



EAST
CAMBRIDGESHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Commercial Services
Committee held in the Council Chamber,
The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely on Wednesday,
12th November 2014 at 5.30pm

P R E S E N T

Councillor Richard Hobbs (Chairman)
Councillor Allen Alderson
Councillor Christine Ambrose Smith (Substitute for Councillor
Bill Hunt)
Councillor Lavinia Edwards
Councillor Lis Every
Councillor Sheila Friend-Smith, MBE
Councillor Tony Goodge
Councillor Tom Kerby
Councillor Hazel Williams, MBE
Councillor Pauline Wilson

OFFICERS

Allison Conder – Principal Leisure & Community Services
Officer
Lewis Bage – Community Development Officer
Spencer Clark – Senior Open Spaces & Maintenance Officer
Julie Cornwell – Partnerships Officer
Tony Grzybek – Principal Accountant
Tracey Harding – Team Leader, Tourism & Town Centre
Services
John Hill – Chief Executive
Janis Murfet – Democratic Services Officer

I N A T T E N D A N C E

Councillor David Brown
Councillor Hamish Ross
Councillor Mike Rouse
Mr Tom Pinnington – The Sports Consultancy (Agenda Item
No.6)

32. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The following question was received from Mr Martyn Newton, a
member of the public:

*“I understand that the press report last year regarding the provision of
80 additional parking spaces at Littleport train station was somewhat
premature and inaccurate. However, the intolerable situation for commuters*

caused by the lack of adequate parking facilities at or near the station is getting worse as demand continues to increase. What steps are the Council taking to resolve this problem?"

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Chief Executive responded to the question. He said that as Mr Newton was not present at the meeting he would provide him with a written reply.

The Council was still committed to increasing the number of parking spaces and was aware of the importance of extending the current provision.

33. **APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Elaine Griffin-Singh and Bill Hunt.

It was noted that Councillor Christine Ambrose Smith would substitute for Councillor Hunt for the duration of this meeting.

Councillor James Palmer had been due to substitute for Councillor Griffin-Singh but did not attend the meeting, having been held up in traffic.

34. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

35. **MINUTES**

It was resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 17th September 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

36. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- The Chairman said he was pleased to announce the completion of some much needed improvements on Ely riverside, as part of the riverside improvement plan approved by the Community & Environment Committee in April 2013.

The path across Lavender Green had now been widened and resurfaced, duck feeding signs were now up near the slipway and solar lighting had been installed from Lincoln Bridge to The Cutter to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists after dark.

Further improvements would be taking place in the next few months including some tree works and creation of a new planting area, new planting and seating at the slipway.

All of these improvements had been made possible through S106 public open space funding.

- The Chairman announced that he had agreed to delay bringing the Stage 2 Service Review of Sport & Health to the March 2015 meeting of the Committee. This was to enable this work to take account of the District wide indoor sport facilities needs assessment work which was scheduled to report to this Committee in January. This work was important as it would include an action plan around the work needed to keep the existing leisure facilities open and offering high quality sports provision for the District's communities.

At this point the Chairman proposed and the Committee agreed that Agenda Item No. 8(ii), the Parks & Open Spaces Service Delivery Plan, would be taken as the next item of business as Councillor Brown needed to leave the meeting by 7.00pm.

37. **SERVICE DELIVERY PLANS 2014-15: PARKS & OPEN SPACES**

The Committee received a report, reference P124, previously circulated, appended to which was the 2014/15 Service Plan for the Parks & Open Spaces Service.

Spencer Clark, Senior Open Spaces & Maintenance Officer, commenced by thanking Councillor David Brown, Service Delivery Champion, for all his help in producing the document.

It was noted that the key functions and responsibilities of the Parks & Open Spaces Service were:

- 1) Grounds maintenance of all public open space, closed churchyards and the Council's 12 public car parks;
- 2) Award ditch maintenance controlling vegetation and removing silt deposits and debris to ensure the free flow of water to protect local land and properties from flooding;
- 3) Weekly inspections of play areas and also carrying out maintenance work;
- 4) Working with both Development and Legal Services on the adoption of public open space.

