

PLANNING COMMITTEE – 27 JULY 2005

Report Of The Sports Services Manager

MISCELLANEOUS REPORT

38/2000/237 - ERECTION OF 144 DWELLINGS AND ASSOCIATED ROADS AND OPEN SPACE, TAUNTON VALE SPORTS CLUB, LISIEUX WAY, TAUNTON

Background

The Planning Committee approved the above application in April 2001.

The plans indicated the position of five play areas on the above site. Four of the play areas were to be Local Equipped Areas For Play (LEAP's) and one was to be a Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP), the latter being larger, for older children and with more pieces of equipment than the former.

Persimmon Homes completed the NEAP and two of the LEAP's by the end of 2004, although none of the areas are as yet adopted.

In addition Persimmon Homes had entered into a 'Section 106' agreement with the Council to provide £48,456 towards an extension to the Hamilton Gault Pavilion, a nearby sports pavilion serving three football pitches but with only four changing rooms.

On pricing the proposed extension to the pavilion it was evident that there were insufficient funds to carry out the necessary extension and at the same time the '2 year time limit' on the S106 agreement was due to expire. In negotiations regarding an extension of time for the funds to be spent, Persimmon Homes suggested that they could supplement the funds available for the Hamilton Gault project should they not be required to construct the remaining two play areas on the Boundary Park development.

TDBC Play Provision Guidelines

The Council's current Local Plan Policy (C4) for play provision is 20 square metres of play space per family dwelling. On this basis five play areas were required on the Boundary Park site.

Since this time, the Council has developed a Greenspaces Strategy, which included work on the reasonable and actual walking distance from a child's home to a play area. This was calculated at 300 metres.

The outcome of this is that a site such as Boundary Park with its high density development, would today only be asked to provide sufficient equipped play

areas to ensure that every home is within 300 metres walking distance of one. In this instance, two play areas would be required.

The area of open space on which a play area would have been located is still provided for casual recreation, but it does not have to be equipped as a formal play area.

The Revised Options

A cost of £53,500 has been agreed as the value of the outstanding play areas and it was decided that a consultation exercise would be carried out with neighbours living closest to the proposed play areas to seek their views as to the best option.

45 questionnaires were circulated and 34 replies were received. Of the replies, 28 respondents wished the proposed play spaces to be left as grass for casual recreation, 2 respondents wanted to see the areas installed as planned, one respondent wished for one area to be used as a play area but the other left as grass whilst a further respondent wanted the areas to be converted into car parking spaces!

Two further responses were received which were detailed and extensive but drew no firm conclusions.

The questionnaire asked householders to indicate how many children were in the household but the results showed that even the vast majority of those with children in the household felt that there were already sufficient play areas on the development.

Conclusion

Whilst the original plan for five play areas on this site was well intentioned it is clear, following a consultation exercise, that residents feel that there are already sufficient play areas on the development and that they would prefer the proposed play areas to remain as open space.

As a result of negotiations with the developer this Council would have a total of £101,956 to fund improvements to sports and leisure facilities in the immediate area for the benefit of the wider community.

Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that the S106 Agreement of the 31 May 2000 and made between Taunton Deane Borough Council (1) Beazer Homes (2) Taunton Vale Sports Club (3) and Somerset County Council (4) be varied such that the obligation to provide two play areas on site be replaced by the obligation to pay a sum of £101,956 to be used to provide/enhance sports and play facilities in the vicinity of the development.

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