

# **PLAY BRIEF FOR FREEMAN'S MEADOW NORTHFIELD END, HENLEY ON THAMES, RG9 2JJ**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Henley-on-Thames Town Council is updating the playground at Freeman's Meadow which is a quiet park with a tranquil nature. The current playground is aimed at older children (8 – 13 year olds) and the Town Council would like to widen the age range who can enjoy the playground by adding equipment for toddlers and younger children. The Town Council would like the updated playground to complement the tranquil nature of the park.

The playground surface is currently bark and a new surface will be required. The updated playground will need to be fenced as it is currently open. There is a swing set (currently being replaced) and a zip wire nearby which will not need to be included in the fenced area. The fencing area will be paid for from a different budget and will not be included in the £60k budget allocated and therefore the fencing will need to be quoted for separately.

## **A BRIEF FOR CHANGE**

Freeman's Meadow is an open, grassy meadow surrounded by large mature trees. The current recreational facilities include a swings area, a separate zip-wire/cableway and a playground. The meadow is almost entirely surrounded by housing apart from one entrance opening on to the Fairmile. There is gated vehicular access on to the Meadow and 3 pedestrian accesses.

The existing playground at Freeman's Meadow was installed in 2008, containing equipment suitable for older children as it was fully funded by the Playbuilder Fund, aimed at 8 to 13 year olds. The playground has few activities suitable for younger children or toddlers and is why Henley Town Council is seeking to widen the appeal of the play facilities.

A new swing set has been ordered including cradle swings for young children for the area adjacent to the playground. The function of any new playground equipment must address the needs of younger children as well as be attractive to them. At this time, the existing playground equipment is almost entirely made up of items that spin. The Council is open to removing certain pieces of existing equipment if it is of a repetitive nature; not a popular design used by children; or has a design fault (further details can be provided upon request). In the event that the new playground equipment requires more space than the present playground has, the existing playground footprint can be expanded to accommodate this up to a maximum of 10 metres in both directions.

The current surface of the playground is woodchips which must be removed before a new surface can be provided. While it may be possible for Henley's Park Service to remove the woodchips, a quote for this work is requested from any contracting party. As the play area is a large area, there are several possible options for a suitable safety surface once the woodchips are removed. A suitable safety surface may be laid only around specific pieces of equipment; laid throughout any toddler and younger children area and/or the surface may differ depending on the type of equipment involved.

Existing playground equipment consists of:

- Kidabout roundabout (wheelchair accessible)
- Basket swing
- Tyre swing
- Spinners (x2)
- Flecto spinner
- Pivot swing
- Supernova
- Spider climbing frame

**Improvements to the Playground at Freeman's Meadow should include:**

- Equipment for a wider age range including toddlers
- A variety of types of equipment as it is currently "spin-heavy"
- A multi-play unit incorporating a slide

- Imagination/creative play
- Sensory equipment
- Inclusive equipment
- Options to replace the current surface
- Wet-pour surface (or similar) to include traditional games such as hopscotch on part (i.e., toddlers' area) or all of the area
- Fencing for all or part of the playground (i.e., for toddler area)
- Seating such as several benches
- A good fit with the aesthetics of Freeman's Meadow

All new play equipment must meet current safety recommendations—BSEN 1176

**Budget Total: £60,000 for the playground equipment and surfacing**  
**Please quote for fencing separately as budgeted separately**

#### **AIMS OF THE PROJECT**

- Provide an imaginative and co-ordinated play experience for all ages
- Create a play area to stimulate children's imagination
- Help promote physical and mental development while interacting socially with other children
- Provide a safe place for play
- Give adjacent owners and occupiers of Freeman's Meadow another reason to use the area

#### **KEY ATTRIBUTES**

- Free and open access available to all
- Creative and inspiring space for play
- An environment where children can play freely and test their individual boundaries
- A space where adults can sit and watch the play or enjoy the environment
- Inclusive Design including activities for physically disabled

**The successful Play Area will incorporate the ten Principles for Designing Play spaces as outlined in "Design for Play" published by Play England: Successful play spaces:**

- Are bespoke
- Are well-located
- Make use of natural elements
- Provide a wide range of play experiences
- Are accessible to both disabled and non-disabled children
- Meet community needs
- Allow children of different ages to play together
- Building opportunities to experience risk and challenge
- Are sustainable and appropriately maintained
- Allow for change and evolution

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

Interested companies should read the following documents:

- An excerpt from a Landscaping and Leisure Proposal (Makins Recreation Ground and Freeman's Meadow's) which relates to Freeman's Meadow by Reading Borough Council
- A report by the Friends of Freeman's Association (local residents) including a survey

Photographs and maps also supplied.

#### **DEADLINES:**

At this stage, Henley Town Council invites you to contact us with Expressions of Interest and some rough ideas of what you could provide for the budget. We do not want you to spend large amounts of time preparing a detailed proposal as this would be required for the next phase.

**Expressions of interest must be received by: Friday 8 March 2019**

Please send to Mrs Becky Walker, Council Offices, Town Hall, Market Place, Henley-on-Thames, Oxon. RG9 2AQ. Telephone: 01491 630076. Email: [b.walker@henleytowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:b.walker@henleytowncouncil.gov.uk)