



**Report to St Matthews/Birchills/Leamore
Local Neighbourhood Partnership**

24/10/2005

**Dual use of Council car parks to provide additional play areas for residents of
the Butts/ Saw Mill area**

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update the Local Neighbourhood Partnership on practical implications of a request from Mr Andrew Moul, for Council secure car parks to be used by the community as a play area outside car park opening hours.

Report detail

Hatherton Road car park is an additional security car park located within the St Matthews / Birchills / Leamore LNP area. Its operating hours are 06:30 – 19:30 Monday to Friday. The primary purpose of the car park is to provide additional security long stay car parking facilities for staff and the general public. The car park is permanently manned by a parking warden during its opening hours, undertaking both security and general housekeeping duties.

Over recent years the car park has suffered from a number of instances of vandalism, ranging from minor graffiti, smashing of glass bottles, damage to the warden's accommodation and toilet facilities. To counter this, security fencing was erected around the perimeter allowing the car park to be securely enclosed when not in use. The car park is perceived by its users as providing a quality service that guarantees both the security of the vehicle and a dedicated parking space.

The use of the car park as a play area would require a significant number of practical issues to be overcome:

- Planning approval
- User security
- Lighting levels
- Insurance requirements
- Surface suitability(government guidelines)
- Car park facilities security
- Opening and closing of car park
- Implications of loss of parking provision

In addition to the practical issues, the suggested use will detract from the important work being undertaken by Youth Services within the area. A detached team of youth workers will be working in the Birchills area and across the district. They will determine the needs of the young people through consultation and building relationships. To support these important activities The Peoples Place located in Proffitt Street will become a youth resource centre for the district. It will be run by full time youth worker Cheryl McPherson, and a team of part-time youth workers and volunteers. The development of outdoor facilities has already started with the provision of marked cricket and football pitches at Rue Meadow.

The provision of a secure environment for youth recreation and development must be welcome, however to use a car park for this purpose is impractical. More importantly it will seriously detract from the important work being developed and undertaken by youth services in the area.

For the reasons outlined above, further development of the proposal is not recommended or supported by the Car parking and Youth Service.

Resource and Legal Considerations

Dual use of the car park will be subject to planning regulations and require planning approval for change of use.

Use of the car park as an outdoor play area will require appropriate insurance cover.

Use of the car park as an outdoor play area will require additional resources for opening and securing the facility.

Citizen Impact

The provision of additional outdoor play area may give a positive benefit for younger residents, but have an adverse effect upon the quality of life of other residents living nearby due to increased noise and antisocial behaviour.

Environment Impact

Use of the car park as a play area is unlikely to have any visual impact upon the surrounding area, however it could have an adverse effect upon noise and litter levels.

Performance Management and Risk Management Issues

Dual use of the car park as a play area will present the opportunity for increased vandalism of the car parking facilities. This could lead to a loss of parking provision and income for the authority.

Dual use of the car park as a play area will present an unacceptable risk as its surface is unsuitable for outdoor recreation facilities.

Equality Implications

None directly relating to this report.

Consultation

A detailed consultation will be undertaken by youth services to ensure the appropriate development of youth provision for St Matthews, Birchills and Leamore.

Links to Vision 2008

The dual use of the car park as a playing area could have an adverse effect upon the Council's vision priority of ensuring a clean and green borough.

The dual use of the car park as a playing area could have a positive impact upon the Council's vision priority of listening to what local people want.

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