

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY - 3 JUNE 2008**

**QUESTION FROM MEMBER OF PUBLIC  
UNDER STANDING ORDER NO.19**

Question from Ms Laura Horner re : Kings Heath

Do the Members of the Community Scrutiny Committee agree with the Digby Residents Association that:-

- all the children of Kings Heath have a right to play in a safe environment;
- the priorities of officers in arranging for a rock sculpture to be installed in an open space but not order the park equipment are at odds with the wishes of the Council Members to construct the park play equipment as soon as possible (Development Control Committee September 2007);
- the delays on the part of the Council since December 2007 regarding the construction of the park were unnecessary and could have been avoided;
- the City Council should now take steps in consultation with the Residents Association to mitigate against the lack of promised play facilities for this Summer (for the avoidance of doubt this promise is minuted at a public meeting in October 2007) and to now give the highest priority to the ordering of the park equipment and arranging for its early installation ?

Digby Residents Association

*Answer*

*The entire aim of the work carried out by our Leisure team in the area of play is to provide for all children who live in the city safe but challenging opportunities for play within an appropriate distance from their homes.*

*With respect to the new park at Kings Heath, what the Residents Association refers to as a sculpture is in fact a large rock intended to be used for play: it is the first of three pieces of equipment which the officers have specifically brought forward because they knew it was going to be impossible to realize the plans for main play area before the summer holidays started. There is already on site a fully complete multi-use games area. A set of goalposts for use on the grassed area has been arranged.*

*It is not a question of prioritizing anything before "ordering" equipment – as the Association is aware the plans for Kings Heath involve a more imaginative approach to play, and the scheme has to be properly designed and planned, precisely because it does not consist of equipment bought off the shelf.*

*No promise was made at the residents' meeting, although officers did say that they would do their best to get the new facility finished. At the moment the Council is working on an unprecedented number of major new play facilities, while the same team is occupied on other, equally important and more complex issues. We regret very much the slippage of the timetable, and will continue to do all we can to get all the facilities ready, including as mentioned above bringing in three pieces of equipment and the goalposts before the holidays.*

