

Minutes of a meeting of the Asset Development Sub-Committee
held in the Council Chamber, The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely
on Thursday 12th March 2015 at 4:00pm

PRESENT

Councillor Bill Hunt (Chairman)
Councillor Lis Every
Councillor Sheila Friend-Smith, MBE
Councillor Tony Goodge
Councillor Elaine Griffin-Singh
Councillor Richard Hobbs
Councillor Neil Morrison (as Substitute for Councillor Pauline Wilson)

OFFICERS

Maggie Camp – Solicitor
Julie Cornwell – Partnerships Officer
Rob Fysh – Team Leader Building Control
John Hill – Chief Executive
Adrian Scaites-Stokes – Democratic Services Officer

52. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

53. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Councillor Pauline Wilson. Councillor Neil Morrison substituted for her for this meeting.

54. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

55. MINUTES

It was resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 21st January 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

56. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The Sub-Committee had agreed to the transfer of a play area land to Stretham Parish Council. It had written a letter, read out by the Democratic Services Officer, expressing its thanks and the opportunity this had given to bid for funding for a new play area to provide better facilities for the children of Stretham.

- Pigeon holes had now been installed in the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Group offices. Too much money was being wasted on postage and, although the Council could not instigate a change in how to deliver documents to individual members unless requested to, Members were encouraged to avail themselves of the new service by contacting the Principal Democratic Services Officer to arrange. Documents could still be posted immediately or they could be left in the pigeon holes until collected up to each Friday, when they would be posted out. Members would be also emailed with a link to the version published on the Council's website. This change had the potential to save the Council around £970 per year.
- Network Rail wished to obtain access to their bridge near the sewerage works in Ely for maintenance works. They would need two parking spaces in the Fishermans Car Park for their equipment and it was suggested that these be offered free of charge, providing the cost of the Council's legal expenses plus any damage caused were covered. The Sub-Committee had no objections to this suggestion.
- Fencing around public open space in Little Thetford, funded in conjunction with the Parish Council, would be installed in about one week's time. The residents had been informed.
- The Council was using leaflets to promote the skills of its staff and the availability of providing a playground inspection service to Parish Councils.

57. **TRANSFER OF LAND KNOWN AS THE PADDOCKS, LITTLEPORT TO LITTLEPORT PARISH COUNCIL**

The Committee considered a report, reference P210, previously circulated, which outlined the transfer of the land known as "the Paddocks" Littleport to Littleport Parish Council.

The Solicitor advised the Sub-Committee that this matter had been before the Sub-Committee back in December 2013, when a decision had been made to transfer the land to Littleport Parish Council. The Parish Council had raised comments about the transfer, as it wanted to build a community facility on that land. In reviewing the Sub-Committee decision it was felt that the decision did not include for this, therefore it had been brought back with a recommendation to allow this.

Councillor Neil Morrison was happy that the Parish Council would obtain this site, as the original Section 106 agreement from 1996 had permitted the building of a community centre. This permission had subsequently been removed, so it was very pleasing that it would now be granted as Littleport was running out of places for the community.

It was resolved:

That the open space land known as the Paddocks is transferred from Cannon Kirk (the developer) to the District Council and then the land is transferred from the District Council to Littleport Parish Council. The transfer of the land from the District Council to Littleport Parish Council is to include a restriction that prevents development except for development that serves community uses falling within Use Classes D1 and D2 of The Town and Country Planning (Use Class) Order 1987.

58. **ASSET MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered a report, reference P211, previously circulated, which sought to update Members on the proposed Asset Management Planned Maintenance Programme for 2014/15 (as approved by the Asset Development Committee on 16th April 2014), including spend to date.

The Chief Executive advised the Sub-Committee that there was currently an underspend but there was some big expense to come, relating to replacement of the boilers at The Grange.

Councillor Bill Hunt noted that the original budget of £270K had reduced to £260K and that only £106K had been spent. Even with the expected £60K to be spent on the boilers, it was projected to be £30K savings against the budget.

Councillor Sheila Friend-Smith was concerned that savings should not just be made if it was possible, as if work was needed then it should be done. There was also concern about the state of the bus shelters in Market Street, Ely which were in a horrific condition. Could they be improved?

Councillor Elaine Griffin-Singh revealed the City of Ely Council had also looked at this problem, and although they had been cleaned with chemicals the plastic needed to be renewed. The plastic was now so scratched that they ought to be replaced. The Council should obtain a quote for this work.

Councillor Richard Hobbs revealed that these had come from the County Council and the design was due to the width of the paths. This Council, along with the County and City Councils should look at smartening up the whole of Market Street.

Councillor Sheila Friend-Smith proposed that the Senior Open Spaces & Maintenance Officer brings back a report with a quotation for the refurbishment of the bus shelters in Market Street, Ely. This was duly seconded and agreed.

Councillor Neil Morrison noted that the Palace Green footpath had been sprinkled with pea gravel, which had spread everywhere causing problems. Councillor Richard Hobbs stated that this was a continuous problem with such gravel, as evidenced elsewhere, so it should be looked at.

