



EAST
CAMBRIDGESHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM NO. x

Minutes of a meeting of the Asset Development Committee held in the Council Chamber, The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely on 4th December 2017 at 4:00pm.

PRESENT

Councillor Bill Hunt (Chairman)
Councillor Christine Ambrose Smith
Councillor Paul Cox
Councillor Lorna Dupré
Councillor Lis Every (as a Substitute)
Councillor Mathew Shuter
Councillor Lisa Stubbs

IN ATTENDANCE

Maggie Camp – Legal Services Manager and Monitoring Officer
Spencer Clark – Open Spaces & Facilities Manager
Emma Grima – Director Commercial
Phil Rose – East Cambs Trading Company
Adrian Scaites-Stokes – Democratic Services Officer
Elie Hughes – Ely Museum

26. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions.

27. **APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

No apologies for absence were received.
Councillor Lis Every substituted for Councillor Andy Pearson.

28. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

29. **MINUTES**

It was resolved:

That the minutes of the Asset Development Committee meeting held on 9th October 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

30. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman made the following announcements:

- The period for submissions of interest in the Mepal Outdoor Centre closed this afternoon. The Working Party would be considering and evaluating those received at its meeting on 18th December.
- A presentation would be given at this meeting from Ely Museum about its future plans.
- The new public car park at The Dock was now open and had proved an immediate success. It had been expected that there would be moderate use initially but already it was receiving substantial use with occupancy rates of 60%, 70% or 80% with the older car park at similar levels of higher. Customers had expressed delight with the new car park. Prices for parking there would remain frozen for 18 months.
- There was a mistake in the report relating to the new Littleport car park, as it should have read the opening would be January **2018**. However, the car park would actually be opening early, on 22nd December 2017, ahead of schedule.

Councillor Lorna Dupré had used The Dock car park and had been rather pleased with it but noted that no information had been put up about prices on the machines. This information was needed.

31. **PRESENTATION: UPDATE ON ELY MUSEUM PLANS**

Councillor Lis Every, the Chairman of the Ely Museum Trustees, introduced Elie Hughes, the Museum Curator.

Elie Hughes advised the Committee that the Museum would be undertaking a development project, funded via the Heritage Lottery. This funding would allow the development of plans for submission in August 2018, in attempt to release £1.6 million in funding. An architect and other professionals had been hired to assist in drawing up the plans, which could be reported back to this Committee in February.

The plans involved extending the existing building upwards. This new floor would house the back-of-house systems as well as providing an educational facility. The main building would be refurbished by reconfiguring the ground floor, replacing the current glass entrance, restoring the windows, highlighting architectural features and remodelling the garden. The new galleries introduced would focus on the history of the fens including their drainage. Upstairs there would be information on trades, farming, the jail and history up to the 20th century. The Museum would also act as a 'heritage hub', to help visitors find out about the area and signpost them to other attractions in the area.

The plans were being built up and consultation with various local groups was being done, to help influence the design. An activity plan was also being created and aimed to reach out to other local locations. These would be included in a substantial business case ready for submission.

The next steps would involve going back to the Heritage Lottery Fund, after raising match funding during the Spring, with an application. Then there will be a waiting period through to December for an answer. It was hoped that, all being well, work could start in January 2019.

Councillor Bill Hunt reminded the Committee that the Council was the freeholder of the Museum and had responsibility for the major structure of the building. The Council also awarded funding to the Museum and clearly had to safeguard the taxpayers' money. The wonderful work done by the Museum was recognised and the Committee would try to be as helpful as possible.

Councillor Lis Every stated that there was a real partnership with the City of Ely Council, which was a major contributor.

