

COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL

DATE: 20 JANUARY 2011

Revised Draft Revenue Budget and Draft Capital Programme 2011/12 for Consultation

Ward(s) All

Portfolio:

Councillor Harris – Leisure, Culture and Environment
Councillor Ali – Communities and Partnerships

Summary of report

This report presents Cabinet's revised draft revenue budget and draft capital programme proposals for 2011/12 for consultation with the panel, and to provide an opportunity for the panel to make recommendations to Cabinet.

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Recommendation

The panel are recommended to consider the draft proposals in this report and make further recommendations to Cabinet as appropriate.

Background papers

Various financial working papers.
Equality Impact Assessment
Budget Consultation

Reason for scrutiny

To enable consultation and scrutiny of the draft budget proposals for 2011/12.



Jamie Morris
Executive Director – Neighbourhood Services

11 January 2011

Background

Cabinet on 17 November 2010 presented their draft revenue budget proposals for 2011/12 for consultation. These proposals were considered by this panel on 30 November 2010, with recommendations to Cabinet on 15 December 2010.

A further report on revenue savings options requiring a formal policy decision to implement was also presented to Cabinet on 15 December, along with a separate report on the draft Capital Programme for 2011/12.

The draft formula grant settlement was announced on 13 December 2010. This is a 2 year settlement and covers the period 2011/12 to 2012/13. The draft settlement includes a number of grants that have been unringfenced and rolled into this single funding mechanism totalling £16.689m. The settlement represents a 10.4% reduction in Formula Grant, which rises to 13.2% following a further reduction of £6.2m in specific grants.

The Government has also announced a one off council tax freeze grant of £2.712m for Walsall in 2011/12 (this will be included in the settlement for 2012/13, but we are not aware of how this will be treated beyond 2012/13). The actual grant will not be known until April 2011, but this replaces the need to raise council tax to residents of the borough in 2011/12.

Resource and legal considerations

Revenue

The draft revenue budget for services within the remit of this panel was presented to the panel meeting on 30 November 2010. This included the detailed breakdown of both investment and savings options submitted to Cabinet to enable the panel to make recommendations for Cabinet to consider as part of the budget process. The panel discussed the options in principle, and made the following recommendations to Cabinet on 15 December 2010 :-

‘that:

1. the proposed 2011/12 budget for the Communities and Partnerships Portfolio be noted;
and;
2. the proposed 2011/12 budget for the Leisure, Culture and Environment Portfolio be noted.’

Table 1 sets out the draft 2011/12 budget for the services within the remit of this panel and proposed changes in resources, compared to the approved budget for 2010/11.

Table 1 : DRAFT 2011/12 NET BUDGET – COMMUNITY SERVICES	
	£m
Budget brought forward from 2010/11	29.426
Inflation pressures	0.182
Other changes (including changes to grants)	(7.025)
Budget pressures : demographics, cost pressures, fall out of grant, etc	0.299
Full year effect of 2010/11 growth	(0.130)
Proposed savings	(1.481)
Full year effect of 2010/11 savings	(0.303)
Draft net budget	20.968

Investment

The draft 2011/12 revenue budget for services within the remit of this panel includes £130k reduction in growth which relates to investment decisions made by Council in February 2010 where a part year cost effect only was included in 2010/11.

In addition further growth totalling £299k has been identified as a very high priority by Cabinet and as being essential to meeting cost pressures. In the report to this panel on 30 November 2010, total growth of £336k was identified, but two pressures totalling £37k were noted as being under the remit of the Environment panel, and have now been amended (relating to Stray dog reception facility £17k and Disinfestation income shortfall of £20k).

Savings proposals

The draft 2011/12 revenue budget for services within the remit of this panel includes £303k of savings which relate to decisions made by Council in February 2010 where a part year effect only was included in 2010/11.

Proposals for savings have been considered by Cabinet and total new budget reduction options (including efficiencies, service redesign savings and income generation) of £1.481m are included in the draft budget proposals, again representing no overall change to the position previously considered by this panel on 30 November 2010.

Following further consideration by legal and finance, a number of changes have been made to the savings options requiring policy decisions by Cabinet, which were presented to Cabinet on 15 December 2010, as set out in **table 2** overleaf.

