



Overview & Scrutiny Board

24 May 2016

REPORT

Subject Heading:

Requisition of Executive Decision 16/48
Preventing damage and injury in parks
and open spaces

CMT Lead:

Andrew Blake Herbert – Group Director of
Communities and Resources

Report Author and contact details:

Richard Cursons - Committee Officer
richard.cursons@havering.gov.uk

Policy context:

Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2013-15

Financial summary:

There are no significant, immediate
additional costs arising from the Cabinet
report.

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

Havering will be clean and its environment will be cared for	[X]
People will be safe, in their homes and in the community	[X]
Residents will be proud to live in Havering	[X]

SUMMARY

In accordance with paragraph 17 of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee Rules, a requisition signed by two Members representing more than one Group (Councillors Ray Morgon & Keith Darvill) has been received calling in an Executive Decision of 5 May 2016.

The text of the original decision, the grounds for the requisition and a response received from the Head of Cultural and Leisure Services are shown below.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board considers the requisition of the Executive Decision and determines whether to uphold it.

REPORT DETAIL

An Executive Decision dated 5 May made the following decision:

The decision is to allow the Parks Protection team officers, once attested, to continue to undertake operations immediately outside the boundaries of parks and open spaces, to lawfully prevent access to those spaces by people who it is believed will cause damage to the park, break Parks Bye Laws and /or cause harm to themselves or other users of the park and open spaces.

Reasons for the requisition:

A requisition was received on 10 May 2016, signed by Councillors Morgon and Darvill. The grounds of the requisition were as follows:

1. Why are additional powers sought for outside parks and in open spaces so soon after the previous Cabinet decision to attest Parks Protection Officers.
2. There is a lack of definition to determine what “immediately outside” a park means and how would this apply to an open space.
3. There is no information on how many arrests have been carried out by Parks Protection Officers since they have gained the power to arrest.
4. There is no information on what incursions or inappropriate access Parks Protection Officers intend to stop with the new powers, will this include stopping travellers gaining access to council land and how will officers determine the type of use a person(s) may intend to make of a park or open space.

5. There is no information on the likely cost savings.
6. There is no data or evidence to support the need for additional powers outside parks and in open spaces.
7. There is no information as to what powers (and under what legislation) will Parks Protection Officers have to prevent a person(s) having access to a park or open space.
8. Given the intended powers there is no information on what assessment of the additional risk and potential insurance claims has been made.
9. There is no information on what partnership arrangements are now in place with the police.
10. Since the attestation of Parks Protection Officers, there is no information on how many persons have been arrested, summoned to court and for what offence.
11. Given the extra responsibilities given to Parks Protection Officers and the potential risks involved, there is no information on how this might affect the service as a result of the council wide review of Terms and Conditions of employment.
12. There is no information on whether Parks Protection Officers have to power to use their batons to stop entry onto council land.
13. Since the Attestation of Parks Protection Officers have any complaints been made against officers.
14. Since the Attestation of Parks Protection Officers have any officers sustained any injuries.
15. Given the limited number of Parks Protection Officers, there is no information on what resources will be in place to protect outside the parks as well as within, particularly when a park has several access points.

Cllr Ray Morgon

Cllr Keith Darvill

Appendix – Executive Decision 16/48