

**THE CABINET**  
**24<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2011**

Present: Councillors:  
Robert Nye Leader  
Ray Dawe Deputy Leader and Efficiency & Resources  
Roger Arthur A Safer & Healthier District  
Andrew Baldwin The Environment  
Jonathan Chowen Arts, Heritage & Leisure  
Ian Howard Living & Working Communities  
Roger Paterson The Local Economy

Also present: Councillors: John Bailey, John Chidlow, George Cockman,  
Leonard Crosbie, Malcolm Curnock, Brian Donnelly, Andrew  
Dunlop, Duncan England, Frances Haigh, David Holmes, David  
Sheldon, David Skipp

EX31 **RECORD OF THE MEETING OF 22<sup>ND</sup> SEPTEMBER 2011**

The record of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2011 was approved as correct and signed by the Leader.

EX32 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

EX33 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements.

EX34 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

(i) Mr Dan Pettitt asked the following questions:

*"If the demolition of Broadbridge Heath were to go ahead, what provisions are there to build a new athletics track within the district because clubs like Horsham Blue Star Harriers rely on such facilities?"*

*"What has brought about this sudden plan to scrap The Broadbridge Heath Leisure Centre, was it purely for financial reasons or was it due to outside pressures such as Tesco who want to expand their superstore?"*

The Cabinet Member for Arts, Heritage & Leisure replied as follows:

*"As the report refers this will be discussed with user groups, which we have already started conversations with and we were very clear during these that we would want to work together in ongoing dialogue to come up with solutions as to how we re-provide or secure access to alternative facilities. The Leisure Futures Study does indicate that due to the population size the suggested provision is 1*

EX34 Public Questions (cont.)

*per 250,000 people. With the K2 facility in Crawley in close proximity this theoretically would suffice for both populations. The Worthing facility is also available and closer to those in the south of the District. We do however recognise the use of the facility by local athletes and we have already referred to in the Cabinet Report (Section 4.4 page 36) that a phased approach is likely to be the only realistic approach to secure the site, realistically in the short term it is likely that the track will remain.*

*The Council has undertaken a 'Leisure needs analysis' which has assessed the provision and need of leisure facilities across the 'whole' district across the range of public, private, community and the education sector. It is a key conclusion from this report which has confirmed an over-provision of indoor sports facilities in the Broadbridge Heath/Horsham area. The conclusion was arrived based on the following facts:*

- 1. Age and cost of repair (£1.3-1.5million over next 5 years basic capital investment)*
- 2. Not meeting community need (misleading provision - approx. 40% of the building is privately leased to organisations)*
- 3. Overprovision of sports hall/gym facilities in Horsham / BBH areas especially that of gym fitness equipment 19 per 1000 people whereas Sport England recommend 5.68 per 1000 people. And there are 10 sports halls in a 5 mile area from the BBHLC site*
- 4. Need to re-let the Leisure Management Contract with certainty (December 2012) BBH will affect best price as the facility is expensive to run, out of date and compromised with an inappropriate facility mix*
- 5. Leases for some users have expired or due to expire*
- 6. Counterbalanced by some provision which will go into W. of Horsham development*
- 7. Opportunity to generate income for HDC and keep services going given significant reduced government grant. Other sectors are now also providing leisure services."*

Mr Pettitt asked a supplementary question regarding what arrangements there would be to assist users if the running track were removed and the timing of the proposal in relation to the 2012 Olympic Games.

The Cabinet Member replied that there would be an ongoing dialogue, especially with the running club, and that there might be opportunities arising from the development of the whole site. He also indicated that there were other running tracks both at K2 in Crawley and in Worthing, which was convenient for residents in the south of the District.

(ii) Ms Anne Heads asked the following questions:

*"Do the council acknowledge that the report is flawed since it has no evidence of*

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*consultation with non-leaseholder groups eg the public paying users who attend ladies mornings, children's after school and holiday clubs, 50+ group, etc, and no suggestions as to where they might relocate, and hence more investigation is required?*

*Does the council recognise that the recommendation to 'Disperse' the leisure facilities also means dilution, since no one site will have the multiple sports halls that BBH has which allow activities to run in parallel?"*

The Cabinet Member for Arts, Heritage & Leisure replied as follows:

*"The report is not flawed; it was commissioned to provide a factual evidence base of current 'recognised' leisure provision and need. The focus of this was not on dialogue with users of the centre. Obviously we have engaged in some dialogue with leaseholders (Badminton Club, Theatre 48, HAODS) and those recognised as core/preferred users e.g. Football club, Hockey and Athletics clubs, we do recognise the centre is used for many community type activities, but we also accept that these can be provided elsewhere.*

*Many of the activities you refer to are those which can be offered in community halls and community spaces and not necessarily a Leisure centre. We are already aware that there is capacity in the vicinity to pick up many of these activities; two venues have already come forward The Holbrook Club, Southwater Leisure Centre. Over 50's, ladies clubs and after school clubs could be delivered elsewhere.*

*We recognise that the Broadbridge Heath area has a concentration of activities, because of the size of the site. The concept of the 'dispersed model' is to ensure there is more equitable access to HDC leisure provision across the whole district and not just those in the Horsham Town area."*

Ms Heads asked a supplementary question requesting that the decision at Council on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2011 be delayed to allow further consultation.

