

THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **Leisure, Wellbeing and Health Committee** held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on Wednesday 6 September from 7.30pm to 9.16pm.

Present: Councillors Chris Lloyd (Lead Member, Leisure, Community and Wellbeing), Alison Scarth (Lead Member, Health), Diana Barber, Martin Brooks, Stephen Cox (substitute for Stephen King), Alex Hayward (substitute for Heather Kenison), Angela Killick, Alex Michaels, David Sansom, Martin Trevett (substitute for Alison Wall) and Chris Whately-Smith.

Officers: Ray Figg, Head of Community Services
Charlotte Gomes, Leisure Development Manager
Nigel Pollard, Section Head (Finance)
Josh Sills, Watersmeet Venue Manager
Wendy Stratford, Operations & Events Manager
Charlotte Taffel, Committee Manager

In attendance:

Lisa Cook, Project Development Officer, Three Rivers District Council
Judy Simpson, Leisure Marketing Manager, Three Rivers District Council
Robin Thompson, RPT Consulting
Councillor Phil Williams

Approximately 15 members of the public.

Councillor Alison Scarth in the Chair

LW 09/17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Heather Kenison, Stephen King and Alison Wall. Councillors Alex Hayward, Stephen Cox and Martin Trevett were the respective substitute Members in attendance.

LW 10/17 MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 5 July 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

LW 11/17 NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS

The Addendum to Item 7 (Chorleywood Play Space) had not been available five clear days before the meeting but was of sufficient urgency to be considered by the Committee to enable them to proceed with the project in keeping with the timetable.

In addition, a petition relating to Chorleywood Play Space had not been available five clear days before the meeting but was of sufficient importance and relevance to Item 7 be considered by the Committee.

LW 12/17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Martin Brooks declared a registerable non-pecuniary interest in Item 6 (Watersmeet Business Plan 2017 – 2020) as Artistic Director and user of the venue by Leavesden Players. Leavesden Players were a not for profit organisation who sometimes used Watersmeet. The organisation made no money from hire. Councillor Brooks stated his intention to speak on the item but abstain from voting.

Councillor Alex Hayward stated that she had been a former Member of Chorleywood Parish Council in relation to Item 7 (Chorleywood Play Space).

Councillor Martin Trevett stated that he was a Member of Chorleywood Parish Council in relation to Item 7 (Chorleywood Play Space).

LW13/17 BUDGET MONITORING - PERIOD 4 (end of July)

The Section Head (Finance) introduced the budget monitoring report for period 4 (end of July), which had been presented and approved by the Policy and Resources Committee on 4 September 2017, providing an overview of the revenue and capital for the Leisure, Wellbeing and Health Committee budget.

A Member raised concern over the cost of Truck Replacement and requested an itemised breakdown of the costs. The Head of Community Services said he would provide a detailed breakdown of the total £411k budget for Members of the Committee. He also added that there was a capital item for a tractor for Leisure Venues i.e. Woodlands.

The Chairman proposed that the £1k variance on Grounds Maintenance service in the Medium Term Revenue Budget will be met from other service budgets within this Committee's remit.

A Member questioned the overspend of the Aquadrome Ultra Sound Units. The Head of Community Services noted that this overspend was minimal and would be absorb within the Committee's total Capital Budget.

A Member questioned the reason behind the lower spend on free swimming. The Head of Community Services said the take up of free swimming over the summer was lower than expected. There were no issues with the availability of swimming pools.

Councillor Chris Lloyd moved, duly seconded, the recommendation to note the report.

On being put to the Committee the recommendation was declared CARRIED by the Chairman the voting being 7 For, 0 Against and 4 Abstentions.

RESOLVED:
Existing

Noted the report.

LEISURE, COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING
Councillor Chris Lloyd in the Chair

LW14/17 CHORLEYWOOD PLAY SPACE

The Leisure Development Manager introduced the report and Addendum regarding Chorleywood Play Space. It was noted that the recommendations

within the original report were superseded by the recommendations as detailed in the Addendum following conversations with Chorleywood Parish Council.