Table 2 :Summary of changes to proposed revenue savings requiring policy decisions	
	£
As reported to Scrutiny panel on 30 November 2010	483,834
Saving No 5 - Reduction in the business support team within Leisure & Community Health – moved to operational	(20,000)
Saving No 7 – Redesign the Sports Development team with minor reductions in programme – moved to operational	(80,000)
Rationalisation of Walsall Museum - saving No 3 on operational list now considered a change in policy due to reduction in service – now saving no. 18	58,356
Revised savings requiring change to policy	442,190

As above, the £442k represents 8 savings proposals that require a cabinet decision to proceed, as follows :-

- Saving No 1 – Cease direct council operation of Bentley Leisure Pavilion (£50k) – **Appendix 1A**
- Saving No 2 – Closure of New Art Gallery on Sundays and Bank Holidays (£40k) – **Appendix 1B**
- Saving No 3 – Remodelling of the library service (saving of £674k expected from 2012/13) – **Appendix 1C**
- Saving No 4 – Rationalisation of Local History Centre (£63k) – **Appendix 1D**
- Saving No 6 – Rationalisation of Green Space Services (£131k) – **Appendix 1E**
- Saving No 8 – Increase in bereavement fees and charges (£90k) – **Appendix 1F**
- Saving No 9 – Cease operation of Leisure Centre crèches (£10k) – **Appendix 1G**
- Saving No 18 – Rationalisation of Walsall Museum – educational support to schools (£58k) – **Appendix 1H**

Impact of the draft Formula Grant settlement

The Government provides funding to councils through formula grant, specific grant (which must be used to deliver government specific outcomes), and un-ring fenced grants which the council can decide how to utilise. For Walsall in 2011/12 the provisional settlement has been confirmed as £137.104m. This is a 2 year settlement and covers the period 2011/12 to 2012/13.

The draft settlement includes a number of grants that have been unringfenced and rolled into this single funding mechanism, totalling £16.689m. None of these relates to grants for services within the remit of this panel

In addition there have been changes to specific grants issued from other government departments. For 2011/12 these total £17.998m compared to £24.222m in 2010/11, a reduction of £6.224m. For services within the remit of this panel, these relate to :-

- Area based grant now stopped – affects Stronger Safer Communities (£304k), Prevent (£182k), Community Cohesion (£57k), Climate Change Planning Policy (£23k). There is however scope to fund some Prevent work from reserves in 2011/12.
- Playing for Success grant to cease (£80k)
- Music Support Grant – outcome pending the Henley review, the results of which are expected late January 2011 (£848k)

Capital Programme

Cabinet on 15 December 2010 presented their draft capital programme for 2011/12 for consultation.

Table 3 below sets out a summary of the draft capital programme for schemes under the remit of this panel, with the full list of associated schemes listed in **Appendices 2 and 3**.

Table 3 : DRAFT 2011/12 CAPITAL PROGRAMME – COMMUNITY SERVICES	
	£m
Mainstream (Council's own resources) – Appendix 2	
Prior Year Approvals	0.500
New Bids – Schemes that will cost the council more in the medium term if we don't do them	0.233
New Bids – Critical to service inspection/delivery outcomes	0.240
External Funding (Ring fenced) – Appendix 3	2.666
Draft Capital Programme – Community Services	3.639

If grant or council mainstream funding is unavailable, schemes will not proceed. At this point in time, a number of grants have not been confirmed, therefore there is likely to be some movement as the budget process progresses.

Schemes are recommended to go ahead as they represent council priorities, for a number of reasons:

- Corporate commitments - annual commitments that must be in the capital programme i.e for infrastructure projects, though the amounts may be varied.
- Prior year approvals - projects that have started or received prior Cabinet approval and funding in 2011/12 is required for their completion.
- Schemes which are critical for health and safety reasons, or which will cost the council more in the long run or are critical to deliver a specific service outcome.
- Capital insurance reserves: in a number of areas as insurance reserves to protect the council's position, for which funding is available should the need arise to draw it down.

Leasing minimises the call on capital resources by spreading the acquisition cost over a number of years, with revenue funds needed to finance operating leases. For services within the remit of this panel, the impact of the current leasing programme will be £163k in 2011/12 (relating to equipment and vehicles).

Citizen impact

The budget is aligned with service activity in service plans, and prepared using the principles of the Working Smarter programme. The savings and efficiencies reduce net cost and dampen the need for council tax increases. A stable financial position ensures activity is targeted on service delivery and driving improvement.

Environmental impact

The draft budget provides funding for community safety initiatives.

