








EXECUTIVE SUMMARY –

Summary of Purpose and Recommendations:

This report sets out proposals for the involvement of the residents of Stillwater Park in the future management and control of the mobile home park

Cost to Council: £400pa **Within existing budget?** Yes

Contribution to Corporate Plan (Minor/Moderate/Major/Neutral):

	+		-		+		-
	Minor			Priorities			
	Moderate			Clean Streets and Public Space		Neutral	
		Neutral		Crime and Disorder		Neutral	
		Neutral		Housing		Neutral	
		Neutral		Managing our Finances		Neutral	

Comments on Impacts on Corporate Objectives and Priorities:

The proposals in this report will meet the corporate priority for the Council to work with the public and partners in that it will enable the residents of Stillwater Park to become fully involved in the management and control of the site and allow them to express their wishes and views directly to the Council and Cabinet whenever decisions regarding the future of the Park are discussed.

STILLWATER PARK – FUTURE MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Stillwater Park is a site comprising some 69 mobile homes in Ringwood that is owned and managed by the Council. During 2003 negotiations to sell the site to the residents failed to reach a conclusion due to changes brought about by the government relating to the rules surrounding social housing grant.
- 1.2 At its meeting on 4th June 2003 Cabinet agreed that the sale of Stillwater Park should not be pursued. However, Members were of the view that, in the future, the residents should have a larger role in managing and controlling the site. This report identifies how this may be achieved.

2 PROPOSALS

- 2.1 The Portfolio Holder for Housing and officers have met with residents and suggested ways in which they can become more involved in the management and control of the Park. A suggested model that could be followed is that which is currently adopted by the Council with the tenants of general needs housing. In this instance the Tenant's Consultative Group (TCG) are consulted formally on all issues that affect Council housing and all reports relating to housing issues always include tenants' comments. In addition two members of the TCG attend Cabinet and are invited to comment on housing issues that are discussed.
- 2.2 Initial feedback from the residents of Stillwater Park indicated that they would welcome a greater level of involvement in the decision making process. As a result of recent discussions a new resident's association has been set up and members voted into office. Currently the association consists of 9 formally elected officers and it is suggested that the Council recognise this group as the formal consultative group for all issues relating to the Park.
- 2.3 As regards the areas for consultation it is suggested that a consultation process be used whenever decisions are taken or proposed in the following areas:-
 - i) Annual budget setting process.
 - ii) Future maintenance and repair programmes.
 - iii) Annual rent setting.
 - iv) Changes to service standards at the Park

- v) Changes to management arrangements or proposals for improvements or additions, to the Park.
- 2.4 The proposed consultation process will include the opportunity for all reports to Cabinet or the Housing, Health and Social Inclusion Panel relating to Stillwater park to include a paragraph for the Resident's Association comments where appropriate.
- 2.5 In order to support and encourage the residents of Stillwater Park to become involved in the process it will be necessary to offer a level of support similar to that offered to TCG members and other tenant groups. This will require the repayment of reasonable expenses to individuals for travel costs, etc (for the attendance at meetings at the Council Offices) and the provision of an annual support grant for the Residents' Association to cover their reasonable expenses. It is suggested that a reasonable figure for the annual support grant would be £360. The annual support grant would be subject to an audit before the following years' grant was paid.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no immediate financial implications with the exception of the need to pay the annual grant and reasonable resident's association member expenses. A budget for the annual grant of £360 is already provided for in the current years' Stillwater Park budgets. It is anticipated that any necessary payment required for residents' out of pocket expenses can be met from within savings achieved elsewhere in the Stillwater Park budgets.
- 3.2 Future expenditure on this site will depend upon any changes to management arrangements, future repairs and maintenance costs and any additional staffing resources that may or not be necessary. Any changes will be the subject of separate reports to Cabinet and the financial implications of those changes will be detailed within those reports.

4 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

5 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

6 RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION COMMENTS

- 6.1 Fundamental changes and additions to the Mobile Homes Act are imminent, therefore, we suggest that paperwork and a review of the Park rules takes place as soon as possible. (Thoughts of how the new changes can be added to a variable amount of existing agreements).
- 6.2 The plan produced for the future expansion of the site was similar to the starting point of three years ago and not one we would recommend.

7 PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S COMMENTS

- 7.1 I am very pleased that we are making rapid progress now in putting together a structure for consultation with the residents on the running of the park. This inclusion on a formal basis of the residents' views should now give them a further sense of security in the way that the park is run by the council. Essentially the residents will have a formal vehicle to comment on future proposals on the management of the park.

8 RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 That the resident's association at Stillwater Park is recognised and that consultation be undertaken with this group relating to the future management and control of the Park.
- 8.2 That the group be financially supported by the provision of an annual grant of £360 and by the reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred as part of the consultation process.

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Background Papers

Cabinet report 4 June 2003