

ENVIRONMENTAL & LEISURE WORKING GROUP

17 January 2017 at 6.00 p.m.

Present: - Councillors Hitchins (Chairman), English (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Bence, Bicknell, Brooks, Buckland, Cates, Mrs Daniells, Dingemans, Mrs Maconachie, Maconachie, Mrs Neno, Northeast, Mrs Porter, Purchase, Reynolds, Dr Walsh and Warren.

[The following Councillors were absent from the meeting during consideration of the matters referred to at the Minute indicated:- Councillors Buckland, Mrs Maconachie, Purchase and Dr Walsh, Minute 29 (part); and Councillor Bicknell, Minutes 24 to 26.].]

Councillors Bence, Dendle and Chapman were also present at the meeting.

24. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Oliver-Redgate and Wheal.

25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Monitoring Officer has advised Members of interim arrangements to follow when making declarations of interest. They have been advised that for the reasons explained below, they should make their declarations on the same basis as the former Code of Conduct using the descriptions of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

Reasons

- The Council has adopted the government’s example for a new local code of conduct, but new policies and procedures relating to the new local code are yet to be considered and adopted.
- Members have not yet been trained on the provisions of the new local code of conduct.
- The definition of Pecuniary Interests is narrower than the definition of Prejudicial Interests, so by declaring a matter as a Prejudicial Interest, that will cover the requirement to declare a Pecuniary Interest in the same matter.

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Where a Member declares a “Prejudicial Interest” this will, in the interest of clarity for the public, be recorded in the Minutes as a Prejudicial and Pecuniary Interest.

26. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2016 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

27. UPDATE ON LITTLEHAMPTON LEISURE CENTRE

*(During the course of consideration of this item Councillor Bicknell declared a personal interest as he worked for Southern Water.)*

The Principal Landscape Officer circulated a written report update at the meeting which set out progress to date with regard to the development of a new leisure centre in Littlehampton.

Members were informed that:

- Approval of the planning application had been granted on 4 January 2017, subject to conditions, although a further amendment would have to be presented to the Development Control Committee due to the fact that the sewer location required a rotation to the position of the building. It was not anticipated that this would have a significant impact.
- Tree removal works would be carried out during February 2017, prior to the start of the bird nesting season.
- Design work was continuing.
- Identification of different procurement packages would be commencing shortly and Willmott Dixon proposed to meet potential suppliers ahead of the tendering process.
- The project team had met with Willmott Dixon and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics) Sussex to learn how the project would positively impact on the wider community.

In the course of discussion, concern was again expressed that the adequacy of the public convenience provision at the centre would not be sufficient for the use of members of the public who were not using the centre, particularly when coaches arrived and dropped off people for their day visits to Littlehampton. An assurance was given that Freedom Leisure were happy with the arrangements and Environmental Health did not feel there was an under provision of facilities.

In response to a number of questions at the meeting, officers were able to advise that:-

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1. A meeting was scheduled on Monday 23 January 2017 with Sport England, who would be leading on a workshop specifically to deal with their new strategy on the application for funding of the leisure centre.

2. A firm date for the commencement of construction work had still to be confirmed but early indications were that it would be in the late summer.

3. Tree removal work would ensure that only those essential to clearance of the site would be removed. A band of trees would be retained which were close to residential properties and contact would be made with nearby residents to inform them of the works due to take place.

4. The involvement of STEM Sussex was welcomed as an important way of promoting the fields of science, technology, engineering and maths to encourage the take up of those subjects by young people in schools.

5. Although there was no firm date for closure of the Sportsdome, Freedom Leisure had been requested to work to 31 March 2017 and were working to provide facilities for a number of activities at alternative venues.

The Chairman thanked the Principal Landscape Officer for her update.

28 ARUN'S PLAY AREA STRATEGY 2017-2027

The Greenspace & Cleansing Contract & Development Manager advised that the managing of play areas was extremely costly and that a robust strategy was now required to consolidate the Council's resources and ensure that the best value for money was provided to local communities. This report set out what the key aims of the new strategy would be and how the relevant information would be obtained to inform that strategy. It was anticipated that the review would take place during the year, with a draft of the strategy to be presented to the Working Group in the Autumn of 2017 for recommendation to Cabinet for final approval.

In the course of discussion, Members were pleased to hear that the monitoring of play areas would be carried out across evenings, weekends and school holidays to enable a truer picture of useage to be obtained. It was felt that the approach being proposed was sensible but it was requested that if facilities were withdrawn from particular areas then there should be an alternative available within walking distance. Comment was also made that the Town and Parish Councils should be fully consulted and an assurance was given that that would be done.

The Working Group

RECOMMEND TO CABINET

That the Council sets out a 10 year sustainable Play Area Strategy based on

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- (a) aligning the strategy with the Council’s agreed 2020 Vision;
- (b) the aims identified in Section 3 of the report; and
- (c) the process outlined in Section 4 of the report.

29. NO COST LITTER AND DOG FOULING ENFORCEMENT SERVICE TRIAL

The Environmental Health Manager presented a report which proposed the initiation of a pilot scheme whereby the Council would, at zero cost, participate in a 12 month trial with a trading company wholly owned by East Hampshire District Council to take enforcement action in relation to litter and dog fouling offences. Members were advised that the benefit of undertaking this trial was that it could be tested to ascertain its financial sustainability for all parties prior to making any long term decisions. A further report would come back to the Working Group prior to the conclusion of the trial with options for a way forward.

The Working Group applauded the initiative of the Environment Health Manager in sourcing this scheme and Members were unanimous in their support. It was requested that an update report be provided in 6 months from the commencement of the trial.

It was suggested that a publicity exercise be undertaken to inform public awareness and that the Town and Parish Councils be provided with the relevant information for inclusion in their newsletters. The Cabinet Member for Environmental Services contributed to the debate by advising that, following the replacement of the lamp posts in the District by West Sussex County Council, new notices would be produced and reworded to make people aware of their responsibilities and he hoped that every Ward Councillor would have 10 of these to put up where they would provide the most benefit.

Following a full discussion, with a number of questions being responded to by the Environmental Health Manager, the Working Group

RECOMMEND TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES AND THE CABINET MEMBER FOR LEISURE AND AMENITIES

That, by way of Individual Cabinet Member decision, authorisation be given to participate in a litter and dog fouling enforcement trial, including delegation of enforcement powers to East Hampshire District Council and delegation to officers to enter into an agency agreement.

(The meeting concluded at 7.45 pm)