

Minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held in the Council Chamber, The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely on 12th September 2018 at 5.30pm

P R E S E N T

Councillor David Ambrose Smith (Chairman)
Councillor Allen Alderson
Councillor Christine Ambrose Smith
Councillor Lavinia Edwards
Councillor Lis Every
Councillor Mark Hugo
Councillor Dan Schumann
Councillor Stuart Smith
Councillor Christine Whelan

OFFICERS

Julia Atkins – Senior Environmental Health Officer
Lewis Bage – Communities & Partnerships Manager
Emma Grima – Director, Commercial
Victor Le Grand – Senior Leisure Services Officer
Janis Murfet – Democratic Services Officer
Ian Smith – Finance Manager

14. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from members of the public.

15. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

There were no apologies offered or substitutions made.

16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor David Ambrose Smith declared an interest in Agenda Item No. 8 (Service Level Agreement Funding - Leisure Centres & Sport Facilities, 2018/19: Update Report). He said that he would leave the Chamber prior to consideration of the item and Councillor Every, Vice Chairman, would assume the Chair in his absence.

17. MINUTES

Further to Minute No. 9 (Service Level Agreement Funding - Leisure Centres & Sport Facilities, 2018/19: Update Report), Councillor Hugo thanked Officers for moving on the grant for the Sports Pavilion at Haddenham; this had now been put through and the upgrade would go ahead. Whereupon,

It was resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 26th June 2018 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

18. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman made the following announcements:

- 'Community Eyes & Ears' was being launched at 10.00am in the Cathedral on 13th September 2018. A copy of the in depth booklet was tabled for Members;
- The Environmental Services Manager had asked for the following statement to be read out at Committee:

'Fieldside Café at Littleport Leisure Centre has just become a member of the Healthier Options scheme.

To join the scheme, small businesses must offer healthier food choices. The menus offered by these businesses allow customers an option to choose healthier foods if they want to (or to select the regular items).

The food business must also achieve a hygiene rating of 3, 4 or 5 at unannounced, food hygiene inspections.

Food Safety Officers in the Commercial Team work with the business on making changes to their menus so that the business can apply for membership.

The Scheme runs across Councils in Cambridgeshire in partnership with Cambridgeshire County Council.

Healthier Options members are listed on the Council's website at <http://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/food-safety/healthier-options> and on the scheme's website at <http://www.healthier-options.org.uk/> '

19. BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

The Finance Manager presented a report (reference T90, previously circulated) which provided Members with details of the financial position for services under the Community Services Committee.

He commenced by apologising for a typographical error in paragraph 3.5 of the report; the figure for the projected net revenue outturn expenditure should read £1,623,211.

This was the first quarter report for the 2018/19 financial year and detailed actual expenditure incurred as at 30th June 2018 and current projections as to the year-end position.

Paragraph 3.4 of the report set out the significant variances of actual spend compared to profiled budgeted spend at the end of June.

It was noted that the capital programme was forecast to have an overspend at year end.

This was mainly as a consequence of delays with a third party getting utilities onto the site. Attempts were being made to recover the additional costs caused by the delay from the third party and the overspend would be funded by the use of additional CIL contributions, so it would put no additional burden on the Council's budget position.

It was further noted that the overspend on the equipment fit out would be recovered from the operator as part of the management fee and this too would not impact on the Council's budget position.

It was resolved:

1. To note that this Committee is currently projected to end the year with a balanced budget, with net spend of £1,623,211.
2. To note that the Committee has a projected capital programme outturn of £3,109,562, this being an overspend on the revised budget of £402,595.

20. THE HIVE: PROGRESS REPORT

The Senior Leisure Services Officer presented a report (reference T91, previously circulated) regarding the initial progress of the new leisure centre, The Hive.

It was noted that monthly usage, based on GLL data, had shown an increase of 3,700 visits between June and July, of which 75% was for the pool.

Councillor Schumann joined the meeting at 5.37pm.

Usage of the outdoor pitch and of the sports hall had been slower to take off, but this was expected and was likely to pick up in the autumn. The programme for the hall would develop in its own way and pick up over time.

