

ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE WORKING GROUP

27 November 2018 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors Hitchins (Chairman), Warren (Vice-Chair), Ambler, Brooks, Cates, Mrs Daniells, Dingemans, Mrs Neno, Oliver-Redgate, Dr Walsh and Wells

Apologies: Councillor Bicknell

21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made:-

Agenda Item 8, Events Policy & Procedures 2018

Councillor Brooks - personal interest in the event that discussion might stray into areas that his Company was involved in.

Councillor Mrs Neno – personal interest as a charity fundraiser for events in the District.

Councillor Wells - personal interest as Chairman of Bognor Regis BID

Councillor Dr Walsh – personal as Chairman of Littlehampton Town Council Events Subcommittee

Agenda Item 7 – Strategic Vision for the Future of Public Convenience Services in Arun – Update Report

Councillors Dr Walsh and Warren – personal interest as member of Littlehampton Town Council, which had a partnership arrangement with Norfolk Gardens

22. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2018 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to deletion of Councillor Brooks as having presented his apologies as he was in fact present at the meeting.

The Group Head of Community Wellbeing apologised for having given incorrect information at the meeting with regard to the fact that he had advised there were no acoustic panels in the Sports Hall at the new Littlehampton Swimming Centre – there were.

23. LITTLEHAMPTON LEISURE CENTRE UPDATE

The Working Group received a written report and a slide presentation from the Principle Landscape and Project Officer which provided a visual update showing the progress of the works to Littlehampton Leisure Centre.

The following comments were made:-

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- Serious concerns were expressed around the use of blinds in the swimming pool as it was felt they would have a detrimental impact on the views into Mewsbrook Park. The Group Head of Community Wellbeing advised that the blinds were needed to ensure there was no undue glare on the surface of the water as the lifeguards had to be able to see the bottom of the pool at all times. As the blinds were retractable he gave an assurance that they would only be used when required and that that would be included in the operating instructions for Freedom Leisure.
- A question was asked with regard to the presence of asbestos in the building to be demolished and the Principal Landscape Officer & Project Officer confirmed that there was and that a detailed survey would be undertaken once the building was no longer in use and prior to demolition.
- The Chairman asked if arrangements could be made for the Working Group to have a tour of the new leisure centre in the New Year and the Principal Landscape Officer & Project Officer stated that she would certainly look into that.

The Chairman thanked the Principal Landscape and Project Officer for her update and the Working Group then noted the report.

24. FORESHORES - UPDATE

(During the course of discussion on this item, Councillor Dr Walsh declared a personal interest as a Governor of the RNLI and as a member of the Littlehampton Harbour Board.)

The Working Group received a comprehensive written report from the Wellbeing Services Manager on the work of the Foreshores Service together with a summary of the 2018 Season.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Clayden as Cabinet Member for Wellbeing congratulated the Foreshores Team on their sterling work in keeping the beaches safe all year round but particularly during the extremely busy summer season due to the wonderful weather everybody had benefited from.

The Working Group then participated in a question and answer session with the Wellbeing Services Manager which covered a variety of issues as follows.

- Defibrillators – questions were asked with regard to the location of these on the seafront and how could they be accessed. Officer advice was given that there were defibrillators in the Foreshore Offices; however, a request was made that additional locations be investigated, in particular the East Beach Café at Littlehampton, as time was of the essence and that signage should be provided to inform the public of the locations of the equipment. The Wellbeing Services Manager confirmed that he would look into the matter.
- Comment was made in respect of the use of shingle on the beach at Bognor Regis and the resultant difficulties with access to the beach.

- Complaints had been received regarding the matter of jet skis and Members expressed their concerns. The Wellbeing Services Manager acknowledged that jet skis were a problem, which had been exacerbated by the good summer and the increasing numbers coming into the District. It was proving difficult to catch them and Members were advised that should they come across any issues they should notify the Coastguard. Work was being undertaken to try to address the problem and improved signage was being provided but it was acknowledged that it was a difficult matter to resolve.
- West Sussex County Council had withdrawn permits to enable the Foreshore Staff to park on-street and concern was expressed that this would have a detrimental impact on the staff's ability to carry out their duties. It was agreed that this would be taken up with the County Council.
- Member comment was made that there used to be a scheme for lost children and was that something that could be looked at again? Also, the RNLI used to provide a service over the two weekends over Easter and would it be possible to reintroduce that? The Wellbeing Services Manager advised that he would look at those issues but did highlight the cost implications of providing lifeguards if the weather was bad and they were not required.