The Leisure Development Manager noted that the timetable may change should there be a public enquiry. Should there be any delays in the timetable; an amendment may be required to the capital programme. This would be brought back to the Committee if required.

The Swillett play area was also included within the Small Leisure Capital Facilities programme which would be a more traditional playground as opposed to the play space on the Chorleywood Common which would be in keeping with the 'Wildwood Dens' already installed by Chorleywood Parish Council.

The Committee received a petition signed by 664 members of the public supporting a play area in Chorleywood.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 18 (5) Ms Tyson spoke in favour of a Chorleywood Play Space on the Common on the land south of the railway near the Station Car Park, to meet the needs of the community's children. Ms Tyson was thanked by the Chair for the petition and her presentation to the Committee.

Members made the following points:-

- The site identified at 15A was appropriate due to its low ecological value, deteriorating trees and being within walking distance of the village centre.
- That Chorleywood Parish Council had made good progress with the 'Wildwood Dens' nature trails, and the designs of the proposed equipment for the play space would be in keeping with this.
- That the recommendations were much improved on previous proposals and were a sensible way forward.
- Supported the recommendation so that another generation would not grow up without an adequate playing space in Chorleywood.
- Congratulated Ms Tyson on her contribution and praised Officers for the positive direction of the project, including proposals for no fences or parking.
- Raised concern with regards to the trees being removed in that some residents may be opposed to viewing the play space from their homes.
- It was noted that 61% of respondents (rather than residents) were in favour of the play space on Chorleywood Common, and to make this clear in the event of a public enquiry.
- Questioned whether the budget for public enquiries had been underestimated.
- Noted that costs for the public enquiry had been agreed under a separate budget.
- Enquired as to whether the timetable allowed sufficient time for Chorleywood Parish Council to accommodate the planning application process.

- Noted that the concerns highlighted by Hertfordshire Constabulary were not to be taken lightly; and careful thought needed to be given to issues such as signage, tree felling, accessibility requirements and CCTV.
- Raised concern with regard to voting for planning on land that Three Rivers District Council did not own, without mutual understanding and agreement in place with Chorleywood Parish Council.
- Suggested that Chorleywood Parish Council be involved in discussions prior to the planning application being submitted to help mitigate any issues that could arise throughout the process.
- Praised the compromise made between Three Rivers District Council and Chorleywood Parish Council, and the balance between a play space and preservation of the Common.

The Chairman recommended that the proposed timetable be approved in principle, however in the event that any issues arise; these would be dealt with through monthly briefings and discussions with Officers and Chorleywood Parish Council. The Chairman noted that he had visited all proposed sites with the Parish Clerk and that the Parish was happy to be involved in discussions going forwards.

A Member asked if there would be a tree replacement programme. The Chairman advised that Chorleywood Parish Council did not want trees to be replaced due to the natural environment and new trees would not be deemed appropriate. Such issues could be discussed with the Parish Council in future meetings.

Councillor Martin Trevett moved, duly seconded, the recommendations of the Addendum.

On being put to the Committee the recommendations were declared CARRIED by the Chairman the voting being unanimous.

The Chairman thanked Chorleywood Parish Council, the parents of Chorleywood and the Leisure Team for their contributions.

RESOLVED:

- a) Agreed to proceed with the timetable as detailed at 2.7, which included submitting a planning application to Three Rivers District Council and the Planning Inspectorate for site 15A on Chorleywood Common; and
- b) Agreed that Three Rivers District Council works in partnership with Chorleywood Parish Council and local school children and their families to produce a natural play space at site 15A, which complements their existing play elements, including climbing, rope play and sensory features.

Councillor Angela Killick left the meeting at 8.10pm.