There remained some operational issues and service quality had not yet reached the levels of consistency expected, but GLL was addressing this and the Senior Leisure Services Officer said he did not want this to overshadow the good news story.

Councillor Whelan said she had been made aware of many complaints regarding the teaching pool and she asked if there were any plans to address them. The Senior Leisure Services Officer replied that the problem was, in part, about programming. There had been a great deal of pressure at the height of the school holidays, but he had already spoken to the GLL Manager about this and lesson programmes would be shifted around to create space. GLL had splash pads at their other sites and this could be looked at, but he felt that it

was a bit early to start moving things around. The only other time of significant pressure was on Sunday mornings.

A certain amount could be done with regard to water confidence, and there had been discussions about the use of inflatables; sessions would be made to feel more accessible. The teaching pool had been designed with flexibility in mind so that it could be used by both children and adults and more could be done to exploit it.

It was resolved:

That the report be noted.

At this point, Councillor David Ambrose Smith vacated the Chamber and Councillor Every assumed the Chair for the following agenda item.

21. SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT FUNDING (LEISURE CENTRES AND SPORT FACILITIES) 2018-19: UPDATE REPORT

The Senior Leisure Services Officer presented a report (reference T92, previously circulated) which sought Member agreement for a revision to a funding allocation for the 2018/19 financial year for leisure centres and sport facilities.

Members were reminded that in June 2018 they had awarded Bottisham Sports Centre (Bottisham Village College) a grant of £1,000 for the purchase of an automated pool vacuum.

A subsequent review by the new sports centre manager indicated that a more powerful machine would be required to be effective, and that the cost would be £3,000. Given the size of the pool and the hours of use, Officers were satisfied that the purpose was sound and the cost proportionate to the anticipated benefit.

As Bottisham is a dual-use (educational/community) facility, recent grant recommendations had assumed that usage of the site was evenly split between the two and that the cost of any enhancements should be divided accordingly. However, as the Committee had already agreed £1,000, it was recommended that the proposed increase of £2,000 be split on a 50:50 basis, on condition that the College (or the centre, from its operating revenue) financed the balance.

Councillor Hugo asked if the applicant had been warned of this and whether they had the £1,000. The Senior Leisure Services Officer replied that he believed they would find the money.

Councillor Christine Ambrose Smith commented that it would be useful in future applications to ask applicants to ensure that they were asking for equipment that would be fit for purpose. The Senior Leisure Services Officer agreed, saying that in this particular case, he thought the original proposal had been slightly hurried. Whereupon,

It was resolved:

That Bottisham Village College be granted an additional £1,000 on condition that the College (or the centre, from its operating revenue) finances the balance.

At this point, Councillor David Ambrose Smith returned to the Chamber and resumed the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

22. PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDER FOR DOG FOULING

The Committee considered a report (reference T93, previously circulated) in which Members were recommended to approve the implementation of a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) for Dog Fouling.

The Senior Environmental Health Officer (EHO) said that a report had been taken to the Regulatory Services Committee on 4th June 2018 and it was agreed that there should be a 6 week consultation period with a view to implementing a PSPO for dog fouling that would apply to the whole of East Cambridgeshire.

The consultation period concluded on 24th July 2018 and results showed that 95% of respondents supported the introduction of a Dog Fouling PSPO. As PSPO's fell within the remit of the Community Services Committee, the matter was therefore being referred on with the recommendation that an Order be implemented with effect from 12th September 2018.

Councillor Whelan wished to know how the scheme would be policed and the Senior EHO said that if Members were minded to approve implementation, there would be a robust publicity campaign to raise awareness. The public would be advised about how to provide good evidence, and 'hot spots' would be patrolled. Councillor Whelan commented that she had found that many dog bins were not being emptied often enough and the Senior EHO said that she would note this and feed it back.

Councillor Hugo believed the proposal to be a good idea, but made the point that although the Parish Council precepted each year, they never had enough money for dog bins. He asked if there was any scheme by which the provision of bins could be accelerated on a short term temporary basis. The Senior EHO said she would feed this back to her department but added that bagged dog waste could be disposed of in normal waste bins.

Councillor Smith asked about the possibility of offering Parish Councils signage for the dog bins. The Senior EHO replied that £1,000 had been put aside for signage; she asked Members to provide her with information so that fouling 'hot spots' could be investigated.