The Cabinet Member replied that he had already received many letters and emails on this subject from residents and that this dialogue would continue. By the time of the Council meeting he would have had further consultations and dialogue. Financial considerations were valid in view of the difficult economic climate. However, he wished the recommendations to go forward to Council in December as it would keep the issue focused and on target.

(iii) Mr Keith May asked the following question:

*"With the Council's proposed decommissioning of the Broadbridge Heath Leisure Centre and the uncertain future over the outdoor athletics track could the council confirm whether it is their intention to relocate the athletics facilities, both indoor*

EX34 Public Questions (cont.)

*and outdoor to another location in the Horsham district?"*

The Cabinet Member for Arts, Heritage & Leisure replied as follows:

*"As we have said to the preferred user groups, we would like to work with you on identifying alternative provision for activities and these discussions will be ongoing. As the evidence suggests the ratio of provision is 1 track per 250,000 people for an outdoor track and 1 per 500, 000 people for an indoor facility. I have already commented that we do have in close proximity the K2 (approx. 6 miles away). These are district or sub-regional facilities and people are and will be expected to travel rather than expecting these facilities to be on their doorstep. We are already aware that people come from all around to use the Horsham facility and that we acknowledge that The Blue Star Harriers have a very good reputation.*

*We make reference to a likely phased approach in 4.3 of report and we consider it probable that the site, in particular the athletics track and the football pitch are likely to continue beyond 1<sup>st</sup> December 2012, when we are proposing to close the managed element of the leisure centre. We also refer in 4.4 of the report that specific discussions about these two facilities need to take place. We are unable to commit to relocating and reproviding an athletics track, but we are exploring options.*

*The indoor 'TUBE' facility is unlikely to be provided given its cost and low usage. Approx. usage figures suggest that 26 people a week use the facility."*

Mr May asked a supplementary question regarding the calculations used in respect of provision of both indoor and outdoor athletics facilities if the Broadbridge Heath facility was removed.

The Cabinet Member indicated again that there would be continuing dialogue but that it would not be fair to expect the residents of the whole District to fund the cost of a replacement indoor facility in view of its limited usage.

**REPORT BY THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ARTS, HERITAGE & LEISURE**

EX35 **Leisure Futures Study – An Assessment of Horsham's Needs**

Three members of the public addressed the Cabinet in opposition to the proposals, indicating that: there was no justification for the recommendation to disperse leisure facilities; the argument for the Broadbridge Heath Leisure Centre being surplus to requirements failed as a considerable percentage of users had not been consulted; there was no indication that the private sector was likely to provide core leisure facilities and a sports development role for local communities; the closure of the Leisure Centre might have a disproportionate impact on older people, children and teenagers due to transport and cost implications; there was a groundswell of public opinion across all age groups against the proposal to

EX35 Leisure Futures Study – An Assessment of Horsham’s Needs (cont.)

demolish the Leisure Centre; the day-time facilities currently enjoyed by the 50+ age group were unlikely to be re-provided at other venues, such as schools; it was not possible to put a monetary value on the health and wellbeing of local people; since the proposal had been made public, more than 1,000 people had already signed a petition against the closure of the Leisure Centre; the study did not take account of the level of day-time activities, the Leisure Centre was not surplus to requirements when there was no other facility that offered the same facilities; and attempts should be made to seek sponsorship and volunteers to fund/undertake the required works.

The Cabinet Member for Arts, Heritage & Leisure presented his report which indicated that the Leisure Futures Study (LFS) – an Assessment of Horsham’s Needs had been designed to provide the Council with a rational and evidence based approach to meeting the four needs of:

- Continuing to provide excellent leisure services;
- Providing improved value for money in a difficult economic climate;
- Ensuring that existing and new communities had access to a range of core leisure facilities while rationalising existing supply where it was no longer sustainable; and
- Identifying the Council’s longer-term future provision of leisure facilities.

The LFS provided a summary of the current levels of public and private leisure facility supply, identified the geographical distribution of leisure facilities across the District (including significant provision in neighbouring authority areas such as Crawley and Worthing) and identified whether the provision of sport and leisure infrastructure was sufficient to meet demand or whether there was an oversupply or shortfall.

