

At a Meeting of the **COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE** held at the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Kilworthy Park, Drake Road, **TAVISTOCK** on **TUESDAY** the **17th** day of **JUNE 2014** at **2.00 pm**.

Present:
Cllr R F D Sampson – Chairman
Cllr K Ball – Vice-Chairman
Cllr M J R Benson Cllr K A Clish-Green
Cllr D Cloke Cllr C Hall
Cllr N Morgan Cllr M E Morse
Cllr D E Moyse

Substitute: Cllr J Sheldon

Executive Director (Communities) & Head
of Paid Service
Head of Environmental Services
Natural Environment & Recreation Manager
Street Scene Manager
Housing Team Manager
Committee & Ombudsman Link Officer

In attendance: Cllr W G Cann OBE Cllr A Leech
Cllr C Marsh Cllr R Musgrave
Cllr T Pearce Cllr P Sanders

CS 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr M Morse and from Cllr R J Oxborough (Substitute Cllr J Sheldon).

***CS 2 ITEM REQUIRING URGENT ATTENTION**

The Chairman invited the Natural Environment & Recreation Manager to report on a meeting of the Strategic Leisure Review Group which had taken place during the morning to keep the Committee up-to-date on procurement of future leisure provision within the Borough.

Consultants had been appointed to undertake a “soft market” test with users and user groups to formulate a view as to the way forward. General options indicated by the “soft market” test would then be developed for further investigation prior to a report being prepared for a future meeting of the Committee. Whilst information was still being sought from Mount Kelly and their proposals for an Olympic Legacy Pool, the Council’s procurement timetable to provide leisure facilities once the current contract expired in 2016 had flexibility built in to consider any firm proposals arising from Mount Kelly.

It was the Committee’s view that the proposals put forward by the consultants should all be real proposals and not just one main option with lesser valued alternatives in support and local delivery, if appropriate, should also be considered.

***CS 3 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 11th March 2014, were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

***CS 4**

LEISURE CENTRE CONTRACT MONITORING

Mr J Smith, Contract Manager for One Life, attended for this item.

The Natural Environment & Recreation Manager and the Leisure Contracts Officer presented a joint report (page 6 to the Agenda) on the current performance and key issues of the leisure centre management arrangements with Leisure Connection. The cost of operating the leisure centres during 2013/2014 had been within budget and the budget set for 2014/2015 was £407,000, equating to a management fee of £336,000 with £47,000 for repairs and maintenance.

Both leisure centres, Meadowlands and Parklands, had seen an increase in use during the period October 2013 to April 2014, of an additional 6,377 visits to Meadowlands and 5,544 to Parklands. Maintenance work had been carried out in accordance with contractual obligations and customer feedback showed that, for Meadowlands, there had been 51 positive and 56 negative comments and for Parklands, 51 positive and 28 negative comments.

Leisure in the Community had achieved a positive trading surplus and, in so doing, had awarded the West Devon contract a grant in the sum of £10,000 to benefit local community programmes. This grant had been allocated to the Okehampton Community Recreation Association and the Tavistock Community Sports Centre to provide various new and extended activities.

The Committee noted that 1 Life was now the organisation delivering leisure activities in West Devon, being a new branding of Leisure Connection. 1 Life aimed to enhance activities already provided and to increase them to encompass other community based activities. Activities were advertised through an outreach programme and use of parish magazines. A new admission programme was enabling 1 Life to gather data on all users, in terms of activities undertaken, to help plan and provide future programmes.

It was **RESOLVED** that the current contract performance and continued increase in usage be noted and 1 Life's expanding commitment to the residents of West Devon be welcomed.

CS 5

COACH PARKING IN MILL ROAD CAR PARK, OKEHAMPTON

Arising from Minute No P&L 33 – 2012/2013, the Street Scene Manager presented a report (page 11 to the Agenda) seeking the Committee's approval to amend the Borough Council's Off-Street Car Parking Order to enable coaches to make use of the Mill Road car park in Okehampton, free of charge. The provision of coach parking had been an issue in Okehampton for many years and a decrease in use of the Mill Road car park together with the opportunity to demolish the former public toilet building provided space to park two coaches. Three spaces had been planned but testing with a 60-seat vehicle had shown that space restriction with a large vehicle would create access difficulties but providing just two spaces would resolve that issue.

