

Executive Board – 16 April 2007

South East Area Committee – 5 March 2007

198 ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT REPORT

The Area Co-ordinator presented for information the report to Executive Board held on 19th February 2007 (previously circulated, now appended)

Resolved to:-

- (1) Note the report;
- (2) Recommend to Executive Board that more offenders be taken to Court, and that this fact should be published more widely.

Response from the Cleaner City Portfolio Holder (Councillor Fooks)

I note this recommendation from the South East Area Committee. We are taking enforcement activity where appropriate – as can be seen from recent press coverage of prosecutions. There will be a further Enforcement Seminar for Members on April 26th which will give more details of what is being done on enforcement following the introduction of the new Enforcement Protocol.

Recommendations on the Cowley Marsh Skate Park Proposal

Cowley Area Committee – 7 March 2007

129. COWLEY MARSH SKATE PARK PROPOSAL

The Leisure and Cultural Services Business Manager submitted a report (previously circulated now appended) which updated the Committee on designs for the proposed skate park at Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground, and presented the results of a sound survey carried out at the site, to allow the Committee to decide whether or not to support the installation of a Skate Park.

The Chair agreed to certify as urgent business a note from the Environmental Health Business Manager in response to the noise report prepared by Alan Saunders.

John Wade introduced the item, followed by Alan Saunders who went through his noise assessment report.

A number of people spoke against the proposals and raised the following issues/concerns:

- (i) Noise
- (ii) People using short cuts to get to the site
- (iii) Scale of the development
- (iv) Flooding/drainage issues
- (v) Possible vandalism and graffiti
- (vi) Lack of funding
- (vii) Inadequate sound proofing
- (viii) Loss of open space
- (ix) Design
- (x) Displacement of other users of the Park
- (xi) Alternative sites not looked at
- (xii) Quiet and green area would be lost

A number of people spoke in favour of the proposals and raised the following points:

- (i) Minimal use during the day of the site
- (ii) Will improve the range of facilities offered by the park
- (iii) Site will be well used and run
- (iv) Meets a number of Oxford City Council Strategies
- (v) Not a large Skate Park, but a medium sized one
- (vi) No complaints from residents near the Meadow Lane facility
- (vii) No loss of facilities in the Park
- (viii) Will look visually impressive
- (ix) Will reduce anti-social behaviour
- (x) Will be more use of the Skate Park
- (xi) Would be something for local youths to use
- (xii) 18 years have passed since it was first suggested that there should be a Skate Park in Oxford

Inspector Brown said that the any views of the Police on the issue were restricted to crime and anti-social behaviour in the area and that currently there were no problems in Cowley Marsh Park or at the Meadow Lane facility.

County Councillor Gatehouse said what was really needed was a building that could be converted to house a Skate Park and that all options and alternatives had to be investigated.

Councillor Malik said that he had read the note from Environmental Health and spoken to local residents to canvass their opinions and he was not happy that the noise report had not been given to Environmental Health to comment on earlier than two days before the meeting. He said that consultation has to be carried out properly and that people's hopes on either side of the issue should not be raised. His job was to represent the residents of Cowley Marsh Ward and he could not ignore their concerns and would not support something that they did not want.

Councillor Mirza said that there was a need for facilities for young people, but you had to taken into account the concerns of local residents who would have to live with the consequence of a poor decision and he felt that the Cowley Marsh Park was the wrong location for a Skate Park.

Councillor Timbs said that Councillors had been discussing the issues for a long while and believed that the Cowley Marsh Park was not right, but that more time was required for other options and alternative sites to be investigated.

The Committee agreed:

- (a) To support the principle of a Skate Park being provided within Oxford;
- (b) To not approve the construction of the proposed Skate Park, detailed in the report, in the Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground or the allocation of S106 funding;
- (c) To pass the following comments to the Executive Board:
 - (1) That the Executive Board consider how the provision of a Skate Park, as detailed in the Green Spaces Strategy could be addressed in a more strategic way;
 - (2) That the Cowley Area Committee suggests that the Executive Board looked at a wider range of possible locations and not just in green spaces or where S106 money was available/allocated, which may involve working closely in partnership with other agencies/businesses to find a suitable and accessible site.

East Area Parliament – 21 March 2007

181. OPEN SESSION

Meadow Lane Skate Park

Jack Richens (Chair of the Oxford Wheels Project) explained that the Cowley Area Committee had turned down proposals for a new skate park in Cowley Marsh. The reasons given were mainly about noise, despite advice from an independent expert that it would not be a problem. He suspected that there was also some underlying concern about the increase in the number of youths a skate park would bring to the area. He asked for the Area Parliament's support in making others aware of the fact the existing skate park was well run and caused no nuisance to people living nearby.

It was agreed that the Cowley Area Committee, Environment Scrutiny Committee and Executive Board be advised of the East Area Parliament's support for finding a new location for the skate park, and to recommend the Executive Board that this should be a priority, pointing out that: -

- there had been no complaints about noise at the existing site at Meadow Lane despite wooden ramps being used there;
- the code of conduct agreed had been effective;
- it was well managed;

- skateboarding was not a fad, and the Meadow Lane skate park had been operating successfully for many years.

The Healthier Environment Portfolio Holder (Councillor Armitage) has advised that he will respond to these recommendations at the meeting.