

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY PANEL

Minutes from the Meeting of the Environment and Community Panel held on Thursday, 4th January, 2018 at 6.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ

PRESENT: Councillors C Sampson (Chairman), Miss L Bambridge, A Bubb, J Collop (substitute for Mrs M Wilkinson), Mrs S Collop, G Hipperson, T Smith, Mrs J Westrop and D Whitby.

Portfolio Holders

Councillor I Devereux, Portfolio Holder for Environment

Councillor B Long, Leader of the Council

Councillor Mrs E Nockolds, Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and Health

Officers:

Chris Bamfield, Executive Director

Ray Harding, Chief Executive

Honor Howell, Assistant Director

By Invitation:

Michael Andrews, Alive Leisure Board

Deborah Chapman, Finance Officer, Alive Leisure

Tommy Goode, Director of Business and Development, Alive Leisure

Peter Lemon, Chairman, Alive Leisure Board

Simon McKenna, Chief Executive, Alive Leisure

Councillor Graham Middleton

EC63: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs Fraser, Taylor and Mrs Wilkinson.

EC64: MINUTES

Peter Lemon, Chairman of the Alive Leisure Board requested to comment on the minutes and against normal practice the Chairman permitted him to comment. Peter Lemon felt that the minutes of the previous meeting regarding the Alive Leisure Fees and Charges did not reflect the discussions held. He felt that the Panel were generally in support of the proposals, just with a few tweaks.

The Chairman, Councillor Sampson acknowledged the comments made and explained that they would be recorded, but he felt that the minutes were an accurate reflection of proceedings. He asked the

Panel if they had any comments to make on the accuracy of the minutes of the previous meeting and there were no comments.

RESOLVED: The Minutes from the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

EC65: **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

EC66: **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was none.

EC67: **MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34**

Councillor David Pope – EC70 and EC71.

EC68: **CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE**

There was none.

EC69: **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED: That under Section 100(A)(4) 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 in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

EC70: **EXEMPT - ALIVE LEISURE UPDATE - FEES AND CHARGES**

Simon McKenna, Chief Executive of Alive Leisure thanked the Panel for the opportunity return to present their revised proposals. He provided the Panel with an update on progress since Alive Leisure had attended the Environment and Community Panel Meeting in December 2017. He explained that following the December meeting, officers from Alive Leisure had carried out further work, taking into consideration the concerns and feedback provided by the Environment and Community Panel. He also made reference to correspondence received from the Council's Management Team regarding the proposed changes to fees and charges.

Tommy Goode and Deborah Chapman from Alive Leisure provided the Panel with information on how the comments of the Panel had been taken into consideration, the revised proposals for fees and charges and the ongoing budget challenges.

The Chairman thanked the representatives from Alive Leisure for presenting the revised proposals and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

The Vice Chairman, Councillor Bambridge commented that she could not find figures for the over 60/65 prices. She asked if the current, first proposal and revised figures could be provided to the Panel for all fees and charges. The Chairman agreed that it would have been useful for the Panel to see all the information and statistics available.

In response to a question from the Vice Chairman, Tommy Goode explained that 9% of children who attended the holiday activity programmes were from deprived areas. He clarified that over 5,000 children had attended the activities.

In response to a further question from the Vice Chairman, Tommy Goode explained the proposals for Alive Leisure Cards and Memberships. He explained that work would be carried out to standardise membership options. At the request of the Vice Chairman, Tommy Goode agreed to provide statistics on users by age range. He explained that with regard to gym memberships, most memberships were provided to the 25 to 40 year old category.

In response to a question from Councillor Mrs Collop, it was explained that membership subscriptions had been looked at to ensure that they remained competitive. A concession on memberships was also to be introduced.

Councillor Collop referred to the promoters cost for the Corn Exchange and it was explained that promoters usually dictated the price of the tickets with the Corn Exchange retaining a percentage of sales. Deborah Chapman explained that programming at the Corn Exchange was continuously looked at to ensure that accurate projections were available, comparable offerings were provided each year and ways to increase income were investigated. The Panel was informed that there was a 64% occupancy average at the Corn Exchange during the year.

The Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and Health, Councillor Mrs Nockolds felt that it was important that Alive Leisure looked at ways to increase participation by providing extra outreach work and encouraging young people to participate in sport. Tommy Goode agreed that this area of work was important and a post had been created as part of the Fitness Review which would deal with health promotion and would work with GP surgeries, schools and outreach programmes to encourage participation and develop a strategy for health and participation.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Long referred to the statutory increase in minimum wage and asked if the extra employment costs to Alive Leisure were all because of the increase in minimum wage, or if

any new posts had been created. It was confirmed that one new post had been created and the rest of the employment costs were because of the increase in the national minimum wage. Councillor Long commented that the Borough Council were also in the same position with regard to the increase in the national minimum wage and the impact it would have on the pay bill.

