

Scrutiny Task and Finish Panel Agenda



Leisure Task and Finish Scrutiny Panel Monday, 25th February, 2008

Place: Committee Room 2, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping

Time: 7.30 pm

Democratic Services Officer: Adrian Hendry, Tele 01992 56 4246
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Members:

Councillors B Rolfe, Mrs H Harding (Chairman), K Chana (Vice-Chairman), Mrs P Brooks, S Murray, Mrs P K Rush, P Turpin, Mrs R Gadsby, Mrs A Haigh, Ms J Hedges, P House, G Pritchard and H Ulkun

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. SUBSITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

(Assistant to the Chief Executive) To report the appointment of any substitute members for the meeting.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Assistant to the Chief Executive). To declare interests in any items on the agenda.

In considering whether to declare a personal or a prejudicial interest under the Code of Conduct, Overview & Scrutiny members are asked pay particular attention to paragraph 11 of the Code in addition to the more familiar requirements.

This requires the declaration of a personal and prejudicial interest in any matter before an OS Committee which relates to a decision of or action by another Committee or Sub Committee of the Council, a Joint Committee or Joint Sub Committee in which the Council is involved and of which the Councillor is also a member.

Paragraph 11 does not refer to Cabinet decisions or attendance at an OS meeting purely for the purpose of answering questions or providing information on such a matter.

4. MINUTES FROM THE LAST MEETING (Pages 7 - 34)

To consider and agree the notes of the meeting of the Panel held on 18 September

2007 held at Waltham Abbey Sports Centre.

5. TERMS OF REFERENCE / WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 35 - 38)

Chairman/Lead Officer) To note the attached updated Terms of Reference and associated Work Programme. The Panel are asked at each meeting to review both documents

6. EVALUATION OF THE YOUTH INITIATIVES SCHEME: (Pages 39 - 40)

Members of the Task and Finish Panel, at a previous meeting, considered a paper prepared by the Council's Policy and Research Officer on the Youth Initiatives Scheme. It was explained that the scheme was initially developed to provide diversionary activities and facilities, in order to reduce anti-social behaviour. The Panel discussed options as to how best to evaluate the success of the Council's investment of some £100,000 in each year of the programme. It was felt important that Local Town and Parish Councils should be asked to comment; a view should be sought from local community police officers, and importantly young people themselves.

The initiative has been spread out in a three-year programme over the financial years 2005/06, 2006/07 and finally 2007/08. As such some schemes in this current financial year have yet to be completed, or have only recently been implemented. While the earlier years' schemes have been in place sufficiently long to be able to gauge their impact, to avoid any further delay in the review, it is proposed that the evaluation of the 2007/08 schemes be carried out in the Autumn of 2008.

However, in the coming weeks, an evaluation of the 2005/06 and 2008/07 projects is to be carried out. This will be done through consultation with various stakeholders about the effect of the new youth facilities. It is intended that this part of the evaluation be completed by the end of March 2008, to enable the results to be included in the Task and Finish Panel's final report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee in April 2008.

The evaluation of the schemes will be in the form of a number of bespoke questionnaires seeking the views of Town and Parish Councils, the police and young people. It is hoped that Secondary Schools and the newly formed Epping Forest Youth Council, will be involved in the consultation.

A Sample Questionnaire is detailed as an Appendix, which has been designed for Members of Town and Parish Councils.

Chris Overend, the Council's Policy and Research Officer, the lead officer on the Youth Initiatives Scheme, has been liaising with the Council's Consultation Officer, and will be in attendance to address any questions and provide further clarification.

Members will be aware of the success of the "Big Lottery" Play Bid, which saw an award of some £244,000 to improve play provision in Nazeing, Limes Farm and Lambourne. As part of this bid process, extensive audit and consultation work was undertaken to produce a 10-year Play Strategy, identifying need over

the period 2007-2017. Whilst the next two years will see the investment of the additional £244,000, there are still schemes later in the Strategy Programme that will require funding.

Depending on the outcome of the evaluation of the directly funded projects, Members of the Task and Finish Panel may therefore be minded to recommend, that in future, further Capital Funding is bid for within the Council's Capital Programme. This would be in order to continue the improvement of outdoor play and youth provision across the District.

Members are asked to endorse the general approach being adopted and specifically comment on the design of the Town and Parish Council Questionnaire.

7. OLYMPIC LEGACY UPDATE

Following the earlier presentation on options available to the Council to maximise the benefits of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, there have been a number of developments with potential implications for the District.

(i) White Water Canoe Venue:

In October 2007, the Olympic delivery agency announced that, due to the risks of contamination as a result of soil tests, the planned venue at Spitalbrook, Broxbourne, was no longer considered viable.

Investigative work has been undertaken on alternative venues. A site some 6 miles south, still on land owned by the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority, in close proximity to Waltham Abbey (although in the Broxbourne District Council administrative area) has been provisionally identified as an alternative.

On face value, the new site may present less concerns regarding construction traffic and spectator congestion, enjoying better public transport links. It may also present a good boost to the local economy of the District and in particular Waltham Abbey as well as a valuable legacy resource for canoeing and outdoor education.

