

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4b

Minutes of a meeting of the Asset Development Committee held in the Committee Room 2, The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely on 20th June 2016 at 4:00pm

P R E S E N T

Councillor Bill Hunt (Chairman)
Councillor David Chaplin
Councillor Steve Cheetham
Councillor Lorna Dupré
Councillor Coralie Green
Councillor Mathew Shuter
Councillor Lisa Stubbs

O T H E R S

Maggie Camp – Legal Services Manager
Spencer Clark – Open Spaces & Facilities Manager
John Hill – Chief Executive
Phil Rose – Local Authority Trading Company
Adrian Scaites-Stokes – Democratic Services Officer
1 member of the public

3. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Mr Griffin put a number of questions to the Chairman:

Question 1: Do all Local Authority assets, be they land, buildings or otherwise, automatically fall within the scope of the Asset Development Committee or feature on the asset development programme?

The Chief Executive, on behalf of the Chairman, explained that operational assets were separated from non-operational ones. Non-operational ones were those that were not used to deliver a Council service, though the line between the two types could become blurred in some cases. The asset development programme only included sites that could potentially be designated for disposal, though that designation was open to change.

Mr Griffin asked a supplementary question about the designations for disposal which could be expanded to cover any site but nobody would be made aware of that. The Chief Executive agreed to provide a written answer on this question.

Question 2: How long do assets remain on the programme before being considered either for planning or removal?

The Chief Executive clarified that the programme listed the sites that were actively being looked at. For example, the Vineyards site had been identified as part of the programme and had come to this Committee for consideration. However, as that site was no longer wanted it had been removed.

The Chairman stated that if any assets were mentioned for inclusion in the programme a preliminary discussion with officers was undertaken and then if it was deemed that further consideration was needed it was put in the programme.

Question 3: Is there a publicly available inventory of assets?

The Open Spaces and Facilities Manager confirmed that a full list was available via the Council's website.

The Chairman said that there were potentially thousands of assets that could be included, as there were many little parcels of land throughout the district, so a comprehensive list was very difficult to produce.

4. **APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

There were no apologies or substitutions.

5. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

6. **MINUTES**

It was resolved:

That the minutes of the Asset Development Committee meeting held on 23rd March 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

Councillor Carolie Green asked when the scope and terms of reference for the review of public conveniences would be ready. The Chief Executive informed the Committee that the Director Commercial was working on that in conjunction with the City of Ely Council. This should be ready by the end of the summer, ready for approval by the end of the year.

7. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman made the following announcement:

- The Council had secured the freehold for the car park extension at Angel Drove. This should produce an additional 140 parking spaces, which would be nearer the railway station, and would be charged at the same rate as the existing car park. There would also be a safer and more viable pathway from the car parks to the station. For a few months the 'unofficial' path used by commuters would be closed whilst building works were ongoing.

Councillor David Chaplin joined the meeting at this point, 4:16pm.

8. **ASSET MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME 2015/16**

The Committee considered a report, reference R26, previously circulated, that updated Members on the Asset Management Planned Maintenance Programme for 2015/16 including spend to date.

The Open Spaces and Facilities Manager advised the Committee that over the last twelve months 84% of the programme had been achieved. One major expense related to the Grange boiler, but this had produced considerable savings on the heating bills. A lot of the programme had been about making buildings safe and compliant, and a new policy on legionella was being worked on. There had been one unplanned matter which had been undertaken, this referred to a roadway in Witchford.

Councillor Lorna Dupré still found the format of the report difficult to navigate, particularly in relation to some figures quoted as they did not add up. The report did not make it clear what the figures for the committed spend compared to the final spend were. These needed to be presented clearer.

The Open Spaces and Facilities Manager accepted there was an ongoing issue with the format of the report and this was being looked at alongside Councillor Lisa Stubbs. There was a time lag between the figures for the committed spend and when the bills were actually paid, which might account for the disparity in the figures shown.

Councillor Steve Cheetham noted there was a variance in the figures and questioned where this had come from. Would the expense used on Barton Road, £25K for fees and advice, be charged to the new Trading Company? The Chief Executive explained that £199K had been expected to be used from Council reserves to help cover any unplanned works. There was some concern about the expected spend, as the annual budget should show the figures for that without including any contribution from the reserves. Some of the costs incurred for Barton Road would be looked at and could be charged to the Trading Company if the project proceeded.

It was resolved:

That the actual spend to the end of March 2016 as set out in Appendix 2 be noted.

9. **ASSET MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME 2016/17**

The Committee considered a report, reference R27, previously circulated, that updated Members on the Asset Management Planned Maintenance Programme for 2016/17 including spend to date.

The Open Spaces and Facilities Manager advised the Committee that a start had been made on the programme, which included a lot of work that was done year-in year-out. The main work scheduled related to Ely Museum, following a survey completed last year that highlighted a number of issues. If the Museum gained lottery funding it would look to change the building, so the Council would

be looking to tap into this work to help keep costs down. The other major expense was in regard to the travellers' site sewage treatment plant in Wentworth. The plant was at the end of its life and was now only working on one pump. It would be difficult to fit in the new plant, as it was bigger than the existing, but it was needed as the septic tanks were imploding and the plant had to remain compliant with the Water Board.

