarded by ensuring cleansing and safety is paramount at our beaches.

### **3.2 Conclusion**

The service provides cost effective, well managed, continuously improving service which is highly regarded by public and visitors to Swansea, it plays a pivotal role in:

- Delivering on Healthy Cities and Wellbeing Agendas
- Supporting Health & Wellbeing
- Protecting Bio Diversity, the environment and natural heritage
- Tourism and reputation of the authority

The review has reiterated a number of good practices in operation and suggests alternatives which when implemented in a structured coordinated manner will enable the authority to:

- Achieve ongoing improvements in its performance
- Provide efficiency savings
- Meet demands and expectations of users
- Protect the reputation of the authority
- Contribute to reduction in disposal costs
- Tackle growing service pressures, eg aging play sites, vehicles etc

## **4.0 KEY ISSUES GOING FORWARD**

### **4.1 Key factors that need to be considered**

When evaluating the desired outcomes and key factors that need to be addressed as part of the review it became clear that the review needed to take account of:

#### **Reducing internal budgets**

- Indicative 50% reduction across Place Directorate
- £1.4 million savings already met by the Parks Service since 2014/15 in relation to anticipated savings through the Commissioning Review.
- Potential reduction of income from internal client departments who may reduce service requirements to meet their budget savings

#### **Budget Pressures**

- Ageing fleet and machinery, at least £90k per year replacement costs
- Reducing reliance on seasonal and agency staff
- Deteriorating play equipment stock

#### **Additional Unallocated Budget Reductions**

- Senior Staff Review
- Modernising Business Support
- Income and Charging
- Depot Review

#### **Operational Issues**

- Merger of Parks & Cleansing Services
- Ash Die Back
- Loss of experience senior managers due to ER/VR

#### **Wellbeing of Future Generations Act**

It is essential that any plan developed to meet the desired outcomes needs to ensure that, where practical and appropriate, the key priorities and goals of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (WFG) Act are major considerations in each step of the process.

The main goals include:-

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- A globally responsible Wales

The continued review and improvement of the activities detailed will ensure that the Authority strives to meet the seven goals set out in the Act and ensure that in providing the services try delivery approaches are in keeping with the WFG governance principles of:

- **Thinking for the long term:** Balancing the pressure to take action in the short term to address current issues with the need to address the long-term needs of Wales.
- **Taking an integrated approach:** Considering the three aspects of well-being (economic, social and environmental) and how the well-being objectives impact upon each other and in turn the objectives of other public bodies.
- **Taking a preventative approach:** Using resources to take action now in order to prevent problems occurring or getting worse.
- **Collaborating:** Working with other public bodies (or parts of the same body) to assist in the achievement of objectives.
- **Involvement:** Involving the people or communities whose well-being is being considered, engaging them in finding sustainable solutions.

## 4.2 The Strategy Going Forward

### a. **Meeting minimum legal and safety requirements**

We will still need to ensure that all statutory and safety requirements are met through maintaining adequate resources for necessary inspections and safety works.

### b. **Support health and wellbeing through facilitating active lifestyles**

As far as practicable, keeping open spaces and sports facilities inviting and accessible to all

### c. **Protecting biodiversity, the environment and our natural heritage**

Policies and practices need to continue to protect our biodiversity, the environment, and natural heritage as far as practicable when considering land use, specialised gardens, and maintaining our tree stock.

### d. **Litter prevention, not just picking up litter better**

Our litter bin, promotion, and enforcement strategies need to seek to reduce litter to improve our environment and mitigate against any reductions in resources.

### e. **Effective targeting of resources, minimising firefighting**

A strategy to effectively target cleansing resources and minimise reactive works is needed to mitigate against any reductions in resources

### f. **Commercial opportunities to mitigate against budget reductions**

Maximising income should be used to minimise impact of any budget reductions.

## **5.0 SERVICE REVIEWS**

Due to the interdependencies required for the proposed service changes to be effective, it was decided that the services be grouped in to clusters for consideration. The clusters comprised of:-

**Cluster 1 Grounds Maintenance, Burials, Play and Workshop**

**Cluster 2 Cleansing**

**Cluster 3 Specialist Parks**

**Cluster 4 Tree Services**

Each service was reviewed in terms of:-

- What it currently provides.
- Good practice identified.
- Options evaluated.
- Key findings of the options evaluated.
- Services changes proposed.
- The anticipated impact of the proposed changes.
- Main risks

### **5.1 CLUSTER 1 – GROUNDS MAINTENANCE, BURIALS, PLAY AND WORKSHOP**

The main functions currently undertaken by the team include:-

- Provision of a full and comprehensive operational portfolio for all parks and open spaces, amenity areas and burials
- Provision and maintenance of all sport pitches
- Implementation and further development of highly valued and acclaimed wild flower planting scheme
- Provision of knotweed service
- In-house service provider for maintenance and burials for 7 Cemeteries in Council ownership
- In- house service provider for maintenance to all soft landscape for relevant departments
- Installation, inspection and repair team for all play sites in City & County of Swansea, inclusive of school sites
- Maintenance and repairs of all agricultural machinery for the effective delivery of the Parks Service
- 24 hour emergency call out team

