

POLICY REVIEW OF PUBLIC PLAYSPACES

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks to establish the methodology for Members to carry out the above review.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At meetings of the Community Services Committee on 1 July and the Community Overview and Scrutiny committee on 11 September, the issue of playspace provision was discussed. In order to assist Members, copies of the reports and resulting minutes of those two Committees are attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 At the request of the Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Town/Parish Councils were asked to submit their views in writing in respect of playspace provision and cost sharing. The responses received from those Councils are attached for Members' consideration at Appendix 2.

3 POLICY REVIEW

- 3.1. In carrying out a policy review, Members will need to give consideration as to what aspects they wish to take into account and how they wish to carry out further consultation with Town/Parish Councils.
- 3.2. As Members are aware, the council has a comprehensive Asset Management Plan. Land is a valuable asset and any decisions taken on its use must be based on a proper evaluation as set out in the Plan. There is also the need to determine whether or not the equipment provided is appropriate to the need.
- 3.3. In view of the above, Members will need to decide whether or not they wish to visit the playspaces at this time. To visit the playspaces will require two full days of Member' and officers' time.
- 3.4. Members may like to carry out some form of survey of usage. This will require investigation by officers as to how this may be achieved. Usage of playspaces is sporadic. The majority of use is in the summer and at weekends. To carry out a meaningful survey would therefore delay the completion of the policy review.
- 3.5. In order to assist the debate on the way forward a scoping form has been prepared and is attached as Appendix 3 of this report.

4 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Risk implications will be taken into account as part of the policy review.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The major resource for this review will be officer time. If site visits are required, the cost of these may be met from existing budgets. In the event of a user survey being required, officers will need to investigate options for carrying this out and report back on indicative costs.

6 RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES:**
- (1) To carry out the review in accordance with the proposals set out in the scoping document.
 - (2) To determine a view on consultation, site visits and user survey.

Roger Crofts

Corporate Director (Finance & External Services)

Background Papers:

None

For further information please contact Roger Crofts on:-

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RAYLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

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*Rayleigh
for presentation
to Members.*

Town Clerk: Mrs. Barbara Larken

10 Bellingham Lane,
Rayleigh, Essex,
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8th October 2003

Mr. R Crofts,
Corporate Director,
Rochford District Council,
South Street,
Rochford,
Essex SS4 1BW

FINANCE		
17 OCT 2003		
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Dear Mr. Crofts,

PLAYSPACE PROVISION – Policy Review

Further to your letter of 3rd October 2003, I am writing to inform you that the Town Council has considered the possibility of shared responsibility of playspaces. An indication has been given by Members' that the Town Council would like to be involved with discussions in relation to play-spaces, but reservations have been expressed on the possible cost implications and the condition of each play-space in terms of compliance with safety standards.

Yours sincerely,

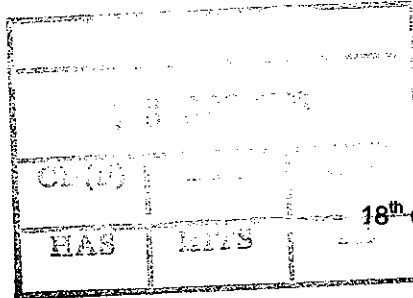
Mrs. Barbara Larken
Town Clerk

Ashingdon Parish Council

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Mr Roger Crofts
Corporate Director
Finance and External Services
Rochford District Council
Council Offices
South Street
ROCHFORD
SS4 1BW



18th October 2003

Dear Mr Crofts,

PLAYSPACE PROVISION

Thank you for your letter dated 3rd October 2003 together with the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

I refer to the minutes of the 1st July 2003 number 307 which states:

"During debate it was perceived that the majority of people using playspace facilities would come from the Parish within which the playspace lay and that as such Parish Councils should pay half the associated playspace costs."

Due to the geographical nature of the playspace in the Ashingdon Playing Fields, it is used predominantly by local people but they are not necessarily residents of the Parish of Ashingdon.

By the very nature of its location, this area is used by a considerable number of Hawkwell Parish Council residents. Rochford Parish Council residents who, due to the closeness of its boundaries with Ashingdon, also make frequent use of the Ashingdon facilities, as they are afforded easier access and shorter distances than attending the playspace in the Rochford Recreation Ground in Stambridge Road.

