

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)

ENVIRONMENT POLICY AND REVIEW PANEL

Meeting held on Tuesday, 5th September, 2017 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

Voting Members

Cllr D.S. Gladstone (Chairman)

Cllr J.B. Canty
Cllr K. Dibble
Cllr C.P. Grattan
Cllr Marina Munro
Cllr J.J. Preece

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr Mrs. D.B. Bedford, Cllr Sophia Choudhary and Cllr A. Jackman.

9. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 6th June, 2017 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

10. CHRISTMAS ACTIVITY IN THE BOROUGH

The Panel received a presentation from David Phillips, Town Centre and Cultural Manager, on the current planned activity for the Borough for Christmas 2017. Activities planned for Aldershot Town Centre included the Christmas Lights Switch-On, Community Christmas Festival, Christmas Craft Fayre and Carols in the Bandstand. In Farnborough, activities included a Farnborough Frost Fayre, Craft Fayre and Princes Mead Lights Switch-On. There had been some changes made to the Aldershot Community Christmas Festival and Farnborough Frost Fair since 2016 to make both events more cost effective.

An additional resource, Jenny Atherton, had been secured for two days a week up until Christmas to help organise and promote events, including any additional Christmas events. The budget for 2017/18 would allow £5,000 for additional events and £5,300 for the part-time post. The Panel was asked to let David Phillips know of any additional events they would like to be considered and provide any suggestions to enhance the town centres and shopping areas over the Christmas period.

The Panel discussed a number of proposals and agreed that a competition for shops to decorate their own shop fronts should be introduced as an initiative in both Aldershot and Farnborough. Cllr Keith Dibble, requested a meeting with Jenny Atherton, to discuss a potential community event in North Town.

John Trusler, Principal Engineer, informed the Panel on the current provision of Christmas lights and trees in the Borough. The Christmas lights were currently put up by the Maintenance Team at Wellington Street and Union Street in Aldershot, a tree with lights was placed at Princes Gardens and the tree adjacent to the NAAFI roundabouts was also lit. Christmas lights were also put up by the Maintenance Team in Queensmead in Farnborough. Christmas lights had been installed on an existing tree in North Camp in 2016 and North Town had been provided with a tree and lights. There were no plans for any additional trees or lights for 2017 as there was no funding available and the deadline for applications for licences had passed.

The Panel discussed options for additional funding to increase and improve the current lights provision including seeking sponsorship from large companies in the Borough. It was highlighted that a number of large companies already provided funding for other community events and it could be difficult to obtain further funding for Christmas lights. Other local authorities had benefited from becoming Business Improvement Districts where local retailers would put in a funding contribution of which some could be used for Christmas lights. Cllr Keith Dibble agreed to approach local retailers in North Town to contribute some funding for additional lights for the tree in North Town. Cllr David Gladstone had secured £250 towards Christmas lights and a tree in North Camp from North Camp Matters.

It was suggested that a joint approach should be considered in future in the town centres for the provision of Christmas lights to try to reduce the overall cost for each partner. Princes Mead would be looking to renew the contract for the provision of their Christmas lights in 2018, The Meads contract expired in 2019. Princes Mead and The Meads acknowledged the benefits of the whole town centre working together but there was no benefit for them to co-ordinate with Aldershot. It was suggested that the cost of a contract for the lease of Christmas lights should be investigated.

The Panel discussed options for securing funding for a tree in North Town with additional lights and a tree in North Camp with additional lights plus a one-off cost for a base to secure the tree in a suitable location. It was suggested that a request could be made to the Cabinet to increase the budget for provision of the trees in North Town and North Camp and that the £3,000 one-off funding for the base could be put forwards as a capital bid. There was also an option to approach the construction company based in North Camp to carry out some of the work required as a contribution. A potential cheaper alternative over the longer term would be to provide a permanent tree in North Camp with lights that would only be turned on during the Christmas period. John Trusler would provide a breakdown of the costs for a permanent tree and lights in North Camp.

A review of Christmas 2017 would take place at the January Panel meeting which would include consideration of costs for additional trees and lights for Christmas 2018.

The Panel requested that the Cabinet re-investigate the appetite of local retailers to become part of a Business Improvement District, although it was recognised that a consultation had already been held which had showed there was not strong support for the initiative.