Councillor Bill Hunt thought that, as the work would be expensive and substantial, a full and detailed report should be present to the next Committee meeting. As there were only eight pitches on the site, it worked out quite expensive, so the income received from the site should be included for consideration.

Councillor Mathew Shuter queried the legionella remedial works, that overall worked out quite expensive. The Open Spaces and Facilities Manager revealed that this issue had been highlighted by the new Health and Safety officer and had been made a priority. Although there was a low risk of legionella, testing needed to be done monthly in-house and the remedial works would only be a one-off cost. Councillor Bill Hunt thought the Committee needed to know a summary of the work involved relating to the legionella remedial works and asked that a report be brought back.

Councillor Lisa Stubbs questioned why £4K had not been brought forward for play ground maintenance. With regard to non-operational properties and their costs, would Ely Museum be making a contribution to their maintenance costs? It would also be useful to know the specifics on income for properties with tenants. Who covered the properties at the E-Space facilities and who decided what happened to them? Why had Spirus been paid additional fees?

The Open Spaces and Facilities Manager stated that the £4K had been transferred from Sanctuary but had not been spent last year so consequently it had been removed from the programme. There was an ongoing review about properties with tenants with the aim of tying them in together. The E-Space properties were dealt with under an historic arrangement. The Spirus payment related to the Barton Road site and referred to a public exhibition to be held.

The report recommendations plus the two requests for further reports were agreed by the Committee.

It was resolved:

- (i) That the actual spend to the end of March 2016 as set out in Appendix 2 be noted;
- (ii) That the Open Spaces and Facilities Manager be instructed to present an asset maintenance report about the Wentworth travellers' site and provide an update on the legionella remedial works being undertaken, at the next meeting.

10. **ANNUAL REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

The Committee considered a report, reference R28, previously circulated, that updated Members on the Asset Management Planned Maintenance Programme for 2015/16 including spend to date.

The Democratic Services Officer reminded the Committee about the role of the Outside Bodies and that this Committee only had responsibility for one, as shown in Appendix 1 to the report. Every year representatives were requested to provide a written report on the activity of those Outside Bodies and that report was included as Appendix 2. Unfortunately the report did not give any details.

The Chief Executive would contact Councillor Julia Huffer, the Council's Representative, to provide a written report. Making Assets Count's policy aspirations were not consistent with this Council's ambitions and, as part of the Devolution agenda, a Public Land Board would be sent up and it could be anticipated that Making Assets Count might not operate once that Board was created.

It was resolved:

That the Annual Report from the appointed Council representative on the activities and manner in which funding is spent by this outside body within the responsibility of the Asset Development Committee be noted.

11. **FORWARD AGENDA PLAN**

The Committee considered its forward agenda plan.

The forward agenda plan was received.

12. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC INCLUDING REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PRESS**

It was resolved:

That the press and public be excluded during the consideration of items 11 to 13 because it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during the item(s) there would be disclosure to them of exempt information of Category 3 of Part I Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

13. **LAND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY – PARISH OF SOHAM**

The Committee considered an Exempt report, reference R29, previously circulated, that detailed some proposals relating to a land development opportunity in Soham.

The Chief Executive advised the Committee that most of the work relating to the site had been undertaken by the Strategic Land Advisor from the Local Authority Trading Company and he was asked to present the report.

The Strategic Land Advisor advised the Committee that the report related to the development of a site in Soham. Investigations had been carried out and it had been found to be a good prospect for development, a proposal which had gained local Member support. A planning application was likely to be successful and there would be local benefits for the community. If the application were successful the land would be developed by the Trading Company, if agreed.

Councillor Lorna Dupré thought the new site assessment form used was excellent, as it gave the necessary information for a decision to be made. There had been some concern expressed about the site over potential noise problems, but this should not be an issue.

Councillor Mathew Shuter was worried about the legal aspects of managing the development and requested a copy of any legal advice given. Councillor Lisa Stubbs wanted more information about the relevant financial matters and where the money would go. Councillor Coralie Green re-iterated her previously made point about including information about the potential social impact on the community.

The Strategic Land Advisor and Chief Executive answered these queries with additional information about the legal, financial and impact aspects of the possible development.

The Strategic Land Advisor left the meeting at 5:15pm, so the Committee could debate the issues. The Committee agreed to the recommendations with the addition of a further condition to address its concerns.

It was resolved:

That the recommendations within the report be agreed, subject to a further condition.

The Strategic Land Advisor returned to the meeting.

14. **LAND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND ASSET DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE 2016/17**

The Committee considered an Exempt report, reference R30, previously circulated, that provided an update on land development opportunities and the asset development programme.

The Strategic Land Adviser advised the Committee about a number of potential development opportunities and their current status. Additional information was provided by the Legal Services Manager and the Chairman of the Committee.

It was resolved:

That the progress in relation to the Land Development Opportunities and Asset Development Programme be noted.

15. **EXEMPT MINUTES**

It was resolved:

That the exempt minutes of the Asset Development Committee meetings held on 1st February 2016 and 23rd March 2016 be confirmed as correct records and be signed by the Chairman.

The meeting concluded at 5:35pm.