

London Borough of Bexley

News Release

For Immediate Release

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YEAR ROUND PLAY FOR BELVEDERE SITE

Next week's Cabinet meeting (22 February) will see Members discuss the future of the Belvedere Splash Park. Cabinet Members are set to consider recommendations that the site could become home to a new play park that will be open throughout the year for young children, including children and young people with disabilities.

The final decision follows extensive investigations and an expert technical study that made it clear that the level of capital investment required, alongside on-going revenue costs, were too high for taxpayers to bear.

At a Cabinet Meeting last summer, community and commercial organisations were invited to put forward businesses cases for taking over the park. The cases had to meet a number of criteria to ensure that the park could become a sustainable business that would no longer require funding from Bexley Council tax payers. Unfortunately, the expressions of interest received did not meet these criteria.

Cllr Peter Craske, Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Environment and Leisure said; "While we have been unable to keep the facility going in its present form, I have always stated that I am committed to creating a new park on this site. We want this new park to be something that looks to the future, with facilities complementing what is already offered locally, and a park which families can use all year round.

I am particularly excited about the opportunity to provide new facilities for people with disabilities so we can make this park really innovative and really inclusive. We start with a blank sheet of paper, and I invite anyone who cares about the future of this site to grab this opportunity with both hands and work together with us so we can create a park of which everyone can be proud - and which everyone can look back on in years to come and say "we created that."

If the recommendations are approved, the next stage will be consultation with local people and park users, prior to any new scheme being tendered. If given the go-ahead, the park could be open for use from Summer 2017.

The independent report found that the Council would have to spend more than £300,000 to make the old splash park usable again – plus an extra annual cost to keep it running.

ENDS

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