

## **PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE**

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**Date:** Monday, 17 May 2021

**Title:** Madley Park Playing Fields & Play Area

**Contact Officer:** Town Clerk/CEO - Sharon Groth

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### **Background**

Sometime ago the Council resolved to request taking on the freehold of the Madley Park Play Fields from West Oxfordshire District Council so that the number of maintained and available football pitches on offer in the town would be increased.

### **Current Situation**

Due to COVID-19 there was a delay in WODC considering the request. However due to some existing covenants and agreements on the land in question, the District Council is unable to transfer the freehold and is offering a lease. See correspondence attached.

Furthermore, WODC are also enquiring if the lease should include the Play Area, which has just been refurbished.

### **Environmental impact**

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates.

### **Risk**

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

### **Financial implications**

Currently the Town Council has no financial commitment to either the playing fields or the play area as they are both managed and maintained by WODC. Moving forward if the Council takes on the areas under a lease of the freehold, a budget will need to be allocated for the ongoing maintenance – although initially the Town Clerk had asked for funding towards bringing the football pitches up to an acceptable standard.

There will also be the legal costs for the lease/freehold transfer.

### **Recommendations**

Members are invited to note the report and consider

1. Whether, in light of the information provided in the attached correspondence, to take the Madley Park playing fields on under a lease arrangement (subject to legal advice), because clearly, given the existing legal agreements in place, the freehold isn't available until 2029;
2. If in agreement to recommendation 1, whether the lease should extend to include the Madley Park Play Area.

Alternatively, the other option would be to leave WODC to manage and maintain these areas under the existing arrangements until the freehold becomes available.