With regard to the Maintenance element of the service, its key functions and responsibilities were:

- 1) Maintenance and repair of Council owned buildings;
- 2) Maintenance and repair of Council owned public footpaths, fencing and boundary walls;
- 3) Maintenance and repair of 3 Traveller's sites; and
- 4) Installation, maintenance and repair of street nameplates and street furniture including benches, litter and dog bins

Councillor Brown reminded Members that the renewal of the Sanctuary grounds maintenance contract was due for decision in February 2015. He

also drew attention to page 10 of the Service Plan (Develop a playground inspection service), saying that a package of playground inspections would be developed and offered to the parishes and other third parties.

Councillor Brown and Mr Clark then responded to comments and questions from the Committee.

Referring to the playground inspections, Councillor Williams asked whether there would be sufficient capacity to cover all the work or would it be necessary to employ more staff. Councillor Brown said that it should be possible to increase capacity, if needed. Mr Clark added that there were already 4 members of staff trained to conduct the inspections, and any additional inspections could be fitted in with those for the Council's playgrounds. Should the need arise, the contracts for the casual workers could be extended.

In response to a question from Councillor Kerby, Mr Clark stated that the cost of a playground inspection was £20 per visit plus VAT. Councillor Friend-Smith wished to know if the service to be offered out to the parishes had been trialled, and if so, where and what was the outcome. Mr Clark said that 2 playgrounds in Witchford had been inspected weekly, and Brinkley had a monthly inspection. It was important to get the check sheets to the parishes as quickly as possible because if a playground or any of its equipment was found to be unsafe, then action would be taken to shut down the faulty equipment or close the playground.

Councillor Alderson raised a query about damage caused at Traveller's sites; he asked if in the event it was identified that the damage had been caused by a Traveller, would that person be expected to pay for the repairs. Mr Clark replied that this was a difficult situation, because nobody tended to see or hear anything. However, where it could be identified that the damage had been caused by a Traveller, the cost would be passed on.

Councillor Every said she wished to applaud the team for the quality of their work. Members were delighted that they were using the opportunity to take an entrepreneurial approach and people would be delighted with what they achieved.

Councillor Williams then asked whether the Council was still required to take responsibility for closed churchyards, and the Chairman confirmed that the Authority had no choice but to look after them.

Councillor Goodge enquired about the maintenance of the watercourses and asked where the money was being spent. Using the award ditch on the Downham Road as an example, he said that it should be maintained but did not appear to be so. Mr Clark replied that some areas needed higher maintenance and therefore a bigger share of the budget, but those deemed as less of a risk were put back. However, he wished to assure Members that ditch maintenance was becoming higher on the agenda.

The Chairman, being satisfied that there were no further comments or questions, wished Mr Clark and his team every success, adding that Members looked forward to seeing wonderful results in the future. Whereupon,

It was resolved:

That the Parks & Open Spaces Service Delivery Plan for 2014/15, listed in paragraph 1.1 of the report, be approved.

38. **A NEW DISTRICT-WIDE INDOOR LEISURE CENTRE FACILITY – FEASIBILITY AND OPTIONS APPRAISAL STUDY**

The Committee considered a report, reference P122, previously circulated, regarding a Feasibility Study and Options Appraisal for a new indoor leisure centre facility in Ely.

The Chairman introduced Tom Pinnington of The Sports Consultancy, and explained that he and Allison Conder, Principal Leisure & Community Services Officer, had been working with Sport England to produce the Study. Members were reminded that some of the information before them was exempt and that if they wished to discuss it, the meeting would have to go into closed session.

