

NEWARK AND SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of **Leisure & Environment Committee** held in the Civic Suite, Castle House, Great North Road, Newark, Notts, NG24 1BY on Tuesday, 19 January 2021 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor R Jackson (Chairman)  
Councillor N Mison (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor L Brailsford, Councillor S Carlton, Councillor D Cumberlidge,  
Councillor P Harris, Councillor Mrs L Hurst, Councillor J Lee and  
Councillor Mrs Y Woodhead

The meeting was held remotely, in accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

79 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS AND AS TO THE PARTY WHIP

Councillor S Carlton declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 7 – Active4Today – Final Business Plan 2020/21 and Performance Update, as he was a member of the Board of Active4Today.

Councillor P Harris declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 14 – Southwell Leisure Centre Trust Update, as he was a Trustee to Southwell Leisure Centre.

The meeting was held remotely, in accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

80 DECLARATION OF ANY INTENTIONS TO RECORD THE MEETING

The Chairman informed the Committee that the Council was undertaking an audio recording of the meeting which was to be webcast.

81 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 NOVEMBER 2020

AGREED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2020, be approved as a correct record to be signed by the Chairman.

82 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman provided an update to the Committee on the major developments that had taken place within the Committee's remit since the last meeting held 17 November 2020.

It was reported that the response to COVID-19 had continued to affect services within the Council's responsibility. At the time of the last committee meeting, the Council's leisure centres in Newark, Ollerton and Blidworth were closed as was the centre in

Southwell which the Council supported. Members were all too aware of the Prime Minister's announcement on 4 January 2021 and as a result, those centres continued to remain closed and as to date, there was no timescale as to when they may be able to re-open. This depended upon infection rates and the rollout of the national vaccination programme. Andy Carolan, the managing director of Active4Today, provided an update on the agenda in relation to the impact this was having on the business, its finances to the end of the year and into 21/22.

Nick Wilson, the Council's business manager of financial services, also provided the impact this and other Covid disruptions were having on the Council's finances.

The Chairman commented that whilst it was encouraging to note the support that was available to mitigate the unavoidable losses that had been incurred by Active4Today, there was no doubt that challenges lay ahead in restoring a membership base that was 37% down on pre-Covid levels.

On a more positive note, the Council continued to make good progress with the new pool at the Dukeries Leisure Centre in Ollerton. The superstructure was now in place and was currently on programme for completion, June 2021. A date was being established and a safe system of work to enable members to take a tour of the facility as it took shape. Late February was the initial thought as the nights become lighter and the superstructure was enclosed. However, with the restrictions that were in place as well as the need not to disrupt the work of the contractor which was already challenging enough, the date had been put on hold. Officers would write to Members with the outcome over the next few weeks.

In relation to the Council's cleansing and grounds maintenance services, the Chairman informed the committee that the Policy and Finance and the Homes and Communities Committees had both approved the proposals to bring the housing grounds maintenance service back in-house. The recruitment process had started in earnest for new operatives to deliver the work, with the change due to take effect in April this year. This would lead to a better, more consistent and more accountable service for streetscene, irrespective of whether communities were on HRA land or not. The Chairman commented that bringing the Garden Recycling service back in house from Rushcliffe and Mansfield had already given the Council greater control of their own destiny, as contained within the agenda. Over the course of the first year the service had been run by NSDC, an additional 1,400 new customers had been generated. This was important both as an income stream and in improving the recycling performance. Members were also advised that the Chatham Court and Lovers Lane areas in Newark were currently benefitting from the award of £550,000 through the Home Office's Safer Streets Fund.

The Chairman also informed the Committee that whilst responsibility for community safety sat with Homes and Communities, he wanted to make the Committee aware of environmental improvements that were being made as a result of interventions from colleagues in street scene, who had been sprucing up the streets and open spaces. This was a significant contribution to a range of interventions which were designed to make residents feel safer in a ward which statistically had low ratings when compared to the rest of Newark and Sherwood. Similarly, Members would also see a report on the agenda which was trying to improve public safety in one of the Council's four green flag parks – Vicar Water. It was unfortunate that it had been submitted seeking to approve a public space protection order for the park, but hopefully that was

another tool in preventing the worrying rise the Council had seen over recent times in fires being deliberately started at what was a much loved beauty spot.

83 PRESENTATION REGARDING PUBLIC HEALTH/ACTIVE NOTTS PHYSICAL INSIGHT PROJECT

A presentation was provided by Helen Ellison – Health Improvement Officer, Newark and Sherwood District Council and Helen Davis – Strategic Lead, Active Nottinghamshire. The presentation informed the Committee of a project which had developed an insight led, asset based approach to changing physical activity behaviour in Ollerton. The aim of the project was to help the community to become physically active and was person led rather than service led. The team worked with the community and learned what the individual requirements were and then developed a fitness regime tailor made around the individual rather than providing a service which did not meet community need.

