

Minutes of the meeting of the Commercial Services Committee
held in the Council Chamber, The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely on
Wednesday, 17th May 2017 at 5.30pm

P R E S E N T

Councillor Richard Hobbs (Chairman)
Councillor Allen Alderson
Councillor Steve Cheetham
Councillor Lorna Dupré
Councillor Lavinia Edwards
Councillor Lis Every
Councillor Coralie Green
Councillor Dan Schumann
Councillor Stuart Smith

OFFICERS

Maggie Camp – Legal Services Manager
Emma Grima – Director, Commercial
Victor Le Grand – Senior Leisure Services Officer
Janis Murfet – Democratic Services Officer

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

Councillor Bill Hunt (Agenda Item No. 6)

51. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions.

52. **APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mark Hugo.

There were no substitutions.

53. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors Hobbs and Every each declared a prejudicial interest in Agenda Item No. 8 (Section 106 Allocation), being Members of the City of Ely Council. Councillors Hobbs and Every said they would leave the Chamber before discussion and voting took place on this item.

54. **MINUTES**

It was resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 14th March 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

55. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman made the following announcements:

- Those who had braved the weather to attend this afternoon's visit would have seen for themselves the amount of work that had gone into the Country Park. Officers had achieved a lot and the Park was a great asset for the whole of the District, not just Ely. There was a sense of excitement regarding the forthcoming installation of the new galleon, and it was hoped that the Park would retain its Green Flag status.
- Congratulations were offered to those who had organised the Ely Eel Day and Food Festival. Both events were hugely successful with accommodation in the local area being fully booked up over that weekend. This was a prime example of how the teams involved in organising and delivering the events could work well together; the end result was very good for the area and the 'feel good' factor was tremendous.

The Chairman asked that the Committee's thanks be passed to Ely Markets for their contribution towards the success of Ely that weekend with their Vegan and Vintage Fair, and to the Town Centres & Tourism Manager and her small team for the success of Eel Day and the Food Fair.

- The new cinema was now open and work on the leisure/sports centre was progressing well, with the swimming pool in the process of being put in. The underpass to the leisure centre had been completed and opened in time for the official opening of the cinema, and the food outlets were doing exceptionally well. It was beyond the control of the Council that Members had been unable to attend the opening of the cinema.
- Consideration should be given to the public being asked to choose a name for the new sports centre.

56. **DRAFT EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE (OFF STREET PARKING PLACES) ORDER 2017**

The Committee received a report, R291, previously circulated, from which Members were asked to approve the draft East Cambridgeshire (Off Street Parking Places) Order 2017 as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, in order to:

- i. Update the Car parking Map for Barton Road;
- ii. Include The Dock, Ely as a new car park;

- iii. Include Cashless Parking as an alternative method of payment at Angel Drove Car Park and The Dock Car Park;
- iv. Increase the Fixed Penalty Notice to £70;
- v. Extend the waiting time at The Grange Visitors Car Park during office hours to 1 hour.

The Director, Commercial presented the report in the absence of the Tourism & Town Centres Manager and reminded Members of the background to the draft Order, which would go out to public consultation.

It was noted that due to the recent re-development of the Barton Road Car Park, the site map shown in Plan A of the Order reflected the relocation of the Market Traders parking area and the removal of the coach parking bays (now provided at Lancaster Way Business Park) and the provision of a new 15 minute drop off/collection point for one coach.

Due to increased usage, the Angel Drove Car Park was now at full capacity and the provision of additional spaces had been needed for some time. Land had been acquired and planning permission granted to create a new car park at The Dock in Ely. The car park, which would link to Angel Drove via a pedestrian route, was due to open in late summer 2017 and would operate in the same way as the Angel Drove Car Park.

As part of the annual Fees & Charges Review (approved by Full Council on 26th February 2015), Members had agreed to increase the fee for a Fixed Penalty Notice not paid within 14 days from £60 to £70. In order for this increase to be implemented, a revision of the Off Street Parking Order was required.

A new cashless parking system was introduced at the Angel Drove Car Park in March 2015 in order to give users an alternate method of payment (via their mobile phones) and offer a service in line with many other car parks nationally. This new system of payment would also be available at The Dock, and the Director, Commercial reiterated that it would be in addition to the existing coin service.

It was further noted that due to the increased usage of services provided by The Grange Reception, the 30 minutes time limit for the visitor's car parking area within The Grange was no longer sufficient for visitors to carry out their business. It was therefore proposed to increase the time limit to 1 hour.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Bill Hunt addressed the Committee in his capacity as the Chairman of the Asset Development Committee.

Councillor Hunt said that there was some confusion regarding two issues. He knew that the Director, Commercial had written to everyone, and he himself had spoken to people when out door-knocking. However, the Order referred to going cashless and this had alarmed people; he wished to make it clear that this was just an additional measure and there was no possibility of paying with cash being dispensed with. He also wanted to reiterate that free City Centre parking was not under threat.

