

Alice Park: Proposed Skateboard Park

Statement from Pam Jones on behalf of residents living around Alice Park

Council Meeting 15th January 2015

I also represent the residents living in the neighbourhood of Alice Park and wish to speak about the proposed siting of a skateboard park in Alice Park. There are a number of major concerns:-

- First a decision has been taken to site a skate park in Alice Park with funding committed without any factual **demonstration of need**. There are no **statistics or market appraisal** to show that skateboarding should receive £400k of funding over other sports or indeed projects. There is already a large skateboard park in Victoria Park set for major refurbishment work. Freedom of Information requests regarding Alice Park show that **basic need has not been established** and that seemingly decisions have been taken to pander to a vocal and persistent minority at the expense of **best practise and due diligence**.
- Secondly there has been a failure to execute **competent project appraisal** for capital expenditure with £100k of funding committed to the project prior to any consultation. This could be construed by some as a **misuse of public money**.
- Thirdly what is being referred to as a **“Consultation Process”** **does not adhere to the key principles issued by the Government** and moreover **is biased and unfair**.
 - Biased in so much as a number of informal discussions between Councillors and the pro skate park group have taken place over many months but none have taken place with local residents of Alice Park
 - The on line survey was also biased and did not ask objective questions but concentrated on establishing which design was better and what elements were desired
 - In terms of Unfairness it is unfair that the residents of Alice Park have not been asked to voice their views at a public meeting for residents only, unlike the residents at Larkhall Rec. perhaps afraid of the same outcome – namely that local residents do not want a skate park in Alice Park.
 - Information has not been forthcoming or transparent but sketchy, tardy, and what at best can only be described as “poorly communicated” to local residents.
 - Moreover how can the Leader of the Council on the one hand take politically motivated decisions dispensing Council Funds and on the other act impartially as sole trustee of the Alice Park Charity. There is a conflict of interest and this position is untenable with political decisions potentially being taken at the expense of the local community

- Lastly there has been **no Impact Assessment** in terms of
 - noise
 - road safety
 - toilet facilities
 - parking
 - vandalism
 - intergenerational conflict
 - residents
 - other park users
 - or indeed deprivation of the only flat play area in Alice Park currently used for traditional group ball games and imaginative play

- Therefore we are asking you to **start consulting with us immediately – start listening** to what we are saying regarding the skate park and **vote no to siting a skate park in Alice Park.** We hope that we have demonstrated today, with our supporters, that we are passionate about this and **are quite prepared to take this further.**