

COUNCIL MEETING – 19TH APRIL 2018

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7 (4)

**ENVIRONMENT POLICY AND REVIEW PANEL –
ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18**

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. In accordance with provisions agreed by the Council, this Report reviews the work that has been carried out by the Environment Policy and Review Panel during 2017/18. In addition to setting out the issues discussed, it also explains the processes used and the progress made.

1.2. The Panel's main areas of responsibility are:

- Planning policy
- Regeneration activities
- Street scene services, including parking
- Environmental Health

2. THE PANEL'S WORK PROGRAMME

2.1 The work programme has been regularly updated with items for monitoring and scrutiny, including regular performance management information.

2.2 The mid-cycle meeting provides an opportunity to discuss the Panel's processes and priorities, and adapt the work programme if it is felt necessary.

3. PANEL ISSUES

3.1 The principal issues examined by the Panel during 2017/18 have been:

a) **Christmas Activity in the Borough**

3.2 The Panel has looked at Christmas activity in the Borough and how activities could be more co-ordinated. There has been a discussion on options for increasing the lights and trees in neighbourhood centres and increasing Christmas activity where possible. There was a more co-ordinated approach to the town centre activities at Christmas in 2017 and a Christmas shop window competition ran across the whole Borough. The co-ordination of activity and the shop window competition will continue for Christmas 2018. At the Panel's final meeting, it was agreed that a bid for Christmas lights for the neighbourhood centres should be submitted. There will also hopefully be a solution found so Christmas trees can be provided in both Farnborough and North Camp for Christmas 2018.

b) Southwood Golf Course Consultation

- 3.3 In November, the Panel joined with the Leisure and Youth Policy and Review Panel to consider options for the future of Southwood Golf Course. The meeting was well attended by members of the public and a number of representations were made in support of keeping the course open. After a lively discussion the Joint Panel voted in favour of deferring the closure of the course for 12 months while other options were pursued. The Cabinet took the decision in December to close the Golf Course to provide Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace, however the date of closure has yet to be agreed.

c) Serco Contract Delivery Performance

- 3.4 The Panel received details from Serco on the service delivery in the first six months of the contract. Serco are already introducing improvements to the service and reported that customer satisfaction was good. Serco are also adding some additional services to take up the reduction in services from Hampshire County Council. The Panel shared information from residents with Serco on their view of the service provision. Serco agreed that they would liaise with Ward Councillors in future to select residents to approach to become Community Champions to further improve services. It was felt important that the service delivery continues to be monitored.

d) Business Improvement Districts

- 3.6 The Panel looked at whether Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) should be considered for the Borough as a way of generating income to improve the centres. The Panel heard that the potential for BID applications was pursued in 2015. At the current time it is felt that a BID application is not appropriate for Aldershot or North Camp but may be of benefit for Farnborough. The level of interest from the Farnborough town centre businesses will be raised with the town centre managers before asking Cabinet to consider pursuing a BID.

e) HCC Transformation to 2019 Programme

- 3.7 The Panel was interested to hear about Hampshire County Council's Transformation 2019 programme to aim to save £140m over the next three years. There are a number of reductions in funding proposed and the Panel agreed that it will not be clear what effect the service reduction will be immediately. It will be important to monitor the reduction in service delivery and Panel has requested that a task and finish group will need to be established to monitor the effect over the next 12-18 months.

f) Penalty Charge Notices

- 3.8 The Panel was asked to scrutinise the problems being experienced with parking at Aldershot Centre for Health (ACH) and the Garage Sites which have been sold and are being operated by private parking operators. The Panel heard from NHS Property Services on the ACH issues and what changes need to be introduced to address the issues. The parking problems at Tices Meadow

have also been discussed by the Panel and what action can be taken by the Council.

As a result of the discussion at the Panel I will be sending a letter to NHS Property Services setting out what action is required at ACH regarding the parking issues and how the Council can help. A letter will also be sent to Vivid to ask them to come and meet with the Panel to discuss the sale of the garage blocks. In addition, a letter will be sent to the current proprietors of the garage blocks and private parking providers to invite them to come and discuss the current practices and resident's concerns.

A private members bill is currently passing through Parliament for a parking code of practice and I will be writing to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in support of the Parking (Code of Practice) Bill 2017-19. I will also be seeking support from Leo Docherty MP for the Code of Practice as it goes through the Parliamentary process.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 I would like to take the opportunity of thanking all Members of the Panel for the support they have given to the Panel's work during the year. We have covered a wide range of areas during the year. The Panel has tried to limit the number of items it has discussed at each meeting to enable detailed discussion and I feel this has proved effective. There are a number of outstanding issues on the Panel's work programme and these will be fed into the new scrutiny and policy development structure when it gets established.

5. RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 The Council is asked to note and endorse the Panel's work.

D.S. GLADSTONE
CHAIRMAN
ENVIRONMENT POLICY AND REVIEW PANEL