

SOUTH SWINDON PARISH COUNCIL

Future Maintenance of Town Gardens & Queens Park

Full Council – 19 December 2017

1. Introduction

The Parish Council has been considering the future maintenance of Town Gardens & Queens Park and a decision needs to be made before considering the final budget and Precept.

2. Report Details

- 2.1** Town Gardens & Queens Park have been maintained by the Parish Council this year as part of the StreetSmart Contract. Both parks have dedicated staff that only work in the parks and both parks have a depot with facilities for staff and storage for equipment.

This will not include the Bowls Club at Town Gardens as this work is carried out by specialist grounds staff and Swindon Borough Council has a separate lease with the club.

- 2.2** This gives an opportunity for the Parish Council to take over the running of the park directly and employ the staff, rather than it being included in the annual Contract.

Swindon Borough Council currently employs 5.31 members of staff and their staffing costs for this financial year are budgeted at £123,400. These staff would be entitled to a TUPE transfer on the same terms and conditions of service. However, they also employ a senior member of staff to oversee the work and that person would not be included in the transfer, so it could be necessary to appoint a more senior groundsman for each park and this should be included in the budget.

- 2.3** The other expenditure associated with the formal parks amounts to £39,100 and these costs would need to be added into the budget. The income from the parks is indicated at £12,600.

There will be additional administration work in terms of taking bookings for the bandstand and bowl and ordering of supplies for the ground staff.

- 2.4** There is going to be a lot of work to do in sorting out current supplies and suppliers and how this will be handed over to the parish. The Service Manager for Grounds Maintenance is very keen to help and make the transition as smooth as possible.

- 2.5** If the Parish Council agrees to take over the future running of Town Gardens and Queens Park, then the Chair should meet with the staff before Christmas to inform them. The staff have already been told misinformation about their future, so it is important that they hear about the current information from the right source.

- 2.6** By taking over the maintenance of the 2 formal gardens, it will give the Parish Council an opportunity to gain the experience of running a grounds maintenance team and further expansion could then be considered for the following year.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1** The view of Councillors is sought.