#### **5.1.1 Good Practice Identified**

##### **Internal**

- Lean Management structure (10 managers in 2009 to 4 in 2016)
- Flexible working hours of team to meet demand of service, (42 hours summer)
- High level of Community involvement with over 30 Friends of Parks Groups
- Previous budget savings



- Member of Green Space Wales (Parks Operational Managers)
- An award winning service, Green Flags / Blue Flags
- Highly acclaimed wildflower planting scheme
- Area based teams
- Multi skilled workforce
- Consultation with sport associations
- In-house electronic Parks Management System capturing essential management and financial information for effective service planning and delivery
- Excellent Health & Safety record
- Reactive and flexible to meet the needs of client and service users
- Flexibility of service to be able to react to service demands
- Workshop will be discussed with Central Transport Unit

### **External**

APSE have produced a 'State of the Market' report 2016 for Parks & Open spaces, 64 local authorities responded to a set of questions, current trends are as follows:

- Respondents claimed that there will be an increase in unmaintained land
- A reduction in management tiers
- Introduction of larger seasonal workforce
- Commercialisation of operations
- Reduce grass cutting
- Reduction in bedding plants and replace with wild flower meadows
- Prioritise maintenance on greatest need
- Reduction in play provision
- Increase income opportunities with more cafes
- Integrated Street scene
- Increased community involvement with Litter picking and horticultural work
- Transfer assets to communities including playing fields and play areas, however interestingly no Parks transferred to communities
- An APSE questionnaire on playground provision with returns from 40 authorities, including Swansea revealed the following:
  - › Maintenance of play areas
  - In-house 18 authorities 45%
  - In-house and contractor mix 17 authorities 42.5%
  - Private contractor 5 authorities 12.5%

### **5.1.2 Options Evaluated**

- Extend Wild Meadows within Parks
- Reduction in employment of seasonal staff
- Replace all formal bedding with wild flowers
- Hire of plant and machinery internal/external
- Hire of 'man with van'
- Greater links with Friends of Parks and other Community Groups
- Rationalisation of equipped play sites
- Sponsorship of Parks and playgrounds
- Spraying gang to take on further external work
- Test the commercial market for grounds maintenance work

### 5.1.3 Key findings of options evaluated

- Across the City there is currently 425,000m<sup>2</sup> (42.5 hectares) of wild meadow land within enclosed Parks and external open spaces which has assisted in managing previous budget reductions by allowing the service to allocate resources elsewhere. However it must be noted that there has been public objection to such sites purely from an aesthetic perspective and we feel we are at saturation point.
- Due to the seasonal demands of the service the grounds maintenance teams have had the need to employ in the region of 40 seasonal staff to complement the existing permanent workforce. This number has reduced due to the services diligently meeting previously budget reductions. Any further reductions in seasonal staff must be offset by a reduction in services, ie less grass cuts in Parks and on highway verges, less bedding plants, less cleansing etc.
- To explain the above in more detail the unit delivers its cyclical contractual work via a Parks Management system which produces a schedule of work to be undertaken in the designated 4 weekly period. Staffing levels derived from the Parks Management system for the summer period indicates that the service requires 74 FTE to complete all programme work. Currently for this area we have 55FTE, once an element of resources have been diverted for unplanned works, so the difference is made up by seasonal staff we recruit over this busy period. Therefore if we do not employ seasonal staff we will need to adjust the work programme to match our FTE, this can only be done by reducing frequency of cuts on Parks & Open Spaces and verges, less beddings plants, and less resources allocated to cleansing.
- A reduction in verge maintenance will result in poor appearance, strain on resources, heavy lay following cut, blocked gullies and negative reputation for City.
- The service spends in the region of £40k on formal bedding planted in Parks and open spaces, this includes material and labour cost. Such bedding can be replaced by wildflower bedding which will save on material and labour costs, however the negative is that this may possibly affect green flag judging and awards. Alternatively some beds can be removed and grassed over.
- Grounds maintenance currently holds 4 Green Flags at Brynmill, Victoria, Cwmdonkin and Llewelyn park, taking out formal bedding is likely to have a negative effect on such national awards.
- Rationalisation of equipped play areas across the City: currently there are 86 within Parks & Open Spaces (excluding schools), Appendix B is a Red, Amber, Green listed indicating life expectancy and need for investment on sites. The service currently only inspects and maintains play areas, there is no capital budget available for replacement or development of sites unless funding by a third party. The suggestion to rationalise numbers so that remaining play sites would be sustainable. This would require a review of condition, usage, and convenience of alternative play sites available. If capital receipts could be realised from any sites considered suitable for closure, it could be invested to improve the remaining sites.
- Parks Friends Groups are now in excess of 30 groups who have a vested interest in their particular park. Such groups have been able to access funds unavailable to the service, and this has resulted in improvements within their park and greater ownership. Where appropriate there may be the opportunity for such groups to be involved in minor horticulture or for that matter transfer sites to Friends Groups if possible.
- The sponsored roundabout scheme has become a success and has income in the region of £50k, extending this to Parks and in particular playgrounds should result in further income. There must be a sensitive approach to who we allow to sponsor.