Risk Management issues

Service managers undertake comprehensive risk assessments of their budgets by identifying risk factors associated with potential changes to service delivery and funding streams to ensure that adequate corporate budgetary provision is available to cover unforeseen future events. This risk management approach has been in place for several years and is used to inform the level of earmarked reserves and working balance. A detailed statement on the adequacy of general and earmarked reserves and provisions will be included within the final budget report in February, along with a comprehensive financial assessment of the key risks to the 2011/12 budget.

Equality Implications

Service managers have regard to equalities in setting budgets and delivering services. Equality impact assessments are undertaken on options and the overall budget which are independently assessed by the Councils Equality and Diversity team. These will be refined as feedback is received on the budget as part of the consultation process.

Consultation

This is the second of two meetings for scrutiny to consider Cabinet's draft budget proposals. Recommendation from this panel will be reported to Cabinet at its meeting on 9 February 2011 for their consideration.

The council is statutorily obliged to consult with representatives of non-domestic ratepayers before setting the budget for the following financial year. Public consultation started in September and includes:

- Budget consultation packs sent to key community and voluntary sector organisations, and also published on the council's website
- Interviews of older people at Age Concern road shows
- Discussions held with service users and young people, met people with learning disabilities, and gathered feedback at the Centre for Independent Living
- Business consultation with representatives from the business community on 28 September 2010, and a follow up meeting on 11 January 2011
- On line budget simulator tool launched on 8 October 2010 until 5 November 2010 for residents to review budget prioritisation
- A Workforce Management JNCC has been established to consult with employee representatives and discussion on budget options started formally on 22 November 2010

The feedback from budget consultation was reported to Cabinet on 15 December 2010, and is attached to this report for your information.

Contact Officers:

Stuart Wootton,
Financial Planning Manager, ☎ 01922 653554, woottons@walsall.gov.uk

Stephanie Simcox
Service Accountancy and Financial Training Manager, ☎ 01922 652703,
simcox@walsall.gov.uk

Tracey Evans,
Lead Accountant – Neighbourhood Services and Resources, ☎ 01922 652430,
evanst@walsall.gov.uk

Saving 1: Cease direct council operation of Bentley Leisure Pavilion

Estimate Net Saving in £'000			
2011 / 2012	2012 / 2013	2013 / 2014	Implementation cost
£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£0 (subject to successful redeployment of staff and securing no-cost alternate management)

1. Description of the Savings Proposal

- 1.1 Cease direct council operation of Bentley Leisure Pavilion (BLP) and consideration of extending management options with the 3rd sector. Football pitches will continue unaffected.

2. Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**2.1 Customers**

The football pitches and bowls greens should be unaffected by any changes to the management of the pavilion. There were 20,227 visits to BLP in 2009/10. If the centre transfers to the third sector it is hoped this usage can be sustained; otherwise we will work with users to assist them to secure alternate venues.

2.2 Employees

The saving involves the deletion of 2 posts both of which are currently occupied. At this stage we are planning for these staff to be redeployed elsewhere within Leisure and Community Health.

2.3 Partners

There should be no impact on partner services.

2.4 Corporate Plan/Priorities

If continued operation of BLP can be secured, there should be no impact.

2.5 Other Council Services

There may be some minor impact on Street Pride who carry out the grounds maintenance of the pitches and greens – though this should be minimal as this function is intended to continue. There may be a small drop in Green Spaces' income if the changing provision for the pitches is lost.

3. Associated Risks

- 3.1 The principal risk is whether a third sector partner can be found to operate the pavilion at no cost to the council. At this stage this is estimated to be a significant risk. If this cannot be done, the likely alternatives would be to continue to subsidise the operation or demolish the site – both of which would have significant cost implications (although the potential cost of demolition could be offset against the possible sale of the site).

4. **Consultation**

- 4.1 Staff “in scope” were made aware of the saving proposal following 17 November Cabinet and all will have had meetings to be formally placed “at risk” by 1 December 2010.

The principal users of the pavilion were made aware of the saving option in advance of the 17 November Cabinet meeting and a further meeting to discuss the possible community management of the pavilion is scheduled for the evening of 29 November.

5. **Legal Implication**

- 5.1 None.

6. **Equal Opportunities and Environmental Implications**

- 6.1 None.