It should be noted that the majority of the residents within the Ashingdon Parish are elderly persons who naturally would have no use for playspace facilities.

With reference to the information supplied to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the 11th September 2003 (not the minutes of that meeting) setting out the costs of refurbishing playspaces, Parish Councillors were not given any information concerning this at the meeting.

CONT/2

Parish Councillors requested the following information at that meeting:

1. Total cost of refurbishing playspace
2. Annual cost of maintenance and management
3. Annual cost of inspections
4. Annual cost of insurance.

The Parish Council cannot make submissions as to its views on partnership working on playspace provisions until they are informed of the costs involved. As our Precept for the forthcoming year will be set and finalised at our meeting of 3rd November, we would welcome those figures before that meeting.

When the Playspace sub-committee meets again, we would wish that they consider playspace facilities at South Farnbridge village, where there are a considerable number of young children who at present play in the street having nowhere else. The lack of bus services precludes them from attending other playspaces within the District.

Would you please inform me when the Playspace sub-committee will be holding its next meeting.

Yours sincerely



Peter Murray
Clerk to the Council and
Responsible Financial Officer.

Chairman: Roger Spink. Vice-Chairman: Peggy Shaw
Cllrs: Norman Drayton-Thomas, Peggy Lonergan, Terry Cutmore, Audrey Powell, Sue Gunn, Lyn Brand
Glen Dryhurst, Russell Prestige, Reggan Clark.
Clerk: Peter Murray.

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Ashingdon Parish Council

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"Tamarix" 43

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Mr Roger Crofts
Corporate Director
Finance and External Services
Rochford District Council
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SS4 1BW

4th November 2003

Dear Mr Crofts

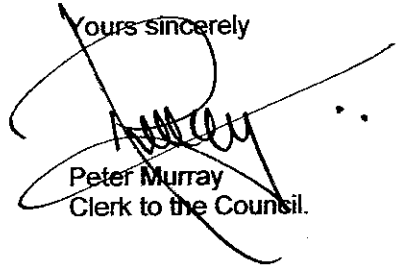
PLAYSPACE PROVISION

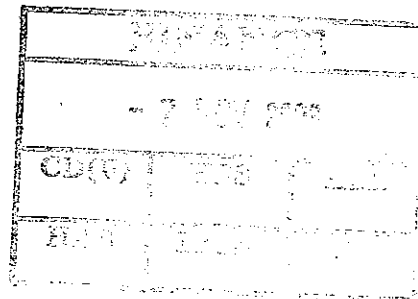
The above subject matter was discussed as part of our Precept meeting yesterday evening.

I refer to our letter of 18th October 2003 whereby the Council wished written confirmation of costs in readiness for our meeting on 3rd November 2003 so that the matter could be fully considered together with costs and concerns that had been voiced, however, unfortunately we received no response.

Unfortunately, to that end, the Parish Council has now set its Precept for the forthcoming year to the exclusion of any provisions of assistance for playspace provision.

Yours sincerely


Peter Murray
Clerk to the Council.



Chairman: Roger Spink. Vice-Chairman: Peggy Shaw
Cllrs: Norman Drayton-Thomas, Peggy Lonergan, Terry Cutmore, Audrey Powell, Sue Gunn, Lyn Brand
Glen Dryhurst, Russell Prestige, Reggan Clark.
Clerk: Peter Murray.

Lissa Higby

From: Harry Morris [enquiries@greatwaking-pc.gov.uk]

Sent: 29 October 2003 10:50

To: roger.crofts@rochford.gov.uk

Subject: Playspace Provision

Dear Mr Crofts,

We note that the Playspace in Great Waking Recreation Ground is the next one to be refurbished through your rolling programme and the Parish Council would like to know, is the equipment to be changed reusable? Have any users of the Playspace been asked what they want? Will you only carryout any work if the Parish Council pays for a proportion and who sets this figure? Will you continue to maintain the safety of the Playspace or will this be allowed to deteriorate and closed as has been written in the newspaper by the Leader of your Council?

H E Morris
Clerk to the Parish Council

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Lissa Higby

From: Peter Murray [petermurray@ashingonpc.fsnet.co.uk]
Sent: 29 October 2003 11:59
To: roger.crofts@rochford.gov.uk
Subject: Playspace programme

Dear Roger

The budget proposals for the Ashingdon Parish Council have been prepared and will be finalised on Monday. I have been unable to include any provision for the playspace programme as I am still awaiting the figures. I would be obliged for these as soon as possible and will endeavour to include them as an addendum to the Budget on Monday. Naturally members won't discuss it until they have the figures and answers to some of their queries as per my letter of 18th October.