- We launched the knotweed team in 15/16 and undertook work on 168 sites with income in region of £52k, this has increased for 16/17 to 235 sites and an income of £65k
- A soft market testing exercise was undertaken on cost for treating 50m2 of knotweed, the following is a table with cost comparison demonstrating our competitiveness:

Company	Cost
Contractor 1	£360
Contractor 2	£300
Contractor 3	£270
Contractor 4	£240
City & County of Swansea	£160

### 5.1.5 Service Changes Proposed

- Reduction in employment of seasonal staff
- **Mitigation against reduced resources:**
  - a) Liaise with Friends Groups and other community groups to broaden their roles
  - b) Reduced grass cutting frequencies on verges and in parks & open spaces
  - c) Reduced formal bedding where possible without risking green flag
- Increase marketing for sponsorship & franchise
- Investigate further commercial opportunities
- Further reduction in employment of seasonal staff dependent upon impact of mitigation measures outlined above
- Review of play sites to allow consideration of whether any rationalization would be appropriate.

### 5.1.6 Estimated Benefits

- Reduction in employment of seasonal season staff £70k
- Sponsorship and franchise £50k
- Commercial opportunities £20k
- Potential further reduction in employment of seasonal season staff £70k
- Sustainable play sites. Target saving £30K

### 5.1.7 Main Risks

- Public expectations
- Aesthetic appearance of City
- Reduced open space for recreational purposes
- Loss of income to service
- Uninviting parks and open spaces
- Risk to Green Flag status
- Accessibility to play sites
- Adverse impact on Tourism
- Increased complaints
- Longer cut grass leading to blocked gullies and additional flooding

## **5.2 CLUSTER 2 - CLEANSING**

The service currently broadly consists of:

- Litter clearance from all adopted highways and verges.
- Leaf clearance
- Dedicated litter team for City Centre
- Servicing of all litter and dog bins
- Cleansing of highways and footpaths by mechanical operation
- Responding to all Fly Tipping enquiries
- Employment of Neighbourhood Environment Action Team operatives
- Satisfying the terms of The Tidy towns initiative
- Removal of graffiti
- Cleansing of public toilets

### **5.2.1 Good Practice Identified**

#### **Internal**

- Dedicated City Centre team
- Dealing with over 8,000 complaints in previous year
- Meeting fly tipping removal targets (within 5 working days)
- Meeting Local Environmental Audit Management System (audit internal standards)
- Amalgamation with Parks Cleansing since merger in January 2016

#### **External**

APSE have produced a 'State of the Market' report 2016 for Street Cleansing Services, 41 local authorities responded to a set of questions, current trends are as follows:

- Provision of a 7 day service
- Have area based working teams
- Implementation of Solar Powered Bins
- Reduced cleansing frequency
- Increase in commercial market
- Promote more litter campaigns – educating public

### **5.2.2 Options Evaluated**

- Test the commercial market for any income opportunities for matters such as sweepers, man with a van clearance, private fly tipping including enforcement etc.
- Determine way of an improved waste segregation to result in a reduction in tipping charges and assist the authority in meeting its recycling target
- Review of working week to include introduction of 7 day working week to meet the service expectations and reduce overtime costs to the service
- Further reduction of Cleansing staff and vehicles, options include:
  - › Reduction of 9 FTE and 3 vehicles
  - › Reduction of 18 FTE and 6 vehicles
  - › Reduction of 27 FTE and 9 vehicles
- Review of staff structure to meet above option
- Closure of all public toilets on a phased approach across the City where alternative facilities are available and seek alternative management options where appropriate.

