

LEISURE, ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES

Of a virtual meeting on Wednesday 8 July 2020 from 7.30pm until 8.19pm.

Councillors present:

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| Councillors Chris Lloyd (Lead Member Leisure) | Phil Williams (Lead Member Environmental Services and Sustainability) |
| Roger Seabourne (Lead Member Community Safety and Partnerships) | David Major |
| Donna Duncan | Alex Michaels |
| Paula Hiscocks | Alison Scarth |
| Stephen King | Alison Wall |

Also in attendance:

Ray Figg – Head of Community Services
Charlotte Gomes – Leisure Development Manager
Claire May – Head of Planning Policy and Projects
Rebecca Young - Strategic Partnerships & Policy Manager
Sherrie Ralton - Committee Manager
Mike Simpson – Committee and Web Officer

Councillor Phil Williams in the Chair

LEC 01/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies. Cllr Jon Tankard was unable to join the meeting.

LEC 02/20 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Leisure, Environment and Community Committee meeting held on 11 March 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

LEC 03/20 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

LEC 04/20 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

LEISURE

LEC 05/20 MEMORIAL BENCHES

The Leisure Development Manager presented the report and said it had previously been to the Policy and Resources and Infrastructure, Housing and Economic Development Committees. The minor amendments proposed by both Committees were marked in yellow (P&R) and green (IHED).

In summary, up to three plaques could be placed on memorial benches and in the event of a dispute, a plaque may be relocated upon payment of £30. Contact details of the plaque owners would be reviewed annually and updated as necessary, and locations of the benches were to be agreed by the Lead Member and respective Ward Councillor.

The Lead Member for Leisure said he would be happy to move the recommendation once Members of the Committee had the opportunity to express their views.

A Member asked for clarification of exclusive ownership of a bench, and asked if three plaques would still be permissible in that instance. The Leisure Development Manager said the options were to buy a bench exclusively, featuring one plaque, or purchase a single plaque for an existing bench. In response to a question about locations of benches, the officer said Parish Councils determine where memorial benches may be placed on their own sites, and the District Council was responsible only for its own land. The history of a site would be considered e.g. whether there had been any instances of ASB and vandalism in the area. The Officer agreed to check whether the Parish or District Council was responsible for Sarratt Village Green and let the Member know.

POST MEETING NOTE

The Leisure Development Manager advised that The Green in Sarratt is maintained by Sarratt Parish Council.

The Memorial Bench and Memorial Trees Policy includes locations for memorial benches and memorial trees in Three Rivers District Council owned and managed parks and open spaces.

Memorial benches within the locations that are managed and maintained by Sarratt Parish Council would be their responsibility.

A Member asked what the Council's commitment was in terms of maintenance of the benches. The Leisure Development Manager replied that the life of a bench was estimated to be approximately 10 years, and in the event of vandalism or damage to the bench, the sponsor would have the option to re-locate their plaque to an existing bench. Sponsors would be aware of this from the outset. She assured the Member that the plastic resin benches were recyclable, that the trees would be maintained by the Council in the first 3 years, and in response to a request for trees to be planted near the front of the Café in the Park, she would refer the question to the tree officer. The terms and conditions of buying a memorial bench and/or tree would be made clear on the Council website and as part of the purchasing process.

A Member asked about public liability for memorial trees, and the Leisure Development Manager said it was the responsibility of the Council if the trees were on Three Rivers land.

A Member observed that the fee charged was £1,000 per tree for 25 years, and asked what would happen after that period. The Leisure Development Manager said after 25 years the tree would cease to be a memorial one, and the plaque would be returned to the family.

A Member asked whether all the relevant memorial information would be published on the Council's website. The Chair agreed with this idea as it would make it easier for everyone to find all the details.

A Member asked whether any Memorial benches would be sited alongside the highway. The Senior Transport Planner would look to include memorial benches within the Cycling and Walking strategy.

On being put to the vote, the recommendation was declared CARRIED by the Chair, the voting being Unanimous.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee agree to the new policy for installing memorial benches, memorial bench plaques and memorial trees within parks, open spaces and on the highway and other routes across the district as detailed at point 2.3 and within Appendix A.

Costs will be reviewed annually year on year to take into account inflation, any additional costs and increased costs from manufacturers/suppliers and will be included as part of the Fees and Charges process.

Locations will be reviewed year on year when required, in consultation with the appropriate Lead Member, Ward Councillor and Head of Service.

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES AND SUSTAINABILITY

LEC 06/20 HERTS WARMER HOMES

The Head of Planning Policy and Projects introduced the report, and said the current arrangement by which the Council provided assistance to those in particular need to heat their homes was approaching an end. The report outlined a proposed new arrangement directly between Three Rivers and YES Energy Solutions, the existing supplier, beyond July 2020, without the involvement of Hertfordshire County Council and Herts Help. The website would be updated with all relevant details.