7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment form has been completed for this savings proposal, which has been assessed by the Equalities team. It shows that ceasing direct council operation of Bentley Leisure Pavilion (BLP) could have an adverse impact on older people’s provision in the area. In order to avoid the impact, the council is aiming to identify a means of continuing provision on the site by a local community organisation or by relocating the users. Extending management options with the 3rd sector are currently being negotiated.

Saving 2: Closure of New Art Gallery on Sundays and Bank Holidays

Estimate Net Saving in £'000			
2011 / 2012	2012 / 2013	2013 / 2014	Implementation cost
£40,058	£40,058	£40,058	£0

1. Description of the Savings Proposal

- 1.1 Currently the gallery opens on a Sunday 11.00am to 4.00pm and bank holidays. It is proposed to close the gallery on these days thus saving on payroll costs and utilities.

2. Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**2.1 Customers**

The facilities of the gallery will be unavailable to the visitor on these days. Current levels of visitors are in the region of 20,000 per annum.

2.2 Employees

On these days the gallery is staffed by one duty manager, six gallery assistants and there is also one sub contracted security guard on site. The hours for the duty manager and one assistant would be absorbed into the remaining working week. Five gallery assistants are employed for weekend duties only (12 hours) and these posts would be made redundant. These staff will be given the opportunity to transfer into a casual pool to provide cover as and when required. The security personnel will form part of the savings from reductions to the security contract.

2.3 Partners

No impact.

2.4 Corporate Plan/Priorities

No impact.

2.5 Other Council Services

No impact.

3. Associated Risks

- 3.1 Closure will lead to the five part time post holders (12 hours each) being made redundant.

4. Consultation

- 4.1 Those members of staff involved and the appropriate union will be consulted on the proposals.

5. **Legal Implication**

5.1 None.

6. **Equal Opportunities and Environmental Implications**

6.1 All appropriate staff will be consulted and given the opportunity to remain with the Gallery on a casual basis.

7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

7.1 Walsall gallery currently works in partnership with at least 39 local and regional organisations actively seeking inclusion of many groups with 'protected characteristics', for example, Black Sister Collective, Multi-Faith Forum, Anglo-Sikh Heritage Trail, Islamic Village, Ethnic Advocacy, Walsall Asylum, Refugee and Migrant Association, DASH – Disability Shropshire and others. Savings in the budget will mean that the outreach work will have to be reviewed and there will be a reduction of opening hours. However, the gallery will carry out further consultation into how to fairly reallocate resources in future to maintain activity with the groups with 'protected characteristics' as much as possible within the resources available.

Saving 3: Remodelling of library service

Estimate Net Saving in £'000			
2011 / 2012	2012 / 2013	2013 / 2014	Implementation cost
£0	£673,874	£673,874	£232,800 Capital cost of introduction of self service technology

1. Description of the Savings Proposal

- 1.1 The remodelling of the Library Service to reflect social and technological changes, introducing closer partnerships with the local community to deliver services and the introduction of self service facilities to streamline delivery and release future savings. This will result in fewer libraries directly run by the Council, but with longer opening hours in those remaining.

2. Implications Associated With Savings Proposal

- 2.1 **Customers:** There will be fewer libraries directly operated by the council, but those remaining will offer enhanced opening hours including Monday, weekends and an evening. Alternative provision in those areas without a library will be in the form of "Book Exchange" facilities run by local community organisations from recognised community buildings, by an enhanced mobile and housebound service and through the introduction of e-books and books download facilities online.
- 2.2 **Employees:** There will be a significant reduction in the number of staff needed to operate the service as the "Book Exchanges" will be operated by community organisations. The introduction of self service facilities across the remaining library network will drive out additional staff efficiencies in future years.
- 2.3 **Partners:** New partnerships with the local community and community organisations will need to be developed to deliver the remodelled service. These will need to be supported and carefully monitored to ensure their effectiveness.
- 2.4 **Corporate Plan/Priorities:** This remodelling is working within the Working Smarter Project and will deliver leaner working principles and greater efficiency.
- 2.5 **Other Council Services:** The remodelling will necessitate closer working with other services and the development of partnerships with education and adult learning providers (particularly Walsall Adult Community College), social care to help deliver the Personalisation agenda and Children's Services to improve achievement and offer out of school informal learning opportunities

3. **Associated Risks**

- 3.1 That no community organisation will wish to partner the Service deliver the new “Book Exchange Services. This will leave residents of the Borough without direct access to a library service unless they have access a personal computer. 40% of residents are digitally excluded and will have no access to the service or a public access computer facility.

