

LEISURE, PARKS & WASTE MANAGEMENT (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE

26 MARCH 2019

PRESENT:

Councillors Matthews (Chairman), Mrs Banevicius (Vice-Chair), Rayner (Vice-Chair), Mrs Bacon, Pullen, Mrs Pullen, Salter, Mrs Tranter, Mrs Woodward and B Yeates.

(In accordance with Council Procedure Rule No.17 Councillors attended the meeting).

15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Miss Fisher

16 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillors Mrs Pullen and Mrs Woodward declared personal interests in any reference to Staffordshire County Council as they are County Councillors.

17 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes including the confidential part of the previous meeting as circulated were signed as a correct record.

18 WORK PROGRAMME

The work programme was discussed and it was noted that this was the last meeting of the Municipal year. Items requested to be put forward for the next year included football pitches review, an update on Bowling clubs and opportunities for events at Chasewater.

RESOLVED: That the work programme be noted.

19 LEISURE MANAGEMENT OUTSOURCING - PRESENTATION BY FREEDOM LEISURE

The Committee received a presentation from Mike Worsnop, Head of Business Development & Active Communities for Freedom Leisure.

The presentation focused on the first 12 months of Freedom Leisure operation and commitments delivered so far. It included the introduction of free swimming for all under 5's and the soon to be introduced free swimming for all over 75 year olds.

The presentation then gave an update of the refurbishment of Burntwood Leisure Centre which included an investment for energy saving at the site along with equipment and the Costa reception area. This was followed by information regarding the fee payable from the Council to Freedom and noted that this would reverse and become a fee received in 2020/21.

Balanced scorecard information was presented to show performance in participation at both Burntwood and Friary Grange centres. It was reported that the Council monitored these scorecards and as this was the first year of operation, these scorecards would set the baseline to compare to in future years.

Health and Wellbeing was discussed and it was reported that a new Active Communities Manager had begun work at Freedom and developed their development plan for 2018-2020 in partnership with the Council and other parties and clubs. It was agreed to send this plan to the Committee.

Members asked how targeting for under participating demographics were carried out as there was concern that wards known for deprivation were not being targeted. It was reported that Freedom worked closely with the Sports development team at the Council who know the relevant areas and that Freedom also used 'know your patch' and conducted consultations with schools and clubs.

Members discussed further areas of improvement that they wished to be considered by Freedom including the showers and toilets at BLC. It was also requested that a changing areas changing space for disabled users be looked at and it was agreed to investigate this further as Freedom do offer this at other facilities they manage. Car parking provision was also considered as needing improvements especially blue badge provision as well as parent and child spaces especially if participation was to grow.

When asked, it was reported that competitor gyms opening in both the Lichfield and Burntwood areas were known about however the offerings and price points were different so there was no concern regarding losing users.

Friary Grange Leisure Centre was discussed further and it was noted that there had been further meetings with Staffordshire County Council and the school as it is move to academy status. It was reported that a business case as to whether there should be future investment was being worked on and would be reported as soon as possible. It was asked what Freedom's position would be and if the centre would be viable if there was no capital investment in the pool and it was reported that it was a known risk and Freedom were supporting the Council to make informed decisions. It was asked if a further graph showing fee payable or receivable could be provided to include FGLC as well as BLC. Freedom Leisure were thanked for their attendance and input to the Committee.

RESOLVED: The information received be noted.

20 BURNTWOOD PARKS

The Committee received a report overviewing the decision to cease the locking of four parks in Burntwood. It was reported that the decision not to lock was made when all services were asked to identify savings and it had been agreed to transfer the responsibilities for the parks to Burntwood Town Council (BTC). Subsequently, the parks did not transfer to BTC.

It was reported that some issues of ASB had come to the Council's attention and complaints received so an agreement had been put in place with residents to lock the gates at Redwood Park. It was noted that ASB had reduced however it had been winter and this may change when the weather gets warmer. As regards to motorbikes scrambling at Chase Terrace Park, it was reported by Committee Members that they use the railway tracks and that is why there is no evidence of damage in the park.

Members stated their concern and disappointment at not being consulted on the decision not to lock the parks and felt it vital to inform ward Members of decisions of this nature. Members also had concern of relying on the goodwill of residents to carry out the task of locking park gates. It was requested by the Committee that these residents be supported if required. The Chairman stated that he would send the residents a letter thanking them for their help on behalf of the Committee.

A query was raised regarding the position of tree planting at Burntwood Park as it was encroaching on the children's play area and there was again concern that ward Members had not been notified. It was reported that the trees had been planted as part of the Lichfield Cathedral's Peace Woodland project. It was agreed that Officers would meet with Members at the park to discuss and relocate the trees to a more appropriate location.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and Ward Members be informed along with Police to any changes to the current arrangements for locking parks.

21 REVIEW OF PARKS EVENTS PORTFOLIO

The Committee received a report on details of the events and festivals programme delivered in 2018 on the council's parks and open spaces. It was noted that a report on the economic impact of events had been reported to the Economic Growth, Environment & Development (Overview & Scrutiny) Committee.

It was reported that lessons had been learnt regarding certain events and it was noted that with regard to the Drive in Movies events, it was recognised that the cult movie selection was not selling as well as anticipated so the decision was made to change to a newer blockbuster movie and sell tickets through Eventbrite which made a vast improvement and sales from that one movie offset the loss from the others. The Winter Wonderland event was also discussed and Members felt that positive steps had been taken to reduce issues occurring and congratulated Officers for continuing to develop the commercial aspect of the service.

Members asked whether the data captured could include events in Burntwood and the research due to be carried out by Bournemouth University on economic impact could include the impact across the whole district. It was reported that this would be investigated. It was discussed as to whether more support should also be provided by the City Council as the area benefitted greatly from the events held.

It was suggested that there had been some crime and disorder at events but it was also noted there was a high potential for a perception of crime and it was requested that any facts from the Police be sought. It was confirmed that there had been no reports of issues to the Regulatory and Licensing Committee.

Income figures from the events was requested and it was reported that figures would be sent to the Committee once the financial year had ended and the most accurate figures could be provided. When asked, it was confirmed that there were different pricing regimes if bookings were from commercial or community.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and financial information be sent to the Committee when available.

COUNCILLOR B. YEATES DECLARED A PERSONAL INTEREST IN ANY MENTION OF THE GARRICK THEATRE AS HE HAS DEALT WITH THEM IN A BUSINESS CAPACITY.

22 VOTE OF THANKS

It was proposed, duly seconded and

RESOLVED: That the sincere thanks of the Committee be recorded to the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen and Officers for their work during the past year. The Chairman also wished to record his thanks to Vice-Chairmen for their work and support.

(The Meeting closed at 7.20 pm)

CHAIRMAN