Also, negotiations with a local business, who owned land at the entrance to the car park, had provided easier access to the Mill Road car park in return for a number of free parking permits.

It was necessary to undertake a public consultation exercise for 21 days on the proposed change to the Car Parking Order and it was anticipated that there would be objections as a number had been received already. The consultation exercise would begin when Council approved the proposal.

The Committee noted that free parking was to be offered in the Mill Road car park as free coach parking was offered in Tavistock.

It was **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** that that the Council approves the provision of free coach parking in the Mill Road car park in Okehampton and that the Off-Street Car Parking Order be amended accordingly subject to public consultation.

***CS 6**

PUBLIC TOILET SERVICE REVIEW

The Head of Environmental Services presented a report (page 15 to the Agenda) on the current public toilet service within the Borough together with options for future provision to make the service more cost effective. The total annual cost of providing the service in West Devon was £185,000 with contributions from Town and Parish Councils of, currently, £22,500.

Three appendices were presented with the report. Appendix A (page 19 to the Agenda) detailed the public toilets operated by the Borough Council and their respective locations; Appendix B (page 20 to the Agenda) detailed the Town and Parish Council contributions; and Appendix C (page 21 to the Agenda) showing five potential proposals to revise the service.

The five potential options as presented in the officer's report were:

- (i) The current contribution from seven town and parish councils was 30% of annual running costs. This amount was set a number of years ago and should be reviewed to reflect inflationary increases in contract payments and utility costs. (Current contributions are shown at Appendix B.)
- (ii) The Council's Assets team was currently looking at the costs which might be saved within individual toilet units. The majority of the toilets currently have hot water provided and some units have also got winter heating systems. By contrast many other local authorities provide only cold water for hand wash which will provide a saving.
- (iii) The Princetown toilet pilot scheme for pay to use facilities was introduced in 2012. This scheme was been successful with £2,500 per annum being raised towards to the upkeep of the facilities. The cost of the cost collection equipment was approximately £4,000. The scheme lends itself to those toilets with the highest footfall. There would be potential in looking at further pay on entry systems in toilets in Tavistock, Okehampton

and Yelverton based upon current facility footfall and operational accessibility to service cash boxes. Where door entry systems are direct entry, cash collection boxes would be required per cubicle.

- (iv) Many local authorities were looking at the possibility of closing some of their facilities seasonally in order to reduce service costs. It should be noted that in the most part this action is being taken by authorities with a much larger toilet stock in the first instance and prior to local contributions being made.
- (v) This option was presented for completeness but as was seen from the benchmarking shown at Appendix A, the Council had already much reduced its own public toilet stock with many facilities transferred to town and parish councils. Where future transfers might be considered with local cleaning arrangements put in place it is important to note that the FCC contract for cleansing ends in April 2017.

It was **RESOLVED** that officer explore further the proposals in Option C and report back to a future meeting of the Committee.

***CS 7**

LOCALISM ACT AND CHANGES TO POWERS UNDER STATUTORY HOMELESS DUTY TO ACCOMMODATE

The Housing Team Manager presented a report (page 23 to the Agenda) requesting the Committee's approval on the proposed use of flexibilities created under the Localism Act 2011 to make use of the Private Rented Sector to discharge, where necessary, the Council's statutory homeless duty.

The Localism Act enabled local housing authorities to meet their homelessness duty by providing good quality rented accommodation should they choose to do so. The Devon Housing Options Partnership made up of the 10 Devon Local Authorities had agreed a minimum housing standard which would need to be met by landlords to allow the housing authority to discharge its homelessness duty. In addition, landlords would need to agree to an initial tenancy of 12 months; 6 months being the normal short-hold tenancy operated in the private rented sector.

A copy of the Devon Minimum Property Standard was presented at Appendix 1 (page 27 to the Agenda).

It was **RESOLVED** that the use of the flexibilities within the Localism Act 2011 to enable discharge of the homelessness duty into the private rented sector be approved.

(The Meeting terminated at 3.37 pm.)