The Chief Executive added that since the publication of the agenda, he had looked critically at the appendices to the report to see if it would be possible to de-exempt elements so that as much of the information could be debated in public. As a result, the majority of the pages contained within Appendix 4 of the Study had now been de-exempted. However, Members were asked to note that pages 28 and 29 and Appendices 2, 3 and 4 of Appendix 4 remained exempt and they had been removed from the copies made available to the public.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr Pinnington addressed the Committee and invited Members to refer to the set of briefing notes that had been tabled at the meeting. During the course of his presentation, he made the following points:

- i. The Sports Consultancy and AFLS&P Architects were appointed by the Council in June 2014 to complete a Feasibility and Options Appraisal Study for a new indoor leisure centre facility;
- ii. The study had been developed to complement existing facilities in the District. Provision within the new centre would be planned on a scale to either meet existing demand for indoor sports facilities, or future growth planned for the District. The study assumed therefore, that all existing facilities such as Littleport, Burwell, Soham etc. would remain open, and only the Paradise Swimming Pool was planned to be closed and the facilities it provides replaced by the new leisure centre;

- iii. The needs analysis and consultation work had shown that District wide, the supply of sports halls was significantly greater than demand both now and in the future, but there was a deficit in provision in Ely;
 - iv. The supply of swimming pools was significantly less than demand and 3-4.4 lanes of pool space should be provided in future;
 - v. There was a need for a full sized artificial grass football pitch to meet the demand for Ely and its wider catchment area;
 - vi. There is a need to provide between 110 and 120 health and fitness stations and two additional activity studios;
 - vii. There were 6 potential facility mix options identified for the new leisure centre from the needs analysis assessment, with Option 1 being the core (6 lane pool 4 court sport hall, 120 gym station, 2 studios), and Options 5 and 6 being variations on this core mix.
 - viii. The 6 options were then worked up in more detail to assess capital cost estimates, revenue projections, funding and affordability. The capital costs estimates were benchmarked against recently developed projects nationally and allowed for fees etc and they reflect a high risk management approach which is appropriate at this stage of the projects development;
 - ix. Funding was set out in terms of that which had been confirmed and what was still potential ;
 - x. The affordability of each option was listed, showing the capital costs, prudential borrowing, other funding and the remaining funding gap;
- Overall, Options 5 was ranked as the most affordable option, and 6 as the option as meeting the identified strategic need now and in the future. This was also Sport England's preferred option as it meets the identified strategic need for indoor sports facilities within the District;
- xi. Although it is planned to provide new facilities which are needed in addition to those already open, the new centre is still likely to have an impact on the sustainability of other centres in Ely, and pull people from those facilities, especially the Atrium Club and the Paradise Centre;
 - xii. Pages 10 and 11 of the briefing notes set out the key next steps and an indicative programme, and there were also sketch layouts of the site plans for Options 5 and 6.

Councillor Kerby having noted the difference in cost of £1.1 million between Options 2 and 6, asked why there was an additional £60k on top of this for the artificial pitch. Mr Pinnington replied that this related to impact fees and contingency; he could provide Members with a detailed costing if they wished.

Ms Conder thanked Mr Pinnington for working alongside her. She reiterated that the purpose of her report was not to seek further finances at this stage but to move the project into a risk management stage. She

reminded Members that she and the Financial Services Manager had worked together to take a paper to the Corporate Governance & Finance Committee setting out a funding strategy to implement the new leisure centre facility. She asked Members to note the tabled revised motion before them, which expressed a preference for Option 6.

In summarising her report, Ms Conder said that a key risk to the Council within the Feasibility Study was around assumptions made about the level of income that could be generated from a new leisure centre. This income would be used in combination with the current annual management fee for the Paradise Pool to meet the long term costs of borrowing once the new centre was open. It was therefore important that a market testing exercise was undertaken to provide greater assurance around the income forecast for the new facility. An update report would be brought back to the Commercial Services Committee in March 2015.

It was duly proposed by the Chairman, and seconded by Councillor Every that :

Members are requested to:-

- (i) approve Option 6 as the preferred facility mix for the new leisure centre facility;*
- (ii) authorise the Principal Community and Leisure Services Officer to undertake a market testing exercise to provide greater assurance around the income forecast for the new facility;*
- (iii) authorise the Principal Community and Leisure Services Officer to secure the approval of funding from Sports England's Strategic Facilities Fund;*
- (iv) instruct the Principal Community and Leisure Services Officer to critically examine the capital costs of Option 6, in light of the advice from Sport England, and report back to January Corporate Governance and Finance Committee;*
- (v) instruct the Principal Community and Leisure Services Officer to provide an update report to Commercial Services Committee in March 2015.*

In proposing the motion, the Chairman said that by approving Option 6, it would be easier to build the larger 8 lane pool and plan for the future needs of the District. Working with Sport England would provide the Council with a strong bed of support and help to secure funding. He also applauded Ms Conder's work, saying that what she had achieved was quite remarkable.