A Member commented that the project did not include weight management, a problem which had increased during the pandemic. It was confirmed that this was a countrywide problem which would need to be addressed. The Council was working closely with the Integrated Weight Management Service – Your Health, Your Way, to address this problem.

The Chairman thanked them both for presenting the informative presentation and invited them back to a future meeting of the Leisure & Environment Committee.

AGREED (unanimously) that the presentation be noted.

84 ACTIVE4TODAY - FINAL BUSINESS PLAN 2020/21 AND PERFORMANCE UPDATE

The Committee considered the report presented by the Health Improvement and Community Relations Manager which presented the Active4Today (A4T) Business Plan 2021/22 and the latest performance report to end of December 2020 for Committee consideration and approval.

It was reported that the base budget for 2020/21 forecast a deficit at year end of £275,120, this was revised to £735,395 at the end of period 7, October 2020, and due to the ongoing challenges of closures the latest forecast to year end had now escalated to £997,104. Total income was anticipated to be down by £1.44m a reduction of 46.7% of target income for the year. This was offset by anticipated savings of circa £725k made up from staffing, £360k, premises £205k, supplies and services £160k. In addition income through grants of circa £85k and the management fee payments from the Council of £202k had contributed to reducing the overall deficit to date. Assuming the position did not change significantly until year end the overall financial outturn would require an additional payment of £247k to balance the accounts to zero for the year, reducing to £222k if further Government grant was received, estimated to be circa £25k which was linked to the national lockdown closure instructions. In addition an application had been submitted to the National Leisure Recovery Fund, a MHCLG/DCMS/Sport England grant support scheme, to secure a share of funding made available which would equally contribute towards reducing the anticipated outturn position and improve the company's final position.

The amount of grant offered had yet to be confirmed and this fund only related to the recent November lockdown and did not extend to the current National Lockdown although it was hoped that further government assistance would be forthcoming in due course.

A Member sought clarification regarding the financial position of Active4Today and whether the company would be forced into liquidation. The Business Manager – Financial Services confirmed that the Council had agreed to fund £490k in September 2020, from the Covid fund towards the £700k deficit. Around £200k being contributed from Active4Today reserves and it was anticipated that further grant support would be received through funding from Sport England to supplement the shortfall.

AGREED (with 8 votes For and 1 vote Against) that:

- (a) the Active4Today Business Plan 2021/22 be approved;
- (b) performance to Period 9 (December) be noted;
- (c) Active4Today presents its 2020/21 draft accounts by early April 2021 in order that a the Director – Housing, Health and Wellbeing, with delegated approval, can agree what level of contribution is made to the Company, for 2020/21 based on the outturn position;
- (d) the full year financial position be reported to the June Committee; and
- (e) the initial early forecast outturn position for 2021-22 be noted.

85 PROPOSAL FOR A PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDER - VICAR WATER COUNTRY PARK

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Public Protection, which informed the Committee of the incidents of fire related nuisance at Vicar Water Country Park. The report also sought approval to begin a consultation process on the use of Public Spaces Protection Orders to control the use of materials within the Park to reduce risk of further damage.

The Chairman suggested that a designated BBQ area be built into the park, something he hoped would be addressed through the consultation.

The local ward Member commented that the proposals were welcomed as Clipstone had suffered recently with anti-social behaviour. Vicar Water had been awarded the Green Flag and the Rumbles project had offered a valued service to the community providing food parcels during the pandemic.

The Business Manager – Public Protection confirmed that the proposed consultation process would run for four weeks. The listed groups and agencies in the report would be contacted, the public would be consulted through the Council's website. The Park Ranger would also speak to visitors at the park to obtain their views. A report

providing the consultation findings would be submitted to the March 2021 meeting of the Committee.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the proposal to consult on the possibility of introducing a Public Space Protection Order at Vicar Water Country Park be supported;
- (b) the terms of the PSPO as being 'a person or persons are prohibited from the following activities being: the lighting of fires; barbecues; Chinese lanterns, fireworks; or using any article/object which causes a naked flame and which poses a risk of fire', be agreed;
- (c) the list of consultees as set out in paragraph 4.3 of the report be agreed; and
- (d) a further report setting out the results of the consultation be brought back to the Leisure & Environment Committee.

