MINUTES OF PLANNING FOR PLAY TASK GROUP

4TH JULY 2011

PRESENT:

Councillors Butlin, G Francis, Miss Lawrence, Lowe (substituting for Councillor Hazelton), Mrs New, Mrs O’Rourke and Srivastava.

Councillor Timms – Economy, Development and Culture Portfolio Holder

Anna Rose (Head of Planning and Culture), Rob Back (Forward Planning and Economic Development Manager), Caroline Johnson (Community Sports and Recreation Manager), Steve Parkes (Principal Planning Officer), Chris Worman (Parks and Grounds Manager), Colin Horton (Green Spaces Officer), Paul Ansell (Scrutiny Officer), Claire Waleczek (Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer (Team Leader)) and Veronika Beckova (Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer).

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED THAT – Councillor Butlin be appointed Chairman of the Task Group for the 2011/12 municipal year.

2. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence from the meeting was received from Councillor Hazelton.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mrs New declared a general personal interest by virtue of being an employee of Warwickshire County Council.

Councillor Miss Lawrence declared a personal interest by virtue of being Chairman of Rugby Play Partnership.

4. THE PLANNING CONTEXT

The Task Group received an overview from the Forward Planning and Economic Development Manager concerning the planning process and documentation relating to the provision of play areas on housing developments.

Legislation, national planning guidance and policies affected planning obligations relating to play areas and other open space on housing developments. National guidance contained in Planning Policy Guidance 17 (PPG17) was very prescriptive. It requires councils as Local Planning Authorities to assist with needs and opportunities for all types of open space. There is a clear definition contained in the policy relating to the allocation of play areas and open space. A Companion Guide to PPG 17 defines how an Open Space Audit should be undertaken.
This Council commissions an Open Space Audit on a regular basis which assesses existing play facilities across the borough and identifies if there is a surplus or deficiency in each area. The last audit was undertaken in 2008.

Policy LR1 defines the different types of open space and sets standards for provision of each type in new developments. The current standard for provision for children and young people is 0.2 hectares per 1,000 population. This can vary depending on the scale and location of a development. A financial agreement between the local planning authority and the developer can be agreed in accordance with Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to secure funding or equipment for provision of play areas or open space off site if this is not practical within a development.

It was emphasised that there were many changes currently being proposed with regard to planning policies. A national planning policy framework, which would replace all current planning policy guidance notes and statements, was being drafted. This framework would retain the core principle that open space and play facilities were fundamental to any development.

Further to the adoption of the Council’s Core Strategy, a secondary Local Development Framework would replace the current Policy LR1. There was an 18 months’ lead in time to this with an appropriate public consultation process to be undertaken prior to adoption. This would then result in a revision of the Open Space Audit.

Further to the briefing, the following points were made.

• The Task Group queried the lack of open space at The Pavilions development at Bilton Road, Rugby. The Head of Planning and Culture advised that Section 106 Agreement monies had been put aside from previous developments for the provision of affordable housing in a high density development. This funding had been used for this provision at The Pavilions and it was an individual situation which would not be considered again.

• School sports pitches were considered as part of the Open Space Audit particularly with regard to public access to the facility.

• There was very little flexibility relating to interpretation of planning policies and guidance on provision of play and open space. Sport England had been heavily involved in the development of PPG17 and, consequently, emphasis had been placed on the provision of sport in developments.

• The location of play areas within housing developments was key to providing a positive perspective of children’s safety. The views of surrounding residents also had to be taken into consideration. The provision of play areas overlooked by dwellings was often counterproductive as many potential residents did not wish to live near them owing to fear of anti-social behaviour, noise nuisance etc.

• It was envisaged that the Localism Bill would have little impact on the planning aspects of play provision because neighbourhood plans would have to comply with the overarching core strategy.

The Task Group requested that officers submit to a future meeting examples of varying standards of play provision in housing developments in the borough.
5. ONE PAGE STRATEGY

The Task Group considered its draft one page strategy which had been circulated as part of the agenda.

The following comments were made.

• The broad topic area – add at the end: “…in terms of quantity, location, suitability and timing.”

• The specific topic area – the reference to ‘insufficient’ land should be amended to read “inappropriate land”.

• Ambition of the review – it was considered that the following wording should be added, “…which meets the needs of local residents and is sustainable.”

• Who to consult – it was considered that users of current play provision should be consulted. Officers would undertake a basic consultation during the school summer holidays and gather basic information regarding siting and location of play provision in the borough.

• Timescale of review – the council’s Play Officer had recently left the authority. The Council was seeking to re-appoint to the post by September 2011. This would result in some slippage in the revision of the Play Strategy. It was hoped that the Strategy would be published in early 2012 to be implemented in 2012/13.

• Outcome of review – add at the end: “…and feeding into the Play Strategy.”

6. WORK PROGRAMME

The Task Group considered its programme of work and dates of future meetings.

A work programme is attached to the minutes including dates of meetings. A meeting of the Rugby Play Partnership was scheduled to be held at 9.30am on 21st September 2011. All members of the Task Group were invited to attend.

CHAIRMAN
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<tr>
<th>Date of meeting</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Officers/consultees required</th>
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<tr>
<td>25th July 2.00 – 4.00pm</td>
<td>Visit to 4 housing developments in the borough, showing both good and bad practice in play space provision – details to be sent to members of the Task Group</td>
<td>Green Spaces Officer and Principal Planning Officer</td>
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<td>15th August 5.30pm</td>
<td>Presentation by the developer of the Gateway site relating to provision for play on the development and reasons for location chosen. This will follow a general presentation on the Gateway site at 4.30pm to which all councillors have been invited.</td>
<td>Developer, Planning Officer, Green Spaces Officer.</td>
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| 21st September 5.30pm | (i) Presentation by Green Spaces Officer concerning the allocation of play provision on housing developments and the consultation design process.  
(ii) Outcomes of the user consultation. | (i) Green Spaces Officer  
(ii) Community Sports and Recreation Manager |
| 20th October 5.30pm | Consideration of draft review report with proposed recommendations | Scrutiny Officer |