

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: OPEN SPACE PROJECTS IN RINGWOOD







Summary of Purpose and Recommendations:

Ringwood Town Council has agreed a Recreation Strategy for the town and this is providing a platform for the development of individual projects. The purpose of the report is to consider three requests from Ringwood Town Council for support using developers' contributions for open space schemes in the town. The schemes are: arrangements to complete the monitoring of a site in North Poulner; an allocation for design costs for a joint provision scheme and an allocation for the refurbishment of a play area.

Cost to Council: £8,000 for monitoring costs; £10,000 for design costs and £20,000 for the play area

Within existing budget? Yes, within available developer's contributions fund.

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

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

Comments on Impacts on Corporate Objectives and Priorities:

The element of particular impact is the proposal to complete the environmental monitoring of the North Poulner site. This represents best practice – to investigate and confirm the condition of the site

CABINET: 3 NOVEMBER 2004

OPEN SPACE PROJECTS IN RINGWOOD

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Ringwood Town Council has agreed a recreation strategy for the town. It provides a platform against which individual schemes can be developed.
- 1.2 There are four proposals for consideration: The schemes are: arrangements to complete the monitoring of a site in North Poulner; an allocation for design costs for a joint provisions scheme; an allocation for the refurbishment of a play area and acquisition of land.

2. ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING AT POULNER

- 2.1 In 1994 the Town and District Council entered into a partnership to restore land in Poulner to provide a picnic area, informal open space and access to the footpath network to the north of the town. The site was a gravel pit, which was later used for landfill. The site was investigated at the time and a restoration plan implemented. It has been monitored since then in accordance with the Waste Management Licence conditions, which were part of the restoration process.
- 2.2 The needs of monitoring will require the purchase of replacement equipment but prior to doing so the Environment Agency has been approached to consider options for the future. As a result, the suggestion is that steps are put in place to surrender the licence.
- 2.3 In summary, to carry on current arrangements will have a first year cost of £4,260 and an annual cost thereafter of £1,600. To surrender the licence will cost £8,000 as a one off cost. This option is preferred since it means an in-depth assessment is made of the site and if Environment Agency finds the outcome acceptable, there will be no further costs. This is also good practice since it will be a more detailed study of the site and will address all the relevant public health issues.
- 2.4 There is an element of risk, in that the assessment could highlight additional issues. However, there are three considerations: firstly, the initial study and monitoring since does not suggest there are issues. Secondly, once an issue is identified, appropriate action can be identified. Lastly, impending environmental requirements will necessitate such a study in due course anyway.

3. DESIGN COSTS: RINGWOOD JUNIOR SCHOOL

- 3.1 A multi agency partnership is devising a proposal to develop a community use scheme based on the playing fields of Ringwood Junior School. Hampshire County Council as landlord, the School as site operators and potential users, Ringwood and Ellingham Rugby Club as scheme developers and operators are all involved, as well as this Council as potential funder through developer's contributions.

- 3.2 There is still discussion about the terms of securing the community interest. The principal relationship will be between the County Council and the Rugby Club. The security will be through a lease and the detailed terms are under discussion, the matters of principle having largely been agreed. However, there is a need to fund some design development in order for these terms, as well as planning issues and funding bids to be prepared. The Rugby club has already allocated resources to this but there is a need to support that work.
- 3.3 Therefore the Town Council have requested the sum of £10,000 for design development of the scheme. It will not be applied until the detailed terms for the lease are agreed but to have the funding to hand will speed the development of the project.

4. REFURBISHMENT OF PLAY AREA

- 4.1 Northfield play area is an existing provision that has become inadequate. The site only has two pieces of play equipment and a low grade safer surfacing. Demand has grown steadily and it is no longer suitable for the level of use it receives.
- 4.2 The planned project is for under eights play and will involve providing four units of play equipment, a fully specified safer surfacing, seating, bins, fencing and gates. There has been extensive involvement with local people and organisations involved with children, such as the local school (which is adjacent) and the local pre- school and playscheme network. The total cost of the scheme is £27,500 and the request is for £20,000 from developers' contributions.

5. ACQUISITION OF LAND

- 5.1 After negotiation the Town Council is close to achieving the acquisition of land which is currently allocated as public open space in the District Local Plan but is not in public ownership. It is a small site, which historically has had access but there have been suggestions of development pressures in the past. Therefore, public ownership would secure this site for the Town. As negotiations are not completed the matter of value is sensitive, a fact recognised in the form of recommendation.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are sufficient funds within Ringwood's developers' contributions, to meet the additional cost of £38,000 for the first three projects. It is likely that there will be further demands on the fund arising from the joint provision scheme. The Town Council has already stated that, subject to the detail of the arrangements, the joint provision scheme is a high priority as part of the overall strategy on open space. The acquisition of land has yet to come to final terms but it is a relatively modest acquisition and will not make a material impact on the fund.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The process for the surrender of the Waste Management Licence will ensure the detailed consideration of the current condition of the North Poulner site. This will be a positive benefit.

- 7.2 The siting of play areas is important and there can be issues of noise and nuisance but the Northfield Road site is established and there has been extensive consultation with local residents.
- 7.3 The community use scheme at Ringwood Junior School will need considered design before implementation and this allocation would assist with that process.

8. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The development of leisure facilities can bring associated anti social behaviour or nuisance issues, from the activity or on occasions the attraction of other people to the site. The arguments presented in the section above, also apply to crime and disorder issues.

9. CONSULTATION

- 9.1 The schemes have been the subject of extensive consultation and there has been consistent and strong support throughout their implementation.

10. PORTFOLIO HOLDERS COMMENTS

- 10.1 The Portfolio Holder supports the recommendations.

11. RECOMMENDATION

- 11.1 It is recommended that:

a) The sum of £8,000 be allocated from developers' contributions for open space, to undertake arrangements to secure the surrender of the Waste Management Licence for land at North Poulner

b) The sum of £10,000 be made available from developers' contributions for open space to undertake design development of the community use scheme at Ringwood Junior School, this sum to be applied on the basis terms being agreed for the tenure of the land, to the satisfaction of the Director of Resources and the Director of Community Services.

c) The sum of £20,000 be made available from developers' contributions for open space to undertake the enhancement of Northfield Road play area.

d) The acquisition of land for public open space be supported by the use of developer's contributions, subject to the satisfaction of the Director of Resources and the Director of Community Services

For further Information contact:

Martin Devine
Assistant Director of Leisure Services
Tel: (023) 8028 5456
E-mail: martin.devine@nfdc.gov.uk

Background Papers:

Letter from Ringwood Town Council 29th
September 2004

[j:l:m:cabinet:2004:12:Ringwood v03]