#### 86 LEISURE & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE REVENUE BUDGET 2021/22

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Financial Services, which sought feedback from the Leisure & Environment Committee on the following:

- The proposed general fund revenue budget for the 2021/22 financial year (01 April 2021 – 31 March 2022) for those services which fell under its remit.
- The scale of proposed fees & charges for 2021/22 also for those services which fell under its remit.

The report sought approval from the Committee for the following:

- The 2021/22 base budget as detailed within Appendix A to the report, to be recommended to Policy & Finance Committee at its meeting on 22 February 2021 for inclusion in the overall council budget.
- The 2021/22 fees & charges as detailed in Appendix D to the report, to be recommended to Policy & Finance Committee at its meeting on 22 February 2021 and Council at its meeting on 9 March 2021.

The Business Manager – Financial Services informed the Committee that the Environmental Health Fees and Charges had been omitted from the report and were displayed during the Microsoft Team meeting. The additional information would be circulated to Members following the meeting.

A Member sought clarification regarding the capital charge for the budget and the percentage of capital charge/costs for each sub heading. The Business Manager – Financial Services confirmed that the depreciation charge was not a cost to the tax

payer and hence not included in the Revenue account. The report presented the controllable costs that the Committee were responsible for monitoring. It was confirmed that a conversation would take place following the meeting with the relevant Member.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the following recommendations be made to Policy & Finance Committee at its meeting on 22 February 2021:
  - i. the 2021/22 base to the report budget in Appendix A to the report, for inclusion in the overall council budget; and
  - ii. to Council on 9 March 2021, the 2021/22 fees & charges in Appendix D to the report.
- (b) the information relating to the Environmental Health – Fees and Charges be circulated to Members of the Leisure & Environment Committee.

87 LEISURE & ENVIRONMENT REVENUE AND CAPITAL FORECAST OUTTURN REPORT TO 31 MARCH 2021 AS AT 30 NOVEMBER 2020

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Financial Services, which compared the Revised Budgets for the period ending 31 March 2021 with the Projected Outturn forecast for the period, based on meetings with Financial Services staff and the appropriate Business Manager. The budget was based on eight months' performance information on the Council's revenue and capital budgets, including General Fund (GF) Revenue and capital programme.

The current position for the Council was a variance of between £0.078m (unfavourable) and £(0.022)m (favourable). This was prior to any return funding from the Nottinghamshire Business Rates Pool, for which S151 Officers across the County were working to review the position.

The forecast outturn position for the Leisure & Environment Committee was an unfavourable variance of £0.242m. The main reasons for this variance were detailed within the report. It was noted that the projected outturn variances were still somewhat indicative and that they would become more accurate in subsequent months, as officers continued to refine budgets and forecasts in light of the latest information available.

AGREED (unanimously) that the report be noted.

88 URGENCY ITEM - GARDEN RECYCLING

The report provided the Committee with the urgency decision that had been taken to secure urgent delegated approval to offer a one-off £30 introductory

offer to everyone who had taken up the offer for Garden Recycling and not just residents who were subscribers during the original service reductions.

The introductory offer had been introduced because the garden recycling collection had been interrupted by the first lock down through Covid 19 and following many complaints communications had been put out by the authority that promised a reduction in charge for the 2021/22 financial year in recompense. This also encouraged customers to remain a subscriber rather than cancel. Due to software restrictions, that could only administer one level of charge at a time and the fact that this was an ideal time to push for more customers, it was proposed that a one-off £30 introductory offer be offered to everyone and not just residents who were subscribers during the original service reductions.

AGREED (unanimously) that the urgency item be noted.

#### 89 LEISURE & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN

The Leisure & Environment Committee Forward Plan was provided for Member information. Members were encouraged to submit any areas of work they wanted to address for the forthcoming year.

Members suggested the following:

- Cattle Market, costs and benefits
- Extending the litter pick service – need to invest in a litter picker for the Bridge Ward
- Update on Fly Tipping in the district

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the Forward Plan be noted; and
- (b) the following suggested items be researched and included on the Leisure and Environment Committee Forward Plan:
  - Cattle Market, costs and benefits
  - Extending the litter pick service – need to invest in a litter picker for the Bridge Ward
  - Update on Fly Tipping in the district

#### 90 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

AGREED (with 8 votes For and 1 vote Against) that:  
under section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

91 SOUTHWELL LEISURE CENTRE TRUST UPDATE

The Committee considered the exempt report of the Director of Housing, Health and Wellbeing which updated the Committee on the progress with proposals for an alternative management arrangements between Southwell Leisure Centre Trust and the Council.

(Summary provided in accordance with 100C(2) of the Local Government Act 1972.)

Meeting closed at 7.50 pm.

Chairman