

Report of the Monitoring Officer

Equality, Inclusivity and Diversity at the Council's Parks

1. Purpose of Report

To present the findings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Working Group's review into Equality, Inclusion and Diversity at the Council. This is in accordance with all of the Council's corporate values.

2. Recommendation

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to RECOMMEND to Cabinet that the following recommendations be CONSIDERED and to RESOLVE accordingly.

- 1. That all entrances to parks are audited, to allow wheelchair/mobility access where possible.**
- 2. Where a play park is fenced around, to ensure the access gate for a wheelchair is close to any accessible/inclusive play equipment or to consider the surface for the travel to the equipment.**
- 3. Where possible, that every play park in the Borough has access to a minimum of one piece of accessible/inclusive play equipment.**
- 4. To introduce further sensory play panels to the parks with some possibly away from climbing frames in quiet areas.**
- 5. When replacing play equipment that a double slide be provided instead of a single slide option.**
- 6. Exploring options to provide sensory gardens in parks and, where appropriate, to provide a sensory experience for all users to touch, smell, hear and see. To consider utilising parks already established with garden areas in the first instance.**
- 7. To provide signage across all parks for users to establish areas of rewilding, butterfly and bee planting, sensory and park areas.**
- 8. To consider the toilet options in large multi-use parks that are not near town centre facilities.**
- 9. To consider accessibility/inclusive benches as standard across all parks in the Borough and investigate the triangular benches with back supports as the standard park bench.**

10. The results from the Parks Survey are made available to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

3. Detail

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee Working Group reviewed this topic with the purpose of the following outcomes:

- To develop recommendations to support improvements.
- To improve the overall Equality, Diversity and Inclusion within the Council including service users, Members and employees.

The report is circulated with this agenda, which includes recommendations.

4. Key Decision

This report is a key decision as defined under Regulation 8 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 as it will be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more Wards or electoral divisions in the Council's area.

5. Financial Implications

The comments from the Head of Finance Services were as follows:

Whilst there are no additional financial implications to consider at this stage, the proposed recommendations would include additional cost implications, both revenue and capital, which may not be contained within existing budgets. Any significant budget implications in the future, over and above virement limits, would require approval by Cabinet.

6. Legal Implications

The comments from the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal Services were as follows:

The Public Sector Equality Duty came in to force in April 2011, s.149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires Councils when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to achieve the objectives set out under s149 of the Equality Act 2010.

This is to:

- a. eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- b. advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- c. foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The proposed recommendations as set out in the report supports compliance with the above legal obligation.

7. Human Resources Implications

Not applicable.

8. Union Comments

Not applicable.

9. Climate Change Implications

The climate change implications are contained within the report.

10. Data Protection Compliance Implications

This report does not contain any OFFICIAL(SENSITIVE) information and there are no Data Protection issues in relation to this report.

11. Equality Impact Assessment

Not applicable.

12. Background Papers

Nil.