Councillor Mathew Shuter noted that museums generally were struggling and wanted to know if people paid to enter and if there was a 'Plan B' if the funding bid failed. Did the Museum link in with the 'Visit Cambridge' initiative? The Museum Curator explained that a charge was made for entry, to help cover running costs, but the rate was not high as it did not wish to make this a barrier to people wanting to visit. There were also multiple concessions in place. The plans being drawn up would stand the Museum in good stead and, if the major funding submission was unsuccessful, the Museum would look to make smaller grant bids to enable some work to be completed. The Museum was confident that the visitor numbers forecast could be achieved but if they should drop off then the situation would be reviewed. The Museum co-ordinated with Tracey Harding concerning Visit Cambridge.

Councillor Christine Ambrose Smith asked whether it had links to the Ely Society and the cathedral. The Curator explained that it acted as a hub and directed visitors to other locations.

32. **PARADISE POOL DECOMMISSIONING**

The Committee considered a report, reference S194 previously circulated, about the demolition of the old Paradise Pool.

The Open Spaces and Facilities Manager reminded the Committee that the Paradise Pool had issues in the past, including youngsters using the flat roof. It would therefore be a difficult building to manage once the new pool opened, as it would have to be boarded up and unused. This would incur some risks of vandalism and costs to patrol it. Therefore it was recommended that it be demolished once it stopped being used to prevent it becoming an eyesore.

Councillor Lorna Dupré acknowledged the health and safety risks if it were not demolished but there would still be risks on the site if this happened and it would still have a negative visual impact. Why would an asbestos survey need to be undertaken?

The proposed asbestos survey would be much more extensive, as it would check what was in the building. Removing the building would leave a clear open site, which would be more acceptable than a deteriorating building.

Councillor Bill Hunt noted that there would be a few days between the closing of the old pool and the opening of the new, to allow staff transfer and training. It would be sensible to demolish the old pool and clear the site to prevent the temptation for vandalism and make it as safe as possible.

It was resolved:

That the Paradise Pool building be demolished as soon as it cease operating.

33. **ASSET MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME 2017-18**

The Committee considered a report, reference S193 previously circulated, updating members on the Asset Management Planned Maintenance Programme for 2017/18 including spend to date.

The Open Spaces and Facilities manager advised the Committee that not much had changed since the last report, though some items had moved on. There had been a number of in-house department moves, the Palace Green Ely toilets had been given a face lift and there would be a number of upgrades in The Grange over the next few weeks. The Council had been working well with Palace Green Homes on the new car parks, which had been delivered on time and to budget.

Councillor Bill Hunt appreciated the co-operation with Palace Green Homes, which had produced an exceptional standard of work for both the new car parks.

It was resolved:

That the actual spend (as at 31st October 2017) as set out in Appendix 1 be noted.

34. **FORWARD AGENDA PLAN**

The Committee considered its Forward Agenda Plan.

The Chief Executive reminded the Committee that there would be an additional item at its February meeting, that being an update on Ely Museum's plans.

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

It was resolved:

That the press and public be excluded during the consideration of the items 11 and 12 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).

36. **LAND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND ASSET DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE 2017/18**

The Committee considered an Exempt report S195, previously circulated, that provided an update on land development opportunities and the asset development programme.

The Committee was advised that although a lot of work was taking place the report appeared 'lighter' than previously. Included within it was a recommendation to formally approve the suspension of a feasibility study for one site.

The Barton Road site was progressing well, with the development being delivered in two parts. The superstructures had been completed with work now up to the first floor level. It was anticipated that the apartments would be available for sale from January 2018. The house sales would be held back until the show home was completed.

A good start had been made with the Soham site, with the foundations completed and the superstructure going up. The car park at the Dock Ely had gone well and it was expected that the new Littleport car park would be opening during December.

Councillor Bill Hunt wanted to ensure that residents near Barton Road were kept fully advised on progress. He was concerned that people should refer to the Paradise Pool as the 'old pool', so as not to confuse it with the Paradise Centre.

It was resolved:

That the progress in relation to the Land Development Opportunities and Asset Development Programme be noted and that the suspension of a feasibility study be approved.

37. **EXEMPT MINUTES – 9th OCTOBER 2017**

It was resolved:

That the Exempt Minutes of the meeting held on 9th October 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman

The meeting concluded at 4:45pm.