

LEISURE AND YOUTH POLICY AND REVIEW PANEL

Meeting held on Monday, 19th March, 2018 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

Voting Members

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

Cllr T.D. Bridgeman
Cllr J.B. Canty
Cllr Sue Carter
Cllr P.I.C. Crerar
Cllr J.H. Marsh
Cllr L.A. Taylor

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr Sue Dibble.

15. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 15th January, 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

16. **PLAYGROUNDS**

The Panel welcomed Mr. Peter Amies, Head of Community and Environmental Services and Mr. Andy Ford, Parks Manager, who attended the meeting to give an update on the current position with the playgrounds in the Borough.

The Panel was advised on coverage, usage and the overall condition of the 44 playground sites, the cost of maintaining and renewing equipment and options for future provision. It was noted that of the 44 sites, five were privately owned and the remaining 39 were maintained by the Council. Since 2005, fifteen sites had been refurbished with Moor Road and Cove Green scheduled for 2018.

Surveys of usage had been carried out on all the playgrounds during 2013 and 2017. Each survey had been carried out at varying times of the day over a 15-18 day period during the summer. The results from each survey had shown a similar pattern, with the two destination playgrounds in Aldershot Park and King George V Playing Fields being the most highly used sites. The small playgrounds, of which there were 19, had much lower usage and in some cases, no one was observed on some of these sites during the survey period.

The Panel noted that capital funding was in place to refurbish Moor Road and Cove Green during 2018, but further funding still needed to be secured for a number of medium sized sites across the Borough. It was advised that options needed to be

considered for the 19 small equipped and very small sites, most of which were approaching end of life. To refurbish the small sites with basic equipment, including a swing, slide, rocker, bin and bench would cost in the region of £60,000 and the very small sites around £20,000.

In summary, the Panel noted that the larger/destination and medium sites, such as King George V and Aldershot Park, had been the most popular playgrounds, being more attractive for families of all ages. A large number of the small and very small sites were reaching end of life and the cost to replace them would be in the region of £800,000 with annual maintenance costs of around £20,000, for which funding was becoming more difficult to secure. The Council needed to consider a more financially sustainable approach to rationalising provision and maintenance of its playgrounds and sought the views of the Panel on the way forward.

The Panel discussed the presentation and considered the costs of replacing equipment at the end of its life or removing it and providing green space for play. In response to a query on external funding, it was advised that the system had changed for applying for Section 106 (S106) funding. Where as before funding had been easier to obtain, now Councils could only be granted five amounts of S106 funding for one project. There were also other restrictions that had been applied, including a time limit of five years for accessing funding from a development and limitations on the distance from the development where the monies could be used.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Amies and Mr. Ford for their presentation.

Following further discussion the Panel **AGREED** to recommend that:

Action to be taken	By Whom	When
Advanced notice should be given of any proposed removal of play equipment from the small or very small sites that were approaching end of life.	Head of Community and Environmental Services, Mr Peter Amies.	Ongoing
local residents and Ward Councillor should be given the opportunity to give their feedback on the proposals and usage of the sites.	Head of Community and Environmental Services, Mr Peter Amies.	Ongoing
Assurance be given to residents that the areas would remain as greenspace for play should the equipment be removed.	Head of Community and Environmental Services, Mr Peter Amies.	--

17. LEISURE CONTRACTS

The Panel welcomed Mr. Ashley Sharpe, Principal Contracts Manager, who attended the meeting to advise the Panel on the current specifications of the leisure contract and on the areas where Members may have an influence when considering the new leisure contract due for re-tender in 2019.

It was advised that the current specification had been set in 1992 and had carried over in 2001 when the contract had been renewed. At that time, Members had put in protection clauses for certain areas, including operating hours, programming for existing clubs and schools, the provision of children's activities during the school holidays, availability of the sports halls for casual use and a commitment to working in partnership with the Council, and other agencies on the GP referral scheme. Operational requirements for the swimming pools had also been established, these included water temperature and cleanliness. High quality catering services, which offered a range of appetising, healthy and nutritious food and drink had also been a requirement.

The Council controlled the core pricing at the facilities. All core pricing had set price ceilings; these included activities such as swimming, squash, indoor bowls, clubs, GP referrals and cardiac rehabilitation patients. All non-core activities could be charged at normal market rates, but with no more than two increases per annum and by no more than 10% within the financial year.

The Panel was advised of the parking arrangements, set by the Council, at the Farnborough Leisure Centre. It was noted that currently users of the facility could get a pro rata rebate on the price of their parking ticket. For the new contract, consideration could be given to allowing the contractor to operate the car park to allow them to develop their own parking scheme.

The Panel discussed further areas for consideration, particularly around maintenance of buildings, grounds, plant and equipment within the new contract taking into account the age and life expectancy of the buildings and Aldershot Lido site. Other areas to consider included utility services and rates, licenses, management information, Council and contractor responsibilities and acting as a ticket agency for Council/local events and public/community hall bookings. Local initiatives around health and wellbeing, sports development, supporting vulnerable adults and older people and safer neighbourhoods could also be considered alongside joint working on communications/social media with the Council and promotional activities, such as the £1 swim.

The Panel was reminded of the option to build new facilities at both the Aldershot Indoor Pools and Lido and the Farnborough Leisure Centre through a Design and Build option or a Design, Build, Operate and Maintain option. If this were to be agreed the Council would still have the opportunity to set certain specifications that the operator would be asked to adhere to.

In response to a query it was noted that a break clause would be included in the contract to allow both parties to exit the agreement by giving standard notices.

It was suggested that a Task and Finish Group would need to be established when the process for renewal began.

The Panel **ENDORSED** the way forward.

18. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Panel **NOTED** the current work programme, in particular the update which had been provided on the football clubs. It was advised that further scrutiny of the clubs could be carried out under the proposed new scrutiny arrangements in the new Municipal Year.

The meeting closed at 9.04 pm.

CLLR MRS. D.B. BEDFORD (CHAIRMAN)