### 5.2.3 Key Findings of the Options Evaluated

- The service has limited commercial income, however there may be potential to expand the service.
- It is essential that the Authority is able to demonstrate that internally we are recycling to our full potential when this is expected from the general public. There is clearly the need to implement alternative collection methods to be able to segregate such waste and reduce tipping costs
- In 2015/16 the authority was 14<sup>th</sup> out of 22 Welsh authorities for the removal of fly tipping within 5 working days, with a percentage rate of 95.11%. There were in excess of 6,000 calls reporting fly tipping received.
- The percentage of highways inspected of a high or acceptable standard of cleanliness for 15/16 Swansea scored 94% yet were still only 15<sup>th</sup> out of 22 authorities. Scoring is undertaken by internal officers and is very subjective, and the Council will need to determine what level of cleanliness it can afford.
- The service currently operates on a five day service deliver Monday – Friday, all weekend work is currently undertaken on an overtime basis. Changing working practices to adopt a 5/7 working week to take into account weekend working will result in a reduction in overtime cost, although resources would then be reduced Monday to Friday.
- To mitigate the reduction of FTE it is essential that the targeting of cleansing resource is reviewed so that it results in a needs basis and not the current culture of cleaning streets on a rigid rota basis which could result in cleaning streets which do not need to be cleaned.
- The need to categorise roads on a needs basis such as weekly, fortnightly, monthly so that there is a more effective use of resource.
- Review how the service is delivered from an operational gang basis, currently six teams spread across the City, potential to coordinate the gangs in a condensed area to follow up day after waste collection and have greater visibility and impact. Any emergency work would still need to be covered.
- Work closer with the Waste service in other areas where potential efficiencies could be realised, this includes better utilisation of staff and vehicle at remote locations which have difficult access for waste vehicles.
- The necessity to draft a 'Bin Strategy' to move away from picking up litter better to focus on litter minimisation- 'take it home' approach. The strategy will link into enforcement and discuss further options with the enforcement team. Refer to Appendix E. The criteria could include
  - › Presumption of bin removal where evidence of continual misuse
  - › Remove where complaints received from public/members
  - › Remove bins where evidence of vandalism / antisocial behaviour
  - › Remove bins in outlying areas/laybys, where absence of shops etc, potential to pilot area
  - › Retain bins in key sensitive areas such as high footfall, near schools, takeaways, shops etc
  - › Retain where existing bins installed and funded by Councillors and community councils
  - › Retain bins where sponsored
  - › Continual review
  - › Feasibility of 'solar' bins within city centre and rural areas, initial investment required however the availability to sponsor and become self-funding

- A review was commenced on the closure of public toilets, resulting in the closure of Caer Street Toilets in the city centre and Trawler Road Toilets in the Marina. Pennard toilets have also been transferred to local shop/café on site. Further discussions and reviews of alternative availability, such as use of local libraries are required. Some alternatives will need additional investment to make them accessible to public.
- The new Public Health (Wales) Bill intends to require local authorities to produce a strategy about toilets for use by the public within their area.

#### 5.2.4 Service Changes Proposed

- Explore the commercial viability of specific types of work such as sweeping private car parks
- Implement segregation of litter collection at Beach sites to test the feasibility and success of programme.
- Introduction of a 7 day service across relevant areas of Cleansing Service through contractual shift pattern if mitigation below is approved.
- **Mitigation against any reducing resources:**
  - a) Need to proactively target planned resources on a needs basis – not cleaning clean roads
  - b) Minimise reactive works – cleansing requests for non safety work to wait until scheduled visit
  - c) Encourage “Take your litter home” through effective litter bin, promotion, and enforcement strategies. Draft and implement revised Bin Strategy
  - d) Coordinate gangs in a condensed area for greater impact, flexibility and effective use of resource
  - e) Proactively support increased activities by community groups eg litter picks, beach cleans, leaf clearance etc.
- Reconsider further reductions in resources by up to 9 FTE and 3 vehicles dependent upon impact of mitigation measures outlined above.
- Continue with review of public toilets to develop a Strategy in line with the principles of the new Public Health (Wales) Bill. Future approval and adoption of such a Strategy would dictate the impact on the current toilet cleaning budget.

#### 5.2.5 Estimated Benefits

- Additional income through commercial market in region of £50k
- Improve segregation of waste to assist with reduction in tipping charges and increased recycle targets, a reduction of 250T of landfill would achieve about £25k
- Introduction of a 7 day service across relevant areas of Cleansing Service £100k
- Reduction in resources operatives and management saving £276k
- Greater service impact and presence
- Greater flexibility
- Pro-active approach and effective use of resource
- The current Toilet Cleaning Budget is £400K per year, and any future reductions in costs resulting from the proposed Toilet Strategy would reduce this figure accordingly.

## 5.2.6 Main Risks

- Balance of resource to meet internal and external work
- Segregation of waste trade union and staff objection due to manual handling issues
- Staff objection to change in working pattern
- Public communication
- Reduction in resources will impact on the level of service provided.
- Widespread reduction of public conveniences could adversely affect the accessibility of areas, and disproportionately affect some groups with protected characteristics, and generally be unpopular with Members and the public

## 5.3 CLUSTER 3 – SPECIALIST PARKS

The service currently broadly consists of:-

- Maintenance of Botanical Gardens, Clyne Gardens, Ornamental Gardens and staff provision to maintain plant stock at Plantasia
- Procurement of all bedding, including wildflower seed for Parks and Open spaces, cemeteries and other maintained land
- Delivery of the Hanging Basket/Floral Decorations to public and businesses within the City and outside the County Borough
- Centre of horticultural excellence designed to inform, educate and interact with public on all plant related materials
- Collaboration with Friends of Botanical Gardens
- Collaboration with Unions in providing facility with 'Helping Hands' initiative

### 5.3.1 Good Practice Identified

- Established and excellent reputation of Floral Service
- Improving service with increasing sales
- Excellent working partnership with Friends of Botanical Gardens
- Excellent link to other users such as Helping Hands, voluntary organisations
- Nationally recognised gardens
- Nationally awarded 2 Green Flags
- Promoting schemes of Clyne in bloom and Botanical Gardens in Bloom
- Cardiff has a very successful urban camper van site.