In order to develop a more equitable Council provision of leisure infrastructure both now and in the future, which addressed the needs of the whole District community a ‘dispersed model’ of leisure infrastructure was proposed, which would counterbalance the over provision that had been identified in the north of the District, particularly Horsham town and its surrounding areas.

The LFS would aid the Council in developing future provision across the District and ensure that, where deficits had been identified, the focus of the overall leisure strategy targeted these areas. Also, the identification of oversupply would enable the Council to make informed decisions as to the best use of public funds to provide leisure facilities. Data produced from the study and the refreshed Planning Policy Guidance 17 assessment would also be used to inform the evidence base required for the forthcoming Community Infrastructure Levy scheme which would be introduced from 2014.

EX35 Leisure Futures Study – An Assessment of Horsham’s Needs (cont.)

The study also provided the evidence needed to inform decisions about the specification for the new Leisure Management Contract, which would run from December 2012, particularly whether the Broadbridge Heath Leisure Centre should be considered to form part of the new contract.

The LFS had identified a number of key issues which would be important in determining the Council’s ability to respond to the policy priorities it had set for itself, including:

- The level of participation was holding up despite the economic downturn and there was some evidence of trading down from private to public sector leisure facilities, particularly fitness gyms
- The growth of leisure related businesses in Horsham was higher than the national average
- Some facilities were ageing and there was a need for significant re-investment in some areas to maintain facility quality/ integrity, with withdrawal in some cases being justified where the cost of re-investment exceeded demand
- Addressing over (Broadbridge Heath Leisure Centre) and under (allotments, indoor tennis) supply in provision.
- The need to plan for the impact of an ageing population and to give consideration to changing needs, such as a greater shift to using outdoor environments
- The justification for a policy of more dispersed provision and re-balancing
- The need to plan for possible participation growth in both public and private sector provision as a result of the Olympic legacy
- The need to ensure that provision is made for population growth
- Provision for young people, including opportunities to provide for constructive leisure to counter obesity/anti-social behaviour/technology related issues.

With regard to the Future of Broadbridge Heath Leisure Centre (BBHLC), it was noted that this was a complex building that had not been designed as a conventional leisure centre, but as re-provision for previous users of the site when it had been acquired by Tesco in the 1980s. A large proportion of the building was leased for exclusive use to private organisations and did not constitute the offer of a public leisure centre. There was an urgent need to decide on the future of BBHLC due to: the age and cost of repair of the building, estimated at approximately £1.3-1.5 million based on a recent stock condition survey; significant Council investment in the provision of new facilities in the last ten years coupled with a significant growth in the private/community sector; the centre not meeting current community needs; the overprovision of sports hall/gym facilities in the Horsham/Broadbridge Heath areas; the need to re-let the leisure management contract with certainty and to secure the best financial deal for residents; the leases for some users having expired or being due to expire; and the West of Horsham development, which would provide some re-provision of the current offer and possible opportunities.

EX35 Leisure Futures Study – An Assessment of Horsham’s Needs (cont.)

It was therefore proposed that BBHLC should not be included in the new leisure contract and that appropriate steps should be taken to decommission the site with the aim of securing a vacant site for demolition. Clearing the site would reduce any future financial burden in respect of the payment of business rates on an empty building. It was likely that, subject to the outcome of discussions with the leaseholders/preferred users of the BBHLC site, it would be necessary to vacate the site on a phased basis. As part of the decommissioning arrangements, the Council would work with existing groups to find viable alternative options or re-provision elsewhere where practical and affordable. Discussions as to the future use of the athletics track and football pitch would also be undertaken with user groups to determine future provision. Leaseholders and core users of the BBHLC facilities had all been informed of the proposal to decommission the Broadbridge Heath Leisure centre site and further detailed consultation and dialogue would be undertaken if the recommendations were agreed.

The Cabinet Member referred to the financial reasons for both undertaking the study and for proposing the decommissioning of the Broadbridge Heath Leisure centre site. In particular, he referred to the routine maintenance work that had been carried out at BBHLC over the years, indicating that the major work now required was not due to lack of maintenance but as a result of the age and construction of the building. Also, all the Council’s leisure facilities throughout the District were subject to routine maintenance and would, in time, require more substantial levels of work, at a cost to the Council tax payer. Much of the evidence in the study relating to the level of provision of leisure and sports facilities was based on the recommended levels of provision by Sport England and National Governing Bodies of Sport.

The decommissioning of BBHLC should not be looked at as a loss of service but as a redeployment of resources to where they were now needed, rather than where they were needed 25 years ago.

