

## REPORT TO RECREATION, LEISURE AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE 7<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2010

### Ash Grove Play Area

1. Members will be aware that there have been difficulties in progressing with the replacement of the play area at Ash Grove.
2. In order to move the scheme forward, the Deputy Town Clerk has met with the Open Spaces Coordinator at New Forest District Council to discuss ways in which that authority could assist.
3. As the site has several constraints including access, misuse by dog walkers and antisocial behaviour, and there is a perceived need to provide equipment for all ages and abilities, it would be beneficial to receive independent advice and a “fresh pair of eyes” to look at the site and try to resolve those issues.
4. This independent advice could be sought from officers of the District Council, who also have particular expertise in play provision, landscaping and consultation. Indeed, the Open Spaces Coordinator has offered to assist with design of the site and drawing up a specification in order to deliver a play area in response to the needs and wishes of the local community.
5. As part of the scheme, we will need to work in partnership with the District Council on several issues, including:
  - management of the ditch, which runs along the length of the site and is in the District Council's ownership
  - control of dogs
  - antisocial behaviour
  - release of developers' contributions, which would be used to partly fund the scheme

It would therefore be beneficial to work with the District Council on the complete scheme, so that all of these issues can be addressed in a coordinated manner.
6. The scheme would be managed within an agreed Project Framework and District Council officers would be available to begin working on the scheme in September 2010, which would enable the new play area to be delivered in the Spring of 2011.
7. It is expected that the District Council's fees would be in the region of £5,000, which could be funded from developers' contributions.

It is therefore **RECOMMENDED** that:

- 1) Members authorise the Town Clerk to liaise with the District Council to agree a Project Framework for the replacement of the play area at Ash Grove;
- 2) Cllr Wiseman and Cllr Urwin, who have been previously appointed to sit on the Working Group, be asked if they wish to continue in this role;
- 3) It be recommended to Policy & Finance Committee that £5,000 be requested from developers' contributions to fund the District Council's fees in addition to the funding for provision of the equipment.

For further information, contact:

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