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## REPORT OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE

### 1 CREATION OF NATURAL PLAY AREA – GROVE WOODS, RAYLEIGH

- 1.1 This item of business was referred by the Review Committee on 11 January 2011 to the Executive with a recommendation relating to arrangements in respect of items of spending of £50,000 or more.
- 1.2 The Review Committee called in a Portfolio Holder decision relating to utilising the open spaces capital programme for the provision of fencing at the Grove Woods play area, together with minor electrical improvements at Hockley Woods, to its meeting on 7 December 2010. During consideration on 7 December the Committee asked that information be made available around who made the decision to accept external funding and install the play area and the level of Member involvement in the decision.
- 1.3 At the Review Committee meeting on 11 January 2011 the Head of Community Services confirmed that the play area had been funded fully to the amount of £50,000 from the Central Government Play Builder fund, which was administered by Essex County Council. The remit was that the play area be designed around open play and access and should fit in with the surrounding natural landscape. The County Council had asked District/Borough Councils in Essex to identify suitable sites. Although Rochford District Council's Portfolio Holder for Young Persons had been aware of the proposed scheme, the proposal had not been put before Members generally due to the fact that there was no financial input required from Rochford District Council. It was noted that one of the Ward Councillors for the area where the play area is situated had not been made aware of the proposals at the time.
- 1.4 The site identified was considered suitable as it has a car park, it is in an open space and there are football pitches and other play spaces and equipment in the location. Mounds and banks of earth had been established and wooden play equipment erected. Essex County Council had confirmed that fencing the area in order to combat the issue of dog fouling would not contravene the terms of the original Play Builder grant.
- 1.5 In considering this matter and, as a result of a site visit, the Review Committee made a specific recommendation to the Portfolio Holder for the Environment in relation to fencing of the play area. The Committee made a further recommendation to the Executive in respect of items of spending of £50,000 or more.
- 1.6 It is proposed that the Executive **RESOLVES** that the relevant Ward Councillors be included in the consultation process for items of spending of £50,000 or more, irrespective of the source of funding, and that all items of £50,000 or more be included in the Forward Plan.