

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Member (Culture, Leisure, Sports and Parks)
held at 9.00 am on Tuesday, 9 September 2014

Present:

Members: Councillor A Khan (Chair)

Other Members: Councillor D Skinner (Shadow Cabinet Member)
Councillor A Andrews (for item 4)

Employees:

C Edwards, People Directorate
U Patel, Resources Directorate
A Walster, Place Directorate

Public Business

1. **Apologies**

There were no apologies for absence.

2. **Declarations of Interests**

There were no Declarations of Interests.

3. **Minutes**

The minutes of the Joint Cabinet Members (Business, Enterprise and Employment) and (Culture, Leisure, Sports and Parks) meeting held on 23 July 2014 were noted as a true record.

4. **War Memorial Park Water Feature e-Petition - Request to remove the new charge for children using the water feature**

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Executive Director, Place which provided a response to an e-petition organised by Councillor Andrews, an Earlsdon Ward Councillor, with 100 e-signatures, requesting the removal of the new charge for children using the water feature.

The report explained that the charges for the use of the Water Feature in the War Memorial park had been considered and approved on 8th April 2014. The Water Feature was opened in 2005 and had been free to use since that time and operated for 77 days of the year; subject to weather conditions.

The report outlined the two options available; firstly, to retain the charge as previously approved or alternatively, to reconsider whether, given the relatively small amount of income anticipated to be recovered, the charge for children to use the water feature should be withdrawn.

In considering these options, it was worth noting that excluding maintenance and replacement costs, the facility cost approximately £17,000 to operate annually. The proposed usage charge of £1.00 per child per day was estimated to recover £5,000 to help meet the overall running costs of this facility.

It was acknowledged that while only a small element of the operating costs was estimated to be recovered, it provided an opportunity to recover some of the costs incurred.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member (Culture, Leisure, Sports and Parks) approves that in consideration of the low level of income anticipated to be achieved and the impact this charge may have on families, the charge for children to use the water feature be withdrawn.

5. A Vision for Allesley Park Walled Garden

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Executive Director, Place which sought approval for the adoption of “A Vision of Allesley Park Walled Garden” as a framework for the future development and management of the Walled Garden.

Allesley Hall Park is one of the Area Parks within the City with a rich history and the Council is supported in its management and ongoing maintenance by very enthusiastic local people who are members of the Allesley Park Residents Association, Allesley Park Walled Garden Group and the Friends of Allesley Park. The park is under the control of the Parks Service within the Place Directorate.

All these Groups have been working over the past three years with City Council officers on a Visioning document for the Walled Garden, an integral and historical element of this well used park. The report sought approval to adopt the document as a framework for the future development of the Walled Garden and to submit an external funding bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for Stage 1 of the restoration works.

For a number of years, residents and groups that use Allesley Park have taken a keen interest in the management of the Park. In 2000, the Council adopted a “Proposal for the Walled Garden”, which permitted the newly formed Allesley Park Walled Garden Group to lease part of the Garden in order to lay it out as it may have looked when the Garden was first built in c1786.

The report outlined two options for consideration:

- (i) To leave the management of the garden as it is. This would mean having a quarter of the garden managed (under lease) by the Walled Garden Group with the remainder of the Garden managed in an ad-hoc basis by the Friends of Allesley Park, apart from essential work such as grass-mowing which would be carried out by the City Council. This lack of formal management for three quarters of the Garden has already proved to be undesirable as it causes friction between the two groups. This was not the recommended option.

- (ii) Adopting the vision for the walled Garden which has been agreed by all parties as a workable management framework. By adopting the Vision, the groups would work in partnership with the City Council to deliver the actions outlined in the Vision including seeking external funding to deliver the new proposal. The report recommended that this option be approved so that the Vision document is adopted, allowing external funding to be sought so this Vision becomes a reality.

Almost four years of consultation and discussion have been undertaken during the development of the Vision document. The consultation was led by the City Council and involved the Allesley Park Residents Association, the Friends of Allesley Park and the Allesley Park Walled Garden Group. The groups carried out consultation with the wider public through questionnaires, distributed within 0.5 miles of the Park and via events where members of the public have had the opportunity to comment on the proposals.

The Vision document, as attached in Appendix 1 of the report, was overwhelmingly agreed by all parties as a framework for the future development of the Walled Garden.

If approved, it was proposed to submit an external funding bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund when the next application window opens in February 2015. Other action plan elements within the Visioning Document would be delivered as resources, both financial and personnel permit.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member (Culture, Leisure, Sports and Parks):

- 1. Approves the adoption of “Vision of Allesley Park Walled Garden” as a framework for the future development and management of the Walled Garden.**
- 2. Agrees to the submission of an external funding application (first-round) to the Heritage Lottery Fund for c£480,000.**
- 3. That if successful at the first-round stage, requests that a further report be submitted to a future meeting outlining the proposed project, financial implications and to seek approval to enter into a contract with the Heritage Lottery Fund for the funding offered to deliver this proposed project.**

6. Outstanding Issues

There were no outstanding issues.

7. Any Other Items of Public Business

There were no other items of business.

(Meeting closed at 9.35 am)