Councillor Williams enquired about the capital costs on the Sport England affordability model. Mr Pinnington replied that the costs in the Study were a bit higher than those of Sport England. There would be the

same functional areas, but possibly a smaller reception and offices, and the external cladding and treatment would be more affordable. This would all be discussed at a later stage. He had done many of these studies and it was part of the process to be quite risk averse in terms of capital costs at the early stages when there are so many unknown factors. Sport England could help to reduce costs and when decisions had to be made, their advice would be very helpful.

Referring to the issue of affordability, Councillor Friend-Smith wondered if the Council would be less likely to get approval from Sport England if it went for a more ambitious building. She said that in the past this Council had always gone for the cheapest option and this worried her because the new facility should be a very attractive building in such a prime site. She also asked whether the period of 35 years of interest rates had been taken into account. Ms Conder replied that Sport England would be part of the Working Group. There would be stark choices ahead, and quality versus affordability would be some of the key choices to be made and a key part of decision making by Members as the project moves forward. With regard to interest rate forecasts, the Financial Services Manager was working on this and would take them into account. Mr Pinnington added that Sport England would not necessarily push the Council down the affordability route and funding would not be conditional upon this. They were looking at fixed interest rates and he believed that the Council had chosen the right time in terms of the affordability of borrowing rates to undertake this project.

Councillor Goodge expressed concern about financial aspects of the project and asked how much reliance would be placed on S106 and CIL monies to pay the interest. He was worried about some funding streams not being forthcoming and whether the Council was looking at a worst case scenario.

The Chief Executive responded, saying that the issue of the Council needing to provide a bridging loan to cover the costs of borrowing before the new centre began to generate and income receipt had been identified by the Corporate Governance & Finance Committee. Emma Grima, Corporate Unit Manager, would go to Council to secure a strategy which would be monitored very closely.

Councillor Every reiterated that the Corporate Governance & Finance Committee had put forward Option 6 as the preferred option. No financial commitment was being sought at this point and she was sure that Officers could manage the risks.

Councillor Williams said she was delighted that the risks were being looked at so carefully, but for her the key issue was the future of the Atrium Club and the Paradise Centre. The latter had been set up by the Council, and while the new facility would not have a great impact on Burwell, it would on the Paradise Centre. To this end she asked if the Council was working with the Trustees. The Chairman replied that the Trustees had been spoken to because it would have been unfair not to bring them in as part of the consultation process. The Paradise building was not very good and it was only built as a temporary building, but the Council did want to

continue a dialogue with the Paradise Sports Trust charity as their plan for the future have to be considered. The Council would bring the Paradise Centre with it on this project.

Councillor Williams then asked if the effect of the new centre on the other facility was known. Ms Conder responded, saying that the health and fitness was based on the Atrium Club staying open, although it was inevitable that the new centre would draw some members away. Councillor Friend-Smith expressed the hope that the Paradise Centre would remain open, as it would be able to cater for those living in the town centre, or for people who did not drive.

The Chairman brought the discussion to a close by thanking Ms Conder and Mr Pinnington for all their hard work. He said the comments made by Councillor Friend-Smith would be taken on board, and he looked forward to the project moving forward.

It was resolved:

- (i) To approve Option 6 as the preferred facility mix for the new leisure centre facility;
- (ii) To authorise the Principal Community and Leisure Services Officer to undertake a market testing exercise to provide greater assurance around the income forecast for the new facility;
- (iii) To authorise the Principal Community and Leisure Services Officer to secure the approval of funding from Sports England's Strategic Facilities Fund;
- (iv) To instruct the Principal Community and Leisure Services Officer to critically examine the capital costs of Option 6, in light of the advice from Sport England, and report back to January Corporate Governance and Finance Committee;
- (v) To instruct the Principal Community and Leisure Services Officer to provide an update report to Commercial Services Committee in March 2015.

