

Minutes of the meeting of the Commercial Services Committee held in the Council Chamber, The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely on Tuesday, 22nd November 2016 at 5.30pm

P R E S E N T

Councillor Richard Hobbs (Chairman)
Councillor Allen Alderson
Councillor Steve Cheetham
Councillor Lavinia Edwards
Councillor Lis Every
Councillor Coralie Green
Councillor Mark Hugo
Councillor Andy Pearson
Councillor Dan Schumann
Councillor Stuart Smith

OFFICERS

Lewis Bage – Communities & Partnerships Manager
Nick Ball – Neighbourhood Support Officer
Emma Grima – Director, Commercial
Victor Le Grand – Senior Leisure Services Officer
Adrian Scaites-Stokes – Democratic Services Officer
Ian Smith – Principal Accountant

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

Councillor Hamish Ross
4 members of the public attended the meeting

15. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions.

16. **APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Lorna Dupré.

There were no substitutions.

17. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Lis Every declared a personal interest in agenda item 6, as she was the Chairman of the PCA.

18. **MINUTES**

It was resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd June 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

19. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman made the following announcements:

- The development of the cinema site was progressing and was expected to be completed by Spring 2017. There had been some delays relating to work on the underpass but this was now being caught up. People could drive through the site, which was looking very impressive.
- Congratulations were proffered to the Open Spaces Team and volunteers as, through their hard work, Green Flags had been awarded to the Country Park and Jubilee Gardens. This was the twelfth year in succession that Jubilee Gardens had achieved this award. The Green Flag award had gone global, though it was noted that local awards had been given to Peterborough (5), Wisbech (2) and Wandlebury (1) but Cambridge had not achieved any yet.

20. **BUDGET MONITORING REPORT**

The Committee received a report, R123, previously circulated, which provided details of the financial position for services under the Commercial Services Committee.

The Principal Accountant advised the Committee that, following the first half of the financial year, an under spend of £17K against the revenue budget was predicted. This was mainly due to the action taken relating to public conveniences and salary savings from the General Gang. The capitol budget was also projected to have an under spend. This was because the funding for the East Cambridgeshire Trading Company for this year would be less than profiled, though the Trading Company was expected to use the full £5million funding in the medium term.

It was resolved:

- (i) That the projected under spend of £17,000 compared to its revenue budget of £1,417,924 be noted;
- (ii) That the projected capital programme outturn of £7,908,794, being a £513,294 underspend compared to its revised budget, be noted.

21. **SUPPORT CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

The Communities & Partnerships Manager introduced members from the Support Cambridgeshire Partnership, who gave a presentation on their work and its impact on the county.

Julie Farrow, Chairman of the organisation, explained that the Partnership was a collaboration of various organisations aiming to deliver infrastructure services across the county. It would achieve this in five key areas using a partnership approach: volunteering and social action; information and advice; representation; town and parish councils; community facilities and developing hubs. This was a new way of working and would look to link in with existing strategies. This would include working with businesses, Cambs Foundation and Cambridge University on future growth and by building capacity in the voluntary sector.

Brad Stombock advised the Committee that the Partnership would work with community groups to help build better communities. Training courses would be offered, provided by the voluntary service, and would be open to anyone to attend. These would be held in Burwell, Littleport and Soham. All organisations would also have access to a newsletter giving regular funding alerts. A database was being designed to manage data, so the best service could be provided.

Julie Farrow stated that a new work stream, Voice and Representation, had been started in response to the County Council's strategies. This aimed to give communities some resilience and new training courses were being designed to teach people how to represent their groups or areas. This would include a couple of networking events, to be held in the rural areas.

Kirsten Bennett, of Cambridgeshire Action with Communities in Rural England, was leading on the work with the town and parish councils. The goal was to get parish councils and clerks to work together in partnership. An action plan would be drawn up to help increase peer learning and networking. Support had already been offered for neighbourhood and parish planning and there were already links available to community land trusts. Advice was also offered to help run community facilities and village hubs and improve their governance.

Councillor Mark Hugo wanted to know how the Partnership helped community land trusts. In response, Kirsten Bennett explained that the Partnership was raising awareness amongst parish councils. This included looking for suitable land, seeking the provision of affordable housing and undertaking housing needs surveys.

Councillor Dan Schumann, in applauding the work being done in the district, questioned why the Ely volunteer organisation was not part of the Partnership. This was concerning, as the Partnership spoke of partnership working but the experts in Ely were not included. How did the Partnership intend to engage them? Julie Farrow revealed that initially the County Council had invited all organisations to attend a number of events but the Ely organisation had not attended any. It had put in its own bid for the work, against the Partnership, but this had been unsuccessful. The Partnership did try and pull things together and had worked with them, and wanted to continue to do so.

22. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT – SIX MONTH UPDATE REPORTS

The Committee received a report, R120, previously circulated, which updated members on the performance of a number of service areas and sought approval of a couple of new Service Delivery Plans.

