

COUNCIL MEETING – 19TH APRIL 2018

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7 (5)

**LEISURE AND YOUTH POLICY AND REVIEW PANEL –
ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In accordance with the Council's procedures for monitoring the overview and scrutiny process, this report reviews the work that has been undertaken by the Leisure and Youth Policy and Review Panel in 2017/18. The Panel's focus has been to keep a watching brief on the performance of local facilities and provide comments and ideas, which would help to shape the Council's future policy and services. The report covers the issues discussed, the processes followed and the outcomes achieved during the year.

2. PORTFOLIO AND WORK PROGRAMME

- 2.1 The main areas of responsibility for the Panel are as follows:

- Leisure and recreation facilities
- Arts and cultural development
- Town twinning
- Rushmoor in Bloom
- Youth issues

- 2.2 The mid cycle meeting (consisting of Cllrs Terry Bridgeman, Liz Corps and myself) is an effective forum for discussion and consideration of process and priorities. For 2017/18, the Panel has focussed on the leisure facilities in the Borough and has continued its work on healthy weights in young people.

3. PANEL ISSUES

- 3.1 The Panel has spent a considerable amount of time monitoring services. The main purpose has been to ensure that the services meet customer demands, provide value for money and are delivered effectively. The principal items considered in 2017/18 have been as follows:

(1) Budgets and Savings

The Panel has continued its work from previous years on looking at certain aspects of its budget. This work has focused on costs and potential alternative ways of providing services. This is part of a programme looking at various aspects of service provision in the portfolio.

- **Aldershot Lido**

The Panel has kept a watching brief on the Aldershot Lido through the work of the Lido Working Group. It is expected that the work in this area will develop in 2018/19 in light of the contract re-tendering process due in 2019.

- **Healthy Weights Audit**

In response to a request from the Panel for some work to be carried out on obesity level within primary school aged children, an audit of the local schools has been carried out. A report was made at the June meeting on the initial concerns and way forward. This was followed up at the January meeting with the findings from the audit and suggestions on initiatives to help address the issues. Work would continue on this project in 2018/19.

(2) **Scrutiny and Performance Management**

- **Southwood Golf Course**

At its meeting in September the Panel were informed of the consultation process for Southwood Golf Course to consider the possibility of converting the golf course into SANG (Suitable Alternative Green Space) to enable the development of 2,500 homes across the Borough. At that meeting, the Panel agreed to hold a joint meeting of the Leisure and Youth, and Environment Policy and Review Panels after the results of the consultation had been prepared. They also requested that other options were considered for providing SANG, including dual use of the golf course.

In November, the Panel met with the Environment Policy and Review Panel at a special joint meeting to discuss the findings of the consultation. The Joint Panel proposed that the decision regarding the future of the golf course should be deferred for twelve months while other options were considered. These included lobbying government, seeking special dispensation for the area of Rushmoor in the way it is treated for SANG and further examination of alternative SANG provision to provide the necessary mitigation for housing development in Rushmoor. The proposals were recommended to the Cabinet for final decision at its December meeting where it was agreed that the Golf Course would close

- **Leisure Contracts**

The Panel have been updated on the leisure contracts at two of their meetings during the Municipal Year. At its meeting in September, an overview of the current situation with each facility due for re-tender in 2019 was provided. This was followed by a presentation at the March meeting on the specifications of the current contract, which highlighted areas where Members will be able to influence the specification in of the contract. It was proposed that a task and finish group could be established when the re-tendering process begins in 2019.

- **Hampshire Cultural Trust**

The Panel has been given an update from the Hampshire Cultural Trust, which was established in 2014. The Trust has responsibility for the Aldershot Military Museum and the West End Centre, within the Borough, and the Panel noted priorities for each venue going forward.

- **Playgrounds**

After its meeting in April, 2017 the Panel requested some further work to be carried out on the usage of the 39 playgrounds in the Borough. At the meeting in March, 2018 a report was given on the utilisation of playgrounds and the approach to be taken moving forward, including removal or replacement of the facilities. The Council has responsibility for 19 small and very small playgrounds, which are reaching the end of their life cycle. The Panel were asked for their views on options for the 19 playgrounds for recommendation to the Cabinet and it was agreed that any proposals to remove equipment from these sites would be subject to consultation with local residents and ward councillors.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The Panel has worked extremely well during the year and we have examined a range of important services, which have a significant impact on the Borough. Within our managed programme we have helped to develop services and carried out in depth scrutiny where necessary. The Panels work programme, which contains some areas still to be examined will be picked up in the new governance structure.
- 4.2 Finally and importantly, I feel that the Panel has worked very well together during the year. All Members have contributed at meetings and I would like to express my thanks for their support. In addition, I am also grateful for the support given by the officers to the Panel and myself as Chairman.

5. RECOMMENDATION

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

DIANE BEDFORD
CHAIRMAN
LEISURE AND YOUTH POLICY AND REVIEW PANEL