39. **FREE PARKING IN ELY AND THE DISTRICT – PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGN**

The Committee received a report, reference p123, previously circulated, which set out initiatives to promote free parking in Ely.

The Chief Executive said that before any discussion took place, he wished to advise the Committee of a procedural issue. He had circulated an email to all Members regarding the decision by Councillor Hobbs and the Leader of the Council, on his advice, to designate this Agenda item as urgent under the terms of the Constitution (4(16) 25.2 refers). If this course of action was agreed, the Council call in procedure rules would not apply.

Any Member could challenge this decision and if they wished to do so, it would be appropriate to do so at this point. It would not predicate any decision.

Councillor Wilson confirmed that she wished to challenge the decision, as she did not feel that there was a need for this item to be treated as urgent. She reminded Members that Dial a Ride had been struggling due to the cuts in its funding and it was coming to a point where it would no longer be able to continue. The County Council was sitting on £500k of funding until March 2015. She said she would find it really hard to support the proposal because £17k was a lot of money and to use it on this campaign would be a slap in the face for those charities in need.

Councillor Friend-Smith asked why put up signage promoting free parking before Christmas when there was already a problem with lack of spaces and the car parks would be full.

The Chief Executive interjected to say that whilst a decision would normally be reached by consensus, in this instance he would recommend that Members took a formal vote on the matter. If Members decided that the item was not to be treated as urgent, under the terms of the call in procedure he would not be able to take any action until 26th November.

It was duly proposed by Councillor Wilson and seconded by Councillor Friend-Smith that this Agenda Item should not be treated as urgent. When put to the vote, the motion was declared lost.

The Chairman informed Members that only a small proportion of the £17k would be spent on signage and Tracey Harding, Team Leader Tourism & Town Centres, said that it would cost approximately £2.5k.

Mrs Harding then summarised the main points of her report, reminding Members that the Service Delivery Plan for Markets, Town Centres and Tourism included a proposal to promote free parking as a key performance measure. The three key elements to the campaign would be:

- media advertising/PR campaign to promote free car parking alongside events/initiatives within Ely and the wider District;
- signage on the entrances to Ely (owned by the City Council);
- signage within the Council owned/operated car parks within the District (where appropriate).

Councillor Wilson repeated that she could not support the proposal as she believed it to be a total waste of money. Dial a Ride was in need of funding, the car parks were full of holes and she would rather see the money spent on repairs than signage.

Councillor Every urged Members to think seriously about the proposal. The stakeholders were fully supportive and surveys had been carried out, so the information was not based on assumptions. It was vital that the city

centre was vibrant and brought people in. Footfall had not increased in the last 12 months and the signage would help to support the greater strategy.

Councillor Friend-Smith agreed that free parking was Ely's greatest asset and she supported the use of signs, but this proposal was at the wrong time of year; the signs should go up after Christmas. She reiterated her earlier comment about the problems with parking in Ely, saying that in the run up to Christmas people would be fighting for spaces. She believed the money would be better spent on running a bus from the City of Ely College.

Councillor Goodge thought that the £17k should go back into the car park fund and he tabled a sheet of photographs to illustrate the poor condition of some of the car parks.

Councillor Wilson took up on Councillor Every's remark about footfall, saying that the Dial a Ride bus used to bring six thousand people into the city each year; if the service ceased they would be lost.

Councillor Ambrose Smith said she wished to place on record her thanks to Mrs Harding and also Councillor David Ambrose Smith for all they were doing for Littleport, as it was much appreciated. Whereupon, the recommendation contained within the Officer's report having been proposed and seconded,

It was resolved:

1. That the promotional campaign, as outlined in paragraph 4.2 of the report be approved;
2. To authorise the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chairman of Commercial Services and the Service Delivery Champion, to allocate up to £17,000, to fund the above proposals in 2014

40. **SERVICE DELIVERY PLANS 2014-15: MARKETS, TOWN CENTRES & TOURISM**

The Committee received a report, reference P124, previously circulated, appended to which was the 2014/15 Service Plan for the Markets, Town Centres & Tourism Service.

