
LEISURE, ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES

Of a virtual meeting on Wednesday 19 August 2020 from 7.30pm until 8.30 pm.

Councillors present:

Councillors Chris Lloyd (Lead Member Leisure)	David Major
Roger Seabourne (Lead Member Community Safety and Partnerships)	Alison Scarth
Donna Duncan	Jon Tankard
Paula Hiscocks	Alex Hayward (Substitute for Cllr Alison Wall)
Stephen King	Martin Trevett (Substitute for Cllr Phil Williams)

Also in attendance:

Ray Figg – Head of Community Services
Rebecca Young – Interim Head of Community Partnerships
Debra Sandling – Animal Welfare and Licensing Inspector
Sherrie Ralton - Committee Manager
Mike Simpson – Committee and Web Officer

Councillor Chris Lloyd in the Chair

LEC 10/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Phil Williams (Martin Trevett substitute) Alison Wall (Alex Hayward substitute) and Alex Michaels.

LEC 11/20 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Leisure, Environment and Community Committee meeting held on 8 July 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

LEC 12/20 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

LEC 13/20 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES AND SUSTAINABILITY

LEC 14/20 ANIMAL ACTIVITIES LICENSING FEE REVIEW

The report set out the proposed fees for licenses that fall under the scope of the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018. The Animal Welfare and Licensing Inspector advised that the recommendation proposed of no change at this time was due to the lockdown period when the businesses were closed. They had not reopened until July. The Council's costs had not changed and the Inspector's contact with operators during the last five months had been minimal so it was proposed the fees would remain as they are. There would be no loss to the Council. Once services were restored the figures would be recalculated and any amendments would be contained within the fees and charges report presented to Committee in November.

The following points were raised by Members:

A Member referred to paragraphs 2.2 and 2.3 and raised concerns about animal welfare and that three years was too long to wait for a license to be granted or renewed. She felt an annual inspection should take place. The Animal Welfare and Licensing Inspector advised that the Regulations were statutory and nationally set by Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). On an inspection minimum and higher standards were set for each establishment to meet. A star rating was provided which determined the duration of the license. Interim inspections were also carried out within the period which were factored into the fees.

Clarification was sought on Paragraph 9.2 which stated there were insufficient resources for the additional statutory function to be undertaken. The Animal Welfare and Licensing Inspector advised that there had been updates to the regime such as a requirement to actively seek unlicensed operators, so the Inspector now had to look through social media and the Internet in order to carry this out. The inspection forms were now very long and detailed and time consuming to complete. At present there was only one qualified Inspector to carry out this work so it was agreed to highlight in the report that the resources were limited and this may have to be addressed in the future.

A Member asked whether there were implications for the Regulatory Services and Licensing Committees. The Lead Member advised that the Regulatory and Licensing Committees had been advised of this item so they would be aware of the fee setting.

Councillor Chris Lloyd moved, duly seconded, the recommendation in the report.

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

RECOMMEND:

Agreed to recommend to Policy and Resources Committee that no change is made to the current fees of Animal Activities Licences between October 2020 and March 2021 and

RESOLVED:

That a review is undertaken during this time with any amendments identified contained in the Fees and Charges report to Committee in November 2020.

LEC 15/20 REVIEW OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

The report presented to Committee a draft revised Terms of Reference for the Environmental Forum for agreement following the community consultation on the proposed changes.

The Interim Head of Community Partnerships presented the report and advised that some of the feedback received from the consultation would be used to start devising a work plan. One amendment had been made around virtual meetings where carbon emissions would be reduced by not having to travel to meetings, however other members of the community may need additional support to access these meetings.

The following points were raised by Members:

A Member asked what would be considered a good response to a survey with a District population of 85,000 people. The Interim Head of Community Partnerships said although 700 was not a huge number compared to the population the consultation had been open for only two weeks and on the Environmental Terms of Reference only. Officers were pleased with the response. On different issues, for example the Climate Change Strategy, the consultation would be wider and a variety of formats would be used to capture the views of more residents. This would not represent the views if a Climate Change Emergency was announced. Wider views on Climate Change would require a larger consultation.

A Member was pleased with the response and identified what people in the District felt was important, but highlighted the need to engage younger people under the age of 40 and other ethnic groups.

A Member highlighted that 80% of the responses were from people in the over 55 age bracket and only 1% were under 34.

The Chair of the Forum who was also the Youth Champion advised that they would be trying to get young people to engage more with the Council in terms of what they think they need for the future.

