

EXTRACT FROM COMMUNITY COMMITTEE - 21 JUNE 2007

C6 GREENWAYS PLAY AREA

The Committee was asked to agree to the play area in Greenways, Saffron Walden being transferred to Saffron Walden Town Council. Major work was needed to refurbish the area and this Council did not have the expertise and resources in-house to manage play areas. It was proposed that the area be transferred to the Town Council along with a contribution of £20,000 towards the refurbishment with the area being absorbed into their existing inspection and maintenance arrangements. The Town Council had recently agreed to this request provided that the £20,000 be transferred and officers work with the Town Council to raise the additional £30,000 that would be required to refurbish the play area.

Officers had suggested that a survey of local residents be carried out to identify if the play area was required in this location. However, Members felt that any such survey would be inconclusive as there would be residents both in favour and against a play area. It was agreed that the play area should remain in this location and the officers should consult on the type of equipment to be provided.

There was some concern about the capital contribution but it was noted that there was no revenue provision for this facility in the Council's budget and no in-house expertise to manage the facility. The additional £30,000 might be forthcoming from a bid to the Big Lottery in relation to the play strategy that was currently being prepared. Members said that this had been a long running issue and the proposal appeared to be a sensible solution.

RECOMMENDED to the Operations Committee on 28 June and Council on 31 July 2007 that:-

- 1 The area of land containing the children's play area, shown hatched at appendix 1 (and possibly a little more land if it was decided to enlarge the play area to be negotiated by officers) be leased on a peppercorn rent to Saffron Walden Town Council for a period of 99 years if the Town Council also approves of this arrangement.
- 2 A capital contribution of £20,000 be made to Saffron Walden Town Council towards the refurbishment and maintenance of the play area.
- 3 A residents' survey be undertaken to ascertain the preferred type of equipment to be provided on the site.
- 4 Officers work with Saffron Walden Town Council to raise external funding to enable a suitable range of equipment to be installed on the site.

EXTRACT FROM OPERATIONS COMMITTEE - 28 JUNE 2007

OP6

GREENWAYS PLAY AREA

The Committee considered the report of the Leisure and Community Development Manager, referred from the meeting of the Community Committee held on 21 June 2007, recommending that an area of land containing a children's play area at Greenways, Saffron Walden be leased on a peppercorn rent to Saffron Walden Town Council for a period of 99 years if the Town Council also approves of this arrangement and that a capital contribution of £20,000 be made to the Town Council towards the refurbishment and maintenance of the play area if the residents survey demonstrated a requirement for such a play area. The report envisaged officers working with Saffron Walden Town Council to raise external funding to enable a suitable range of equipment to be installed on the site. The report detailed the history of this matter and the improvements required for acceptable maintenance.

It was noted that the land had been transferred to the Council as a result of obligations set out in a Section 106 agreement entered into by the developer of the properties at Greenways and was restricted to use as public open space so carried little freehold value. The Council's obligation to continue to mow the grass, keep it in neat and tidy condition and keep it available as a public recreational area, would endure.

Councillors A J Ketteridge and K L Eden declared personal and prejudicial interests in this item insofar as they were members of the Saffron Walden Town Council. Councillor A J Ketteridge made a statement prior to leaving the Committee Room, that he understood that at the time of the Section 106 agreement the £20,000 referred to had been set aside for the purposes outlined in the report. Councillors Ketteridge and Eden then left the Committee Chamber. Councillor H S Rolfe pointed out that the play area was in his ward, but that he was not on the Saffron Walden Town Council.

The Leisure and Community Development Manager explained that the Town Council was better resourced with staff to maintain play areas and that the necessary refurbishment, resurfacing and replacement of equipment would cost all of the sum allocated and more.

In answer to questions from a Member, she added that the play area was the only one in the ownership of the district and that all health and safety responsibilities would transfer with the transaction, but that the responsibility under the Section 106 agreement to mow the grass would remain with the District Council. She added in answer to a question from another councillor that the Town Council had indicated itself willing to undertake responsibility for the play area subject to the payment of the £20,000 and to the District Council's staff working them to raise the necessary funding to refurbish the play area. The Town Council was unwilling to take over the area until these matters were complete.

RECOMMENDED that the Full Council approves the recommendations referred from the Community Committee on 21 June 2007.