Tracey Harding, Team Leader, Town Centres & Tourism introduced the Service Plan by informing Members that there was a new team with a new focus and the team had been renamed "Markets, Town Centres & Tourism". They would all be working more closely together and sharing skills and the budgets would be pooled. All areas of the Service were income generating and it was intended to eliminate the net cost (excluding support services costs) by the end of 2017/18.

Councillor Ross said it was his honour to be the Service Delivery Champion for Markets, Town Centres & Tourism, and he had worked with Mrs Harding to formulate the Plan. At the time the team had been short of

four members, but everyone had coped admirably. He felt privileged to work with them and had been impressed by their business acumen. Councillor Ross believed the future was exciting for the Service and he commended the Plan to Members.

It was noted that the key functions and responsibilities of the Markets, Town Centres & Tourism Service were:

- 1) Ely Markets – to provide weekly Thursday General and Saturday Craft, General and Farmers markets and continue to develop additional themed markets throughout the year to maximise income potential. It was intended to introduce a new weekly Sunday market in Ely;
- 2) Car Parks – to provide safe and easily accessible parking for all in Ely, Soham and Littleport and manage the commuter car parks at Ely's Angel Drove and Littleport Station;
- 3) Town Centres – to carry out initiatives and projects to revitalise our three town centres to make them a pleasant place to live work and visit;
- 4) Tourist Information Centre – to provide a high quality, unrivalled official tourist information service that is accessible to everyone and promotes Ely and East Cambridgeshire as a key tourist destination;
- 5) Oliver Cromwell's House – to provide an informative and enjoyable experience for all visitors. To retain part of England's heritage and educate its visitors about one of the most important men in English history;
- 6) Gift Shop - to provide an additional source of income to support the core business and assist in the promotion of Ely and Cromwell as well as providing products and ranges to meet visitor expectations;
- 7) Function Room – to provide an additional source of income to support the core business and provide facilities to enable events and activities to be held.

Councillor Every offered her congratulations to Mrs Harding, observing that a lot of time and energy had gone into the Service Delivery Plan.

Councillor Friend-Smith, referring to the hire of open spaces, said that it had always been freely available to charities and she asked what sort of income stream it was hoped to achieve. Mrs Harding replied that charities could still use open space for free, but commercial events would be charged as there was a cost to the Council to support these events.

Councillor Friend-Smith noted that contained within the Plan was a proposal to relocate Ely Fair from the Forehill Car Park. Mrs Harding said that the present location caused problems and affected the Forehill business footfall. The proposal would provide an opportunity to work with the Charter Holder to find another location for the Fair.

Councillor Williams asked if the target of October 2014 for additional parking at Angel Drove had slipped. Mrs Harding replied that it could be

seen as an error, but the desktop exercise had been completed and the project was ongoing.

The Chairman congratulated Mrs Harding on the Service Delivery Plan, and said that under Chairman's Announcements he should have thanked her for all the work that had gone into the recent Apple Festival. He asked her to pass on the Committee's thanks to her team for such a successful event, saying that the Ely traders had told him how much they looked forward to it.

Referring to paragraph 2.1(ii) of the recommendation, the Chief Executive said this reflected what Mrs Harding and Mr Clark had said about developing a commercial service. They needed to be fleet of foot and given the opportunity to put their case and get finances in place when the need arose. Commercial Services was unique and a special case. The decision to allocate £20k would be made by Corporate Governance & Finance Committee, and it was expected that Members would have conflicting requirements. However, the recommendation reflected that the Members of the Commercial Services Committee wanted a special case to be made.

It was resolved:

- i. That the Markets, Town Centres & Tourism Service Delivery Plan for 2014/15, listed in paragraph 1.1 of the report, be approved;
- ii. That the Corporate Governance & Finance Committee be requested to allocate £20,000 in the 2015/16 budget as an "Invest to Save" programme, specifically for Commercial Services.

41. **MANAGEMENT OF DISTRICT COUNCIL MOORINGS ALONG ELY RIVERSIDE**

The Committee considered a report, reference P125, previously circulated, from which Members were asked to identify an effective management solution for the moorings owned by the District Council along the Ely riverside, which allows the area to be enjoyed by visitors and residents and supports the local economy.

