

# PETITION REQUESTING A SKATE PARK NEAR WOODLANDS AVENUE, EASTCOTE

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| <b>Cabinet Member(s)</b>    | Cllr Jonathan Bianco                    |
| <b>Cabinet Portfolio(s)</b> | Finance, Property and Business Services |
| <b>Officer Contact(s)</b>   | Adrian Batten, Residents Services       |
| <b>Papers with report</b>   | Location Plan                           |

## 1. HEADLINE INFORMATION

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| <b>Summary</b>                                  | This report informs the Cabinet Member of a petition that has been received requesting a skate park at Cavendish Park in Eastcote.   |
| <b>Contribution to our plans and strategies</b> | The recommendation supports strategic priorities of protecting and maintaining high quality green spaces.  |
| <b>Financial Cost</b>                           | There would be no cost to the Council should the Cabinet Member agree the officer recommendation. Should the Cabinet Member decide to agree to the petitioners request the estimated cost to the Council would be more than £160k (based on the cost of Lake Farm Skate Park). |
| <b>Relevant Policy Overview Committee</b>       | Residents' & Environmental Services  |
| <b>Ward(s) affected</b>                         | Cavendish, Eastcote.   |

## 2. RECOMMENDATION

**That the Cabinet Member:**

**1) Meets and discusses with petitioners their request, and subject to these discussions advises the petitioners that following investigation of the site by officers it is considered that Cavendish Park is not a suitable location for a Skate Park.**

### **Reasons for recommendation**

To enable the Cabinet Member to discuss the petitioners' request and to consider officers recommendation's.

There are several suitable skate park facilities at other locations across the Borough: Lake Farm (Hayes), King's College (Ruislip) and Fassnidge Park (Uxbridge). The closest (King's College) is a little over a mile away. All are easily accessible by public transport and are free to use.

Cavendish Park is not considered to be a suitable location for a skate park. There are a number of reasons for this. The park itself has a number of existing designated sporting areas (e.g. the bowling green, cricket pitch) and officers are of the view that it would not be appropriate to remove any of these uses at the expense of a skate park. This means a new skate park would need to be located in a part of the park that is not set aside for an existing defined recreational use. Whereas there is such land it is less than half the area of the total park. The park performs two key functions, as a place for sporting pursuits and as an open and attractive green space for the general public to enjoy without restriction. The geographic location of the park means that most of it is close to residential properties.

Skate parks do generate a lot of noise; whereas this is not necessarily a problem in a public park (as other recreational uses can be noisy) it is a problem if located close to residential property. The Council's Environmental Health Team have suggested that to prevent noise nuisance a skate park would need to be at least 100m from noise sensitive facades of residential property. This in itself causes a major problem at Cavendish Park given the restricted size of the park. It is also considered that a further large scale sporting area (especially with the urban appearance of a skate park) would be to the detriment of the park as a whole. This is because a skate park would result in too small an area of the park remaining as un-restricted green space.

Overall officers consider that not only is there insufficient space to install a skate park, but that there is not a robust argument to invest in a skate park given other nearby facilities.

### **Alternative options considered / risk management**

Although officers have in considering the petition given due regard to the need to provide facilities for the demographic represented by the petition; alternative locations for a Skate Park have not been considered given the number of existing high quality facilities in the Borough (including a facility only 1 mile from Cavendish Park).

### **Policy Overview Committee comments**

None at this stage.

## **3. INFORMATION**

### **Supporting Information**

A petition with 297 signatures has been submitted to the Council from residents living within the Borough asking for a skate park. The petition states: *"This petition is for the idea of bringing a new skate park in the local area of Eastcote at the open space near Woodlands Avenue (Cavendish Park) to help bring a new facility for the locals to use and enjoy for many years to come"*.

## **Financial Implications**

The cost to install a skate facility would exceed £160K (based on the cost of the recently installed skate park at Lake Farm), for which a suitable funding source would need to be identified.

## **4. EFFECT ON RESIDENTS, SERVICE USERS & COMMUNITIES**

### **What will be the effect of the recommendation?**

To maintain Cavendish Park as it presently exists.

### **Consultation Carried Out or Required**

The local Ward Councillors have carried out consultation with their constituents with regard to this matter. The Ward Councillors have advised officers that as result of their consultations, they do not support the petition.

## **5. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

### **Corporate Finance**

Corporate Finance has reviewed this report and concurs with the financial implications set out above.

### **Legal**

There are no special legal implications for the proposal, which amounts to an informal consultation. A meeting with the petitioners is perfectly legitimate as part of a listening exercise. In considering any informal consultation responses, decision makers must ensure there is a full consideration of all representations arising including those, which do not accord with the officer recommendation. The decision maker must be satisfied that responses from the public are conscientiously taken into account.

The public sector equality duty (section 149 Equality Act 2010) requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. Of the protected characteristics named in the Equality Act 2010, age has the greatest relevance for this petition, as it seems likely that younger demographics would make significantly more use of public skate parks. Where equalities issues arise, the Cabinet Member should weigh up the equalities impact of the proposals against the other relevant considerations. Equalities impacts are not necessarily decisive, but the objective of advancing equalities must be taken into account in weighing up the merits of a proposal. The weight to be given to any equalities issues is a matter for the decision maker to determine in all of the circumstances. It should be ensured that full reasons for the decision are recorded.

If it were decided to proceed with further consultation on a skate park, this would be subject to various planning and land use considerations, which would require further legal advice at that time.

## **Corporate Property and Construction**

Support the recommendations in this report.

### **6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Nil