In closing the discussion, the Chairman asked for and was duly given the Working Group's endorsement in thanking the Wellbeing Manager and his team for their excellent work and, also, tribute was paid to the work of the RNLI.

The Working Group noted the report.

25. STRATEGIC VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCE SERVICES IN ARUN - UPDATE

(In the course of discussion on this item, Councillor Dr Walsh re-declared his personal interest made at the start of the meeting.)

The Working Group received an information and update report from the Property, Estates & Facilities Manager on the Strategic Vision for the Future of Public Convenience Services in Arun. He provided a verbal correction to the report that the original recommendation had been approved by Cabinet on 12 February 2018 and not 2012.

Members were advised that good progress was being made with the public convenience programme and it was anticipated that phase 1 and phase 2 of the works would be fully operational by Christmas, with £290,000 being available for further improvements in 2019/20.

In considering this item, Members participated in some discussion around the following:-

- Norfolk Gardens – it was welcomed that work had now started and that these facilities would not be subject to seasonal opening as they were a popular amenity throughout the year, not just during the summer months.

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- North Street Wick – it was agreed that the Council would re-contact the Traders Association with regard to the provision of a community toilet scheme in the vicinity.
- Bedford Street – due to the problems around anti-social behaviour in this locality, discussion centred on improvements that could be undertaken. Officer advice was given that a full re-design to incorporate a new build was being investigated.
- Arundel Crown Yard – A concern was raised that the report had stated that Crown Yard might be used for something other than car parking, which was already an issue in Arundel. The Property, Estates & Facilities Manager stated that he was not dealing with that but as far as he was aware no decisions had as yet been made.
- Snooks Corner – signage would be looked at.
- Facilities for disabled children were raised and an officer response given that that was something the Council would wish to do, subject to budget requirements.

In the course of further discussion, comments were made with regard to advertising and the Property, Estates & Facilities Manager stated that was being taken forward.

The Chairman thanked the Property, Estates & Facilities Manager and the Environmental Services & Strategy Manager for their input and work to improve the service and the Working Group noted the report.

26. EVENTS POLICY & PROCEDURE 2018

The Working Group was advised by the Environmental Services & Strategy Manager that the Council's Events Policy & Procedures had been developed with the aim of ensuring a fair, transparent and consistent approach to event management within the District. This report sought Member approval for the full Events Policy & Procedures document.

It was highlighted that the number of events applied for and held on Council land was increasing year on year and it was important for the Council to have fair, transparent and consistent policies and procedures to support any event application and management process. Members were also reminded that the Council supported community events through not charging for any such events and that a huge amount of "in kind" contributions were made via insurance, grant funding and officer time.

Following consideration of the Policy by the Working Group and Cabinet, consultation would be undertaken with key stakeholders and any recurring feedback would be considered and the policy revised in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services.

The Environmental Services & Strategy Manager took this opportunity to introduce Jenny McMann to the meeting as she had recently been appointed as the Council's Events Management & Marketing Officer.

Members then participated in some discussion around the following:-

- Fly posting and street clutter – it was agreed that further clarity would be included in the Policy.
- Right of Appeal – it was agreed that this would be revisited.

In view of the issues raised by Members, the Environmental Services & Strategy Manager reiterated and reassured Members that the Policy would be going out to consultation and if major concerns were raised, would be reviewed in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and revised accordingly. It was also acknowledged that for profit and commercial events they needed to be charged appropriately and a flexible approach applied so as not to make events unviable. The increased footfall of successful events was acknowledged as a benefit to the local economy.

The Working Group then

RECOMMEND TO CABINET – That

(1) the draft Events Policy & Procedures be adopted; and

(2) future amendments or revisions, which do not constitute a wholesale change in Policy or procedure, can be made in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services.

(The meeting concluded at 7.35 pm)