

POLICY AND PROJECT ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting held on Wednesday, 25th September, 2019 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

Voting Members

Cllr J.B. Canty (Chairman)
Cllr Sophia Choudhary (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr Gaynor Austin
Cllr P.J. Cullum
Cllr Prabesh KC
Cllr T.W. Mitchell
Cllr Sophie Porter
Cllr M.J. Roberts
Cllr C.J. Stewart
Cllr J.E. Woolley

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr P.I.C. Crerar.

13. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 31st July, 2019 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

14. DRAFT STRATEGY FOR FUTURE INVESTMENT IN RELATION TO PLAYGROUNDS WITHIN THE BOROUGH

The Board considered a presentation from the Head of Operational Services and the Parks Manager on the strategic aims and objectives to underpin the emerging playground strategy. The Cabinet had requested the Board to agree the fundamental principles before the draft Strategy was brought forward for recommendation.

The proposed strategic aim which had been prepared following the Board workshop in July was as follows:

‘For every resident in the borough to have either a local equipped playground within a five-minute walk or a neighbourhood playground within a fifteen-minute walk, complimented by destination facilities at key parks.’

The Board discussed the proposed strategic aim and there was some deliberation on what constituted a 15-minute walk and whether distance should be included as well as time. The Board agreed the strategic aim, subject to the inclusion of a criterion of distance to walk.

Underpinning the strategic aim there were four proposed strategic objectives:

- To provide a network of high quality, diverse play facilities across the borough.
- To utilise a hierarchy of play facilities by type
 - Destination
 - Neighbourhood playgrounds
 - Local playgrounds
- To ensure that the facilities were managed and maintained to a high standard to ensure a safe and high-quality experience.
- To ensure additional consideration was given to sites located within areas of deprivation.

The Board discussed the proposed strategic objectives and other areas of information that could be included. It was proposed that changes in demographics and population along with future forecasts for the area should be taken into consideration. It was agreed that demographics and population would be included as a strategic objective. The amended strategic aims and objectives would be circulated to the Board by email.

The high-level strategic aims and objectives would need to be developed into an operational plan. It was agreed that the detail of the operational plan would be worked through by the Progress Group and brought back to the Board to agree and make a recommendation to Cabinet.

Action to be taken	By whom	When
Amend the strategic aims and objectives as agreed and circulate revised version to the Board	James Duggin/ Andy Ford	October 2019
The Progress Group to work through the detail of the operational plan	James Duggin	October 2019

15. RENT RELIEF POLICY

The Head of Democracy, Strategy and Partnerships presented the background and approach to rent relief for charitable/sporting organisations in the Borough and asked the Board to comment on the policy approach. The Board was advised that in 2017/18 there were 27 community organisations that leased land or buildings from the Council and received rent relief. The majority of those organisations (23) received 100% rent relief. As part of the Council's review of income and expenditure at that time, the level of support was examined, working to the principle that organisations should pay a rental contribution. It was agreed that rent relief would be reduced to 90% in 2018/19 with the potential to reduce the relief further to between 80-90% following assessment.

The current situation was that, of the 27 organisations, sixteen were paying their rent proportion, two were being reviewed and nine were still to pay, with most of them making representations about the contribution. Each representation had been reviewed and, of the nine, eight were being recommended to pay a contribution.

Following consideration with the Portfolio Holder for Democracy, Strategy and Partnerships, it was now proposed that the future policy should be that the maximum relief be retained at 90% across the board but in the longer term move to an arrangement under the Asset Management Strategy to enable negotiated sums at review dates. Specific cases would be reviewed on the grounds of hardship which would be determined by the Portfolio Holder for a maximum of one-year. Assistance would be offered to organisations, where required, to identify opportunities to increase income generated from their premises.

The Board discussed the proposed approach to rent relief and agreed the principle for setting a policy under the Asset Management Strategy for organisations to make a contribution towards the rent. However, it was requested that all representations for relief were assessed on a case by case basis to ensure that the organisation was not at risk of closure if required to contribute to the rental costs.

The policy would be developed, taking into account the comments from the Advisory Board, and following discussion with the Portfolio Holder, it was expected that a report would be submitted to the November Cabinet meeting. Rent relief to organisations would be kept under review to ensure an effective and consistent approach.

16. **UPDATE FROM SUB GROUPS**

The Board received a paper which provided an update on the work of the Advisory Board sub-groups including the Progress Group, Strategic Housing and Local Plan Group, Leisure Facilities and Contracts Task and Finish Group, Rushmoor 2020 Task and Finish Group and the Elections Group. An update was also provided on the first meeting of the Cabinet's Climate Change Working Group which had been requested by the Board.

The Board **NOTED** that Cllr T.W. Mitchell had been appointed to join the Progress Group, Strategic Housing and Local Plan Group and the Leisure Facilities and Contracts Task and Finish Group.

17. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Board **NOTED** the work programme.

The meeting closed at 8.35 pm.

CLLR J.B. CANTY (CHAIRMAN)
