

AGENDA ITEM NO. x

Minutes of a meeting of the Mepal Outdoor Centre Working Party held in the Council Chamber, The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely on 31st July 2017 at 2:00pm.

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
John Hill – Chief Executive
Victor Le Grand – Senior Leisure Services Officer
Adrian Scaites-Stokes – Democratic Services Officer

1. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

Councillor Bill Hunt was duly proposed, seconded and elected as Chairman of this Working Party.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

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

Councillor Lorna Dupré questioned the requirement for the meeting to be held in public. In response it was explained that, although the Council's default position must be to hold all of its meetings in public where possible, the Council had to protect its commercial interests. Therefore it had to be cautious in revealing any information within the report to be discussed that might affect those interests. The Working Party would include sets of public minutes for its meetings and include as much possible detail as was considered prudent.

It was resolved:

That the press and public be excluded during the consideration of the remaining item no. 4 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).

4. **PROCESS AND TIMETABLE**

The Working Party considered an Exempt report, reference S78, previously circulated, that detailed the process and timetable for securing and assessing

expressions of interest for the future operation of the Mepal Outdoor Centre and site.

The Chief Executive reminded the Working Party that it had been tasked by the Asset Development Committee to invite expressions of interest in the Mepal facility and report back with its recommendations by December. Interests had already been received with more expected. The Working Party had to balance the need for clarity on the tender process without stifling innovation. The process recommended to be undertaken aimed to strike that balance.

The Senior Leisure Services Officer advised the Working Party of the three elements of the recommendations. The first, Appendix 1 to the report, related to a standard letter to be sent to all interested parties to appraise them about the Mepal facility and explain what the Council would expect from them.

Appendix 2 was an Opportunity Document that gave details about the facility, outlined the process for the benefit of the interested parties and included information was what the Council would try to achieve. Appendix 3 was a questionnaire for the interested parties to complete to help with the evaluation process.

The Working Party considered each Appendix in turn and amended each to clarify matters. This included revising the timetable to involve the Working Party at various stages of the process and discussions on the evaluation criteria. The key considerations were to make the process as flexible as possible, achieve the best possible outcome for the facility and to safeguard the Council's financial position.

It was resolved:

- (i) That letter and accompanying documentation to invite expressions of interest for the future operation of the Mepal Outdoor Centre and its site, as amended, be approved;
- (ii) That the process and timetable as detailed in Appendices 1-3, as amended, be approved.

The meeting concluded at 2:52pm.