### 5.3.2 Options Evaluated

- Botanical Gardens
  - (i) Closure of Gardens, or
  - (ii) Reduce costs and increase income at the Gardens, whilst seeking a partner to manage the Gardens
- Increased input from Friends Group for minor horticultural work
- Create car park at the Botanical Gardens and charge for users.
- Explore commercial options eg flower bouquets, tours, wedding photographs etc.
- Explore franchise opportunities such as tea/coffee, sandwiches, ice cream vendors
- Charge for parking at Woodman public house entrance
- Christmas hut storage
- Explore option for urban camper van site

### 5.3.3 Key Findings of the Options Evaluated

The Botanical Gardens is an integral part of the Parks Service and consideration of changes must take into account its links with the other units

- Botanical Gardens are open 363 days of the year, currently closed for Christmas and new year day. The site has in excess of 70,000 visitors per year and is critical for the health and well being of its visitors and Friends Group members. The Gardens are often used as a social gathering point.
- The gardens have a very active Friends of Botanical Gardens who have financially supported many schemes at both Botanical Gardens and Clyne, this includes £70k contribution to the building cost of Ty Blodau visitor building at Botanical Gardens and number of bridge improvement at Clyne.
- The Friends Group use the facility to propagate and sell plants to the public.
- In order to explore the option of a partner taking over responsibility for the Botanical Gardens, discussions need to take place on creating a partnership agreement for the site and relevant interested parties.
- Part of the Botanical Gardens is used by Parks Operations for developing floral displays, by the Friends Group, and could be an option for relocating operations from Home Farm if that depot is disposed of. These requirements would need to be accommodated within any partnership arrangements.
- The visitors are often daily repeat visitors and any charging mechanism needs to take into account such users. A charge could range from per entry to cover the intermediate visitor to a season ticket for repeat visitors.
- As with a number of free cultural buildings a 'donation' box could be situated asking for such donations which would be reinvested in sustaining the gardens
- The site does not have a formal car park and there needs to be an option appraisal on the feasibility of creation at the top end of Singleton Park, this could also benefit users of Singleton Park. On discussions with Car parks we should see in the region of £20k per year in charges for the service. It is likely that Planning Permission would be required.
- Considering the site has 70,000 visitors and Clyne has 120,000, the opportunity to offering franchise agreements could be assessed.
- Christmas huts are understood to be kept in private storage, so they could be relocated to the Botanical Gardens and save in storage costs of £70k.
- Due to its stunning displays during the spring and summer wedding parties visit the site for photographs, this is an opportunity to charge for such service and link this in when weddings are booked at the registrar's office
- Visitors to Clyne Gardens are allowed free use of car park near the Woodman public Inn, there are currently 30 parking spaces available following installation costs of machine should see in the region of £15k income from car park tickets. This proposal could be linked in with any similar considerations across the Authority as a whole.
- The provision of an urban camper van site would need careful and detailed consideration by the Commercial Team prior to taking forward.



### **5.3.4 Service Changes Proposed**

- To avoid the loss of our natural heritage through closure of this well visited facility, pursue partnership working in relation to the Botanical Gardens with appropriate parties.
- As an interim measure install a 'donation' box, reduce operational resource, and consider options for an increased role by the very active Friends Group, seeking measures to mitigate reduction in provision
- Review the potential possibility of created a formal charged car park at the Botanical Gardens subject to the appropriate planning processes to be transferred to Highways and Transportation's broader review of parking charges
- Pursue franchise opportunities at all parks and gardens
- Pilot test charging for wedding photographs
- Consideration of option to charge for car park at Clyne to be transferred to Highways and Transportation's broader review of parking charges.
- Relocate Christmas hut storage to the Botanical Gardens
- Further explore options for urban camper van site prior to presenting as a separate project

### **5.3.5 Estimated Benefits**

- Interim measures at the Botanical Gardens whilst a partner is sought could save £50k per year
- Transferring the running of the Botanical Gardens to a partner would via phased approach save up to an additional £150k
- Charging for both car parks would see potential income of £35k per year, although an initial investment would be required
- Storing the Christmas huts could save £75k per year
- Franchise and commercial opportunities should bring in £25k of income annually
- The potential for an urban camper van will remain unknown until explored further

### **5.3.6 Main Risks**

- Relationship with Friends of Botanical Gardens
- Public/User complaint 'selling our jewels'
- Losing our natural heritage forever if any gardens closed – Once it's gone it cannot be retrieved
- Impact on tourism and Health & Wellbeing of any closures
- Loss of Green Flags
- Potential loss of employment of any closures
- Opposition to car park and charging
- Opposition to camper van sites
- Public liability risks with creation of car park

## 5.4 CLUSTER 4 – Tree Services Unit

The service currently broadly consists of:-

- Responsibility for tree maintenance throughout City for Parks & Open Spaces
- Commitment to maintaining a visually attractive tree stock
- Provision of professional advisory service to internal and external client
- 24 hour emergency call out unit
- Inspection of tree stock via electronic system