Councillor Tony Goodge noted that £20K had been set aside for maintenance of public conveniences, and some were in dire need of work. Could this sum be spent on more than one convenience? There was also some damage in the car parks, with broken gullies repaired with concrete causing drainage problems, and this also needed looking at.

The Chief Executive explained that the £20K would not be limited to maintaining just one toilet but it would be better to use in light of the results of the review of all the toilets. This work was carrying on currently and was expected to conclude in June or July. Councillor Richard Hobbs thought that the maintenance of the toilets would be expensive, so the review body needed to progress the review quickly.

Councillor Neil Morrison asked questions about the work for the closed circuit television and kitchen. The Chief Executive would check those issues out.

It was resolved:

- (i) That the Asset Maintenance Programme 2014/15, specifically the actual spend to end January 2015, be noted;
- (ii) That the Senior Open Spaces & Maintenance Officer brings back a report with a quotation for the refurbishment of the bus shelters in Market Street, Ely.

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

It was resolved:

That the press and public be excluded during the consideration of the remaining item nos. 9 to 14 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 items 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).

60. **ANNESDALE, ELY**

The Sub-Committee considered an Exempt report, reference P212, previously circulated, relating to Council owned land in Ely.

The Partnerships Officer advised the Sub-Committee on the background details, including an application for access and the key issues for consideration.

Councillor Bill Hunt expressed concern about agreeing to the application and its consequences. Councillor Tony Goodge was totally against this application due to its relevance to the Station Gateway and the pittance the Council would have got in providing access. A motion was put to refuse the request due to emerging proposals relating to the Station Gateway and the importance of the access involved.

It was resolved:

- (i) That the request be refused due to emerging proposals relating to the Station Gateway and the importance of the access involved;

- (ii) That the Partnerships Officer be requested to write to the applicant with the outcome of the decision.

61. **LAND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY – PARISH OF ELY(UPDATE)**

The Committee considered an Exempt report, reference P213, previously circulated, which gave an update on a land development opportunity in Ely.

The Chief Executive advised the Sub-Committee of the considerable progress that had been made with this site. A number of issues were moving to resolution and a revised set of proposals for developing the site were included for agreement. It was expected that the Council would act as a direct developer, if approved by Council, for this site. This would mean that the Council would control the quality of the development.

Councillor Bill Hunt was excited about this project on this important site, which could be expected to provide a quality development and a financial return for the Council. It would provide a fabulous outcome for the community including local jobs for local companies.

Councillor Sheila Friend-Smith raised a number of concerns but was re-assured by Councillor Bill Hunt that the issues highlighted had been considered and solutions suggested.

Councillor Richard Hobbs thought that this development would please the town centre team and it would enhance the area it was located in.

It was resolved:

- (i) That the revised outline designs detailed in Appendices 1 – 3 be approved;
- (ii) That the Chief Executive be instructed to bring forward proposals for planning permission in accordance with 2.1(i), paragraph 4.6 and Appendix 7;
- (iii) That the Council acts as the developer with the “Local Authority Trading Company” (LATC) (subject to Council approval);
- (iv) That the progress with other aspects of the site be noted.

62. **ANGEL DROVE COMMUTER CAR PARK, ELY**

The Committee considered an Exempt report, reference P214, previously circulated, which gave an update about the Angel Drove commuter car park in Ely.

The Team Leader Building Control advised the Sub-Committee that the proposed works to the car park would not be straight forward. There were a number of issues and risks to be considered before moving forward with the project. To this end there a consultant had been appointed to highlight all the issues and provide solutions.

Councillor Richard Hobbs re-iterated the need for car parking and that the demand was increasing every day. This project was a huge priority for residents who had to put up with commuters parking in their streets.

It was resolved:

- (i) That the project proceed to planning application (subject to consideration of the feasibility study);
- (ii) That the Chief Executive and Financial Services Manager be instructed to recommend a funding strategy to Corporate Governance and Finance Committee to implement the project (subject to consideration of the feasibility study).

63. **LAND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND ASSET DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE 2014-15**

The Committee considered an Exempt report, reference P215, previously circulated, which gave an update on land development opportunities and asset development programme.

The Chief Executive updated the Sub-Committee on several land opportunities and assets, including the progress made, the chance for the Council to act as the developer on one site and proposals on use for some assets.

It was resolved:

- (i) That the Council acts as the developer with the “Local Authority Trading Company” (LATC) (subject to Council approval) in respect of one site;
- (ii) That the update in relation to previously identified land opportunities and asset development programme (as set out in paragraph 4.1 and 4.2 and Appendix 1) be noted.

64. **FORWARD AGENDA PLAN**

The Sub-Committee received and noted the Exempt Forward Agenda Plan.

It was resolved:

That the Exempt Forward Agenda Plan be noted.

65. **EXEMPT MINUTES**

It was resolved:

That the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 21st January 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

The meeting concluded at 5:32pm.