The Panel **AGREED** the following actions:

Action to be taken	By whom	When
A review of Christmas 2017 be carried out at the January 2018 Panel meeting	Panel Members	23 January 2017
Details on the costs of a permanent tree and lights in North Camp to be brought to the January 2018 Panel meeting	John Trusler	23 January 2017
A meeting to be arranged with Cllr Keith Dibble to discuss a community event in North Town	Jenny Atherton	October 2017
Consider the introduction of a decorated shop front competition in the Borough	Jenny Atherton	October 2017
A meeting to be arranged with Tony Parrot and Liz Marsden to discuss potential joint procurement of Christmas lights and provide details of the costs involved	John Trusler	January 2017
The Cabinet be requested to re-investigate the appetite of local retailers to sign up to be part of a Business Improvement District and report back to the Panel meeting in March 2018	Ian Harrison	January 2017

11. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Panel discussed the current work programme and **AGREED** to add the Christmas 2017 review and proposals for 2018 to the 23rd January 2018 Panel meeting. Christmas activity Cabinet outcome, Business Improvement Districts and Neighbourhood Shopping Facilities Policy would be added to the work programme for the 20th March 2018 Panel meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.30 pm.

CLLR D.S. GLADSTONE (CHAIRMAN)

BOROUGH SERVICES POLICY AND REVIEW PANEL

Meeting held on Monday, 11th September, 2017 at the Concorde Room, Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

Voting Members

Cllr A.R. Newell (Chairman)

Cllr T.D. Bridgeman

Cllr Liz Corps

Cllr A.H. Crawford

Cllr S.J. Masterson

Cllr Marina Munro

Cllr B.A. Thomas

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr R.L.G. Dibbs and Cllr M. Staplehurst.

8. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 12th April, 2017 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

9. CITIZENS' ADVICE RUSHMOOR

The Panel welcomed Ms. Alex Hughes, Chief Executive Officer, Citizens' Advice who attended the meeting to give a presentation on the recent activities of the organisation. Citizens' Advice offered an advice service via face-to-face contact, over the phone, via live webchat and through a comprehensive website to help people with a wide range of issues. Rushmoor's Citizens' Advice was financed through a variety of funding streams including, the Council, Pension Wise and the local Clinical Commissioning Groups.

The Panel noted the trends in issues tackled. The highest proportion of issues related to benefits and tax credits, and finance and capability, on which the introduction of Universal Credit and Welfare Reform was a significant factor. Advice assessments and face-to-face contact were the two main channels for delivery of support, although there had been an increase in contact via the web. Citizens' Advice were there to help everyone and reached 4.4% of any local population, this raised to 9% in areas of deprivation.

Ms Hughes explained that over 300 independent local charities made up the national Citizens' Advice network. The 36 million customers, nationally, using the website benefited from realtime updated information and the 2.7 million face to face customers had access to 2,900 locations across the country. National statistics showed that two in every three clients had their problem solved.

Housing advice was a large part of the work carried out by Citizens' Advice. Knowledge, legal advice and an understanding of local processes were the key things that Citizens' Advice could bring to a client in need, this resulted in savings to the local authority and social services to the sum of £24,000 – £30,000 per individual. During 2016/17, Citizens' Advice had generated savings in the region of £203,000 through reducing the risk of homelessness in Rushmoor.

On benefits and tax credit advice, the introduction of Universal Credit and Welfare Reform had resulted in an increase in clients requesting support in this area. Through working with the Council, Citizens' Advice had reduced financial difficulties to over 1,300 clients and prevented the need for more critical and costly state intervention.

It was noted that debt advice had reduced in recent years, although numbers were still high with 626 clients with 1686 debt problems contacting the Citizens' Advice in 2016/17. Some clients had successfully rescheduled a total of £722,881 of debt, an average of £5,146 per client and 45 clients had written off £889,135 of debt, an average of £19,784 each. The advice offered by the Citizens' Advice had been around the prevention of escalation and stabilising finances now and in the future.

Ms Hughes explained that the advice provided by Citizens' Advice had a significant impact on the lives of its clients. It was noted that clients were less stressed, had more money and felt more in control of their finances, had a more secure housing situation, felt their physical health had improved and had better relationships with others.

It was noted that Citizens' Advice carried out educational work in a variety of areas to help customers, these included building confidence and skills, financial capability, Energy Best Deal (an initiative to inform decisions on energy deals) and Scam Awareness talks. Locally, specific campaigns and engagement had centred around gambling, "Welfare Reform and Working Families" and "Settled and Safe, a Renter's Rights". A multi agency advice provision, where Citizens' Advice team worked with VIVID, PeoplePlus, Job Centre Plus, Home Group and the Council, was also in place to offer a smoother journey for clients and allowed adaption to meet local needs, an example of which was the Nepalese drop in service which had been established in 2016 to provide specific information/advice to the Nepalese community. Pensionwise, which offered advice on pensions and Heathlands, a provision that offered advice to patients with mental health issues, were also examples of the work adapted for the community with Rushmoor.