### 5.4.1 Good Practice Identified

#### Internal

- Electronic Emtree Package for inspection and recording of findings
- Experienced trained and qualified staff
- 24 hour emergency cover
- Excellent health & safety record

#### External

- A questionnaire was circulated to a number of councils, 7 returns and the following are the main points of how they deliver such a service:
  - › 2 remain in-house service / 3 mixed in-house and contractor / 2 contractor
  - › All 7 undertake tree inspection work in-house
  - › Average of 4 inspectors per authority
  - › 2 of above 7 use same package as Swansea, a third applying for funding
  - › 6 of the 7 charge for tree inspections
  - › 5 of the 7 undertake other public organisation tree inspection work
  - › 3 of the 7 undertake tree inspection on private land
  - › 4 of 7 provide 24 hour call out in-house
  - › Average of budget for service is £437k, Swansea is £434k

### 5.4.2 Options Evaluated

- Sale of by-products eg wood sales
- Market electronic Emtree package (inspection) to external companies
- Extend service to commercial market
- Produce in-house loose fill (bark) for play areas
- Sub contract Arboricultural work to supplement in house workforce

### 5.4.3 Key Findings of the Options Evaluated

- Currently the unit achieves less than £6k in sales for wood, previously the Service has submitted application under the umbrella 'Rethinking Parks' for funding to set up its own wood mill with the intention of increasing sales such as woodchip, kindling etc.
- Social Services have a ready-made depot with machinery available via the day centre in Fforestfach trading estate. This would be the ideal opportunity for both Parks & Cleansing and Social Services to work in collaboration to on feasibility of such scheme
- The facility at Fforestfach has the availability to explore the project and generate income sales in the region of £50k

- By-products can range from sales for woodchip, firewood, pellets, small furniture items and seasonal ornaments. Sale channels can link into Friends Groups, Community Centres and Baling Plant shop for example
- Ezytree package provides a very comprehensive inspection database of tree stock and is currently used by the service to inspect and record findings for all tree stock within Parks & Open spaces.
- Internally this has been marketed to other departments such as Housing and Environmental Health (Cemeteries) and has realised further income in the region of £150k, this is from initial inspection and subsequent work.
- Land owners have a duty of care to have their tree stock inspected by a competent person at reasonable frequency intervals, therefore potential to market to such external organisation and inspect and potentially procure subsequent work following inspection, inspection costs will reduce following first year due to electronic recording of such data. However it will realise a constant income stream on an annual basis
- On evidence there are a number of external Arboricultural companies albeit small in number size competing for private work.
- The reputation of the authority should sell itself when marketing for such work
- Parks currently has 43 sites with loose fill (bark) and replacement/replenishing costs run at approximate £17k per year.
- For safety reasons the loose fill must go through a process to allow it to be used in equipped play areas. Therefore all bark produced from tree maintenance is currently used on shrub beds, footpaths and offered to Friends Groups.
- Investigate the cost in the process to make safe for playgrounds on a spend to save basis, however the long term strategy is to replace all loose fill with wet pour for safety of users
- Due to potential increase in work demand following market of Ezytree package and external work the possibility of sub-contracting work to meet demands

#### **5.4.4 Service Changes Proposed**

- Commence discussions with Social Services and the Waste Re use Shop to create a partnership working for the sale of wood by-products
- Work with commercial team on marketing the Ezytree package to external and private companies/organisations
- Work with commercial team on exploring the commercial market for specialist operations.

#### **5.4.5 Estimated Benefits**

- Potential additional income in region of £50k, however other benefits will include greater use of depot at Fforestfach, environmental issues on sustainability of by-product, potential relocation of Tree Services Team to Fforestfach alongside depot rationalisation and efficient use of machinery available at Fforestfach

#### 5.4.6 Main Risks

- Market is unknown and the need to create various sales points
- Ensuring the drying and quality of the product does meet expectations to sustain long term income stream
- Initial set-up costs and relocation of team
- Impact on local businesses
- Insurance and liability issues
- Procurement , legal, insurance and liability costs

#### 6.0 STAGE 4 – SERVICE DELIVERY OPTIONS APPRAISAL

**6.1** As part of the review process an options appraisal stage has been completed. Consideration was given to all the delivery options available to provide the services under the scope of the review. It was decided to rule out the options of a) A Staff/Public Mutual, and b) Non-Profit organisation due to the nature of the services being considered. It was determined that the options to be considered and evaluated to provide the services under review within this process would be:

**Option 1 Transformed in house.**

This model would maintain direct provision of the services, but seek to make savings, maximise income and develop service improvements through the more efficient and flexible use of resources. This could also include seeking partners to take over certain areas/elements of work.

**Option 2 Outsourcing to Private Sector**

This model would require the procurement of one or more external organisations to deliver the services under consideration. Compliance with the European public procurement regime would require European wide competitive tendering.

