

WASHINGTON AREA COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL SERVICES

2 JULY 2009

WASHINGTON WHEELED SPORTS PARK

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of the report is to:

- i) Advise the findings from the recent round of consultation
- ii) Seek endorsement of the preferred option and
- iii) Progress to Step 7 of the process to develop a Wheeled Sports Park for Washington

2.0 BACKGROUND

In 2008, the City was successfully awarded £2.5m Play Pathfinder Funding to invest in the future of play within the city.

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) selected 30 Play Pathfinder authorities throughout the country, to receive capital and revenue funding to invest in their play infrastructure. The Government's aim was to invest in 3,500 play areas as part of £235m Government commitment to children's play.

In Sunderland, the funding will facilitate the development of 28 new or upgraded play spaces plus one City Adventure Centre. All the projects must be completed by 31 March 2010 or Central Government have stated that the funding will be "clawed back". In July 2008, Cabinet approved receipt of the grant from DCSF, the associated conditions and delegated arrangements for the delivery of the Pathfinder Programme to the Director of Community and Cultural Services.

3.0 PREVIOUS POSITION

The Committee will recall that officers presented an eight step revised consultation process for the development of the Area Wheeled Sports Park provision at their meeting on 4 February 2009. This is attached for information in Appendix 1.

Elected members endorsed this process which aimed to ensure that young people and families across Washington were fully consulted on the options and preferred design of the new provision.

DCSF have supported the Council in deferring delivery of this project to year two of the Pathfinder programme however this must be delivered by March 2010, or the Pathfinder funding will be forfeited.

At Area Committee on 1 April, officers subsequently presented sixteen sites of which six were recommended for endorsement, to be considered for the detailed design stage for the project. This shortlist was endorsed by the Committee and included Albany Park, Glebe Park, land adjacent to Washington Arts Centre, Princess Anne Park (Crocodile pond), Rickleton and Sulgrave.

4.0 CURRENT POSITION

Since the Area Committee meeting on 1 April, detailed designs have been developed and a young people's steering group and elected members have provided their feedback into the designs prior to their release for public consultation across Washington. The designs have additionally been considered at the Local Multi Agency Partnership Meeting in June when feedback has been provided via a specialist sub group established for the purpose of considering this project.

Since the launch of the new revised eight step process a variety of communication methods have been used to engage residents of all ages across Washington. The wheeledsportsark@sunderland.gov.uk e-mail address has continued in use as has the updated website. In consultation with elected members four venues to publicise the designs and voting process, being Washington Millennium Centre, Washington Library, Washington Leisure Centre and Washington Arts Centre were identified. In addition the vote for the preferred location was also facilitated on-line and every school in Washington offered their support to encourage young people to vote.

A media release was issued encouraging residents to get involved as a result, articles have appeared in both the Sunderland Echo and the Evening Chronicle. A radio interview has also taken place and has been aired on a number of occasions by Sun FM.

5.0 FINDINGS

The voting system closed 12 noon on Monday 22 June and findings are under analysis. Full results will be provided on completion of the analysis no later than 12 noon on Monday 29 June 2009 and will be posted on the web site www.sunderland.gov.uk/leisure.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

Members are requested to consider the results from the public vote (to be released after analysis by 12 noon on Monday 29 June 2009) and endorse the recommended preferred site. Following this and moving to Step 7 of the process, the designs will be circulated to residents who live in close proximity of the preferred location and it will be determined whether planning permission is required.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Play Pathfinder Cabinet Report 30 July 2008
Residents' Update 2/3