The Panel was informed of the value and vital role of volunteers to the Citizens' Advice, it was reported that 121 volunteers had worked with the organisation during 2016/17. Volunteering helped the individuals build confidence and self esteem and also provided wider economic and social benefits.

In response to a query, it was advised that the one in three cases that didn't get resolved were more complicated and couldn't be dealt with at the advice interview stage of the processes, these cases generally required more specific advice and the client would be referred to a third party, such as a solicitor.

It was noted that the work carried out with the Nepalese community ran alongside the provisions provided by the Gurkha Welfare Society who offered advice and assistance with more statutory needs, such as Ministry of Defence, Department of Work and Pensions and visa issues. Citizens' Advice could advise on the more day to day issues around benefits and household bills.

The Chairman thanked Ms. Hughes for her presentation.

10. ELECTIONS REVIEW UPDATE

The Panel welcomed Mr. Andrew Colver, Head of Democratic and Customer Services, who attended the meeting to give an update on the current review of electoral services and recent electoral events.

The Panel noted the unprecedented electoral events that had taken place over the previous two years and the challenges and workload these had created for the Elections Team. There had been an increase in the electorate since the May 2016 local election and the turnout for the EU referendum had been 74%. Different types of elections created different challenges, local and Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) elections took more organisation whilst other national electoral events generated greater customer contact. Some issues had emerged during 2016/17, including requests to review some of the polling stations, a review of the arrangements around the issue of postal votes, complexities of the PCC ballot paper, increased contact from overseas electors and the difficulties in registering military personnel.

The Panel noted the Government's position on making democracy work for everyone. The key focus was to ensure the electoral system worked better and addressed the potential for fraud and improved processes. The Government proposed to tackle fraud and the perception of fraud through the testing of the impacts of ID checking in polling stations, a pilot for which would be carried out during 2018 local elections in areas where there had been issues in the past. Further work would also be required to improve security around postal votes, registration and polling station processes.

It was advised that the Boundary Commission was currently carrying out a Parliamentary Constituency Review. The second consultation period was now complete and the responses were being assessed. The proposals would mean a change for the Aldershot Constituency to include Crookham East, Crookham West and Ewshott. It was noted that if revised proposals were made a further eight week consultation period would commence at the beginning of 2018 and recommendations made to the Government by September 2018.

The Panel was informed of the Law Commissions Reform Project, the Commission had requested a review in 2012 of administrative law, offences and legal challenges. An interim report had recommended consolidation and rationalisation of the laws and processes to address inconsistencies and modernise out of date laws. The review was currently at the Government review stage but had been delayed by activities around Brexit.

The Panel reviewed the elections timetable for the period 2018 – 2022 and it was noted that a European election in 2019 was unlikely. Mr. Colver explained that Individual Electoral Registration (IER) had been introduced in 2014/15. The system had moved from being property based to person based and additional funding had been provided to meet the extra costs of the system. The IER system presented new challenges, which the Government recognised, and it was noted that it was keen to progressively remove mandated processes, make registration simpler, more digital and data driven and more efficient. An annual assessment of the register was also likely to be carried out to assess accuracy and completeness. It was reported that the project had been generally successful, in particular the use of digital services to register and confirm details; however many applications made were duplicates. The Panel noted the changes in the register since 2006, key increases had been the influx of overseas voters, from 29 in 2006 to 330 in 2017. The number of service voters had fluctuated over the years, it was advised that married quarters were canvassed in the same way as non-military properties, but those resident in barracks were harder to access and letters were often returned as undelivered.

The Panel noted that, following the implementation of IER, the Elections Team had commenced a wide-ranging review of its services, using “systems thinking” principles. The team were focusing on improving the service to customers, addressing the amount of paperwork and waste work, integration with other Council services and reductions in cost. A considerable amount of work had been carried out to understand customer demand and processes and currently a consultation was being carried out with residents to assist in the review of the service/process. Electoral services were governed by conditions and legislation which affected the way the service operated; these include Electoral Commission guidance and standards, IT systems and prescribed forms, all of which were detailed/prescriptive and needed to be understood to influence the review.

The Panel noted the next steps, which would involve the findings being collated and fed back to the Elections Group and Panel as required. The redesign of the system would need to be trialled and the team would work with the Cabinet Office to modernise the process, should pilots for any changes be required.

