

AGENDA ITEM NO.

Minutes of a meeting of the Mepal Outdoor Centre Working Party held in the Council Chamber, The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely on 12th March 2018 at 11:30am.

P R E S E N T

Councillor Bill Hunt (Chairman)
Councillor Lorna Dupré
Councillor Lisa Stubbs

O T H E R S

Emma Grima – Director, Commercial
Victor Le Grand – Senior Leisure Services Officer
Adrian Scaites-Stokes – Democratic Services Officer

19. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no questions from members of the public.

20. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

21. **MINUTES**

It was resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Mepal Outdoor Centre Working Party held on 18th December 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

22. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman reminded the Working Party that it would be interviewing the final three contractors, in alphabetical order, wishing to take over the operation of Mepal Outdoor Centre. Each would make a presentation, with Members and officers asking questions. The Working Party would then make a recommendation to full Council in April about its preferred contractor for a final decision. Once that has been completed, then in-depth due diligence would be undertaken before an exchange of contracts.

23. **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 items nos. 6 and 7 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 of Part I Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

24. **EVALUATION OF SUBMISSIONS**

The Working Party considered an Exempt report, reference S263, previously circulated, that reviewed the final proposals for the future operation of the Mepal Outdoor Centre and site. Each Contractor was interviewed separately.

Contractor A

The Contractor explained the key points of their submission, including its background, current business and experience and skills. If the contractor was awarded Mepal Outdoor Centre to operate it would allow the Contractor to grow and develop a range of products. The intentions for the site were expounded, which involved plans to diversify the activities, and convert and expand the existing facilities.

The Working Party and Council officers asked questions relating to setting up at the Centre, financial risks, investment, operational costs, fishing, residence on site and length of lease.

Contractor B

The Contractor appraised the Working Party of its business focus, its aims to provide opportunities for engagement of the youth at the Centre, projected activities, making the site commercially viable, provision of educational and day visits, diversifying activities and plans to revamp the facility.

The Working Party and Council officers asked questions relating to use of the indoor facilities, care for vulnerable clients, potential installation of a wind turbine, freehold of the property, partnership working, key risks, funding and operation of the site.

Contractor C

The Contractor informed the Working Party about its experience with other similar sites throughout the country and its consultancy work. Improvements to the Mepal site were identified, on a phased basis, including provision of extra facilities, necessary refurbishments and extensions, engaging possible client groups, the development of activity programmes and partnership working.

The Working Party and Council officers asked questions relating to making the best use of the available land, costs and staffing, fishing, social functions, promotions, management fees, residential manager and financial projections.

*The meeting adjourned at 1:51pm.
The meeting reconvened at 1:56pm.*

The Working Party then discussed the merits of each of the Contractors taking into consideration support for local business, operation of the site, experience, financial matters and site viability, safety and security, range of activities and facilities for children, to seek the best solution.

It was resolved to RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL:

That one of the Contractors be the preferred contractor to operate the Mepal Outdoor Centre.

25. **EXEMPT MINUTES**

The minutes had not been included with the agenda paperwork, therefore they would be presented to the next following meeting for approval.

The meeting concluded at 2:20pm.