

A Question from Cllr Ifty Choudary to Cllr Church

“Northamptonshire Police believe that a skateboard park in Becketts Park would be a very useful youth facility as currently skate boarding in Abington Street causes annoyance to traders, shoppers and visitors to the town. The Police believe it would help solve anti-behaviour in the town centre. Other towns such as Milton Keynes and Camden in London have built skate parks that have proved popular with all age groups and alleviated issues of people skating in town centres and other inappropriate areas. These parks have been designed as street skating parks that replicate the sort of street skating, that Abington Street provides.

As a ward councillor it is my view that Becketts park should have a skate board park. Can the portfolio holder and the Lib Dem administration give the police their unequivocal backing for a skateboard facility in Becketts Park?”

Answer:

The consultation on the proposed master plan for Becketts Park has shown considerable support for the principle of a skateboard provision sited on the park. This would not just be a small facility, but a major attraction to provide a very special resource for skateboarders, rollerbladers, BMX and trail bikers. The proposed master plan will be presented to cabinet in October.

The siting and the proposed funding of a skateboard park need very careful consideration before a firm commitment can be made. The proposal needs to be considered alongside other proposed activities in the park, including a marina, and also residential and commercial development around the park. A skateboard park on this scale will need considerable financial support, not just to build, but to operate and maintain, funds that the Borough council does not have.

The Council’s administration would wish to see a major facility such as this in Northampton. It would provide something of real value to local young people, as well as drawing more people into our town. We need to be certain that Becketts Park is the right place for it, so we may be asking for more work to identify other potential sites while supporting the concept of such a facility in Becketts Park.

**Councillor R Church
Portfolio Holder – Regeneration**

B Question from Cllr Tess Scott to Cllr Tony Woods

Following my question at the last council meeting the Leader of Council said further investigations would be carried out on whether planning permission should have been applied for before placing any artwork on the racecourse. Given that it was seven weeks ago could the Leader now tell us whether or not planning permission was needed?

Answer:

As there was some uncertainty about the Ownership of the Artwork, Officers sought clarity from the Friends of Northampton Racecourse on this issue. FONR have, by letter, formally gifted the Artwork to Northampton Borough Council. This means that the artwork, being owned by NBC can be regarded as permitted development. Therefore, there will not be a need for a retrospective planning permission application and any issue about past planning permission is now academic.

**Cllr T Woods
Leader of the Council**