

Vernon Park Bowling Green Fencing

Report of the Corporate Director for Place

1. MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

1.1 The fencing of the bowling greens in Vernon Park.

2. INFORMATION

- 2.1 Stockport Council have been approached by the bowling clubs at Vernon Park with a request to fence the bowling greens due to continual damage to greens through misuse and vandalism
- 2.2 There are two crown bowling greens in Vernon Park.
- 2.3 Vernon Park opened in 1858 and is Stockport's oldest public park lying just east of the town centre. It's an exceptional Victorian/Edwardian asset to both the local community and the North West region.
- 2.4 The bowling greens have suffered from anti-social behaviour over a number of years, ranging from casual misuse i.e. picnics, children's games, dog walking, football to criminal damage such as fires and riding motorbikes.
- 2.5 Provision of bowling green fencing is proposed as the most practical way of reducing bowling green misuse and protecting this important sports facility.
- 2.6 The proposed fencing will be sympathetic to the parks historical setting and has been laid out to minimise disruption to the existing cobble sett path.
- 2.7 The fence will be 1.8metres high and will restrict access to the footpaths around the greens. The fencing proposal is detailed in the attached as Appendix A.
- 2.8 The fencing proposal has been consulted on with key stakeholders. Given the heritage status of the park this has included Cheshire Gardens Trust and Historic England.
- 2.9 Cheshire Gardens Trust works with The Gardens Trust as the national statutory consultee have provided the following comment on the scheme, '*While we regret the need for the fencing which will limit access for law abiding park users and visually dominate the upper bowling green by the club house, we appreciate the need for protection of the greens. We do not consider that the proposal has an adverse impact on the historic significance of the park, and without protection the historic bowling greens will not be able to function.*'
- 2.10 Historic England have been notified however, there is no requirement for them to comment in this instance.

- 2.11 As part of the consultation, signs have been placed at the main entrances to Vernon Park displaying the proposed fencing layout and highlighting where there will be restrictions to footpath access.
- 2.12 There have been two objections from park users to the proposals. Both objections relate to the fencing restricting access to the footpaths around the greens.
- 2.13 There are 15 parks in Stockport with bowling greens. Vernon Park along with Heaton Norris and Heaton Moor Park are currently unfenced.
- 2.14 There are three ladies teams, one mens team and one mixed team comprising of 70 members that use Vernon Park as their home green.
- 2.15 The teams play competitively across four leagues; Stockport Parks Veterans Bowling League, Cheadle/Gatley League , Stockport District Pairs League and Stockport Parks Bowling League. The ladies team play in a friendly league with visiting teams from across Stockport.
- 2.16 The project is anticipated to cost £20,000 and the works will be formally tendered.
- 2.17 £20,000 of Section 106 commuted sum formal sports funding has been allocated to this project by the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Stockport, subject to community consultation and the agreement of Area Committee to proceed with the project.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Area Committee are requested to support the proposal to fence the bowling greens in Vernon Park.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are none

Anyone wishing to inspect the above background papers or requiring further information should contact Richard Booker on telephone number Tel: 0161 474 4829 or alternatively email richard.booker@stockport.gov.uk