Emma Grima, Director, Commercial, advised the Committee that, although the Communities & Partnerships and the Leisure Service Delivery Plans were new, some of their targets were already starting to be achieved.

Communities and Partnerships

The Communities & Partnerships Manager explained that a draft plan had been drawn up for Communities and Partnerships, which set out its performance measures as per page 3 of the Plan. Work was being done in an attempt to improve how the Council engaged with parish councils. So two parish council conferences had been arranged to provide better communication. The Council's Engagement Strategy would also be reviewed and Service Leads had been engaged to help identify best practice. Ely Country Park was meeting the needs of the community and was in the middle of a two-year improvement plan. It was essential to improve the Park to obtain a Green Flag and achieve national accreditation. Ely Riverside was receiving daily patrols and helped promote Ely and the district. The first year of the new scheme had been successfully completed and stakeholders were being consulted to help draft up a new improvement plan. The development of a vulnerable communities strategy was being drawn up and nominations for potential assets of community value were being processed.

Councillor Andy Pearson, Leisure & Community Services Champion, thought the work carried out had been exceptional. A Green Flag had been achieved for the Park, which had gone from strength to strength. This was down to the hard work undertaken by the officers. A positive attitude prevailed at the riverside, as there had been an increase in motor boat clubs using it and an increase in footfall.

Leisure

The Senior Leisure Services Officer advised the Committee that the focus of Leisure Services was being re-structured around four principal areas. This would underpin the development of activity levels. Reasonable progress had been made. A lottery application to Sport England had been successful and other areas of work were ongoing. It was essential to maintain support for the district's leisure centres.

It was resolved:

- (i) That the Service Delivery Plans for the following services be approved:
 - Communities and Partnerships

- Leisure
- (ii) That the six month performance updates and comments from Service Delivery Champions for the following services be noted:
- Tourism and Town Centres
 - Open Spaces and Facilities
 - Reprographics.

23. **DISTRICT SPORTS & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STRATEGY**

The Committee received a report, R121, previously circulated, which detailed a broad strategy for the development of sport and physical activity in East Cambridgeshire.

The Senior Leisure Services Officer thought the draft strategy helped map out the territory but was not an in-depth document. It pulled together existing work and identified the wider policy landscape. Physical activity was valued for general health benefits and was becoming more prominent. The strategy reflected the evolving landscape and would knit together policy commitments for leisure centres for the long term. It also gave opportunities to build on the existing work being carried out, including that done via partner engagement. The strategy needed to be locally responsive, as leisure provision within the district was widely dispersed. Some areas were further away and could seek to develop their own activities.

The County Health Committee was funding support for a county-wide strategy, with a provision for activity co-ordinators in each area. This would probably be in place by next April and it was anticipated that it would include the development of new activities linked with existing schemes.

Leisure Centres should be an integral part of the strategy but it had to be recognised that they were run by independent trusts. It was possible that they could work in isolation but the aim was to bring them together as soon as possible. The new leisure centre had enormous potential to contribute to the promotion of activity, and its specification needed to reflect that, so it could be integrated within the district.

Councillor Lis Every found it extremely exciting, particularly to have a leisure centre for the whole district. It was really important that the other leisure centres worked well for their communities and it was vital that they continued to receive support.

Councillor Dan Schumann thought it brilliant to get this strategy, particularly as resources were diminishing. Joined-up thinking was needed as the only way forward. A community/cultural strategy was also needed, as the Council did not have the same arrangements for these issues. So such a strategy should be drawn up.

Councillor Mark Hugo questioned how the strategy would work on a month-by-month basis and what level of activity was available in the parishes. In

response, the Senior Leisure Services Officer stated that activity in the parishes varied and the Council did not intervene in that activity. Where gaps were identified the Council was willing to work with anyone to fill them. Engagement would revolve around the facility mix available, as there were different requirements for each village, and this would be done on a case-by-case basis. The Council was happy to act as a 'critical friend' and identify possible funding if parishes sought help.

Councillor Richard Hobbs looked forward to implementing the strategy, as the Council had not had one previously. This would be used as a channel to encourage health improvements. This strategy should be applauded and supported. Parish councils were much more financially stable but did not have the expertise to implement suitable activities. This strategy would help give them some direction, which should lead to a healthier East Cambridgeshire.

It was resolved:

That the strategy proposed be endorsed.

24. **REVIEW OF TOURISM & TOWN CENTRES SERVICE**

Committee considered a report, R122, previously circulated, which set out the Terms of Reference, Stage 1 report and Statement of Consultation for the review of the Tourism and Town Centres Service.

The Director, Commercial, advised the Committee that the review intended to result in the delivery of the right level of service. Some recent changes had affected the service, so the review would see where the service had been left.