4. **Consultation**

- 4.1 Library customers have been interviewed by the Working Smarter Team. Further wide consultation is planned in the next year (of both customers and non customers) and the plans for the remodelling are developed.

5. **Legal Implication**

- 5.1 The council has a statutory duty under the 1964 Public Libraries Act to provide a Library Service that is both “efficient and comprehensive”. This service must be freely accessible to all residents of the Borough.

6. **Equal Opportunities and Environmental Implications**

- 6.1 The reduction of staff will be effected according to the redundancy and redeployment policies if the council. Every effort will be made to mitigate compulsory redundancies by using vacant posts and a voluntary redundancy trawl.

7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 7.1 The council is considering a consultation on remodelling the library service. The options currently considered are less reliant on a number of buildings and branch libraries and better provision in bigger district libraries, with longer opening hours and better self-service. The council is aware that this may impact on some local communities with a restricted ability to travel. Therefore, the council will explore whether the activities delivered in the branch libraries could be delivered through alternative community venues. The proposals will be subject to further consultations with customers.

Saving 4: Rationalisation of Local History Centre

Estimate Net Saving in £'000			
2011 / 2012	2012 / 2013	2013 / 2014	Implementation cost
£62,947	£62,947	£62,947	£0

1. Description of the Savings Proposal

- 1.1 Reduction of opening hours, reduction of supplies and transport/subsistence budget, increase of income, deletion of staff posts, reduction of staff hours at Walsall Local History Centre.

2. Implications Associated With Savings Proposal

- 2.1 **Customers:** Loss of service one day a week, reduced service over breaks and lunch hour. Slower service and less opportunity to use Centre.
- 2.2 **Employees:** Deletion of three posts necessitating compulsory redundancy, reduction in hours of one further post.
- 2.3 **Partners:** Less opportunity for activities with partners as fewer staff and fewer opening hours.
- 2.4 **Corporate Plan/Priorities:** Will try to meet but will be constrained as have fewer staff to manage these and public service.
- 2.5 **Other Council Services:** As the Centre will have fewer staff there may be a slower response to requests from other council services for assistance.

3. Associated Risks

- 3.1 Drop in use of the Centre because fewer opening hours.

4. Consultation

- 4.1 Regular consultation is being held with staff who are directly affected and with other Centre staff as are all staff are affected directly or indirectly. Consultation will be undertaken with the public as to which further day in addition to Monday the Centre should close. Consultation is being undertaken also with the Trade Unions.

5. Legal Implication

- 5.1 None.

6. **Equal Opportunities and Environmental Implications**

- 6.1 The council's policies and procedures in such matters relating to the compulsory redundancies will be followed. The restriction in service at the centre will be managed to avoid inconveniencing one group more than any another. Full consultation will be undertaken with staff and trade unions over job losses and reduction in hours.

7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 7.1 This may lead to review of opening hours, conservation work, outreach work, and general efficiencies. It may be harder to collect and preserve records from all communities in the borough to the extent they used to before. The impact will be managed by 'reviewing the collecting and outreach policy' so that all sections of the community are served in an equitable way.

Saving 6: Rationalisation of Green Spaces Services

Estimate Net Saving in £'000			
2011 / 2012	2012 / 2013	2013 / 2014	Implementation cost
£130,829	£151,658	£172,487	£0

1. Description of the Savings Proposal

- 1.1 Rationalisation of green spaces services - staffing and operational budgets (5 posts year 1, plus a further post in year 2 and another in year 3) plus a small reduction in the operational revenue budget.

2. Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**2.1 Customers**

There should be no negative impact to users of the Council's parks, play areas and open spaces from this proposal. Staffing levels will be maintained at the 2010 level.

2.2 Employees

The proposal is for the deletion of five Park Ranger posts that are currently vacant; there is therefore no impact.

2.3 Partners

The same level of work will be maintained although it is likely that not as many new initiatives may be possible.

2.4 Corporate Plan/Priorities

Parks, play areas and open space and the activities that take place within them contribute to a number of the priorities within the Corporate Plan ~ being Healthy, Ensure all people are safe and secure, Ensure citizens are aspiring and achieving, Ensure a clean, green quality of life, Ensuring that citizens are active, and Deliver quality services and meet customer expectations. The service also contributes to the Sustainable Community Strategy's theme of "Sustaining a better place to live and work" and improving health, well-being and social care.

