
To: **Business, Enterprise and Economy Scrutiny Board (3)**

Date: **16th March 2016**

Subject: **Parks and Friends Groups Task and Finish Group Recommendations**

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 To inform the Business, Enterprise and Economy Scrutiny Board (3) of the recommendations agreed by the Parks Task and Finish Group

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Business, Enterprise and Economy Scrutiny Board are recommended to support the following recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure, Sports and Parks
- 1) Parks and open spaces are considered as the city moves towards becoming an age-friendly city
 - 2) When resources are available, improvements to parks and open spaces should consider age-friendly requirements such as footpaths and safety/anti-social behaviour concerns.
 - 3) Support networks for Friends groups are supported by the Council both locally and regionally.
 - 4) Section 106 agreements for green spaces are more flexible as to what can be funded on a specific site.

3 Information/Background

- 3.1 At their informal meeting on 24 June 2015, the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) established a task and finish group to look at how Friends of Parks groups could be supported to make parks and open spaces more age-friendly.
- 3.2 The task and finish group consisted of:
- Cllr Bigham
 - Cllr Lakha (Chair)
 - Cllr Lapsa
 - Cllr Welsh
- 3.3 The group met on four occasions and heard information about age-friendly cities, Section 106 funding and also from representatives of two community groups, as well as visiting several park sites across the city.

4 Age-friendly Cities

- 4.1 The Health and Well-being Board supported becoming an age-friendly city at their meeting on 7 July 2014 and subsequently this was adopted as part of the refreshed Council Plan at Cabinet on 7 July 2015.

- 4.2 Members heard from Kam Kaur, the Age-Friendly Transformation Manager, as well as Anne Lakin, Chair of Coventry Older Voices, about what was happening to support Coventry becoming an age-friendly city.
- 4.3 Members heard that the top priorities for older people when it came to public spaces were accessibility, such as suitable paths and walkways, feeling safe, and access to public toilets.
- 4.4 A check list from the World Health Organization of what is involved in becoming an age-friendly city is provided at appendix 1.
- 4.5 Anne Lakin also offered to become part of the group to advise and support on age-friendly matters.

5 Section 106 funding for parks and open spaces

- 5.1 Members of the task and finish group considered information about Section 106 (S106) agreements for open spaces.
- 5.2 Members heard that Section 106 monies form part of planning agreements and can be designated to a variety of different capital projects such as infrastructure, education and open spaces. The money usually has to be spent within in specific geographical area that is related to the development for which the planning agreement refers to.
- 5.3 Members heard that most capital funding for improving parks and open spaces comes through S106 agreements and is frequently designated for children's play facilities. Members also heard that although capital funding comes through S106 agreements, the on-going revenue costs for maintenance has to come from existing Council budgets.

6 Friends Groups

- 6.1 Members heard that the Council supports around 30 Friends and community groups associated with green spaces across the city. It was explained that these kinds of groups can access sources of funding unavailable to the local authority. Examples given were Gosford Park Residents Association, who had accessed lottery funding for play equipment and Willenhall Rangers who had accessed Woodland Trust funding for tree planting.
- 6.2 Members heard about the work that community groups do in terms of supporting the community use and maintenance of the green spaces. They also heard from one of the Parks Development Officers about the support offered through the Council to community groups and friends groups.
- 6.3 Members of the task and finish group heard evidence from representatives of 2 community groups that support green spaces in their local area. Representatives from Canley Green Spaces and Allesley Green Residents Association attended the meeting.
- 6.4 Members heard about some of the issues experienced by volunteer groups, with parks and green spaces, such as anti-social behaviour and sustaining membership.
- 6.5 The representatives from the two groups found it beneficial to be able to share information and experiences.

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