Regards

Pete Murray
Ashingdon Parish Council.

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Lissa Higby

From: HULLBRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL [hullbridgepc@lineone.net]

Sent: 28 October 2003 11:31

To: Roger Crofts

Subject: Playspace provision

Roger,

Reference your letter of 3rd October regarding the Playspace provision policy review, this matter was discussed at a recent meeting of this Council.

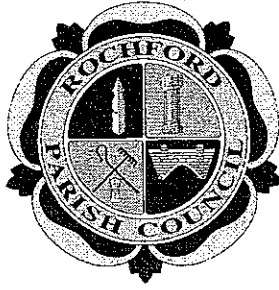
It was agreed that no decision could be made on the principles of partnership working and cost sharing until representatives of this Council had met with the sub committee.

Linda Cowan

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28/10/03



ROCHFORD PARISH COUNCIL

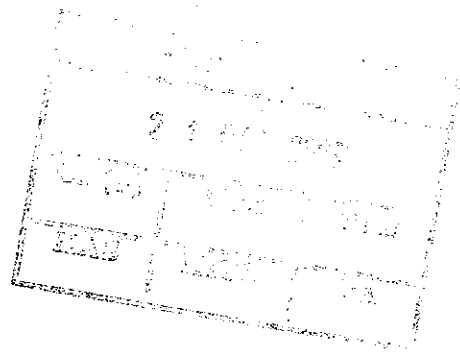
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Clerk to the Council: Mrs. J. V. Rigby *Cert. HE Local Policy*

17 October 2003
Our ref. jvr/cs/171003

Mr. R. Crofts
Corporate Director
Finance and External Services
Rochford District Council
Council Offices
South Street
Rochford
Essex SS4 1BW



Dear Mr. Crofts,

Playspace Rolling Programme

Further to your letter of 3rd October, this matter was discussed at length by the Parish Council at the meeting on 15th October.

Members feel that although they are quite willing to make periodic contributions to Playspace Schemes (as they have done in the past with Doggetts Recreation Ground and Wrick Drive Playspace), budgetary and manpower constraints make it impossible to commit to a rolling refurbishment/maintenance programme for Playspaces in Rochford Parish.

Yours sincerely,

Janice V. Rigby
Clerk to the Council

APPENDIX 3

1 OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY – SCOPING FORM FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT/REVIEWS

Committee: Playspace Sub Committee	Date: 20 November 2003
Review Title: Public Playspaces	
Terms of Reference:	
To recommend a policy, in partnership with the Town/Parish Councils, in respect of public playspaces.	
Witnesses: <i>Who? Why?</i>	
<p>Witness 1: Town and Parish Councils</p> <p>Witness 2: Council officers:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Corporate Policy Officer</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Property Maintenance and Highways Manager</p> <p>Information to be gathered:</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Views of Parish Councils on cost sharing</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Strategic view of playspace land within District</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Cost of service and appropriateness of equipment provided</p>	
Documents/information: <i>What? Why?</i>	
<p>Document 1: Written representations from Parishes</p> <p>Document 2: Officer reports</p> <p>Information to be gathered:</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Views on cost sharing</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Strategic issues of land use</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Appropriateness of equipment provided.</p>	

Site visits: <i>Where? Why? When?</i>
<p>Possible visits to playspaces</p> <p>Information to be gathered:</p> <p>Possible alternative future uses</p> <p>Views on type of equipment provided</p>
Consultation/research: <i>Who? Why? What?</i>
<p>Conduct usage survey?</p> <p>Information to be gathered:</p> <p>Attempt to estimate usage of facilities</p>
Venues to be used for evidence gathering: <i>Where? When?</i>
<p>Determine most appropriate venue to meet with the appropriate Town/Parish Councils.</p>
Officer support and other resources:
<p>Main officer support required for above.</p> <p>Additional budget for external support required if survey work to be carried out.</p>
Timescale:
<p>Suggest end of February if site visits are to be carried out. If a user survey is required it may be necessary to extend the issue by four months in order to monitor summertime usage.</p>
Reporting line for the Review:
<p>Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee.</p>