

REQUEST FOR LEASE OF LAND FOR MILFORD PLAY AREA

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report is to ask the Cabinet to determine a request from Milford on Sea Parish Council to lease two pieces of land adjacent to the Needles Eye Café at Milford on Sea, for the purpose of increasing the size of the existing play area.
- 1.2 The two areas of land involved are marked A and B on the attached plan (Appendix 1) and total 621 sq.m and 792 sq.m respectively.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Milford Parish Council approached the District Council in 2016 with a view to enhancing the play facilities in Milford on Sea. Following discussions, District Council officers expressed concern regarding the size and scale of the facilities proposed, these originally included a skateboard park and a large zip wire apparatus. As a result the Parish Council reviewed the proposal and reduced the scheme and the amount of land required.
- 2.2 In April 2017 the Parish Council carried out a consultation exercise with households in the parish which indicated that 73% of those consulted (280 responses) were in favour of the proposed scheme.
- 2.3 On 5 July 2017 the Cabinet received a petition presented by Mr A Dabson with 717 signatures opposing a scheme on the seafront and asking the District Council not to grant a lease to the Parish Council due to the following:
 - The equipment would clutter the seafront green area used for general recreation.
 - It would restrict the views to the Needles and the Isle of Wight.
 - It would ruin the peace and serenity of this area of the seafront which is treasured by so many.
 - The proposals are large and garish and totally out of character within the area. The provision of providing play equipment was sound but this would be the wrong location.
- 2.4 On 2 August 2017 the Cabinet received a petition presented by Ms J Savage with 1270 signatures supporting a scheme on the seafront and asking the District Council to support granting a lease to the Parish Council. In her presentation Ms Savage noted that the benefits for children in having access to playgrounds were:
 - They have space in their community and feel that there is a play area for them.
 - It is really important for developing a sense of self and an awareness of one's value in the broader community.
 - It is a place to exercise, for outdoor play and for physical problem solving.
 - It is a place to develop creative play, social skills and independence.

Ms Savage suggested that the current play provision in Milford is not really fit for purpose as it is overused, including by age groups beyond that for which it was originally designed. She also commented that the specific location on the seafront provides an excellent opportunity for development of an improved play facility especially as there is existing infrastructure such as car parks, public toilets and a café.

- 2.5 Following the presentations to the Cabinet in July and August, District Council officers met with representatives from Milford Parish Council to discuss options available to address the concerns outlined in paragraph 2.3. In response the Parish Council amended the proposal as follows:

The footprint was reduced to 792 sq.m leaving 4,154 sq.m of informal open space, identified as C on Appendix 1; the proposal for a larger play area on the western side of the Needles Eye Café equates to 16% of the currently available open space.

Structures would be restricted to a maximum of 4 metres in height and not 6 metres as per the original plan.

It was also agreed that a further consultation exercise be undertaken by the Parish Council to consider other sites that might be available.

- 2.6 In November 2017 the Parish Council revised the proposed plan for the play area with a maximum height for any equipment to be 4 metres . A further consultation exercise was undertaken, this survey/consultation was widely published (Lymington Times editorial and two specific adverts, Parish Website, NFDC Website, Parish Office Window and Office display boards, several village notice boards, village blog, Parish Council face-book page viewed by 1300 people during the survey time, at the Needles Eye Café and existing play area and discussed in public at the last two Parish Council meetings). This exercise had 457 responses, 371 electronic and 86 paper, with the following outcomes;

- Question 1 – Is there a need for additional play facilities..... 380 yes (83%) 77 no (17%)
- Question 2 – Should the larger play facilities be at the seafront adjacent to the current play area.....352 yes (77%) 105 no (23%)
- Question 3 – What alternative location would you prefer;

<u>Responses</u>	<u>Site</u>
• 25	MoS1
• 11	Barnes Lane
• 9	Carrington Lane
• 5	Old Coach Park near Marine café
• 3	Old Putting Green
• 21	Elsewhere (but not specified),
• 1	Village Green,
• 1	Keyhaven,
• 1	Kiosk at car park.

77 responses in total

- 2.7 In the light of the outcome of this survey and the reduction in size of the original scheme, the revised footprint, the removal of the skateboard facility and the zip wire apparatus, together with the reduction in height of 33% from the original scheme, the Parish Council wrote on the 11th December 2017 formally to request for a second time that, as there was overwhelming support for additional play facilities and that these facilities be located on the Sea Front adjacent to the Needles Eye Café, the District Council lease the two pieces of land as identified in Appendix 1 to the Parish Council for a term to be agreed at a peppercorn rent to use only as open space and a children's play area with no alienation rights.
- 2.8 The Parish Council have also requested that subject to the approval of the lease for the two areas of land identified in Appendix 1, the sum of £66,034 towards the overall cost of this project be released from the monies held by the District Council in Section 106 contributions.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no ongoing financial implications for the District Council as the Parish Council will be responsible for the inspection and maintenance of the leased areas.
- 3.2 The requested contribution of £66,034 towards the overall cost of this project requested by the Parish Council is held by the District Council in Section 106 contributions and is currently allocated to projects at Barnes Lane and Carrington Lane. The Parish Council have not identified any further work in either of these areas that the monies could be used for.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None.

5. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Parish Council is experienced in managing play equipment within their Parish and are fully aware of the responsibilities for ensuring that these facilities are used in the correct and appropriate way.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Currently the play equipment that is provided is limited to very young children. A new facility will give more access to a wider range of children

7. PORTFOLIO HOLDER COMMENTS

- 7.1 Cllr E Heron - Planning and Infrastructure - The Portfolio Holder supports the recommendations including the release of £66,034 towards the project from s.106 contributions
- 7.2 Cllr M Harris – Local Economic Development, Property and Innovation - I am both proud and delighted that my first Portfolio related Cabinet comments relate of a decision that is guaranteed to last for nearly a century – 99 years. Moreover it is a

project which has evolved from within the community of Milford on Sea, led by the Parish Council. After wide consultation the resultant community scheme, appropriately amended to take account of many submissions, will be enjoyed by young children and accompanying adults for many generations to come. This is also being achieved without any cost to the resident of Milford on Sea or indeed to the residents of the entire New Forest.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 That the two pieces of land marked A and B on the attached plan be leased to Milford on Sea Parish Council for a term of up to 99 years, with the terms of the lease to be approved by the Portfolio Holder for Local Economic Development, Property and Innovation in consultation with the Executive Head Operations and the Executive Head Governance and Regulation.
- 8.2 That subject to the approval of 8.1 above the Council release the sum of £66,034 towards the overall cost of this project from the monies held by the District Council in Section 106 contributions.

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Background Papers:

Published documents