

Minute Extract from the meeting of the Healthy, Safe, Clean and Green Communities Scrutiny Committee held on the 19th April 2016

***. CALL IN OF EXECUTIVE MINUTE NO. PROV 13 – CASTLE LEISURE PARK OPTIONS EXEMPT – PARAGRAPH 3**

The Chair presented the item and asked Councillor Bowler to outline the reason for the Call In.

Councillor Bowler raised concerns regarding the press release being published prior to the expiration of the Call In period. The Call In had been made as Castle Leisure Park had been out of use since 2015, but prior to that there had been up to 8,500 visits per year, with no effort to encourage usage. The site had been neglected which had resulted in vandalism causing nearby residents problems such as emotional distress.

Consultation regarding Vale Park Section 106 monies had been ongoing for over a year with suggestions requested from local people and it was hoped to install a multi-use games area (MUGA) at Vale Park which was only a 5 minute walk from Castle Leisure Park. There was no need for 2 such facilities so close together.

Castle Leisure Park was very visible and central to New Bolsover. The improvements to New Bolsover which were about to get underway and the work of the Friends of New Bolsover Group would help to raise the profile of the area and creating a MUGA could have a negative effect on the well used bowling green next door.

No consultation regarding the Castle Leisure Park Options had been carried out with either local Members or the community.

Councillor P.A. Cooper added that Old Bolsover Town Council had received many complaints from residents who felt that there would be too many MUGAs close together and the community would prefer something else.

The Assistant Director – Leisure responded that there had been many pressures regarding the financial pressures of the Authority and the Leisure department. Within the Leisure Strategy, all leisure facilities within the Authority had been looked at. The department was not structured in a way that allowed for management of remote facilities. There was a lot of anti-social behaviour and vandalism at Castle Leisure Park which was costly to repair. The bowling green was now community run and as a consequence, suffered less vandalism as there was usually someone on site. Meetings had been held with clubs and people in the community to try to find someone who would be willing to run Castle Leisure Park.

There was Section 106 money and an insurance settlement available and the facility could be returned to its original state, however usage records showed that the users were not from the local community and no enquires had been made to use the site since its closure in 2015.

An Astroturf pitch was expensive to fit and maintain and needed to be staffed to ensure that it was not vandalised. The proposal offered a larger MUGA which would be free to use and more activities could be carried out e.g. Extreme Wheels. This would make it more accessible to the immediate community and bring self policing. A MUGA would also be less susceptible to vandalism.

The Portfolio Holder for Performance (Corporate Plan)/Human Resources/Social Inclusion/Leisure noted that the options needed to be looked at and welcomed the call in. It was an opportunity for everyone to get involved and move forward and give New Bolsover a facility to be proud of.

The Assistant Director – Leisure agreed that there was no need for 2 MUGAs close together and suggested that a large one be installed at Castle Leisure Park and different facilities be looked at for Vale Park.

A question was asked regarding whether CCTV could be installed and it was noted that it would be a Member decision, however costs could be prohibitive.

Members felt that it was necessary to get the consultation right and ensure that all relevant groups had the opportunity to contribute to ensure that the facility was something the Council could be proud of.

It was noted that the community would prefer the MUGA to be installed at Vale Park, due to the boggy nature of the ground.

Councillor Bowler noted that there had been a lengthy consultation on a Section 106 for public art which had heavily involved the community. As a result everyone felt that they had ownership of the project and there had been no vandalism. There was a need to bring the community on board.

Moved by Councillor T. Munro and seconded by Councillor H.J. Gilmour

RESOLVED that the matter be referred back to the Executive for reconsideration to allow the Executive and Officers to consider the need for wider consultation with local residents and Members.

(Governance Officer)