There had also been a huge 'hoo-ha' about the coach drop off, the confusion having arisen when it was said that the alternative would be located at

Lancaster Way Business Park. Future coach parking would be at the new Leisure Village, with a minimum of 5 spaces and the temporary arrangements would disappear within a year.

On a point of action, Councillor Hunt raised the issue of Business Parking Permits and he explained how the system currently worked. He believed it had become misused because some 'essential workers' who would benefit from having a permit could not have one. Rather than the number of permits being distributed per business, he thought they should be allocated individually by need and he felt that the system should be reviewed.

The Chairman informed Councillor Hunt that it was not within the power of this Committee to conduct a review, but it could be added to the agenda for the new Community Services Committee.

Councillor Dupré asked why there had been a two year delay in the implementation of the increase in the fee for the Fixed Penalty Notice. The Director, Commercial replied that it was the decision of Full Council. It was known that further changes to the Order would be required, and so rather than keep bringing 'bits and pieces' back to Committee, it was decided to deal with everything all in one go.

Councillor Dupré next asked about the doubling of the time limit for parking in the visitor's car park at The Grange, as she wondered how this would impact on users. She thought it was something that should be monitored as with visitors being able to park there for twice as long, it could potentially halve the number of customers being able to park there. The Director, Commercial said the change in the time limit had come about as a result of feedback from Customer Services, but it would be kept under review.

Touching on the subject of car parks, Councillor Every said she had been made aware by local people of the serious issues with joy riders in the car parks, and she asked if there were any plans to put in deterrents such as CCTV or barriers. The Director, Commercial replied that the CCTV at the Angel Drove Car Park would be improved, and 'fit for purpose' CCTV would be installed at The Dock. The Community Safety Officer was working with the Open Spaces & Facilities Manager to look at options, and concrete blocks were one possibility.

Councillor Dupré interjected to say that the problem with joy riders was not confined to the car parks in Ely; it was happening across the District. When they were moved on from one place, they went elsewhere; the same group of joy riders that had caused problems in Ely were displaced to Sutton.

Councillor Smith asked if the police were acting on the problem, and the Director, Commercial replied that they tried to help when they knew the joy riders were in a particular place.

There being no further comments or questions,

It was resolved unanimously:

To approve the draft East Cambridgeshire (Off Street Parking Places)) Order 2017 for consultation.

57. **SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT FUNDING (LEISURE CENTRES AND SPORT FACILITIES) 2017/18**

The Committee received a report, R292, previously circulated, from which Members were asked to agree the initial funding allocations for the 2017/18 financial year for leisure centres and sport facilities.

Members were reminded that following a Committee resolution two years ago, the approach to Service Level Agreement grants for the leisure facilities had evolved from relatively fixed revenue support to a project focus. The Centres were invited to submit bids for this year on this basis and four bids had been received so far:

- Bottisham Sports Centre: Funding requested £8,000. Funding recommended - £2,500 for the membership system (software, hardware and training);
- Burwell Sports Centre: Funding requested and recommended - £12,000 for the replacement of the roof;
- Ellesmere Centre: Funding requested and recommended - £4,680 for an extension to the sports hall store;
- Ely Outdoor Sports Association: Funding requested £10,000.

The Senior Leisure Services Officer said that of the four submissions received, he felt that those from Ely Outdoor Sports Association (EOSA) in respect of the refurbishment of the bar, and the refurbishment of the pool changing and shower areas at Bottisham Sports Centre should be deferred for further information.

Where a funding recommendation was being made, Members were being asked to approve indicative funding which would be awarded on the proviso that the applicants provided full details of costs, partnership funding and any other funding packages.

Councillor Dupré raised a number of points. She asked if 'indicative funding' meant that an award of funding would lapse if the applicant did not get everything in place on time. She also noted that there clearly was not enough money remaining in the pot for Bottisham or EOSA to receive all that they had asked for. She was worried that for two of the cases, further information would be required and she said that something should be done to improve the application process in order to allow a decision to be made more promptly.

The Senior Leisure Services Officer responded, saying the shift from a revenue support basis was, in part, to do with this. Projects of this kind carried uncertainty and costs, for example, could change before a project got on site. In the case of Burwell, it would not necessarily lose the funding, but the Council would need to know that the project was deliverable. With regard to Bottisham and EOSA, there was still time for them to provide the details requested and it

would be worth allowing this time to ensure that the projects were fully developed and evaluated. In the case of Bottisham, any funding recommendation for the refurbishment element would also need to reflect the dual educational/community use of the site.

