

LAND AT RIVERSMEAD, ST NEOTS
(Report by the Head of Legal and Estates)

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To consider a request from St Neots Town Council for the District Council to transfer to it an area of land at Riversmead, St Neots. The land is shown edged black on plan A and hatched black on plan B (appended).

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The subject land comprises a recreation area of about 2.9 acres accessed off Riversmead, St Neots. The land was included in a 30-acre parcel of land acquired in 1947 for residential development. Most of the area was then developed with Council housing.
- 2.2 The Town Council has been responsible for the land since local government reorganisation in 1974 and now wishes to grant a lease on part. However, it has transpired that the Deeds are still held by the District Council.
- 2.3 There are also five other similar areas where the Town Council has been maintaining land since 1974. The ownership arrangements for these are being researched with a view to submitting a report to Cabinet in December 2004.
- 2.4 There is a degree of urgency concerning the land at Riversmead as the lease is required to facilitate the construction of a headquarters building for the Reserve Forces and Cadets Association for East Anglia. Funding for this project is only available until the end of the current financial year and it is necessary to start work on site as soon as possible. The proposed development was submitted to planning in March this year as a government application under Circular 18/84. In May the Head of Planning Services informed the applicants that no objections had been raised to the proposed development.

3. RESPONSIBILITY FOR/OWNERSHIP OF THE LAND

- 3.1 In conjunction with the reorganisation of local government in 1974 discussions took place between the District Council and successor Town Councils to consider the discharge of concurrent leisure functions and the distribution of assets. The conclusions then reached sought to reflect the local affinity of (smaller) recreational areas with the Towns in which they were located in contrast with facilities that were regarded as of District-wide significance.
- 3.2 As a consequence of the discussions referred to in the preceding paragraphs, the Riverside Park and Priory Park were accorded District-wide status and a list of other local parks, recreational grounds and open spaces was identified for transfer to the Town Council.

3.3 The Parks Section of the District Council's Community Services Division acknowledges that the Town Council has been responsible for this land for many years and has no objection to the transfer request.

4. IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There would appear to have been a clear intention in 1974 to transfer the land at Riversmead to the Town Council.

4.2 The Town Council has confirmed that it will accept a restriction in relation to the use of the land for recreation/amenity purposes only.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 It is proposed that the land at Riversmead be transferred —

- ◆ for the sum of £1.00;
- ◆ on the basis that it will be used for recreational and amenity purposes only; and
- ◆ subject to consent for the grant of a lease on part to the Reserve Forces and Cadets Association for East Anglia.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Cabinet is invited to approve a disposal of the land at Riversmead on the terms and conditions outlined in this report.

Background Papers

Estates File Ref. Gen.42

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