Councillor Pope addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34. He referred to the projected deficit and commented that it would be harder each year going forward to make savings. Deborah Chapman commented that it was important for Alive Leisure and the Borough Council to have a good working relationship so that they could discuss ways to manage resources and work to achieve savings.

Councillor Pope commented that he felt that Alive Leisure had done a fantastic job of managing the facilities and thanked them for their hard work.

Councillor Ian Devereux, Portfolio Holder for Environment commented that at the previous meeting the Panel had requested information on the breakdown of charges, attendance details and the potential impact on income and usage should the fees be increased. He could not see that this information had been provided. He also asked if information was available on how Alive Leisure would increase participation to offset any increase in fees and charges. Tommy Goode commented that he hoped that the proposals brought fitness to a competitive level and the additional facilities that some people may not know about, would be promoted.

Councillor Ian Devereux commented that the Panel needed to know the price sensitivity and the consequences of any increases on attendance. He did not feel that the Panel had been provided with the full picture, and that a list of all fees and charges should have been provided. He also asked for information on cost reduction targets whilst maintaining the same level of service.

Deborah Chapman explained that Alive Leisure was looking at all of the costs that they could influence, but a lot of costs were out of their control. The Panel was reminded that Alive Leisure and Alive Management had established a Joint Board in which proposals would be considered in detail and then a business case would be presented to Alive Leisure and Alive Management for consideration.

The Chief Executive felt that Alive Leisure and the Council had a good working relationship and the challenge between both parties was not a concern. He explained that the Council was very aware of the financial challenges that Alive Leisure faced, as the Council was facing many of the same challenges. He reminded those present that the Council paid the Utilities and Maintenance costs for the Leisure facilities. Members were also reminded of the Joint Alive Leisure and Alive Management Board which would be looking at ways to reduce costs and maximise

income and he felt that this would be a good way to move forward. The Chief Executive commented that Alive Leisure considered the comments made by the Panel with regard to phased increases. He informed the Panel that they should monitor the impact of the increases in fees and charges and invite Alive Leisure to a future meeting so that they could evaluate the impact.

The Vice Chairman, Councillor Bambridge asked for information on the charges for schools and clubs use of the swimming pools and Tommy Goode confirmed that there would just be a small increase and agreed to provide the figures.

The Chairman thanked Alive Leisure for taking on board their comments from the previous meeting. He felt that the Panel did still have some reservations on the proposals, but the important thing now would be for the Panel to have the opportunity to monitor the impact.

RESOLVED: (i) That representatives from Alive Leisure be invited to a future meeting of the Environment and Community Panel approximately six months from implementation of the proposals to provide information on the impact of the increase in fees and charges, how it has worked, a comparison of income against the same period the previous year and attendance figures.

(ii) The information requested by the Panel during discussion of the item be provided.

EC71: **EXEMPT - DISCOVERY CENTRE UPDATE**

Councillor Middleton provided the Panel with an update on the Discovery Centre. He apologised for not being able to bring an update earlier, but he wanted to wait until progress had been made.

The Panel were provided with information on what had happened to the centre over the past year, the current position and what was to happen going forward.

Councillor Middleton informed those present that he had been appointed as the Borough Council's representative on the Discovery Centre in May 2016. He had subsequently become a Trustee of the Board. The Panel was provided with information on the work which had been carried out with other organisations and the staff at the Discovery Centre.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Middleton for the update.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Long explained that it was unusual for an Outside Body representative to take on this amount of work. He wished to put on record his thanks to Councillor Middleton for the huge amount of work which had gone into bringing the centre to its current position and giving it a future. The Chairman, on behalf of the

Panel reiterated the Leaders comments and comments were made that without the work of Councillor Middleton the Discovery Centre would be facing an entirely different future.

Councillor Middleton responded to questions from the Panel regarding the future of the centre and how it would be used.

Councillor Middleton asked for his thanks to be recorded to Vince Muspratt, Lorriane Gore, Sarah Dennis and all other officers and staff involved, who had gone above and beyond their duties in dealing with the Discovery Centre. He felt that it was a credit to all involved.

RESOLVED: (i) That the update was noted.
(ii) The Leader and the Panel commended the work of Councillor Middleton and thanked him for all his hard work.
(iii) Thanks to Vince Muspratt, Lorriane Gore, Sarah Dennis and all other staff involved be placed on record.

EC72: **WORK PROGRAMME**

Members of the Panel were reminded that an eform was available on the Intranet which could be completed and submitted if Members had items which they would like to be considered for addition to the Work Programme.

RESOLVED: The Panel's Work Programme was noted.

EC73: **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Environment and Community Panel would be held on Tuesday 13th February 2018 at 6.00pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn.

The meeting closed at 8.05 pm