

19. **Parks and Open Spaces - Income Policy**

Steve Bird, Assistant Director Communities and Street Scene:

- a. presented a policy document that set out a framework for permitting charges to be levied, in some instances, for matters relating to parks and open spaces, so as to generate income in support of these sites.
- b. explained that parks and open spaces had a vital part to play in supporting many of the Council's future ambitions for the City and its residents.
- c. advised that funding was required and that in the current economic climate, it was unlikely to be forthcoming for some years.
- d. gave an overview of the proposed policy and explained that it was careful to set clear policy where possible, but where it was not possible, it established a suitable decision-making route with accountability.
- e. referred to the proposed Charging Policy attached as Appendix 1 of the report and advised that it is intended to: generate income in support of parks and open spaces, enthuse stakeholders to generate income for parks initiatives, and that it was not intended to deter use of the spaces.
- f. invited committee's questions and comments:

**Question:** Could reassurance be given that the policy would not deter people from using parks and outdoors spaces for activities such as wedding photographs?

**Response:** People using parks for this purpose already made voluntary donations to the parks. We did not want to deter people from using the parks, so opportunities for waivers had been built into the policy.

**Question:** What was the threshold for using the space for an event and how would the Council ensure that people were paying the charge?

**Response:** We would charge for formal use of the parks and open spaces however, we would not levy a direct charge for impromptu, casual, and informal use. We were aware of businesses using the sites and would approach them to ask them to pay a fair and reasonable charge.

**Question:** Was there a more detailed list of activities that would be charged for?

**Response:** A short life working group would be established to look at ways the policy would be used. For example, we would not seek a charge for community groups using the parks and open spaces if their aims aligned with the Council's,, but if someone was running a business (e.g. a bootcamp) then it would be fair and reasonable to ask them to pay.

**Question:** Would the money generated be used on the parks and open spaces?

**Response:** Yes. It was proposed that all income was ringfenced. If significant

funds were generated it would be brought to Councillors to decide how the money would be used.

Steve Bird, Assistant Director Communities and Street Scene reiterated that it was not the intention to charge directly for informal use of the parks and open spaces or to deter people from using the spaces. However, if people were generating an income from the sites, then it was fair and reasonable to charge for their use.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.