In summarising the main points of her report, Julie Cornwell, Partnerships Officer, reminded Members of the background to the issue and the two options available for consideration:

- Option 1: Do nothing – allowing boaters to moor as they chose with no time limit along the stretch of land managed by ECDC; or
- Option 2: Introduce a visitor mooring management system with a specified time period for allowing visitors to moor.

It was noted that the Council had been seeking to resolve land ownership and mooring issues since 2009. This was to ensure that there was a consistent approach to enforcement, resulting in a regular turnaround of boaters to Ely, which in turn benefited the local economy. Although the Council could no longer manage the riverside via the enforcement of a Byelaw, there were other options that could achieve a similar result. These

should be explored in greater detail and an options appraisal brought to Committee for consideration after a public consultation had been carried out.

Mrs Cornwell reiterated that there was much public interest in what the Council did at the riverside and it was therefore important to ensure that things were done correctly. A further report would be brought back to Committee in March 2015, and if Members were minded to approve a management system, the intention would be to have the new arrangements in place by the summer of 2015.

Members noted that enforcing the mooring byelaw had a cost to the Council and this would need to be factored into any business plan looking at an alternative solution for regulating the moorings. Bearing in mind that the Council was committed to keeping Council Tax as low as possible and to maximising income opportunities, any alternative management option would need to be cost neutral.

The Chairman enquired about the meeting with the stakeholders and suggested that it would be useful for the members of the Commercial Services Committee to be invited to attend so that they could hear the problems being raised.

Councillor Friend-Smith asked if anything could be done about the dry dock moored at the riverside, as it was such an eyesore. Mrs Cornwell told the Committee that the Environment Agency had gone through the byelaws, but as the dry dock did not impede navigation, it could remain where it was. However, as part of the consultation process she would try to appeal to the owner's better nature.

It was resolved:

- i. To approve the principal of introducing a "cost neutral" visitor mooring management system, which takes a proactive approach to dealing with boaters that overstay a specified time for mooring;
- ii. To authorise Officers to consult key stakeholders and the wider community on the options for the effective management of the moorings managed by the District Council;
- iii. That the consultation findings be reported back to the Commercial Services Committee at their meeting on 3rd March 2015, along with an options appraisal and recommendation on the preferred management option for the moorings moving forwards.

42. **BUDGET MONITORING REPORT**

The Committee considered a report, reference P126, previously circulated, which sought to update Members on the Committee's financial position for 2014/15, based on current projections for both revenue and capital expenditure.

Tony Grzybek, Principal Accountant, summarised the main points of the report, drawing attention to paragraph 3.4, which set out the variances for the revenue budget. It was noted that the Committee's capital projects had been reviewed and no further variances had been identified.

Councillor Williams asked why, if the income from the Paradise Centre had increased, was the contract payment £67k less. Mr Grzybek replied that it was due to the renegotiated contract extension, and Ms Conder added that the tender had a sliding scale, based on Year 3.

It was resolved:

- i. To note that this Committee has a projected underspend of £1,091 compared to its approved revenue budget of £2,185,297; and
- ii. To note that this Committee has a projected capital budget of £297,000, as previously reported.

At this point the Chairman proposed and the Committee agreed to take Agenda Item No's 12 and 13 as the next items of business.

43. **COMMUNITY FUND GRANT SCHEME**

The Committee received a report, reference P128, previously circulated, from which Members were asked to note the grant offered to the East Cambridgeshire Arts Festival Society under Officer delegated powers.

It was resolved:

That the grant of £1,000 offered to the East Cambridgeshire Arts Festival Society, under Officer delegated powers, be noted.

44. **FORWARD AGENDA PLAN**

The Committee considered the previously circulated Commercial Services Forward Agenda Plan.

It was resolved;

That the Forward Agenda Plan be noted.

45. **SHAPEYOURPLACE: PROGRESS UPDATE**

The Committee received a report, P127, previously circulated, from which Members were asked to receive a progress update on ShapeYourPlace (SYP).