**LW15/17 UPDATED FUTURE SMALL LEISURE CAPITAL FACILITIES PROGRAMME
2018-2021**

The Committee received a report providing Members with proposals on the future priority order for upgrading and refurbishing small leisure capital facilities in the District.

A Member asked if the budget for the Leavesden Country park upgrade to the existing play area could be brought forward. The last upgrade was in 2008 which only included new tyre swings, with the rest of the facility not having been upgraded since 2004.

The Chairman suggested that the programme be approved as stated in the report as the programme had been formed to take all parts of the District into consideration. However depending on the timescale relating to the Chorleywood Play Space, the capital programme could be amended. Alternatively, if the Committee desired, the Leavesden Project could be swapped with the Denham Way, Maple Cross project. It was also noted that there were some areas which had older equipment than Leavesden Country Park and that the Committee should be flexible with the timetable, taking into consideration all comments made.

A Member questioned the shortfall for Croxley Skate Park. The Leisure Development Manager stated that Three Rivers District Council would be applying to Sport England for additional funding.

A Member noted that programme would overlap with the Local Plan, and this would have an impact on play spaces in the District. With the introduction of new housing estates there would be the possibility of falling behind with play space provision, and the Chairman suggested that additional Officer resources may be required to tackle these issues in the coming years.

A Member said that the Local Plan would need to include provision in addition to housing, such as playgrounds and schools.

A Member said it would be useful if Three Rivers District Council worked more closely with Parish councils that could not afford to improve play spaces, in an attempt to promote a more holistic programme of upgrading facilities.

A Member questioned the more natural play elements that were scheduled for South Oxhey, which Officers replied were an emphasis on more wooden, natural play apparatus rather than structured metal equipment.

RESOLVED:

- a) Agreed the proposals for the 2020 – 2024 leisure capital facilities programme as detailed at point 2.4 and 2.5; and
- b) Agreed that the Section 106 money detailed at point 2.3 be used for the Croxley Green Skate Park Project.

LW16/17 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the Work Programme.

A Member questioned whether electric cycles could use all cycle routes and whether that would cause problems. The Chairman advised that this was a transport matter and therefore not within the Committee's remit. This question would be passed to the Traffic Engineer for a response.

RESOLVED:

Noted the report.

LW17/17 LEISURE FACILITIES MANAGEMENT CONTRACT AND REDEVELOPMENT OF THE CENTRE, SOUTH OXHEY

The Head of Community Services introduced Mr Thompson from RPT Consulting who has assisted Three Rivers District Council on the Leisure Management Contract procurement.

The Head of Community Services gave a brief overview of the procurement process to date and updated the Committee on the evaluation of the Invitation to Submit Final Tender outcome for the procurement of the new Leisure Facilities Management Contract; noting that both bids received were very strong.

RESOLVED:

Noted the report.

LW18/17 WATERSMEET BUSINESS PLAN 2017 - 2020

The Watersmeet Venue Manager and Operations & Events Manager introduced the report which outlined the direction of the Watersmeet Business Plan for 2017-2020. The report recommended that commercial rates be reduced to increase competitiveness, and it was clarified that all fees quoted in the report were per hour.

The Part I report included the recommendations of the independent consultant's report. The full consultant's report was included in Part II, which included commercially sensitive information from third parties.

Councillor Chris Lloyd moved, duly seconded, the recommendations to approve the recommendations, subject to any queries or concerns raised in Part II of the report.

On being put to the Committee the recommendations were declared CARRIED by the Chairman the voting being 9 For, 0 Against and 1 Abstention.

RESOLVED:

- a) Approved the Watersmeet Business Plan 2017 – 2020; and
- b) Approved the proposed reduction in commercial hire rates for 2018/19.

LW19/17 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

“that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined under paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act. It has been decided by the Council that in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.”

LW20/17 WATERSMEET BUSINESS PLAN 2017 - 2020

The Committee considered the Part II Appendix 3 to the report at item 6 and discussion ensued on the suggestions of the independent consultant.

