

**CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE AND TOURISM
22nd April, 2014**

Present:- Councillor Rushforth (in the Chair); Councillor Andrews.

F57. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

No Declarations of Interest were made.

F58. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS HELD ON 18TH AND 25TH MARCH, 2014.

The minutes of the previous meetings of the Cabinet Member for Culture and Tourism held on 18th and 25th March, 2014, were considered.

Resolved: - That the minutes of the previous meetings be agreed as accurate records.

F59. PUBLIC PETITION REGARDING PLAY PROVISION AT HORSEFAIR PARK, SWINTON.

Further to Minute No. F41 (Receipt of a Petition) from the meeting of the Cabinet Member for Culture and Tourism held on 18th February, 2014, the Cabinet Member now considered a report that provided an update on the investigations that had followed since receipt of the petition containing 400 signatures.

The Leisure and Green Spaces Manager (Leisure, Green Spaces and Community Development, Streetpride, Environment and Development Services Directorate) outlined the further investigation that had taken place following receipt of the petition that requested the play area on the site behind the Robin Hood Public House leading to Horsefair Park, Swinton, be re-instated. Swinton Ward Members, the Wentworth North Area Assembly and a number of local community groups were also in favour of creating a new play area on the site. It was believed that the Wentworth North Community Planning Officer would be able to assist with potential funding applications that were made in relation to the issue. Leisure and Green Spaces Officers had spoken with the Lead Petitioner to determine her requirements and expectations for the use of the site.

The report outlined previous proposals to replace the play area using Play Pathfinder funding. Unfortunately, this proposal had been withdrawn due to the presence of Japanese Knotweed on site meaning that the work could not be completed within budget and the necessary timescale.

Later, when the old play area had to be removed, Leisure and Community Services concluded that they could not justify its replacement because of reductions in budgets for play area maintenance from 2011, and the level of alternative play provision in the vicinity.

The Leisure and Green Spaces Manager outlined the factors that were investigated in the course of considering the petition: -

- **The condition of the existing play area** – the previous play area had been removed due to the very poor condition of the equipment;
- **Availability and quality of alternative play areas accessible to the community in question** - The Swinton Ward had four other play areas, and two were amongst the newest in the Borough. Therefore, the Swinton Ward was relatively well provided for;
- **The suitability of the site, including ground conditions, accessibility, level of surveillance, and possible nuisance to neighbouring properties** – The site did have Japanese Knotweed, which would not automatically prohibit the development of a play area if there was significant demand for a resource, but would add to the overall cost. A number of recent incidents of anti-social behaviour had taken place in Horsefair Park, highlighting concerns regarding the suitability of the site for a play area;
- **Local demand** – The submission of a petition containing 400 signatures, which was supported by local residents and Elected Members, the Area Assembly and community groups, evidenced that there was strong local demand for the site. However, the Leisure and Green Spaces Manager again referred to the other play areas in the local area;
- **The impact the proposal would have on the service's ability to maintain its entire stock of play areas in a safe and useable condition** - Leisure and Green Service's priority was to maintain the existing play areas as far as possible. The creation of additional play areas would decrease the Service's ability to adequately maintain existing play areas within the Service's revenue budget, which had been reduced since 2011.

The Leisure and Green Service's Manager concluded that whilst it might be desirable to replace the Horsefair Park play area, given current resources and the considerations outlined above, it was not currently practical or affordable and was not a high priority for resources

Discussion ensued on the information presented and the following points were raised: -

- **Did the area have a Parish Council who could support the installation of a play area?** – The Swinton area did not have a Parish Council. If the area did this would have been another option that could have been explored.
- **What were the future plans for the Horsefair Park?** – Another funding stream could potentially be deployed to improve the biodiversity of the area subject to the outcome of a Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership fund. However, this was in the early stages of discussion and was not yet approved. If the funding was approved for Horsefair Park it should improve the area's amenity.

Resolved: - (1) That the report be received and its content noted.

(2) That the request to provide a new play area at Horsefair Park, Swinton, not be supported due to the relatively good level of provision elsewhere in Swinton, and the need to target scarce resources in areas of greatest need across the borough.

(3) That the lead petitioner be informed of this decision.

F60. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING: -

Resolved: - That the next meeting of the Cabinet Member for Culture and Tourism take place on Tuesday 17th June, 2014, to start at 10.00 a.m. in the Rotherham Town Hall.