2.5 Other Council Services

There is no anticipated impact on other council services from this proposal.

3. Associated Risks

- 3.1 Green Space sites are potential locations for vandalism, graffiti, criminal damage and arson and a staff presence is considered of high importance to maintain both the service and customer satisfaction.
- 3.2 Walsall has developed ten new Play builder play areas during 2010 and a further seven are to be installed by Spring 2011. The regular and appropriate level of playground site inspection for the additional sites will need to be taken in to account within the work programmes of the Park Ranger team.
- 3.3 The small reduction in operational revenue budget of approximately £10,000 will mean slightly less resource being available for general maintenance of buildings.

4. **Consultation**

4.1 No consultation has been undertaken as the year 1 proposals are based around the deletion of vacant posts.

5. **Legal Implication**

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this savings proposal.

6. **Equal Opportunities and Environmental Implications**

6.1 There are no legal or environmental implications arising from this savings proposal.

7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment form has been completed for this savings proposal, which has been assessed by the Equalities team. The assessment shows that the needs of disabled users of green spaces within the new rationalised service will have to be reassessed. The council will be continuing to improve Green Spaces with enhanced access for disabled users, through, for example; the Arboretum restoration programme and an ongoing programme of Green Spaces improvement projects. The draft capital programme (see separate report on this agenda) includes £150k match funding towards a £500k 3 year programme of investment in Walsall parks.

Saving 8: Increase in bereavement fees & charges

Estimate Net Saving in £'000			
2011 / 2012	2012 / 2013	2013 / 2014	Implementation cost
£90,000	£150,000	£215,000	£0

1. Description of the Savings Proposal

- 1.1 Increase in bereavement fees and charges; 4.5% (£90,000) in year 1, 3% (£60,000) in year 2 and 3.25% (£65,000) in year 3.

2. Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**2.1 Customers**

Customers will be affected financially by the council charging higher funeral costs as well as the associated increase in the cost of memorials. The fees and charges for burial, cremation and registration services will affect all users of the service. It is anticipated that the highest quality service will continue to be delivered.

2.2 Employees

There is no effect on staff.

2.3 Partners

None.

2.4 Corporate Plan/Priorities

In accordance with protocol, it is customary to consider a review of the council's fees and charges at least annually.

2.5 Other Council Services

Environmental Health will pay more for funerals that are arranged by them as per the provisions of the Public Health Act 1984. These include where no next of kin can be identified/traced or where there is unwillingness from the deceased's relatives to procure the funeral. There are approximately 10 such funerals per year. However, where possible these costs are claimed back by the council from the Estate of the deceased.

3. Associated Risks

- 3.1 It is possible that there may be a reduction in the sale of memorial products; Book of Remembrance entries, plaques and tablets.
- 3.2 The other Black Country Local Authorities become more competitively priced however they too are considering price increases at this time.
- 3.3 The level of demand for burials and cremations is difficult to predict and accordingly, any increases in fees and charges do not necessarily generate the additional income forecast.

4. **Consultation**

- 4.1 Regular consultation with a range of stakeholders is undertaken during the year to establish views about the service delivery and assist the service in its path to excellence.

5. **Legal Implication**

- 5.1 The Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977 empowers a Burial Authority to charge such fees as they think proper for, or in conjunction with, burials in a cemetery.
- 5.2 By virtue of Section 9 of the Cremation Act 1902, a Burial Authority may demand payment of charges and fees for cremating human remains in any crematorium provided for them.

6. **Equal Opportunities and Environmental Implications**

- 6.1 Bereavement and Registration Services charges affect all users of the service irrespective of age, gender, disability, race, religion/faith or sexual orientation

7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment form has been completed for this savings proposal, which has been assessed by the Equalities team. The assessment shows that there is no specific impact to any particular section of the community. Legislation remains in place for the public purse to provide a basic burial/cremation service in cases where the bereaved cannot afford to pay themselves.

Saving 9: Cease operation of Leisure Centre crèches

Estimate Net Saving in £'000			
2011 / 2012	2012 / 2013	2013 / 2014	Implementation cost
£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£0 (subject to successful redeployment)

1. Description of the Savings Proposal

- 1.1 Cease direct council operation of crèches at Oak Park and Bloxwich Leisure Centres, and consideration of extending management options with other service sectors. This is a low usage service with a net cost to the council.

2. Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**2.1 Customers**

The withdrawal of this service will impact on the parents using crèches for childcare whilst they use the facilities at Oak Park and Bloxwich Leisure Centres. At present this represents fewer than 1,000 users per year. In the context of 400 operational hours for the crèches, this equates to fewer than 2.5 children per hour on average – given each crèche is staffed by 2 crèche workers, this is a level of provision that is difficult to sustain.

- 2.2 Alternate options for the provision of the crèches will be investigated to mitigate the impact on customers. However, given the high cost of the service (requirement for qualified staff & high supervision ratios) and relatively low demand, to identify a lower / no cost alternate provider will be extremely challenging.

- 2.3 Similarly, given the requirement for qualified staff and significant child safeguarding considerations it is considered to be difficult to achieve a satisfactory voluntary / community solution and ensure child protection.

2.4 Employees

The saving involves the deletion of 5 part-time posts – all of which are occupied. At this stage we are hopeful that these staff can be offered redeployment opportunities elsewhere within Leisure and Community Health.

2.5 Partners

None.

2.6 Corporate Plan/Priorities

If the crèche provision is lost this may limit some users' ability to access our sport and leisure facilities and thereby impact on the priority of "Improving health". However, given the low usage of the current service this impact is likely to be relatively small.

2.7 Other Council Services

None.

3. **Associated Risks**

- 3.1 The principal risk is whether an alternate means of delivering the crèches at no cost to the council can be identified. This is unlikely, for the reasons outlined above.
- 3.2 Achieving adequate levels of child protection and safeguarding is also felt to be a significant risk through community provision.

4. **Consultation**

- 4.1 Staff “in scope” were made aware of the saving proposal following 17 November Cabinet and all will have had meetings to be formally placed “at risk” by 1 December 2010.

5. **Legal Implication**

- 5.1 None.

6. **Equal Opportunities and Environmental Implications**

- 6.1 None.

7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment form has been completed for this savings proposal, which has been assessed by the Equalities team. The assessment shows that there is no evidence to suggest that removal of the crèches will have a negative impact on socio-economic equality. Users of the service are drawn from throughout the borough. This service is used predominantly by women although it is open to all. However, the numbers using this service are so small that the impact will be minimal.

Saving 18: Rationalisation of Walsall Museum – educational support to schools.

Estimate Net Saving in £'000			
2011 / 2012	2012 / 2013	2013 / 2014	Implementation cost
£58,356	£62,821	£62,821	£0

1. Description of the Savings Proposal

- 1.1 The proposal would lead to the deletion of the currently vacant Education Officer post at Walsall Museum and the closure of the museum's Temporary Exhibition Gallery. The number of visitor assistant posts at the museum will be from four to two.

2. Implications Associated With Savings Proposal**2.1 Customers**

Services to local schools are being reviewed. Sessions which were previously led by the museum's Education Officer will now be self-guided by the group leader/teacher in charge. Outreach work to schools and colleges will be reduced. Temporary exhibitions at Walsall Museum will cease, although small changing exhibitions will still be held in the 'My Space' corner of the museum.

2.2 Employees

The currently vacant post of Education Officer will be deleted. The number of visitor assistant posts will be reduced from four to two. Competitive interviews will be held to fill the posts, and the two unsuccessful applicants will be at risk of redeployment/redundancy.

2.3 Partners

Without access to the temporary exhibition gallery it will be harder for the museum to arrange exhibitions in partnership with local community groups. Small displays will still be possible in the 'My Space' corner of the museum.

2.4 Corporate Plan/Priorities

No impact.

2.5 Other Council Services

No impact.

3. Associated Risks

None.

4. Consultation

- 4.1 Those members of staff involved and the appropriate union will be consulted on the proposal and their suggestions considered before the revised structure is implemented.

5. Legal Implication

None.

6. **Equal Opportunities and Environmental Implications**

6.1 All staff affected by the proposals have been consulted, given the opportunity to comment, and will be enabled to apply for the revised posts.

7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

7.1 This may affect outreach work with various communities, educational workshops, and working with mothers with children. The risk will be managed so that remaining programmes will continue to target diverse audiences, including BME users, children, and disabled people. In order to avoid unfair imbalance, future provision will be informed by community analysis and targeting those disadvantaged groups that would most benefit from the service.