

Summary of Public Consultation

Foundry Barton

November 2015

Background

The proposed design was made available for comment from Friday 28 August until Friday 11 September - a period of two weeks.

Comments received over the weekend of 12 & 13 September have been included in this summary.

The design and the consultation were promoted on the Council's website; on Facebook; and on Twitter. Poster copies of the design and details of the consultation were also put up on site.

10 people commented on the design – with some people commenting more than once; or in different ways & places (so by email and on Facebook, for instance)

The design received 11 comments on Facebook; 5 shares and 3 likes.

The proposed design was also retweeted once and liked once.

For the purposes of this summary, shares, likes & retweets have been noted – but they were not counted as comments.

Comments

The comments received fell into two categories.

Category 1

2 of the 10 people who commented were disappointed that the play area was closed – and both felt that providing opportunities for local play in this location would be great for children and families.

The possibility of keeping the area as a 'play park' but limiting access - 'restricted access for local accompanied children' - was put forward.

As was the feeling that the old issues should have been addressed by policing rather than 'banning use of the park'

Category 2

8 of the 10 people who commented focused on the need for the area to be gated and fenced:

'The whole space must be fenced and gated whatever design is accepted. No ifs or buts'

'IT HAS TO BE FENCED OFF'

'Somewhere nice and out of the way to do drugs. What a...dumb idea'

'The area needs to be cordoned off to the public as there are already a number of children who use the fenced area to drink and do drugs'

'Opening this space will only ever attract more anti-social behaviour and cost the Council more money in repairs and upkeep'

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Without exception, these opinions referenced the historic problems in the area:

‘Lewd and inappropriate behaviour’ made the area a frightening and unpleasant place for residents and families.

‘Why would young people have changed?’

It was therefore suggested that we consult with and work with ‘long time residents’ on this project.

Additional comments

Only 2 of those who commented offered thoughts on the proposed garden design.

Both felt that proposed planting was too formal and would require excessive & costly maintenance.

Softer planting and softer edges were suggested, particularly given concerns that planters and retained beds could be (mis)used for seating.

Comments from Steve Nickerson, Avon & Somerset Police

Staff also met with Steve Nickerson to discuss the site.

Steve is Avon & Somerset Police’s Crime Prevention Design Advisor for the Somerset East area.

‘My professional opinion is that the play area should not be left in its current condition.’

The area ‘appears unloved and undervalued’. There’s no ownership and no one is going to respect it as it is.

If this play area was part of a proposal for a new development it would not pass the scrutiny of today’s standards – ‘it is far too close to inhabited dwellings’.

Steve also identified three options going forward:

Option 1

Reinstate the play area; then monitor the area for a set period of time before making any future decisions.

Option 2

Remove the old play equipment and then leave the area open to the public, excluding seating from any design.

Option 3

Create a garden area based on the proposed design. An agreed design could ensure that flowerbeds are high enough that they dissuade people from sitting on them – perhaps with hostile toppings that would be uncomfortable to sit on.

Pathways could be short runs using cobbled stones to deter skateboarders.

Seating could be excluded at this early stage - but this could be reassessed as the garden establishes.

If the garden was designed a ‘sensory garden’ it could encourage local ownership and protection.

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Proposed next steps

We'd like to work closely with residents in developing a design for this space – and to do this we're organising an open design meeting for January or February.

Please contact us by Monday 11 January if you're interested in coming to this meeting.

When you do this it would be helpful if you could tell us whether an evening or weekend meeting would be better than one during standard working hours.

That way we can set a convenient date and book a suitable venue for numbers.

Register your interest by calling, emailing or coming in to see us:

Frome Town Council, 5 Palmer Street, Frome, BA11 1DS

01373 465757

admin@frometowncouncil.gov.uk

Ahead of that we'd also be interested to hear from you if you have any follow-up comments or thoughts on the consultation and this summary.

And while you're reading this...

We're looking to keep people better informed about news, events & projects like this one. As one way of doing this, we're setting up a number of Parks & Green Spaces mailing groups.

There's a main group – and by signing up for this you'll receive email updates on all of the town's parks & green spaces.

If you're only interested in specific parks & green spaces just tell us which ones when you sign up – and then you'll only receive updates on these!

How to sign up

Just email admin@frometowncouncil.gov.uk with your name and your email address. *If you don't want to sign up for the main group that covers all of our spaces then tell us which spaces you'd like updates on e.g. Foundry Barton & Henley Way*

We'll only keep your details for the purposes of sending you emails relating to the parks & green spaces you're interested in. And you can opt out of receiving the emails at any time - just tell us if you don't want to receive them anymore.

If you'd like more information about this – or information in other ways - then please let us know.