



Report of the Chief Recreation Officer

Outer South Area Committee

Date: 25th September 2006

Subject: Middleton Park Bonfire and Firework Display

Electoral Wards Affected:
All Wards in Committee Area.

Specific Implications For:

Ethnic minorities
Women
Disabled people

Council
Function

Delegated Executive
Function Available
for Call In

Delegated Executive
Function not available
for Call In. Details set
out in the report

Executive Summary

1. Officers from the Learning and Leisure Department were asked to explore a number of sites in the Middleton area where the annual bonfire and fireworks display could be held.
2. Three sites were investigated; an event safety management consultant was engaged to report on the suitability of the three sites.
3. Only one of the sites was considered suitable i.e. Middleton Park. This was conditional upon a number of permanent and temporary infrastructure measures being put in place, and additional staffing being at site during the event.
4. The costs for the additional measures are estimated at £46,750.00 for the permanent features and £25,540.00 for the temporary infrastructure and staffing.
5. The Inner South Area Committee is being asked to fund these additional costs together with the Outer South Area Committee.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

- 1.1 To seek consideration to the funding of a number of permanent and temporary infrastructure measures and additional staffing at Middleton Park in support of the annual bonfire and firework display.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 The bonfire and firework display held at Middleton Park each November was last held in 2004. The event experienced an unacceptable level of anti social behaviour, which raised issues concerning public safety. Owing to this experience and the staffs reluctance to support any further similar events at this venue, no display took place in 2005
- 2.2 The community living in the Middleton area has raised the question about the return of the display event; local ward members have supported this.
- 2.3 Officers from the Learning and Leisure Department were asked to examine alternative potential sites for the display and re-examine the use of Middleton Park.
- 2.4 Three sites were investigated and an event safety management consultant asked to report on the suitability of each site. The consultants report concluded that only the Middleton Park site was suitable, and then only if a number of additional safety measures were implemented.

3.0 Main Issues

- 3.1 The experience at the bonfire and firework display event at Middleton Park in November 2004 after similar experiences in previous years highlighted the safety considerations of both the public attending the event and for the employees staffing the event.
- 3.2 The principal concern was the absence of a separate access route for emergency service vehicles, and their ability to swiftly respond to site in the event of an incident. There is currently only one suitable shared access and egress point at present into Middleton Park. Other concerns were the levels of staffing and stewarding at an event, which potentially attracts circa 12,000 persons.
- 3.3 The alternative sites investigated by the event safety management consultant were The Brooms (close to Newhall Road at Middleton) and the South Leeds Stadium site. Both were deemed unsuitable for the event, particularly the latter with its very close proximity to a major motorway.
- 3.4 The consultant advised in his report that the site traditionally used in Middleton Park was felt to be the best option, provided a number of safety measures were put in place first. Some of these measure involved permanent infrastructure and temporary infrastructure work together with additional staffing during the evening of the event.
- 3.5 The permanent infrastructure work recommended includes;
- Construction of passing places along the main drive (to Middleton Grove) to allow emergency vehicles a two-way access.
 - Improvements and surfacing to main drive where current surfacing ends towards Middleton Grove.

- Improvements to paths and road access near car park area to display arena.
- Regrade banking and surface to make new improved entrance to event arena adjacent to Tennis Court area from access road.
- New security fencing to support improved access points, to prevent use during non-event times.

This work will cost an estimated £46,750.00 to carry out. However it will provide the opportunity to use Middleton Park for other larger public events.

3.6 The temporary infrastructure measures include;

- Additional lighting in and around event arena and along main drive to Middleton Grove.
- Fenced event arena and signage.
- Additional PA, Radio, transport, & other necessary equipment used for build up and dismantle.
- Additional staffing within event arena and along emergency access route to Middleton Grove.

These additional infrastructure measures and staffing will cost an additional estimated £25,540.00. This additional cost will be required on an annual basis if the bonfire and firework displays are to take place in Middleton Park each November.

3.7 The Learning and Leisure Department have available a small budget which has been used to support the bonfire and firework event. However to ensure the safety of the public attracted to any future display event, essentially held in the hours of darkness there is a requirement for the above safety measures to be in place. These will require an additional sum of £72,290.00.

3.8 The display event at Middleton Park is also the major firework display for much of that part of Leeds within the remit of the Outer South Area Committee. As a consequence the committee will also be requested to consider this report.

4.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance

4.1 The bonfire and firework displays supports the development of a harmonious and thriving communities agenda within the Council Plan, by ensuring that the services provided meet the needs of the local community..

5.0 Legal And Resource Implications

5.1 The event safety management measures outlined in the report are in compliance with those contained within the “Green Guide” and “Purple Guide” for event safety management.

5.2 The funding requested, if awarded will ensure the display event proceeds. There will be a requirement to ensure a sum equivalent to circa £25K is available in future years for the display event to proceed.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 Without the additional funding to implement the infrastructure works and support increased staffing, a safely managed bonfire and firework event in Middleton Park cannot take place.

7.0 Recommendations

- 7.1 That consideration is given to funding the £72,290.00 for the additional infrastructure works and staffing, to support the bonfire and firework display event held at Middleton Park.