A Member pointed out that at the previous meeting there was talk of having meetings in the afternoons to try to get school children to attend.

A Member pointed out a spelling mistake on page 17, should read Carpenders Park.

The Chair was advised at 19.55 that Councillor Seabourne had lost connection to the meeting.

The Interim Head of Community Partnerships said Officers would attend the Youth Council Meeting to consult on the Climate Change Strategy and ensure they look at different ways to consult with young people and residents.

The Chair thanked the Interim Head of Community Partnerships and the team for the work carried out.

Councillor Chris Lloyd moved, duly seconded, the recommendation in the report.

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

RESOLVED:

Approved the proposed new terms of reference for the Environmental Forum to improve the quality of the environment and support the climate change agenda for the people of Three Rivers.

The Committee reviewed its work programme.

The Chair advised that two items, Watersmeet, which was not currently open and the Leisure Management Contract presentation had been pushed back to October due to the impact of Covid-19 Pandemic.

The Head of Community Services advised that a presentation on Watersmeet would be given at the October meeting but if it was still closed a verbal update would be given instead.

On the Leisure Management contract, William Penn Leisure had recently opened together with the Multi Use Games Area at Sir James Altham Swimming Pool. The construction works at South Oxhey Leisure Centre were due to be completed at the end of August. There would be a phased reopening in early September starting with the gym and group exercise.

A Member felt it was important to have an update on Watersmeet and the Leisure Centre in October. Under point 8 the Sustainable Tree Resilience Strategy, she asked when this would be presented to the Committee. The Head of Community Services advised that the resources in the Trees and Landscape team had been recently agreed by the Senior Management Team. Once the Principal Trees and Landscape Officer had been appointed they would facilitate this work. There were no timescales at present.

There had been a lot of Anti-Social Behaviour in Rickmansworth and a Member asked for an item to be added to the work programme. The Lead Member for Community and Partnerships would be contacted to discuss taking this forward.

A Member asked why the Sir James Altham Swimming Pool was not open. The Head of Community Services advised that this was due to the cost involved in recommissioning the swimming pool as well as the running costs. An agreement had been reached with SLM on the Management fee until the end of March but this would have been an additional expense to the Council. There was only 4 to 6 weeks until the new pools opened at South Oxhey Leisure Centre.

South Oxhey Leisure Centre was due to open in early September, the contractor was of the view that the main building works would be completed by the end of August and there would be a phased approach. There was a Section 278 agreement required with County to allow for the road works to the entrance of the car park. These works could not be scheduled by County until the second week of September and hence the car park would remain closed until mid-September. An email would shortly be going to all Councillors with anticipated timescales of the phased approach. The contractor is looking to open the gym and group exercise studios on 1 September, followed by sports hall one, swimming pools and the car park. Sports hall 2 will open once the construction workers have vacated the site.

A Member asked where the customers would park. The Head of Community Services advised that a lot of users were local. The same parking arrangements before lockdown would be in place including Henbury Way car park and the local church car park.

A Member asked whether people could be asked not to park on the junction of Fairfield Avenue and Gosforth Road as it caused problems with the buses. The Head of Community Services advised that notices would be put up to this effect but

it would be difficult to enforce. Officers would discuss with the Leisure Management contractor. A Member said they had no problem parking in Henbury Way before lockdown.

A Member asked about the name of the Multi-Function room. The Chair advised that currently one of the sports halls was called the Glyn Abraham Sports Hall. Rather than keeping that name it had been proposed that the Councilor's name be associated with the Multi-Function room, as this Councillor had represented South Oxhey for many years and was a former Chairman of the Council. The South Oxhey Members were very keen for this to happen.

A Member thought that, together with the fight against obesity and encouraging children to use the gym, it would be a good to get local schools involved with a competition to rename the room. Also to involve members of Glyn Abraham's family in the panel to choose the name.

The Chair of the meeting agreed to report back to the Committee on whether another room could be named by the local community.

The Chair moved a recommendation, duly seconded by Councillor Stephen King, to vote on the naming of the Multi-Function room after the late Councillor Glyn Abraham.

On being put to the vote, the recommendation was declared CARRIED by the Chair, the voting being 6 For, 1 Against and 2 Abstentions.

RESOLVED:

That the Multi-Function room be named after the late Councillor Glyn Abraham.

That the work programme and Members' comments be noted.

LEC 17/20 OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman declared there was no other business

CHAIRMAN