Councillor Dupré continued, asking if the Senior Leisure Services Officer had a process in mind to address the application process - something that would help both the Council and the applicant. He replied that during the course of this year the form would be reviewed to see if any refinements could be made. The application form was reasonably straightforward and not as structured as those for other programmes.

Councillor Schumann said he totally disagreed with Councillor Dupré's comments. He had been involved with a number of organisations in the last 20 years and he considered the Senior Leisure Services Officer's approach to be much more constructive and refreshing. The Council should not be constricting the application process, but rather working closely with communities and small organisations to help them access funding.

Councillor Dupré felt that Councillor Schumann had misrepresented what she had said. She was saying it would be helpful on all sides if the Council could work with bodies instead of them having to come back time after time. Constriction was absolutely not what she was suggesting.

Councillor Every thought that the Senior Leisure Services Officer had a good relationship with the organisations and this was very helpful. However, she did not think that the refurbishment of the EOSA bar was the right reason for spending taxpayer's money. She would want to know more detail about the project.

The Senior Leisure Services Officer believed this to be a fair comment, as Members would want to know how the funding would be spent and what would be the outcomes. He agreed that a bar would not in itself be a priority for support; but he had attended a Hockey Club meeting at EOSA, and his impression of the bar area was that it was not congenial. He believed that opportunities were being lost because when the Club hosted competitions, the parents of the children playing could have refreshments in the bar, and that if there was somewhere for social processes to take place, this could in turn, help clubs to form and develop.

It was resolved unanimously:

That the annual grant contributions for the 2017/18 Service Level Agreements, as set out in Table 1 to the report, be approved.

Councillors Hobbs and Every left the Council Chamber at 6.12pm.

It was duly proposed by Councillor Smith, seconded by Councillor Green, and agreed that Councillor Alderson should take the Chair for the consideration of the next item of business.

Councillor Alderson assumed the Chair.

58. SECTION 106 ALLOCATION

The Committee received a report, R293, previously circulated, from which Members were asked to consider allocating Section 106 contributions for the installation of a lift at Sessions House, Ely.

It was noted that the Council was currently holding £130,000 (of which £58,771 could only be used by the City of Ely Council), secured by Section 106 Agreements. In accordance with the Section 106 Agreements, the money could only be used for community infrastructure improvements for the benefit of Ely.

The City of Ely Council had requested £119,278 for the installation of a lift at Sessions House; this was essential to the ongoing use of this community building and the City of Ely realising its full potential.

Officers had assisted the City of Ely Council in assessing the funding requirements and were satisfied that the Section 106 money currently being held could be used towards the project. The City of Ely had engaged the Access Group to ensure that the planned works met the required standard. The Group had confirmed that the need for a lift met their requirements and had written to the District Council in support of the application.

Councillor Green said she had no objection to the proposal, but she would have liked the report to contain more detail about the community benefits. The Director, Commercial replied that at present this was all the information she had been given. The City of Ely Council wished to bring the building into proper community use but it was not Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant.

Councillor Cheetham asked whether the City of Ely Council had considered other infrastructure projects, or was the lift at the top of their list. The Director said that there was more money in the pot for the District, not just for Ely; the Pavilion in Soham had received Section 106 money last year. Officers were working with those who asked for money.

Councillor Alderson agreed that the report could have contained more detail and commented that Sessions House had five or six upstairs rooms which, with the installation of a lift, could be brought into use.

Councillor Dupré said she was unclear about whether the District Council made the decisions as to which projects received the money, or simply dispersed the money. The Director replied that it was not for herself to dictate priority, but she had encouraged the City of Ely Council to do so. The £58,771 could only be used by the City of Ely Council and although the District Council could say no to the remainder, they wanted to facilitate delivery of the lift.

Councillor Dupré then asked if the District Council had a role in determining what was a priority for Ely. The Director responded, saying that the City of Ely had its own structure and the District Council had to have faith in what it was doing.

Councillor Schumann interjected to say that sometimes it was ECDC's job to ensure that the legal side of the Section 106 was compliant and a known absolute. The 'shopping lists' were led by the parishes and the District Council was custodian of the money, but the communities established the priority of their lists.

Councillor Smith believed the lift would be a very good use of the money and he duly proposed that the Officer's recommendation be supported. The motion was seconded by Councillor Edwards, and when put to the vote,

It was resolved unanimously:

To approve the allocation of £119,278 for the installation of a lift at Sessions House, Ely.

Councillors Hobbs and Every rejoined the meeting at 6.26pm.

Councillor Hobbs re-assumed the Chair.

59. CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS.

The Chairman said that as this was the last meeting of the Commercial Services Committee, he wished to say 'thank you' to Members for their support over the last two years. A great deal had been achieved during the lifetime of the Committee, especially the Country Park and other facilities throughout the District, and he thanked Officers for all their hard work.

The meeting closed at 6:28pm.