
PROPOSED ENVIRONMENTAL CENTRE – FEEDBACK FROM RAYLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report updates Members on the latest decision taken by the Town Council in respect of the Environmental Centre and in the light of that information, seeks Members' agreement on the way forward.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Members will be aware that the District Council transferred the land adjoining the Windmill at Rayleigh and adjoining 21 London Hill to the Town Council for the purposes of building an environmental and/or educational centre. The Lease was finally signed in January of this year. Under the terms and conditions of the Lease, the Town Council has five years to complete the project.

3 DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The Chief Executive has now been advised by the Town Council that it has decided not to proceed with the environmental centre project at this point in time. Instead it is investigating the possibility of developing a pavilion/community facility within King George's Playing Field. Hence there is now considerable uncertainty over the future use of the site adjoining the Windmill and adjoining 21 London Hill and whether the environmental centre project will ever proceed. Given the considerable investment which the District Council has made in connection with the Windmill and the adjoining area, it is considered that in the light of the Town Council's decision, a formal approach should now be made to that body in an attempt to resolve the matter with a minimum of delay. Within the terms and conditions of the lease, the Town Council has five years in which to complete the structure, although clearly there would be considerable benefit in resolving the future of the site within a much shorter timeframe. Otherwise the condition of the site and its appearance could well deteriorate in contrast to the considerable enhancement work which has taken place in the surrounding area.

4 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 If the area is left vacant and unused for a considerable period of time, then it has the potential to attract problems associated with Crime and Disorder.

5 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The site offers the potential to bring further environmental benefits to the area if it is developed. Otherwise its continued vacancy will detract from the overall environmental quality of the area.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 At this point in time, there are no specific resource implications other than Officer and Member time involved in any discussions with the Town Council.

7 RECOMMENDATION

It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

That Officers be instructed to seek formal clarification from the Town Council in connection with its intentions regarding the future of this site, with the Town Council being asked to reach a decision on this matter no later than six months from the date of this meeting.

Paul Warren

Chief Executive

Background Papers:

Letter from Rayleigh Town Council dated 2nd October 2001.

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