

ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE WORKING GROUP

27 February 2020 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors Mrs Staniforth (Chairman), Brooks (Vice-Chair), Bicknell, Mrs Catterson, Clayden, Dixon, Gunner, Huntley, Kelly and Mrs Worne

Apologies: Councillors Chapman and Ms Thurston

13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Brooks declared a Personal Interest in item 6 [Cemeteries Regulations & Procedures] as he personally knows one of the Cemetery Managers.

14. MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting held on 7 November 2019 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

15. LOCAL COMMUNITY NETWORK UPDATE

In agreement with the Chairman the Working Group agreed that due to a late apology received from the NHS representative that this item should be deferred to the next meeting of the Working Group to allow for a more meaningful discussion to be had.

The Working Group

RESOLVED – That

- 1) this report be deferred to the next meeting of the Working Group

16. CEMETERIES POLICY

The Environmental Services and Strategy Manager drew Members attention to section 1.4 of the report where he summarised that the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) was commissioned in 2018 to undertake a review of its services. In the main review it confirmed that the service was operating well with effective systems and compliance. It did highlight the following:

- Staffing was lower than expected in respect of the size and responsibilities of the service

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- There was a need to update and review service regulations and procedures

As well as the above and to further inform the review of the regulations, procedures, fees and charges, the Parks and Cemeteries Manager had completed benchmarking against other local and neighbouring authorities.

The Parks and Cemeteries Manager then drew Members attention to the following:

- Encouraging biodiversity within cemeteries with the introduction of wild flower areas
- Grave allocation & ownership, regulations now define how and when out of rotation purchases of graves may be undertaken at additional cost
- New regulations for Lawn sections
- Scattering of ashes to be allowed at designated places at Council cemeteries
- The proposal that specific areas are set aside and suitably landscaped to provide an appropriate location for deceased children
- New regulations relating to memorials and memorial installation, requirements that monumental masons provide:
 - Membership of a trade body
 - Copies of testing certificates evidencing compliance for ground anchor systems
 - Copies and receipt of public liability insurance held
 - Copies of guarantee provided to memorial and/or grave owner

A full debate took place with Members raising the following points:

- In relation to section 1.5.7 of the report a number of questions and concerns were raised, officers gave assurances that the ICCM had agreed that ADC's proposed measures in relation to memorial safety were 'entirely reasonable and went further than most'. It was agreed that a meeting would be arranged with Members who wanted to attend with Officers to discuss these concerns in more detail
- Concerns in relation to why there had been an increase in fees were raised. It was explained that on completing the benchmarking exercise it was highlighted that the Council's fees were significantly lower than other local authorities and with the Council's desire to make the improvements that had been detailed within the report it was felt that the increases were justified.
- A question was asked in relation to the cost of the work needed at Bognor Regis Chapel. It was explained that this question would require an answer from the Properties & Estates Team. The Working Group agreed to accept a written response at a later date.

The Working Group

RECOMMEND to Cabinet – That

- a) From 1 April 2020 Arun District Council does adopt the proposed Cemeteries Regulations and all procedures as outlined in this report.
- b) The new associated fees & charges as outlined in the report are approved for implementation from April 2020.
- c) The service enhancements & projects identified within the report are endorsed and where appropriate, delivery will be considered as part of the Council's future annual budget setting
- d) Future changes and amendments to the regulations, procedures and fees & charges, can be made in consultation with the Cabinet Member with delegated responsibility for Cemeteries.
- e) Within 12 months following the Councils adoption of these regulations, the Cemeteries Service shall submit to the ICCM a request for Arun, as a burial authority, to become a member of the Charter for the Bereaved, which further enhances the Council's reputation as a modern, compassionate, lawfully and legally compliant Cemeteries Service provider.

17. ENFORCEMENT CONTRACT UPDATE

The Environmental Services & Strategy Manager advised Members that since 2017 Arun District Council (ADC) had provided environmental enforcement services through an agency agreement with East Hampshire District Council (EHDC) and that the report was seeking a recommendation to Cabinet to extend the agreement for a further 2 years from 15 May 2020 to 14 May 2022.

He went on to advise that throughout the one-year trial agreed in May 2017, the delegation of enforcement powers given to EHDC to enable their officers to undertake littering enforcement across the district with a focus on Town Centres was an immediate success and subsequently extended in December 2017 for further two-year period up until 15 May 2020. He also drew Members attention to the fact that neighbouring authority Chichester District Council also commenced the scheme in November 2017 with EHDC.

The Cleansing Services Manager drew Members attention to the current statistics section of the report (2.0), he advised that the contract was efficient, that EH Commercial Services Ltd are recognised as a good performer given their 100% prosecution rate and highlighted that they are also recognised by the courts as the lead for best practice for Single Justice Procedure. He further highlighted the work the officers complete regarding education for under 18's, vulnerable adults and non-UK residents where tickets could have been issued and that they have been shortlisted for an award in the Public Service category at the 2020 LGC awards.

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The Environmental Services & Strategy Manager confirmed that in extending the agreement for a further two-years, EHDC had offered a share on any income beyond the point at which operating costs are covered. This money would then be ringfenced for reinvestment in targeted additional enforcement and educational patrols against dog fouling, breaches of dog controls and other littering offences.

Members took part in a full debate and asked a number of questions of which have been summarised below;

- A request to see some benchmarking in future reports for comparison purposes was made
- Confirmation of the cost of the agreement was sought, this was confirmed as zero cost to ADC
- Overflowing bins at fast food outlets was a concern highlighted, it was advised to Members that ADC do have a Street Scene Enforcement Officer who they should report incidents like this to and a visit to the premises would be made, however this was confirmed as a separate service to the EHDC agreement
- Concerns regarding dog fouling were also raised and addressed
- A question was raised at how much income this agreement could approximately bring in, it was confirmed that it was expected to be approximately £12,000 and this would be ringfenced for use within the programme as explained previously

The Working Group

RECOMMEND to Cabinet – That

- 1) the agency agreement with East Hampshire District Council is extended for a further two years from 15 May 2020 until 14 May 2022.
- 2) the charging model of the agreement is amended, as outlined in the report. This is in order to provide Arun District Council with greater flexibility and options for additional targeted enforcement activities.

18. REPORT BACK FROM CABINET/FULL COUNCIL

The Chairman confirmed that the previous recommendations made at the last meeting on 7 November 2019 to Cabinet and Full Council for consideration were;

- 1) **Minute 9 [Urgent Item – Bognor Regis Disc Parking Scheme]** had been withdrawn as this had been superseded by the resolution made at the last Full Council meeting held on 13 November 2019 [Minute 300 – Bognor Regis Regeneration Sub-Committee of 28 October 2019 referred].

- 2) **Minute 12 – Climate Change** – Cabinet agreed with and resolved the recommendation.

19. WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20

The Committee Manager advised Members that as this meeting was the last for this municipal year, that officers would present a draft work programme at the first meeting in the new municipal year for their review.

The Chairman agreed that Members could present suggestions for the new work programme for her to collate and pass on to officers ahead of the next meeting.

(The meeting concluded at 7.23 pm)