

PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 10 MARCH 2020

Present: Cllrs Daryl Turner (Chairman), Cherry Brooks (Vice-Chairman), Jean Dunseith, Simon Gibson, Andrew Starr, Roland Tarr and David Taylor

Apologies: Cllrs Robin Cook, Ryan Hope and Val Potheary

Also present: Cllr Tony Alford, Cllr Shane Bartlett, Cllr Ray Bryan, Cllr Barry Goringe, Cllr Laura Miller, Cllr Andrew Parry and Cllr Molly Rennie

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):

John Sellgren (Executive Director, Place), Matthew Piles (Corporate Director - Economic Growth and Infrastructure), Karyn Punchard (Corporate Director of Place Services), Paul Rutter (Service Manager for Leisure Services), Tony Bygrave (Senior Assurance Officer - Complaints), James Potten (Communication and Engagement Officer) and Lindsey Watson (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

40. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

41. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

42. Public Participation

There were no representations from town or parish councils or from members of the public.

43. Urgent Items

There were no urgent items.

44. Leisure Services Review

The committee received and considered a report of the Service Manager for Leisure Services, following a review by an Executive Advisory Panel.

In presenting the report, the Service Manager for Leisure Services noted that since the report had been published, advice had been received from the council's legal team that the contract for Blandford Leisure Centre could be extended until 31 December 2024. In addition, there was a potential

opportunity under Regulation 74 of the Public Contract Regulations, to vary the timescale further due to Local Government Reorganisation, to allow time for a more holistic approach moving forward and align the contract for Blandford Leisure Centre with the proposed contracts for Dorchester Sports Centre and Ferndown Leisure Centre.

The report set out that the Executive Advisory Panel had strongly supported the need for the leisure review to be considered alongside the council's wider review of buildings and assets. This would also include understanding maintenance issues and the link to climate issues.

It was noted that there was a desire to continue to extend contracts where possible in order to minimise the impact on customers and staff.

The Service Manager for Leisure Services suggested that the following wording be added to the end of both Recommendation 1 and 2, '...if Dorset Council are unable to secure an agreed contract extension.' The position would be confirmed before the report was considered at Cabinet.

The Chairman highlighted that the appendix 'Strategic Review of Leisure Centres report' was an exempt document and therefore the committee would need to move into exempt business if they wanted to discuss anything included in the document. He indicated that it was not his intention to move into exempt business.

The Chairman highlighted that the review had only looked at council owned leisure centres and he felt that this should have included all leisure centres in the Dorset Council area. He also questioned whether the review should include a link to grants provided by the council to other leisure centres.

Following discussion, the following recommendation was agreed.

Recommendation to Cabinet

1. That the operation of Blandford Leisure Centre be brought back in-house on 01.04.2022, if Dorset Council are unable to secure an agreed contract extension
2. That a budget allocation for the one-off costs associated with bringing Blandford Leisure Centre back in-house be approved, if Dorset Council are unable to secure an agreed contract extension
3. That officers are instructed to agree contract extensions for Ferndown Leisure Centre and Dorchester Sports Centre until 31.03.2025, with appropriate contract break clauses
4. That leisure centres are established as a high priority in the buildings and assets review.

Reason for Recommendation:

The Executive Advisory Panel strongly supported the need for the leisure review to be considered alongside the council's wider review of buildings and assets.

The panel considered that the continuation of funding maintenance and refurbishment works at some of the leisure centres may not be the most viable option and that the preferred approach would 'buy the council time', and enable opportunities around the development of community hubs to be explored in detail.

The extension of the Ferndown Leisure Centre and Dorchester Sports Centre contracts to 31.03.2025 will minimise the impact on centre staff, customers and service provision.

45. **Quarterly Complaints Update - Place**

The committee received a report of the Senior Assurance Officer (Complaints) with regard to the performance of complaints made against functions within the Place Directorate. In presenting the report, the Senior Assurance Officer noted that there had been an increase in the number of learnings being taken from complaints received.

The Chairman noted that the report continued to be developed and additional information had been included following requests made by the committee, incorporating a further breakdown of complaints information, including those investigated by the Local Government Ombudsman and an overview of compliments received. He was pleased to note that the council were incorporating learning from complaints.

In response to a point about overdue timescales, the Senior Assurance Officer confirmed that the council had been managing a large number of unreasonable behaviour instances during the previous quarter. The way these were being managed had had an impact on the timescales in this area.

The Executive Director of Place highlighted the opportunity to hold a briefing for members of the committee in respect of the council's vexatious complaints policy and wider work being undertaken. It was suggested that this could be considered when the new scrutiny committees were in place from May 2020.

The Chairman noted that it would be useful to provide a similar overview of complaints to the other scrutiny committees.

46. **Place Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan**

Councillors considered the committee's forward plan and the Chairman noted that new overview and scrutiny committees would be in place from May 2020.

Councillors noted that it was proposed to bring a report on 'Public consultation results and making of a dog related Public Space Protection Order (PSPO)' to committee in July 2020.

In respect of the decisions taken by Cabinet on 3 March 2020, the Chairman noted that the Single Use Plastics Policy had been approved by Cabinet.

47. Exempt Business

No items of exempt business were discussed at the meeting.

48. Leisure Services Review - Exempt appendix

An exempt appendix had been circulated to committee members associated with agenda item 6, Leisure Services Review, but was not discussed at the meeting.

Duration of meeting: 10.00 - 10.36 am

Chairman

.....