**Option 3 Joint venture with a third party or Private Company.**

This model would require, in the case of a joint venture with a private company, full compliance with European public procurement regime. In the case of a joint venture with a third party, it would require agreement on behalf of both parties for a long term plan for the relevant service area.

**6.2** An Options Appraisal workshop with a cross section of Parks & Cleansing management and stakeholders was held at the Guildhall on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2016 to consider different delivery models available for the previously described clusters. The service delivery options detailed above were scored and evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Service Outcomes.
- Fit with Council Priorities.
- Financial Impact.
- Sustainability and Viability.
- Deliverability.

Key perceived characteristics of each option are shown below

<b>Option 1 - Transform in house</b>	
<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Already a very efficient, high performing service.</li> <li>• Greater local control/accountability (Members and Officers)</li> <li>• Greater flexibility- an ability to adapt to changes in legislation, service needs</li> <li>• Excellent skills and experience.</li> <li>• No requirement to make a profit.</li> <li>• Local employment (Poverty Agenda)</li> <li>• Assist the Authority in meeting its objectives.</li> <li>• Retains flexibility of options for potential local government reorganisation.</li> <li>• Low risk option.</li> <li>• Protects heritage</li> <li>• Protects health and well-being of Friends Groups</li> <li>• Commercial income remains in-house</li> <li>• Allows greater co-ordination with other services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perceived reduced ability to innovate and provide value for money.</li> <li>• Change management, particularly Terms and Conditions and operational practices can be slow to introduce.</li> </ul>
<b>Option 2 - Outsourcing to Private Sector</b>	
<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inject new investment without the need for the Authority to invest up-front.</li> <li>• Introduction of new ways of working and innovation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of local control and flexibility to change.</li> <li>• Loss of expertise leads to reliance on contractor.</li> <li>• Difficult to bring back in-house in the future.</li> <li>• Contractual issues, including service changes lead to increased costs over contract price.</li> <li>• Potential loss of local employment.</li> <li>• Contract/procurement costs.</li> <li>• Need to set up a client function.</li> <li>• Lengthy and costly change process</li> </ul>
<b>Option 3 - Joint venture with Third Party or Private Company</b>	
<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possibility to reduce overall management costs.</li> <li>• Possibility of future uniform services over a wider area.</li> <li>• Could enable economies of scale to be achieved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needs a partner who wants to undertake a Joint Venture approach.</li> <li>• Different methods of existing service delivery.</li> <li>• Set up costs.</li> </ul>

## **7. DELIVERY MODELS**

The different models of delivery have been considered and it has been determined that the most suitable way forward would be as follows:

### **7.1 Cluster 1 – Grounds Maintenance**

#### **Preferred Delivery Model - Transformed in-house**

Main Reasons:

- i. High levels of local knowledge and experience
- ii. Excellent performing service
- iii. Management and team already reduced
- iv. Geographical location of area based teams
- v. Avoids duplication of Client function
- vi. Potential local government reorganisation
- vii. Local employment

### **7.2 Cluster 2 - Cleansing**

#### **Preferred Delivery Model - Transformed in-house**

Main Reasons:

- i. Good performing service
- ii. Retains flexibility and control
- iii. Avoids lengthy and costly change process
- iv. Potential local government reorganisation
- v. Local employment

### **7.3 Cluster 3 – Specialist Parks**

#### **Preferred Delivery Model - Transformed in-house / Partner Botanical Gardens**

Main Reasons:

- i. Protection of natural heritage
- ii. Nationally recognised sites
- iii. Wellbeing of Friends and visitors
- iv. High levels of local knowledge and experience

### **7.4 Cluster 4 – Tree Services**

#### **Preferred Delivery Model - Transformed in-house / Partner Botanical Gardens**

Main Reasons:

- i. Retains flexibility and control
- ii. Allows co-ordination with other services
- iii. An efficient in-house service
- iv. Allows increased commercial opportunities
- v. High levels of local knowledge and experience

## 8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the following proposals for each Cluster are considered for approval:

### 1) Grounds Maintenance

- a) Reduction in employment of seasonal staff.
- b) Mitigation against reduced resources:
  - Liaise with Friends Groups and other community groups to broaden their roles
  - Expand role of NEATs
  - Reduced grass cutting frequencies on verges and in parks and other open spaces
  - Reduced formal bedding where possible without risking green flag
- c) Increased marketing for Sponsorship and franchise
- d) Investigate further commercial opportunities
- e) Review of play sites to allow consideration of whether any rationalization would be appropriate
- f) Further reduction in employment of seasonal staff dependent upon impact of mitigation measures outlined in 1b).