The Stage 1 report gave a cost analysis, aimed to meet the needs of the district, would consider alternatives, seek efficiency savings and provide ideas for the East Cambridgeshire Trading Company. The review group would consist of Councillors Richard Hobbs, Lis Every, Carol Sennitt, Sue Austen and one Littleport representative. A timetable had been set, which meant that a proposed improvement plan would return to the Committee for consideration next March.

Councillor Richard Hobbs requested an update report on progress be provided for the Committee at its January meeting. This to include specifications, a consultation statement and a strategy. It was essential to provide more information so the matter could move on.

Councillor Lis Every thought this would be a huge piece of work and could change how the town centres worked. There was concern about the timetable, as time would be needed to bring Councillors along. The working group was fortunate as it had the backing of the Local Enterprise Partnership Chairman, who had offered to provide advice.

The Director, Commercial, said the timetable was flexible, as the objective was to reach the right outcome.

Councillor Coralie Green noted that things were changing rapidly so the review needed to recognise that tourism delivered more than it cost. These 'soft' outcomes were difficult to measure but needed to be recognised.

It was resolved:

- (i) That the Terms of Reference set out in Appendix 1 be approved;
- (ii) That the Stage 1 Report set out in Appendix 2 be approved;
- (iii) That the Statement of Consultation set out in Appendix 3 be approved.

Councillor Hamish Ross left the meeting at this point, 6:33pm.

25. **SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT FUNDING (LEISURE CENTRES & SPORTS FACILITIES) 2016/17 – UPDATE REPORT**

Committee considered a report, R124, previously circulated, which updated Members on progress with funding allocations for the 2016-17 financial year for leisure centres and sport facilities.

The Senior Leisure Services Officer advised the Committee that the Burwell agenda had moved on further. The Sports Centre had been planning on fixing its roof and gutters and had funding lined up. However, after some discussion, it had been decided to step back and look at the medium term, due to concerns that the fabric of the building could be faulty. A condition survey had been suggested, so the work had been deferred. The immediate focus would now be on the upstairs windows.

In reply to Councillor Mark Hugo's question, it was revealed that the sports centre was on a long term lease.

Councillor Richard Hobbs asked how supportive the parish council had been. The sports centre had worked very hard and it needed a new roof. The Council should support the centre as much as possible and help it into the longer term. The parish council should also be contacted to garner its support. Overall the district's facilities needed a lot of work, but this would have to be dovetailed in with work at other places.

Councillor Lis Every left the meeting at this point, 6:38pm.

Councillor Dan Schumann queried the Ross Peers' idea to convert its squash courts into fitness rooms. Had questions been asked about why they wanted to do this and what would be needed? This information should be used to make sure a solid business case was drawn up.

The Senior Leisure Services Officer informed the Committee that this was the first year that the Council's new approach had been taken. Previously, Service

Level Agreements had been used to provide regular funding, which the centres started to rely on. Now there was a checking and challenge process, including conversations undertaken to gauge the long term needs of the facilities. The bid from Ross Peers related to providing more spaces for fitness rooms to match it needs.

It was resolved:

That the contents of the report be noted.

26. **UPDATE ON THE EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER (PSPO) AT FOOTPATH 102 IN SOHAM (VILLAGE COLLEGE & ROSS PEERS SPORTS CENTRE)**

Committee considered a report, R125, previously circulated, which updated Members on the implementation and effectiveness of the Public Spaces Protection Order approved at the Committee's January meeting.

The Neighbourhood Support Officer reminded the Committee that the Order had been agreed in January to help tackle anti-social behaviour. Since its implementation that had been no further incidents reported, which was good news. Word had got around that miscreants would be caught, which had helped make the Order as a success.

Councillor Andy Pearson had thought that agreeing to the Order would be a risk, but it had worked well. This should be repeated in other areas with similar problems. An excellent job well done.

Councillor Coralie Green appreciated this fantastic news, but was concerned that this would just have moved the issue elsewhere. The Neighbourhood Support Officer accepted that could have been the result, but he was not aware of the problem occurring anywhere else. The key customers were extremely pleased with the outcome.

It was resolved:

That the progress achieved via the 'East Cambridgeshire District Council Crime and Policing Act 2014, Public Spaces Protection Order 2016 (Footpath 102 and adjacent areas at Ross Peers Sports Centre)' be noted.

27. **COMMUNITY FUND GRANT SCHEME**

Committee considered a report, R126, previously circulated, which outlined the grants offered under delegated powers from the Community Fund Grant scheme.

It was resolved:

That the grants offered under officer-delegated powers be noted:

- Snail Tales Storytelling Ltd – Celebrating 1,000 years of English History - £1,000;
- Field Theatre Group Littleport – Software and Computers to support the Group’s Community art work - £780.

28. **FORWARD AGENDA PLAN**

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

It was resolved:

That the Forward Agenda Plan be noted.

The meeting closed at 6:49pm.

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