

Report of Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods

Report to Executive Board

Date: 13th March 2013

**Subject: Deputation To Council – Leeds Children's Mayor Regarding
The Winning Manifesto – ‘Leeds Offers Fun, Free, Fitness
For The Family’**



Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. This report considers the idea to have outdoor health and fitness equipment in parks and outlines how people are consulted about new proposals with some examples of where there are similar schemes already in place across the city.
2. The deputation speech makes particular reference to the following:
 - A zone with free to use outdoor activity equipment located in parks and green spaces for children and their families to enjoy the health benefits of exercise in the outdoors, as part of the aspiration for Leeds to become a child friendly city
 - Sponsorship encouraged as a means to sustain each zone
 - Zones to be used as part of organised activities in the park
3. The report highlights the scheme design for a play area at Queen's Park, Pudsey which has recently been approved. The scheme incorporates outdoor fitness equipment informed by a consultation exercise devised with the Pudsey ward members, to engage with local residents and schools to determine what improvements should take place in the park.
4. Other examples of where there are already similar schemes being implemented across the city are highlighted.

5. The council is keen to encourage organisations who wish to use parks for fitness activity, and 13 parks are used for military fitness type activities, with 3 parks used for regular, organised running. As part of the Olympic legacy 19 community parks will have athletics tracks marked out for free community use.
6. Initiatives are being introduced to promote sponsorship of either whole park sites or individual features in parks such as playgrounds or outdoor fitness equipment, to ensure their sustainable use and expansion across the city. A partnership project is also being developed, to create better health referral routes for sport and physical activity.
7. The deputation has focussed attention and ignited further interest on an emerging trend for outdoor fitness equipment in parks and green spaces. Children and young people make a valuable contribution through ideas and feedback when consulted, and as a result of this deputation, the service will include reference to fitness when carrying out consultation on relevant schemes. In addition, the service will promote the inclusion of outdoor fitness equipment as an important means to encourage people to enjoy the outdoor environment and get fit at the same time.

Recommendations

8. That Executive Board note the contents of the report in response to the deputation, and approve the following actions:
 - To include reference to health and fitness when carrying out consultation on relevant schemes.
 - To promote the inclusion of outdoor fitness equipment as an important means to encourage people to enjoy the outdoor environment and get fit at the same time.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report considers the matters arising from the deputation to Council by the winning manifesto 'Leeds offers fun, free, fitness for the family'. As part of the vision for Leeds to become a child friendly city, it considers the idea to have outdoor fitness equipment in parks and outlines how people, including children and young people are consulted about new proposals, with some examples of where there are already similar schemes being implemented across the city.

2 Background information

- 2.1 Leeds has around 4,000 hectares of parks and green spaces including 7 major parks, 62 community parks and 95 recreation grounds in addition to around 155 hectares of local green space. The deputation speech highlights the fact that Leeds already has children's play areas, and indeed there are 151 playgrounds, 24 skate parks and 32 multi-use games areas located in these parks and green spaces throughout the city.
- 2.2 More recently, there has been interest in developing equipment for all the family, in particular for health and fitness. There are examples of 'trim trails' with single pieces of equipment placed next to paths in parks at regular intervals enabling people to do various exercises in addition to the health benefits of walking or running. Some of the older trim trails in place are at Horsforth Hall Park, and Potternewton Park, but new trim trails continue to be developed. In the last few years, there are examples where outdoor fitness equipment has been installed in parks suitable for people of all ages.
- 2.3 Through child friendly Leeds, children and young people came up with 12 wishes to make Leeds a child friendly city. One of the wishes is that there are places and spaces to play and things to do, in all areas and open to all.

3 Main issues

- 3.4 The deputation speech makes particular reference to the following:
- A zone with free to use outdoor activity equipment located in parks and green spaces for children and their families to enjoy the health benefits of exercise in the outdoors
 - Sponsorship encouraged as a means to sustain each zone
 - Zones to be used as part of organised activities in the park
- 3.5 **A zone with free to use outdoor activity equipment located in parks and green spaces for children and their families to enjoy the health benefits of exercise in the outdoors**
- 3.5.1 In order to address the idea above, an illustrated example is provided on how local consultation plays an important part in deciding priorities for local parks and how these inform the final scheme design. There are also other examples of

where outdoor fitness equipment has been recently installed in parks and green spaces.