A Member said was very pleased that the Council was to continue providing help to eligible individuals, and asked if details of the new agreement were available as it must be clear that the Council was not incurring additional costs as a result, and asked whether there would be a separate web page. The Head of Planning Policy and Projects said there would be no additional liability to the Council, and that the arrangement was as good, if not better than the existing one. The Officer would be happy to share details of the new agreement.

A Member said this was an ideal opportunity to put the supplier contract out to tender in order to secure the most competitive deal, to which the Head of Planning Policy and Projects said the process had been to HCC and that YES Energy

Solutions had been confirmed as the potential supplier. She added that Broxbourne and St. Albans had also signed up to a similar deal.

A Member asked whether it would be possible to incorporate the government's newly-announced scheme to provide financial assistance for home insulation. The Head of Planning Policy and Projects agreed it would be preferable to run the schemes side-by-side, but it would be necessary to wait and see details of the government's insulation project.

Councillor Stephen King moved the recommendation, seconded by Councillor Christ Lloyd.

On being put to the vote, the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair, the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED:

Noted the contents of the report and approved the continuation of the Herts Warmer Homes Scheme as set out in paragraphs 2.5 and 2.6 of the report.

LEC 07/20 ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Strategic Partnerships and Policy Manager presented the revised terms of reference for the Environmental Forum, which had not been changed for many years and now needed to incorporate climate change. It was intended to survey Members of the forum, the public and other interested parties by way of a consultation, with emphasis on the views of young people. Upon agreement of revised terms of reference, they would be presented to the Policy and Resources Committee for adoption.

The Lead Member for Leisure thanked the Officers involved in the preparation of the revised terms of reference, and said it was at least 29 years since the current ones had been drawn up. He added that virtual meetings like this were clearly good for the environment and were conducive to attracting a wider, younger audience, and it was important to attract new people to the forum.

A Member said it was very sensible to look at the remit, but would like to see greater importance attached to the tree strategy, something on which the Council failed to meet its target in terms of the risk matrix. The Strategic Partnerships and Policy Manager said she would follow up on that point.

A Member said consultation with young people of school age would be a challenge if meetings were to be in the evening, and asked if daytime meetings would be considered. The Strategic Partnerships and Policy Manager said the timings of meetings could certainly be looked at, and young people could be consulted on what time best suits them.

The Lead Member for Leisure said he believed the Chair of the Forum would build on the work done previously by the Youth Council in his new role as Young Persons' Champion. The Chair added his thanks to Councillor Alex Michaels for his work with the Youth Council, during which time he had done an excellent job engaging with young people,

A Member asked whether an Environmental section could be included at the next meeting of the Youth Council. The Leisure Development Manager said she would liaise with the Strategic Partnerships and Policy Manager regarding having an item on Climate Change at a future Youth Council.

Councillor Alison Wall moved that the recommendation, seconded by Councillor Roger Seabourne.

On being put to the Committee the recommendation to draw up new terms of reference for the Environmental Forum was declared CARRIED by the Chair, the voting being 9 For and 0 against. Councillor Alex Michaels was not present at the time of the vote.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee delegates to the Head of Community Partnerships, in Consultation with the Chairs of the Committee, to undertake a consultation on the revised terms of reference as outlined in the report.

That officers report back on the findings of the consultation to Committee and recommendations are made to the Policy and Resources Committee for adoption.

LEC 8/20 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee reviewed its work programme.

A Member asked that a report be produced on the Sustainable Tree Resilience strategy to provide an overview of the extent of tree diseases and Tree Protection Orders. The Committee Manager said she would check and revert.

The Lead Member for Leisure said a number of staff from Leisure had been redeployed during the Covid-19 emergency, and wished to place on record that they had been doing other jobs in addition to their own. They had been involved in closing services at the beginning of the emergency and were now helping to reopen them. He thanked the Head of Community Services, the Leisure Development Manager and their teams.

A Member asked whether the work programme should include something on Leisure Centres and Watersmeet during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Lead Member for Leisure said a Covid-19 response Sub-Committee had been set up by the Policy and Resources Committee to address pandemic-related issues. The Watersmeet report was moved back due to the difficulty in providing an update as so many officers were redeployed. A tree report may not be possible in August and was not a priority at this time. He was keen to see a report but other things were more urgent. He would raise the matter at Full Council with a view to facilitating a written reply. The Member thanked the Lead Member and welcomed this approach.

On being put to the Committee the recommendation to note and accept the contents of the Work Programme was declared CARRIED by the Chair, the voting being Unanimous.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme and Members' comments be noted.

Post Meeting Note: *The Sustainable Tree Resilience Strategy has been included on the Policy and Resources Committee Work Programme in the first instance as there will be Budget and Policy implications.*

LEC 09/20 OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman declared there was no other business.

CHAIRMAN