At the invitation of the Chairman, Lewis Bage, Community Development Officer, gave a short presentation and made comment under the following headings:

- **Overview of SYP** – SYP has been successfully running in East Cambs since April 2012 and is ECDC's key community engagement tool. Traffic to the site is constantly increasing and a 10 working day response time is now included in the Leisure & Community Services Service Plan;
- **Summary of 2013/14** - In 2013/14 there were 19,066 unique visitors to the site (22.5% of the East Cambs population). There were 103 issues and comments that ECDC is responsible for responding to;
- **Summary of Issues, 2014/15 to date** - There has been a 47% increase in the number of visits to the site in Q1 2014/15, compared to Q1 2013/14. The South Villages and West Villages are underperforming in comparison to the other sites, and the County Council, as administrator of the sites is considering merging them with other sites. The timetable for any changes has yet to be finalised.
- **SYP in Action** – ShapeYourPlace is useful in communicating local needs to public services. An example of this was an amendment to the Council's Waste Collection Policy for providing additional garden waste wheeled bins on request following a significant number of enquiries received via SYP;
- **Future Plans & Development** – The County Council is proposing to reduce the number of sites from 5 to 3. This will save administration time and require less maintenance. Fewer sites will mean increased traffic to individual sites and also allow quicker updates to be made. 1st January 2015 has been suggested as the date to make the changes and this would make sense from the performance monitoring point of view.

There will be further opportunities for Councillor engagement, as Members will be copied into issues relating to their Ward. This will be an advantage for them as it will give them a feel for the issues and local community concerns.

The SYP site is moderated. Some posts can be quite blunt, although not offensive.

It is proposed to offer Member training after the 2015 elections.

The Leisure & Community Services team will need to ensure that all departments are committed to the 10 day response time, as this will impact on the reputation of the organisation, the site and its partners. Staff and Members will need to take a more proactive approach to SYP.

We have an additional County Council resource; Beth Green, East Cambs SYP Engagement Officer, promotes Council services and is up to date with current issues.

Engagement will continue at local events to show that the Council is "open for business" and to increase unique visitors to the SYP website.

Councillor Every expressed her high regard for SYP, saying that it was a very safe place to go and offered a real opportunity to get good news out into the public arena. She urged Members to use the site as it was a good means by which to engage with the community and she also thanked Mr Bage for an excellent presentation.

Councillor Wilson thought it was already the case that Ward Members were to be notified of issues relating to their Ward. Mr Bage replied that when James Nairn, ECDC's former Community Engagement & Development Officer, was responsible for SYP he had done this. Mr Bage was still new to the system, but once he had got to grips with it, he would do so.

The Chairman concluded by thanking Mr Bage for an informative presentation. Whereupon,

It was resolved;

That the progress update, in the form of a presentation, and the comments made thereon, be noted.

46. **ASSET DEVELOPMENT SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES**

The Committee received the Minutes of the meeting of the Asset Development Sub-Committee held on 13th October 2014.

It was resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Asset Development Sub-Committee held on 13th October 2014 be received and noted.

47. **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

It was resolved:

That the press and public be excluded during the consideration of the remaining item no's 16, 17 & 18 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 there would be disclosure to them of exempt information of Category 3 Part 1 Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as Amended).

48. **A NEW DISTRICT-WIDE INDOOR LEISURE CENTRE FACILITY –
FEASIBILITY AND OPTIONS APPRAISAL STUDY – EXEMPT
APPENDICES**

The Committee considered the Exempt Appendices to report No. P122.

It was resolved:

That the Exempt Appendices to Report No. P122 be noted.

49. **COMMERCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE – EXEMPT MINUTES**

The Committee received the Exempt Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 17th September 2014.

It was resolved:

That the Exempt Minutes of the meeting held on 17th September 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

50. **ASSET DEVELOPMENT SUB-COMMITTEE – EXEMPT MINUTES**

The Committee received the Exempt Minutes of the meeting of the Asset Development Sub-Committee held on 13th October 2014.

It was resolved:

That the exempt Minutes of the meeting of the Asset Development Sub-Committee held on 13th October 2014 be received and noted.

The meeting closed at 7.45pm.