### 2) Cleansing

- a) Explore the commercial viability of specific types of work such as sweeping private car parks
- b) Implement segregation of litter collection at Beach sites to test the feasibility and success of programme.
- c) Introduction of a 7 day service across relevant areas of Cleansing Service through contractual shift pattern if mitigation below is approved.
- d) Mitigation against any reducing resources:
  - Need to proactively target planned resources on a needs basis – not cleaning clean roads
  - Minimise reactive works – cleansing requests for non safety work to wait until scheduled visit
  - Encourage “Take your litter home” through effective litter bin, promotion, and enforcement strategies. Draft and implement revised Bin Strategy.
  - Coordinate gangs in a condensed area for greater impact, flexibility and effective use of resource
  - Proactively support increased activities by community groups & NEATs eg litter picks, beach cleans, leaf clearance etc.
- e) Reconsider further reductions in resources by up to 9 FTE and 3 vehicles dependent upon impact of mitigation measures outlined in 2d).
- f) Continue with review of public toilets to develop a Strategy in line with the principles of the new Public Health (Wales) Bill. Future approval and adoption of such a Strategy would dictate the impact on the current toilet cleaning budget.

### **3) Specialist Parks**

- a) Pursue partnership working in relation to the Botanical Gardens with appropriate parties
- b) As interim measures, install a 'donation' box and reduce operational resource, seeking measures to mitigate reduction in provision
- c) Review the potential possibility of creating a formal charged car park at the Botanical Gardens to be transferred to Highways and Transportation's broader review of parking charges
- d) Pursue franchise and commercial opportunities at all parks and gardens
- e) Consideration of option to charge for car park at Clyne to be transferred to Highways and Transportation's broader review of parking charges.
- f) Relocate Christmas hut storage to the Botanical Gardens
- g) Further explore options for urban camper van site prior to presenting as a separate project.

### **4) Tree Services**

- a) Commence discussions with Social Services and the Waste Re use Shop to create a partnership working for the sale of wood by-products
- b) Work with commercial team on marketing the Ezytree package to external and private companies/organisations
- c) Work with commercial team on Exploring the commercial market for specialist operations

- 5)** The service delivery encompassed by all Clusters are delivered through a transformed in house model, with a further review of the Specialist Parks Service to explore partnership working around the Botanical Gardens



## 9. FINANCE

9.1 The estimated financial impact from the initial tranche of above recommendations are as follows:

<b>Recommendation</b>		<b>Estimated Saving</b>
1a	Reduction in seasonal staff	£70K
1c	Increased Sponsorship	£50k
1d	Investigate further commercial Opportunities	£20k
2a	Commercial market	£25K
2b	Disposal Costs	£25K
2c	7 day working	£100K
3a	Pursue partnership working in relation to the Botanical Gardens	
3b	Interim savings during partnership exploration	£50k
3d	Franchise and commercial opportunities	£25k
3f	Storage of Christmas huts	£70k
4a & b	Wood by-product sales/ Market Ezytree package	£50k

- Recommendation 1a requires the approval of the mitigation measures outlined in Section 8 - Recommendation 1b
- Recommendation 2c requires the approval of the mitigation measures outlined in Section 8 - Recommendation 2

Maximum Total Savings up to    £485K

9.2 Future savings could include the following subject to further assessments and subsequent approvals:

<b>Recommendation</b>		<b>Potential Target</b>
1e	Review of play sites	£30k
1f	Further reduction in seasonal staff	£70K
2e	Operational and Management reductions and 3 vehicles	£276k
2f	Impact of proposed Toilet Strategy (current budget)	£400K
3a	Transfer of running Botanical Gardens to partner	up to £150k
3c	Car Park at Botanical Gardens	£15k
3e	Charging for parking at Clyne Gardens	£20K
3g	Explore the opportunities for creating an urban Camper van site	£unknown

- Recommendation 1f will be dependent on the impact of the mitigation measures outlined in Section 8 - Recommendation 1b
- Recommendation 2e will be dependent on the impact of the mitigation measures outlined in Section 8 - Recommendation 2d

The above projected saving, and the £1.5M savings achieved in the Parks and Cleansing Services since April 14, would result in the total savings being 33% of the 14/15 budget.

**9.3** However there are existing spending pressures on the service namely essential machinery replacements at £90K per year and capital investment needed for Play equipment replacement.

## **10. HR IMPLICATIONS**

Depending on preferred options there may be a number of compulsory redundancies, however it is hoped that this will be avoided by previously agreed voluntary redundancies and natural retirement. There will be changes to shift patterns and in this respect, the appropriate consultation with staff and Trade Unions will take place before any changes are made.

## **11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

If the decision on alternative delivery model is working in partnership for Specialist Parks then support and advice will be required from Legal

All other service areas are expected to be transformed in-house and there are no specific additional legal implications relating to revised delivery options.

## **12. EIA**

EIA screening has been completed and the initiatives are not relevant for a full EIA report at this point. This will be revisited as part of the development of the Toilets Strategy and review of Play Sites and will also include the outcomes of any necessary consultation once completed. Any changes to current services will be widely publicised prior to their introduction.

**Background Papers:** None.

### **Appendices:**

Appendix A – Summary of Stage 3 Benchmarking / Comparisons  
Appendix B – Equipped Playgrounds Red / Amber / Green analysis  
Appendix C – Summary of Stage 4 Option Report  
Appendix D – Comparison or Remuneration for Posts  
Appendix E – Basis of ‘Litter Bin Strategy’