

LEISURE AND YOUTH POLICY AND REVIEW PANEL

Meeting held on Monday, 4th September, 2017 at the Concorde Room, Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

Voting Members

Cllr Mrs. D.B. Bedford (Chairman)
Cllr Liz Corps (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr J.B. Canty
Cllr Sue Carter
Cllr Sue Dibble
Cllr L.A. Taylor

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr T.D. Bridgeman, Cllr P.I.C. Crerar and Cllr J.H. Marsh.

7. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 5th June, 2017 were agreed as a correct record.

8. SOUTHWOOD GOLF COURSE CONSULTATION

The Panel welcomed Mr. Ashley Sharpe, Principal Contracts Manager, who attended the meeting to report on the consultation process for the Southwood Golf Course. It was noted that a consultation had been prepared to consider the possibility of converting the golf course into natural open parkland (SANG – Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space) to enable 2,500 new homes to be built across the Borough. The Panel noted that Natural England had visited the course and had agreed in principle, subject to a feasibility study incorporating a management plan, flood risk assessment and visitor surveys, to the possibilities set out in the consultation.

Mr. Sharpe gave a background to activity at the golf course. It was noted that the course hosted an average of 25,000 rounds at a subsidy of £40,000 per annum. A “Golf Club” operated at the course and had around 175 members, half of which were resident within the Borough. It was advised that Southwood was the most affordable course in the local area, with Oak Park, Crondall and Pine Ridge, Frimley costing almost £10 more for a mid-week round of golf. The current operator of the course was Mack Trading and it was advised that the tender was due for renewal in Spring, 2019.

The Panel was advised that the consultation period had started on 8th August and would run until 29th September, 2017. The consultation had been made available online and in hard copy and had been promoted through the web, social media, leaflet drops, press releases, static displays and open public meetings, the next of

which had been scheduled for 18th September, 2017 at the Southwood Community Centre at 6.30p.m.

It was explained that a discussion on the way forward was unlikely before the end of 2017. However, the Panel was advised that a joint meeting of the Leisure and Youth and Environment Policy and Review Panels had been suggested to allow further discussion to prepare a combined response for the Cabinet. This was supported by the Panel.

The Panel was also made aware of a petition being co-ordinated by campaigners. Once it had been submitted a decision would be made on how to submit it to Members

Members discussed the process and the possible outcomes of the consultation. A number of issues were raised, including, an option for dual use of the land with an offer of a nine hole golf course with a driving range and parkland, further investigation into other possible SANG available to the Council, and clarity on Natural England's position on dual use of the land.

The Panel **AGREED**:

| Action to be taken | By Whom | When |
|---|---|---------------|
| A joint meeting with the Environment Policy and Review Panel be arranged. | Mr. Andrew Colver, Head of Democratic and Customer Services | October, 2017 |
| Consider other options including; a part golf/part SANG dual use facility, and/or other available SANG in the area. | Mr. Peter Amies, Head of Community and Environmental Services | October, 2017 |
| Identify Natural England's position on the possible dual use of the land. | Mr. Ashley Sharpe, Principal Contracts Manager | October, 2017 |

9. LEISURE CONTRACTS - UPDATE

Mr. Sharpe gave an overview of the current position with each of the leisure contracts; these included the Alpine Snowsports, Aldershot Pools Complex and Farnborough Leisure Centre.

Alpine Snowsports – it was noted that the contract was due for renewal in Spring 2019 and the current operator was Active Nation. The centre was a profit centre which attracted 40,000 visits per annum, which gave a return of £30,000. The process going forward to renew the contract would include soft market testing and

liaison with regular users and clubs. This would be followed by a review of the contract and specification with a Member led group before the tender process for self-funding variant bids commenced.

It was reported that some structural work was required on the main slope (Bailey Bridge) at a one off cost of £20,000 including inspection works.

Aldershot Pools Complex – It was noted that the Aldershot Pools Complex incorporated the Indoor Pools and Aldershot Lido. The contract was due for renewal in Spring 2019 and the current operator was, Places for People. The Lido attracted an average of 25,000 visits per annum and ran on a subsidy of £180,000 per annum. The facility was open for 76 days of the year. The Indoor Pools had 300,000 visits per year and was subsidised to the sum of £380,000 per annum.

The Panel were apprised of the outcomes from the soft market testing which had been carried out on the complex. Some of the priorities for the Lido that were noted included, the provision of an adventure golf facility, improved catering, changing and reception areas, increased pricing, a splash pad, a longer season and the provision of a small heated pool.

It had also been suggested that one operator for both the Aldershot Pools Complex and the Farnborough Leisure Centre would allow for shared economies in staffing and other associated costs.

The Panel reviewed the options for the pools complex, from refurbishment to new build, and the procurement process through a design, build, operate and maintain system to deliver innovative solutions to help balance capital and revenue costs. If the decision was made to build a new facility, it would take three years from the initial notice to opening. The development of the facilities would need to be considered against the need for the Council to achieve significant financial savings.

Farnborough Leisure Centre – The Leisure Centre attracted 600,000 visits with a subsidy of £360,000 per annum. The contract was due for renewal in Spring 2019 and was currently operated by Places for People. The Panel was advised that, to retain the existing building, significant savings could be secured. However, roof works to the building were required, in the short term, at a cost of £1 million. The existing centre could operate for a further ten years, with the roof works completed, but maintenance costs would increase and participation would reduce. It was advised that to build a new facility on a smaller footprint would cost in the region of about £16 million.

The Panel noted that the results of a report on the proposed civic quarter developments was due towards the end of September, 2017. This report would help determine viable options for the Leisure Centre.

The Panel discussed the offer at Farnborough Leisure Centre and the utilisation of some of the activities on offer. In particular, squash was highlighted as a sport where demand had fallen over the years and use of the courts only generated an income of £33,000 per annum. This had also been noted as an issue at the Garrison Sports

Centre at the meeting in January, 2017. Consideration would be given to the mix and performance of activities as part of the tendering process.

The Panel **NOTED** the presentation and requested further updates in due course.

10. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Panel **NOTED** the current work programme and it was confirmed that the Southwood Golf Course Consultation outcomes and the potential joint meeting with the Environment Policy and Review Panel would be discussed further at the Panel's mid cycle meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.46 pm.

CLLR MRS. D.B. BEDFORD (CHAIRMAN)