The Panel discussed the option of online voting and it was noted that the Government was reluctant at present to progress any e-voting initiatives.

The Panel **NOTED** the presentation and requested an update on the review at a future meeting.

11. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Panel was advised that, in response to the Notice of Motion raised at the last meeting of the full Council on 27th July, 2017 regarding fire safety issues in the Borough, representatives from the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority and Accent Housing would be in attendance at the next meeting of the Panel on 13th November, 2017. An invitation would be extended to all Members, in particular Cllr Jeremy Preece who had submitted the Motion, and the Cabinet Members.

The items scheduled for the November meeting would be rescheduled for the meeting on 22nd January, 2018.

The meeting closed at 8.56 pm.

CLLR A.R. NEWELL (CHAIRMAN)

COMMUNITY POLICY AND REVIEW PANEL

Meeting held on Thursday, 14th September, 2017 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

Voting Members

Cllr M.D. Smith (Chairman)
Cllr S.J. Masterson (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr R. Cooper
Cllr J.H. Marsh
Cllr Marina Munro
Cllr J.J. Preece
Cllr M.J. Roberts
Cllr P.F. Rust

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr M.S. Choudhary.

7. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 15th June, 2017 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

8. HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY UPDATE

The Panel welcomed Mrs Zoe Paine, Strategy and Enabling Manager, who presented the 'Housing and Homelessness Strategy Update September 2017', as detailed in Report No. EHH 1711. The Report provided the Panel with an overview of the good progress made in the delivery of the Housing and Homelessness Strategy over the six-month period from March to September 2017. The Panel noted that the Strategy was designed to be a rolling document to enable it to be updated to reflect changes in national housing policies.

In relation to the Council's housing objectives contained in the Strategy, the Panel was reminded that these fell into four overall housing themes:

- (a) The right homes in the right places;
- (b) Making the best use of housing stock;
- (c) Helping people solve their housing problems and provide a suitable home when needed; and
- (d) Enabling people to live in good quality accommodation that is right for their needs.

Zoe Paine outlined the key achievements, opportunities and challenges for each of the four housing themes. These included:

(a) The right homes in the right places

- An increasing number of affordable homes being completed;
- Housing and planning officers working more closely to secure policy compliant schemes, including liaison at an earlier stage with developers and providing developers with guidance on affordable housing;
- Removal of prioritisation for local residents on the purchase of shared ownership properties;
- Universal Credit only providing under 35s with funding for a room in a shared property rather than funding for their own property.

(b) Making the best use of housing stock

- Registered Providers have agreed in principle to share data to improve understanding of the composition of households living in affordable housing stock;
- Lettings plan targets have been achieved on the Maida phase of the Wellesley development ensuring maximum movement / occupancy for each unit;
- New Empty Homes Policy has been published with officers across the Council providing feedback and information to the lead officer;
- Ongoing issue of there being a mismatch between household sizes and available accommodation i.e. under occupation in the owner-occupied sector and overcrowding in the private rented sector.

(c) Helping people solve their housing problems and provide a suitable home when needed

- The Trailblazer project funding has resulted in the recruitment of new staff to prepare for the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and to develop a person-centred approach to homelessness prevention;
- Working more with the armed services and private landlords to identify empty properties;
- Positive outcomes for street homelessness due to North Lane Lodge;
- The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 is likely to increase the number of people approaching the Council for advice, assistance and temporary accommodation.

(d) Enabling people to live in good quality accommodation that is right for their needs

- Employment of an experienced caseworker to support vulnerable residents through the Disability Facilities Grant process;
- Financial Assistance Policy being drafted to enable the Council to extend the scope of works that can be carried out with grant assistance;
- Comprehensive review of fire safety issues following the Grenfell Fire;
- Evidence that Welfare Reform is pushing people into cheaper, poorer quality accommodation;
- Guidance awaited on the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and the extended Mandatory Licencing Scheme for HMOs.

The Panel reviewed and provided feedback on the Delivery Plan for the Housing and Homelessness Strategy, noting that none of the actions had been identified as not being on target.

The Chairman thanked Zoe Paine and the team for a comprehensive and informative report.

9. **HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL - CONSULTATION ON OVERNIGHT RESPITE FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES**

The Panel noted Hampshire County Council's Consultation on proposals to close overnight respite services at Sunbeams in Aldershot. Panel members were encouraged to provide individual responses to the consultation by the deadline of 2nd October, 2017.

10. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Panel noted the updated work programme for 2017/18 Municipal Year.

The meeting closed at 8.20 pm.

CLLR M.D. SMITH (CHAIRMAN)