It was resolved unanimously;

That the Public Spaces Protection Order for Dog Fouling be implemented with effect from 12th September 2018.

23. DRAFT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2018-23 AND ACTION PLAN 2018-20

The Communities & Partnerships Manager presented a report from which Members were asked to note and approve the Draft Community Engagement Strategy 2018-2023 and Action Plan 2018-20.

The Strategy (attached as Appendix i to the report) had been developed to ensure that all residents had the opportunity to engage with the Council and have their say regarding the services and resources they needed. It aimed to ensure that effective mechanisms were in place to support strong, active and inclusive communities. It outlined what community engagement was, the various forms it could take and its benefits.

The Strategy identified the following principles for the Council to adopt to ensure that effective community engagement was achieved:

- Ensure appropriate and accessible methods of engagement are in place and utilised to maximise participation;
- Ensure that community engagement is embedded into everyday Council life and is used to inform service delivery and strategic direction;
- Provide timely and quality feedback to consultees so that they know how their views have made a difference;
- Use innovative and creative mechanisms to engage with people whose voices aren't always heard;
- Ensure the views and knowledge of partners, stakeholders and communities are considered in relation to services that relate to them
Improve community engagement skills and increase awareness of the tools available to Council staff and members to enhance the quality of consultation and engagement activity.

Appendix ii to the report contained the Action Plan, which set out how the Council would ensure that effective engagement was in place.

Councillor Hugo thought the Strategy to be a good document, but questioned how it would change what had been happening in the past. Using the Local Plan as an example, he said this was a very emotive subject. The Council had gone through the process of calling for land and holding consultations with the villages, and Haddenham had 'put its mark in the sand' regarding what it wished to accept in the way of development in the future. It was felt that those views had been largely ignored and he was concerned that this gave a very bad view of the Council's engagement process. It was a problem and there was a need to get people back on side, particularly in the light of localism.

The Director Commercial agreed that planning was always emotive, but there was a statutory process regarding engagement and the Emerging Local Plan was still going through Examination at the moment. Page 15 of the Strategy document set out what the Council would actively do with regard to

planning and how engagement would take place. Whilst a strand regarding localism could be inserted, it would not stop material considerations and could not supersede the statutory process.

Councillor Hugo replied that while he had a great relationship with the planners, he sometimes felt there was a 'pass everything' attitude, almost as though everything would be granted planning permission. He believed that localism was not being given due regard when an application was approved despite it not being supported by the Parish Council and the local Members. He also made the point that applications were often called in to Planning Committee by Members from outside the Parish.

The Chairman called for a momentary adjournment in order to confer with the Director Commercial and they duly left the Chamber at 6.05pm.

Upon their return at 6.06pm, the Chairman said that determination of this item would be deferred to the next Committee meeting, so that Councillor Hugo's comments could be taken on board.

Councillor Schumann suggested that the Council should consider more creative methods of engagement with parish councils, in addition to Parish Conferences. Councillor Alderson agreed, adding that he wanted parish councils to be represented as an example stakeholder on the diagram illustrating Methods of Engagement.

Councillor Every thanked the Communities & Partnerships Manager for the huge amount of work that he had put into the documents, and assured him that Members' comments were not intended as a criticism.

There being no further comments,

It was resolved:

That, in the light of comments made by Members, consideration of the Draft Community Engagement Strategy 2018-2023 and Action Plan 2018-20 be deferred to allow for further discussion to take place.

24. FORWARD AGENDA PLAN

The Committee reviewed the Community Services Forward Agenda Plan.

Councillor Schumann asked for an update, having asked for the Tourism Strategy to be included on the Plan for the meeting of Committee in November 2018, and noting that it was not there. He also remembered Councillor Every bringing up the Masterplans and asking if the Community Services Committee would be involved in them.

The Director Commercial replied that the Masterplans would go to Full Council; the Community & Partnerships Manager was working hard to develop the Tourism Strategy and it would be brought to Committee either in November 2018 or January 2019.

It was resolved;

That the Forward Agenda Plan, and the comments made thereon, be noted.

The meeting closed at 6:10pm.