- 3.5.2 A play area at Queen's Park, Pudsey has recently been approved that incorporates outdoor fitness equipment. However, as stated above, before deciding whether to install such equipment a consultation exercise was devised with the Pudsey ward members to engage with local residents and schools to determine what improvements should take place in the park.
- 3.5.3 Over 200 letters were distributed through letter boxes of nearby properties asking for comments on the proposals. This exercise generated feedback which was taken into consideration when creating the final project plan. In addition, the proposals were placed in Pudsey Sports Centre and Pudsey Library for final comment. Colleagues in Children's Services were consulted and assisted on evaluating consultation feedback and creating a project design brief. The scheme was also included on Talking Point Leeds, a facility for community engagement on the Council website.
- 3.5.4 A consultation event was also held at the local primary school to discuss ideas and to encourage people to fill in a questionnaire stating their preferences. In total 159 children and young people completed the questionnaire along with 12 adults. The questionnaire asked people what type of play experience people would like to see with examples and opportunity to tick a box next to each one, as illustrated below:



☐ Play on slides

☐ Build dens



☐ Climb trees

☐ Get fit



- 3.5.5 The full list of options to select is as follows.

- Meeting up
- Dance / Sound Play
- Climb
- Play on Slides
- Climb Trees
- Make up own games
- Play with sand
- Play with water
- Natural Play
- Skate
- Play on Swings
- Run
- Roll down slopes
- Build dens
- Listen to / make music
- Get fit

From the example at Queen's Park, Pudsey, the following in order of priority were identified as the most popular choice:

- Slides
- Climbing
- Get fit
- Swings
- Den building
- Climbing trees
- Spaces to run
- Water
- Slopes for rolling and running up and down.

3.5.6 A design brief was then put together based on these priorities and in line with available funding. As the deputation highlights, funding is a very important aspect of developing any scheme. There are many different sources of funding available, but most schemes are funded through section 106 developer contributions as part of the planning process, when for example new houses are built. In the example of Queen's Park, Pudsey, £172,000 funding was identified. Clearly, the more funding available the more priorities can be included in the final scheme.

3.5.7 In this scheme, 'get fit' was identified as the third highest priority and therefore was included in the final design drawing as illustrated below. The deputation correctly identified the emerging importance of fitness and emerging trend for such equipment in parks. Construction on this scheme is due to commence during 2013.

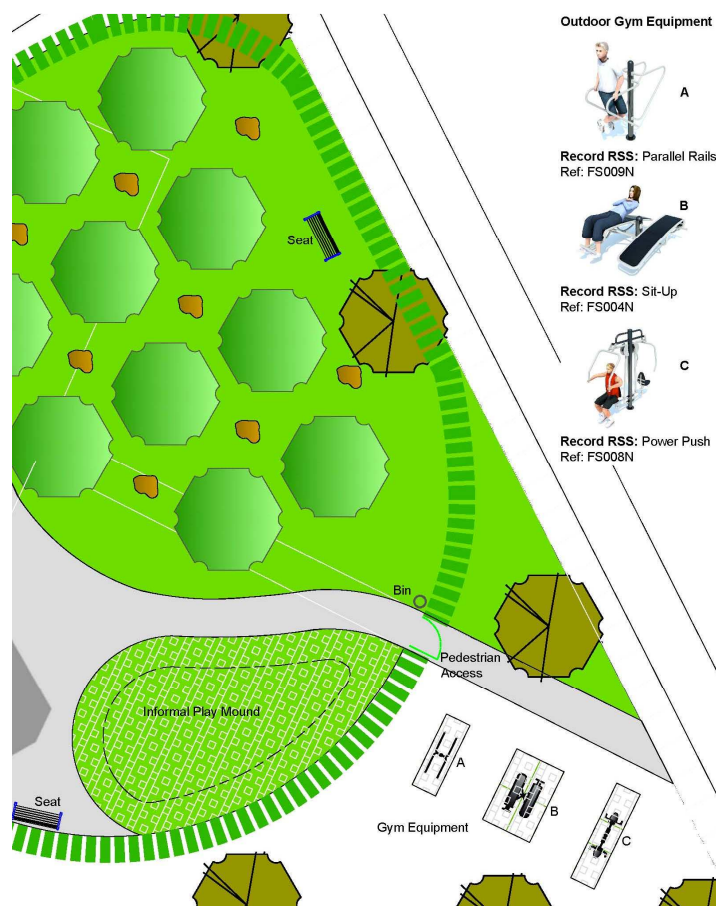


Figure 1: Queen's Park, Pudsey

3.5.8 There are other examples of where outdoor fitness equipment has already been installed that is suitable to use for all ages, including children. The equipment is chosen to give an all round workout involving the following:

- Cardio – aerobically developing both heart and lungs
- Strength and tone – resistance training to improve both strength and posture
- Co-ordination – helping to improve the body's agility
- Flexibility – reducing the threat of injury through stretching

3.5.9 Armley Moor included such equipment as part of a wider landscaping scheme which included improvements to paths, boundaries, trees, benches, bins and signage. This is more akin to the fitness 'zone' referred to in the deputation, with a number of items of equipment in fairly close proximity. Photographs of the equipment are shown below:



Figure 2: Armley Moor

3.5.10 Rothwell Country Park has had trim trail equipment installed including 'pull-up' bars and a ski walker, funded via section 106. The adjacent photograph illustrates the 'pull-up' bars:



- 3.5.11 Bramley Falls Wood Park had outdoor fitness equipment installed in 2010 as part of the West Leeds Country Park initiative. It has a wide range of equipment spread throughout the park enabling users, young and old, to have fun as well as undertake differing fitness activity as part of a longer walk or run, as illustrated below.



Figure 3: Bramley Falls Wood Park

- 3.5.12 The photograph below shows outdoor fitness equipment installed at Sandford Road, Kirkstall as part of a wider scheme that also included a children's playground and other improvements to the site.



Figure 4: Sandford Road, Kirkstall

- 3.5.13 Four pieces of outdoor fitness equipment of a similar nature has also been installed at Scatterd Park. At Cross Flatts Park, trim trail and outdoor fitness equipment has been installed which has been used in particular by Bangladeshi women who expressed a preference for this type of provision rather than attending a gym to undertake physical activity. Consultation activity is also taking

place currently at Norma Hutchinson Park with a view to possibly developing proposals for outdoor fitness equipment.

- 3.5.14 In general, outdoor gym equipment is designed to be easy to use and for that reason people can generally use it independently. Some equipment is designed in tandem so that families can enjoy some interaction whilst undertaking fitness activity.

3.6 Sponsorship encouraged as a means to sustain each zone

- 3.6.1 There is already an active roundabout sponsorship programme that enables local businesses to support enhancements to these features, as well as help support around 60 'in bloom' groups throughout the city. These partnership arrangements are being extended and discussions are taking place with local businesses to sponsor community parks. This could include acknowledging the local business as part of entrance signs to the park, playground sponsorship, or potentially other features such as outdoor fitness equipment or flower beds, as illustrated below.



Figure 5: Example of Play Area Sponsorship

- 3.6.2 The intention is to work with local 'friends' groups to ring fence any income so that this could be spent on improvement projects and the long term sustainability of the park.

3.7 Zones to be used as part of organised activities in the park

- 3.7.1 The deputation makes reference to other activities that can be organised in parks and open spaces that does not require specific equipment. In order to celebrate the London 2012 Olympic Games, running tracks of various lengths were marked out in 19 community parks across the city to offer people of all ages the chance to be active. The tracks were installed at Potternewton Park, Banstead Park in Harehills, Scott Hall Playing Fields, Springhead Park in Rothwell, Wetherby Ings, Manston Park in Cross Gates, East End Park, Harehills Park, Garforth Recreation Ground, Middleton Leisure Centre, Cross Flatts Park in Beeston, Holbeck Moor, Hunslet Lake, Scatcherd Park in Morley, Pudsey Park, Calverley Park, Horsforth Park, Armley Park and Wharfemeadows in Otley. It is planned to mark tracks out in a similar way this coming summer as part of the Olympic legacy.



Figure 6: The running track at Roundhay Park

- 3.7.2 The council is also keen to encourage organisations who wish to use parks for fitness activity.



Figure 7: Example of military fitness activities

3.7.3 There are currently 13 parks used for military fitness type activities at the following:

- Alwoodley Park
- Armley Park
- Chapel Allerton Park
- East End Park
- Golden Acre Park
- Horsforth Hall Park
- Kirkstall Abbey Estate
- Meanwood Park
- Middleton Park
- Potternewton Park
- Roundhay Park
- Springhead Park
- Temple Newsam Estate

3.7.4 There are also organised 5km park runs that take place every week at Woodhouse Moor, Roundhay Park and more recently at Temple Newsam. This is organised by 'parkrun' who also provide 2km timed runs for children. In addition, many running, gyms and athletic clubs organise fitness events in parks throughout Leeds each year.