In November the Director of the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority gave a presentation to the Council's Cabinet and Waltham Abbey Town Council, which whilst lacking in final detail, was well received.

The International Olympic Committee and International Canoeing Federation have still to give final endorsement to the alternative site, but officers will endeavour to keep Members abreast of developments and timescales as they start to emerge.

(ii) Mountain Bike Venue:

As Members may be aware, Essex was to host the Mountain Bike Event at South Weald Park in Brentwood. However, in the last two weeks, the International Cycling Federation have withdrawn their

endorsement for the venue, on the basis that it lacks sufficient “drop” to be technically challenging enough to their top performers, by 2012.

This is a major blow for Brentwood, who had anticipated some significant legacy benefits. A search is now underway for an alternative venue in Essex, although at this stage it is difficult to identify where an incline of 300m could be achieved.

Originally, sites were identified in Epping Forest at the pre-bid stage, although the Corporation of London were not prepared to authorise the use of Forest land, largely due to the potential environmental impact. Again, Members will be advised of any new approaches to utilise sites in the area.

(iii) Olympic Breakfast – 6 December 2007:

The East of England was one of the foremost supporters of the London 2012 Olympic Bid, with Essex being a strong contributor in helping the region to register the highest level of public support for the Games, across the whole of the UK. The economic impact study undertaken to support the bid, identified that the economic benefit to Essex could be as high as £139M.

As Epping Forest is uniquely positioned to take advantage of the Games, the District Council along with Business Link East, hosted a Business Breakfast designed to assist locally based businesses in winning contracts directly associated with the Games, as well as increasing the amount of business they carry out within the public sector. The event held on the 6 December 2007 was well supported by Local Businesses, with the Council’s Economic Development Officer and Business Link able to provide follow up advice.

(iv) Officer Working Group:

In order to co-ordinate the numerous aspects of the potential impact of the 2012 Games, from sports development to transport and emergency planning, a new Officer Co-ordinating Group is being established. The cross Council Group will be chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive with standing members as well as the opportunity to draw in external representatives as necessary. The minutes and action plans will be published on the Council’s communications system and regular updates placed on the Council’s Website and Members’ Bulletin.

Members of the Task and Finish Panel are asked to comment and note the update on the Olympic issues.

8. FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF WALTHAM SPORTS CENTRE

At the Panel’s meeting in August, Members considered a proposed new Dual Use Agreement for the management of Waltham Abbey Sports Centre. The draft covered the respective responsibilities of the Council and King Harold School. This was followed by a site visit to the Sports Centre in September,

which assisted the Panel in appreciating the current facilities and activities offered.

As previously reported, despite some initial resistance, the School, through ongoing dialogue, now have a greater understanding of the implications of a Third Party Leisure Management Contractor, being appointed to undertake the day-to-day operation of the site.

In January 2008, the Deputy Chief Executive and Assistant Head of Leisure Services, attended a meeting with the Headteacher and School Bursar, where it was confirmed that the Governing Body had now formally considered the matter. In summary, provided that there was not direct interface with the contractor, who in effect would be the Council's appointed management agent, they would be prepared to go down the external contractor route. The School were also keen to stress that no "education expenditure" could be used to subsidise community use.

The Headteacher went on to explain in outline terms, how the School had aspirations to achieve a major refurbishment and redevelopment, which would see the demolition of the older parts of the building and replacement new build facilities. This was hopefully to be funded by the "Building Schools for the Future" programme. A decision about whether King Harold's application had been successful would be known, in late Spring 2008. The indicative plans would appear to leave the Sports Centre largely unaffected although the building programme may have some implications in terms of access and potential impact on parking. Another consideration highlighted was the potential need to have some extra gymnasium space provided within the Sports Centre, if funding could not be found to have it within the main rebuild.

However, whilst the School would be in agreement to an external contractor, as previously indicated, this would need to be by open competitive tender. This is based on legal advice, as the management of the site could not be a variation to the Council's current Contractor's contract, as it was not within the original offer tendered.

It would take in the region of 6-8 months to undertake the tender process, once a decision had been taken to proceed. As the current formal agreement between the Council and School expired in October 2007, and both parties are holding over on the existing terms, it is recommended by the Council's Legal and Insurance Officers, that a holding agreement is entered into in the short term until any new Dual Use Agreement/Contract is let. The School are willing to enter into this, but would like it to be for a minimum of 12 months to assist their forward planning.

The Council has built the costs of operating Waltham Abbey Sports Centre in the current way, into the 2008/09 budget. Therefore resources have been allocated up until the 31 March 2009.

Members are therefore asked to recommend to Overview and Scrutiny that:

- 1. A new Dual Use Agreement is entered into with the Kind Harold School for the future management of Waltham Abbey Sports**

Centre.

2. **That the Council seek an external management contractor to undertake their management responsibilities under the new Agreement.**
3. **That the Contract period be in line with the existing contract for the Council's other four Centres.**
4. **That the Council enter into a holding arrangement with King Harold School on the existing terms of the current Agreement, up until the 31 March 2009.**

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Panel is asked to decide on a suitable date from the following:

Tuesday 11 March 2008
Thursday 13 March 2008
Tuesday 25 March 2008