

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 2nd June 2015 at Pippbrook, Dorking from 7.00pm to 9.08pm

Present: Councillors Chris Townsend (Chairman), David Draper (Vice-Chairman), Stephen Cooksey, Clare Curran, Paula Hancock, Mary Huggins, Duncan Irvine, Malcolm Ladell, Jatin Patel and Paul Potter.

Also present: Councillors James Friend, Howard Jones, Tim Loretto, Vivienne Michael, Paul Newman, Sarah Seed and Charles Yarwood

6. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 19th May 2015 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

7. Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Tim Ashton.

8. Disclosure of Interests

Councillor David Draper declared a non pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 5 – Joint Waste Strategy – Action Plan as he was the Chairman of Governors for St Johns School, but was not required to leave the meeting during consideration thereof.

Councillor Duncan Irvine declared a non pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 9 – Redevelopment of the Dorking Football Ground, Meadowbank as he was the Vice-Chairman of Westhumble Residents Association, but was not required to leave the meeting during consideration thereof.

Councillor Tim Loretto declared a non pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 9 – Redevelopment of the Dorking Football Ground, Meadowbank as he was an acquaintance of some of the individuals involved with the operation of Dorking Wanderers Football Club, but was not required to leave the meeting during consideration thereof.

9. Ride London

The Committee received a presentation on the forthcoming cycle race event to be partially staged in Mole Valley later this year from Kevin Nash, the Route Director for RideLondon. The Council's Strategic Leadership Manager, Lucy O'Connell, who was the Council's liaison for the event was also in attendance. During the course of the presentation the following points were noted:-

- This year's race would take place on 2nd August 2015 and would follow the same route as used in 2014, including a significant part of Mole Valley. In order to facilitate the race, there would be road closures along the route, which would come into effect from between 5.00am to 7.30am and it was estimated that all roads along the route would be reopened by 6.30pm at the latest.
- Communication with local residents and businesses had been a key learning point from the 2014 event. The communication methods available this year included a helpdesk and online support to help residents with access issues. Ride London had also held public meetings with land locked communities to discuss the plans and to ensure they were as fully informed as possible.
- Events were being held in Box Hill, Dorking, Leatherhead and Westcott to attract visitors to the local area and Ride London had been working with the Town Centre Managers to ensure businesses would be in a position to take advantage of the increased number of visitors to the area. A workshop had also been arranged for rural businesses as well.

The Chairman thanked Mr Nash for his attendance at the meeting and invited him to return at a later date after the event.

10. Joint Waste Strategy – Action Plan

The Committee received a report setting out details the Action Plan 2015/2016 which would be used to implement the Joint Waste Strategy. This report was presented to Scrutiny Committee following a request for the information to be provided to Members during the consideration of the Joint Waste Strategy at a prior Committee meeting. The Scrutiny Committee were asked for its comments or suggestions for the implementation of the Action Plan.

It was noted that a textile recycling scheme would be introduced at the St Johns School, Dorking that that would allow the school to retain some of the income raised from the recycled material. This scheme was welcomed by Members who agreed that involving schoolchildren would increase the likelihood of families recycling. If the scheme was successful, there was potential for it to be rolled out to other schools in the district.

It was questioned whether the targeted increase of 1% per annum to the Council's recycling rate was significantly ambitious, with a view that there could be significant gains from commercial waste. The Committee were advised that at present the Council did not manage commercial waste collections, but it was something that could be included in the tender process for the joint waste contract.

Other comments raised by the Committee included the effectiveness of bin hangars, the need to educate people on what can and cannot be recycled, using different social media tools to communicate with the public and the need to relaunch food waste recycling to increase its use. It was agreed that the Action Plan did address these concerns, but monitoring would be need to ensure that it was successful.

Resolved: That the contents of the report are noted.

11. The Process for Procuring a Principal Contractor for the Refurbishment of the Pippbrook Civic Offices, Dorking

The Committee received an Executive report setting out the process for procuring a principal contractor for the refurbishment of the Pippbrook Civic Offices. Members were asked for their observations or recommendations which would be reported to the Executive during its consideration of the item on 16th June 2015.

During the Committee's brief discussion of this report it was clear that there were no major objections to the suggested process set out in the report. However confirmation was requested on the cost/quality split to be used to decide how the contract would be awarded. It was agreed that this would be made available for Members when the report was considered by the Executive on 16th June 2014.

Resolved: That the content of the report be noted.

12. Capel Parish Council Application for Designation of Neighbourhood Area

The Committee received an Executive report setting out the application from Capel Parish Council for the parish boundary to be designated as a Neighbourhood Area for the purposes of producing a Neighbourhood Development Plan for Capel. Members were asked for their observations or recommendations which would be reported to the Executive during its consideration of the item on 16th June 2015.

Overall the Committee were happy with the course of action suggested in the report and felt that it may help to clarify this stage of the Neighbourhood Development Plan process in the minds of some residents, who had raised concerns with local Members. As it was noted that a report would be coming back to the Executive in September with feedback from the consultation process, it was requested that this report also be provided to the Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 15th September.

Resolved: That the content of the report be noted.

13. Redevelopment of the Dorking Football Ground, Meadowbank

The Committee received an Executive report concerning the redevelopment of the Dorking Football

Ground at Meadowbank, which set out the following recommendations to the Executive:-

1. Approve the scope of works as set out in this report and that Surrey County Football Association (SCFA) be granted the head-lease of football facilities and offices at Meadowbank Football Ground.
2. Approve the acceptance of the Sport England/Lottery Grant.
3. Replace the existing agreement with Dorking Football Club (DFC) with a sublease.
4. Delegate the negotiation of the detailed head-lease terms to officers, in consultation with the Leader and the Executive Member for Town Centres.

Members were asked for their observations or recommendations on the report which would be reported to the Executive during its consideration of the item on 16th June 2015.

From the discussion held at the meeting it was clear that Members were largely happy for the Executive to accept recommendations 1, 2 and 4, with the Committee recognising that the project represented an excellent opportunity for a much needed community sporting facility in the centre of Dorking. It was also accepted that by granting a head lease to the Surrey County Football Association it would provide the Council additional security for its investment as well as putting in place at the facility an organisation that had the ability to mediate between the two main football clubs in the town.

Despite the positive endorsement for the overall project there was significant concern voiced across the Chamber in regard to recommendation 3, with the view taken that awarding a sublease to only one of the two main football clubs in Dorking would give that team an unfair advantage. The Committee were advised that although there was no legal obligation compelling the Council to grant DFC a sub lease on the new facility, given that Meadowbank was the historic home of the club the Executive believed this placed a moral obligation on the Council to ensure that DFC were able to be based at the redeveloped ground. The Leader would also be meeting with representatives from both DFC and Dorking Wanderers Football Club (DWFC) to discuss the issue further.

It was accepted amongst the Committee that DFC should be able to use the ground, but it was also generally accepted that one of the main reasons for developing the facility was to provide Dorking with a community sporting facility. If this was to be the case, then it was essential that the other main football club in the town, DWFC were given equal opportunity to share the ground. If a sub-lease was granted to DFC before an agreement had been reached between both clubs to share the ground, Member considered this may give DFC an unfair advantage over DWFC in any negotiations.

Given the strong views expressed by the Committee, including local Members whose Wards would be directly impacted by any decision, it was agreed that the Executive would be asked to reconsider Recommendation 3 and either remove it from the report until a ground share arrangement could be reached or rewording the recommendation to grant a sublease to both clubs.

Resolved: That the above comment be reported to the Executive during its consideration of the report and that the Executive is asked to reconsider Recommendation 3 as set out in the report.