Figure 8: Organised children's run

3.7.5 Council services including Public Health, Sport and Active Recreation and Parks and Countryside are working together to develop a project, to create better health referral routes for sport and physical activity. It is hoped that this can be achieved through facilitating, enabling and providing a range of opportunities to take part in sport and physical activity, providing the necessary interventions to increase the level of participation and performance, together with partnership working to deliver programmes and projects.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 As highlighted in the report, consultation with residents, schools and local ward members is a key aspect in determining priorities and translating these into a design brief in line with available funding, which in turn determines the final scheme outcome. All consultation activity is also included on Talking Point Leeds, a facility for community engagement on the Council website.
- 4.1.2 The deputation has highlighted an excellent idea and as a result the service will include reference to fitness when carrying out consultation on relevant schemes. In addition, the service will promote the inclusion of outdoor fitness equipment as an important means to encourage people to enjoy the outdoor environment and get fit at the same time.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2.1 An equality and diversity, cohesion and integration screening is carried out on a scheme by scheme basis. From the example given at Queen's Park, Pudsey, consideration was given in the screening document to ensure a wide representation from the local community in planned consultation. In terms of the overall scheme design, care was taken to consider the impact of any proposals on the park as a whole to ensure that there is a sense of 'something for everyone', in line with the national Green Flag Award criteria. Care was also taken with regard to path design to ensure they cater for two pushchairs or wheelchair access. Increased seating is provided in the scheme to provide opportunities for rest and social interaction. Most equipment provided within the scheme is inclusive, however specific types of play equipment have been included tailored to people with severe physical impairment.

4.3 Council policies and City Priorities

- 4.3.1 The content of this report relates to the following priorities from the City Priority Plan:
- Best city for health and wellbeing, in particular *to make sure that people who are the poorest improve their health the fastest.*
 - Best city for children, in particular *ensuring Leeds becomes a child friendly city, where children are active citizens who feel they have voice and influence. It supports the notion that we want children to choose healthy lifestyles and have fun growing up.*
 - Best city for business, in particular *get more people involved in the city's cultural opportunities and improve the environment through reduced carbon emissions.*
 - Best city for communities, in particular *increase a sense of belonging that builds cohesive and harmonious communities.*
- 4.3.2 It also supports the priority in the Council Business Plan *to improve the quality of Leeds' parks.*

4.4 Resources and value for money

- 4.4.1 This report makes reference to sources of funding in developing capital improvement schemes in parks. It also considers potential opportunities for sponsorship in partnership with local businesses and community groups.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 4.5.1 This report is in response to a deputation to full Council as requested. There are no issues with access to information. The report is subject to call in.

4.6 Risk Management

- 4.6.1 There are no significant risks associated with this report.

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 The deputation has focussed attention and ignited further interest on an emerging trend for outdoor fitness equipment in parks and green spaces. Children and young people make a valuable contribution through ideas and feedback when consulted, and it is anticipated that as a result there will be many more examples of people gaining the health benefits of using outdoor fitness equipment in the future.
- 5.2 As a result of this deputation, the service will include reference to fitness when carrying out consultation on relevant schemes. In addition, the service will promote the inclusion of outdoor fitness equipment as an important means to encourage people to enjoy the outdoor environment and get fit at the same time.
- 5.3 The deputation has also highlighted ideas, which from the schemes already highlighted, demonstrate that communities are developing an interest and prioritising proposals to ensure that parks and green spaces provide the following:
- A zone with free to use outdoor activity equipment located in parks and green spaces for children and their families to enjoy the health benefits of exercise in the outdoors
 - Zones to be used as part of organised activities in the park
- 5.4 In addition, initiatives are being introduced to promote sponsorship of either whole park sites or individual features in parks such as playgrounds or outdoor fitness equipment, to ensure their sustainable use and expansion across the city.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 That Executive Board note the contents of the report in response to the deputation.
- To include reference to health and fitness when carrying out consultation on relevant schemes.

- To promote the inclusion of outdoor fitness equipment as an important means to encourage people to enjoy the outdoor environment and get fit at the same time.

7 Background documents¹

7.1 None.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.