

## IMPLEMENTATION OF AMENITY SERVICES SAVINGS

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### 1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members regarding the budget savings and the revised service specification by Amenity Services for 2014/15 and progress to date.

### 1.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Members note the contents of this report.

### 2.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 This report provides information to members on current situation within Amenity Services Section.
- 3.2 Amenity Services had carried out a series of workshops with members in the Spring of 2013 to allow feedback and suggestions on how the front line delivery should be carried out in light of further savings of £116,959 needed in 2014/15 within B&C Amenity Services Section.
- 3.3 To allow these savings to be met, it was reported the department would need to shed 4-5 Full Time Employees and reduce the fleet size by 2-3 vehicles.
- 3.4 Amenity Services had through the summer of 2013 trialled new work schedules to incorporate the efficiencies required, the area work teams completed "job cards" that enabled management to keep a record of works carried out and look at areas where anomalies / inefficiencies were found.
- 3.5 The data collated over summer 2013 has been used to allow further improvements to work schedules to be made and the current schedules are in place for summer 2014, the main areas of change within the B&C area are:

- All grass borders around obstacles, paths and walls are to be cut once at beginning of growing season and weed killed thereafter to reduce the need for strimming throughout the growing season. (this includes around headstones)
- Schedules are set up to ensure that teams are working to take in full range of duties, routes will be covered

by staff to carry out the wide range of tasks required whilst in the particular area i.e. pavement sweeping / toilet cleaning / litter picking and grass cutting.

- All Amenity open space grass will continue to be cut 24 times per season Apr-Oct.
- Rose Beds & Shrub borders have been pruned / mulched with forest bark (weed killed where appropriate) to reduce seasonal maintenance.
- Reduction in grass cutting on some rural grass verges from 24 to 6 in areas such as Rhubodach ferry terminal.

3.6 The current establishment numbers within the Bute & Cowal Grounds/Cemeteries, Street Sweeping and Local Environment teams are as follows:

Bute - 12

Cowal - 16

3.7 It is proposed that Amenity Services work towards a monitoring system that uses current software available to the council, namely WDM & Total costing system to give accurate / live data on all activities undertaken by Amenity Services. This will involve creating a system that can be used to record work schedules / respond directly to calls & emails / collate Key Performance figures for pyramid and reduce the requirement to complete daily work sheets / spreadsheets by staff on the ground. (A future report will update members on this project)

3.8 Amenity Services are in discussion with a number of Community Groups where there appears to be a willingness to engage in Third Sector Partnership working. The aim of these discussions is to allow communities / sports clubs to take ownership of their area / facility with support from the council where agreement can be reached and support provided. This can range from a sports club looking to take on maintenance of a pitch to community groups looking to undertake the full range of maintenance duties within a village. These discussions will also look to further enhance a number of play parks and sports facilities where community groups have the potential to fund projects via external funders (Rothesay & Sandbank play parks are good examples of this partnership working).

3.9 All staff within Amenity Services have been kept informed of changes and Union Shop Stewards have been fully briefed on changes within the section. In total in B&C: 4 front line employees have left the council via Voluntary Redundancy in 2013/14. A larger number of employees expressed an interest but were not granted their request due to requirement to continue to deliver front line services, a further saving via VR will be made within the management structure in B&C (Supervisor on Bute & Working Foreman in Cowal) in June 2014.

3.10 Our Amenity Services Enforcement Officers (new title to be adopted by Environment Wardens) will support the Parking Enforcement team (Amenity Wardens) in B&C to cover the recent introduction of DPE (Decriminalised Parking Enforcement) this will allow our officers to engage with local business / emergency services and bus companies in reducing the traffic flow concerns within Bute & Cowal town centres, ensuring that illegal parking at junctions, bus parking zones, loading bays, double yellow lines and limited parking zones are monitored and fines / warnings issued where appropriate.

- 3.11 Amenity Services are also in discussion with Private Land tenants on how agreement can be reached for the upkeep of land outwith council in future, the impact on reducing / removing the maintenance in these high profile areas within towns will have a huge impact on tourism and the aesthetics in these areas, It is not the intention of Amenity Services to simply walk away from these areas, but to look at best way of ensuring an acceptable level of maintenance in future years.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 Argyll and Bute Council have made financial reductions in all departments; Roads & Amenity Services have implemented changes to maintain front line service delivery to an amended specification. The future structure of Amenity Services will be set up to allow for multi-tasking / flexible working to ensure that acceptable levels of maintenance are in place and statutory duties such as burials / collection of waste continue to be delivered. Where Capital investment is needed to improve the infrastructure, Business Cases will be drawn up to look at prioritising investment in future years.

#### **5.0 IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Policy: Environmental / Amenity Services
- 5.2 Financial: Revenue / Capital
- 5.3 Legal: None
- 5.4 Risk: Service Delivery
- 5.5 HR: Employees leaving Department due to VR

#### **Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure**

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**For further information contact:** Allan Macdonald, Amenity Services Performance Manager (South A&B) 01369 708617