There was debate on the proposed use of space within the venue and how this would be best utilised to increase revenue and avoid any commercial loss.

A Member questioned if the proposed increase in marketing would require additional resources being spent on salespersons. The Watersmeet Venue Manager noted that this would not be the case and any face-to-face meetings would be carried out by the existing team, and such meetings were intended to build relationships rather than act as sales pitches.

RESOLVED:

That Appendix 3 be noted.

LW21/17 LEISURE FACILITIES MANAGEMENT CONTRACT AND REDEVELOPMENT OF THE CENTRE, SOUTH OXHEY

The Committee noted the recommendation from the Policy and Resources Committee which considered the report on 4 September 2017, which included an amendment as follows:-

RECOMMEND:

- 1) *to recommend to Council on 17 October to fund the £8.6 million capital required by the Preferred Bidder for the South Oxhey Design, Build, Operate and Maintain (DBOM) plus leisure management for William Penn and Rickmansworth Golf Course subject to the preferred bidder being appointed by the Leisure, Wellbeing and Health Committee;*
- 2) *to recommend to Council on 17 October for the management fee to be profiled over the life of the Contract.*
- 3) *that public access to the decision be made once the bidders have been informed;*
- 4) *that public access to the report and appendices is denied until the contract is awarded.*

The Chairman advised that should the Committee not appoint the preferred bidder, and instead appoint the reserve bidder, this would need to be ratified by Policy and Resources and Council.

The Head of Community Services noted that the preferred bidder had not submitted a variant bid.

A Member queried the summary of projections relating to Rickmansworth Golf Course. The Head of Community Services noted that Rickmansworth Golf Course was currently making a loss and that there was a general downward trend in the uptake of golf. There are provisions within the Leisure Management Contract documentation to remove facilities during the Contract period.

Mr Thompson noted that alternative options could be explored for the golf course in the future, and highlighted that the financial summary provided a column which excluded golf. This would improve the financial position by £32k per annum.

Mr Thompson also noted that there was a provision within the Contract documentation which meant that the Council would financially benefit if the preferred bidder over achieved on their bid submission.

A Member said that thought should be given to improving the return on revenue for the Council through the golf course site.

A Member said that while all sports were to be supported, money should not be spent if there was no demand. This would need to be monitored to avoid any significant financial loss.

The Chairman advised that the contract with the preferred bidder would be much more financially sound than the current arrangement and asked the Committee to focus on the finances rather than leisure provision, which could be explored in more detailed discussion with the preferred bidder in due course.

The Head of Community Services confirmed that the preferred bidder would take on full responsibility with regards to upkeep and maintenance of sites, which at present was split between the Leisure Contractor and Three Rivers District Council. Overall, the financial position would be significantly improved under the preferred bidder's contract.

A Member asked if staff employed under the current contract would be moved over to the new contractor. Mr Thompson confirmed that staff would be moved over to the new contractor as part of TUPE. The Head of Community Services noted that current staff had been visited and made aware of the progress of the procurement process and that further meetings will be held as part of the mobilisation process.

The Chairman noted that the decision was to remain non-public until the final decision was made by Council on 17 October 2017.

Councillor Chris Lloyd moved, duly seconded, the recommendations of the Part II report.

On being put to the Committee the recommendations were declared CARRIED by the Chairman the voting being 9 For, 0 Against and 1 Abstention.

The Chairman wished to thank Officers, consultants and bidders for all the work that had gone into the procurement process.

RESOLVED:

- a) to appoint the preferred bidder of the Leisure Facilities Management Contract from 1 April 2018;
- b) to appoint the reserve bidder of the Leisure Facilities Management Contract from 1 April 2018, in respect of their variant bid;
- c) to award the Leisure Facilities Management Contract from 1 April 2018 to the preferred bidder, subject to final documentation being concluded with them;
- d) that public access to the decision be made once the bidders have been informed; and
- e) that public access to the report and appendices is denied until the contract is awarded.

CHAIRMAN