The Leader stated that the report before Cabinet was not a business case for closing BBHLC, it was a planning document. In terms of closure, Cabinet was only seeking tonight and at the Council meeting in December to take BBHLC out of the specification for the leisure management contract. There was a commercial aspect to the proposal insofar as, if BBHLC were decommissioned, it would make sense to use the land for the benefit of the whole community by using any income received for much more than could be achieved if the Council continued to operate the current facilities, with the major expenditure that that would entail.

The Leader also emphasised that no deal had been done nor were there any current negotiations with any particular company in respect of the site. If the decision to decommission BBHLC was agreed, it would be a phased process in consultation with the leaseholders and users and all residents of the District. If the commercial potential of the site was realised it was likely that, whilst it was accepted that some residents might be inconvenienced by the closure of this

EX35 Leisure Futures Study – An Assessment of Horsham’s Needs (cont.)

facility, the Council would be able to provide the types of facilities that residents would prefer where they were needed. In the longer term, therefore, this was the best option. Also, if the commercial potential of the site was realised, it was likely that there would be sufficient funds to build a replacement running track possibly in partnership with another organisation.

Other Cabinet Members also commented on the proposal, indicating that they understood the apprehension felt by the current users of the site; that there would be opportunities for relocation; that the report was a success story in that it showed the spread of leisure facilities that had been provided throughout the District since the building of BBHLC; and that BBHLC was at the end of its useful life and needed to be removed.

Other Members addressed Cabinet, thanking the Cabinet Member for Arts, Heritage & Leisure for the opportunity to attend his recent Advisory Group meetings. Some expressed disappointment with the report currently before Cabinet, considering it to be lacking in detail and premature.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the draft Leisure Futures Study (LFS) be adopted as guiding policy which will provide the evidence base for future leisure planning across the District.
- (ii) That a dispersed approach to future leisure provision across the District be adopted.
- (iii) That underprovided facilities be prioritised when seeking to infill facilities for current residents (e.g. allotments, indoor tennis provision).
- (iv) That the proposed ratio/provision standards for planning, as detailed in the LFS, be adopted to determine the need for core and secondary facilities to serve new communities and respond to population growth.
- (v) That all new education facilities be encouraged to make their leisure facilities openly available to the community and that existing education providers be supported in making their facilities available for community use.



EX35 Leisure Futures Study – An Assessment of Horsham’s Needs (cont.)

- (vi) That future options for the provision of bowls facilities in the District be investigated in consultation with local clubs, with a view to establishing the provision of appropriately sized affordable facilities which meet local demand.

**RECOMMENDED TO THE COUNCIL**

- (i) ***That a phased approach to the closure of Broadbridge Heath Leisure Centre from December 2012 be agreed in principle and that current leaseholders and core users of the Centre be consulted about alternative arrangements prior to the demolition of the building.***
- (ii) ***That, subject to recommendation (i), the relocation of current lease holders and the replacement of/provision of alternative facilities where viable and affordable, to serve local community needs be pursued.***
- (iii) ***That, subject to recommendation (i), the Director of Community Services, in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Member, be authorised to commence the necessary permissions in order to decommission the site and secure vacant possession of the facility.***
- (iv) ***That, subject to recommendation (i), Broadbridge Heath Leisure Centre, currently managed by an appointed contractor, be excluded from the new Leisure Management contract.***

**REASONS**

- (i) ***To provide the Council with a framework for long-term strategic provision of leisure facilities which will enable informed decisions to be made about supply, location and demand.***
- (ii) ***To provide the evidence base of community need/provision and ensure the Council provides leisure facilities in the most efficient and cost effective manner in a difficult economic climate.***

EX35 Leisure Futures Study – An Assessment of Horsham’s Needs (cont.)

- (iii) To recognise where under/over supply exists and aim to address issues identified which will ensure that Council’s resources are spent on essential leisure facilities rather than those which are considered (based on evidence) to be over supplied.*

**REPORT BY THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR EFFICIENCY & RESOURCES**

EX36 **Report on and Performance Indicators for Quarter 2 2011/12 and District Plan Priorities Progress**

The Cabinet Member for Efficiency & Resources reported on the outcome of the review of District Plan priorities and the quarterly review of performance indicators for the second quarter of 2011/12 by the Scrutiny & Overview Committee’s Performance Management Working Group.

It was noted that the priorities identified in the District Plan 2011-15 were reviewed on a monthly basis by the Corporate Management Team and quarterly by the Performance Management Working Group.

The Performance Management Working Group had considered the progress monitoring report of the District Plan priorities at its meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2011 and had raised no concerns or requests for further information.

Details of issues raised by the Performance Management Working Group in respect of the quarterly review of performance indicators and the responses thereto were submitted.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

REASON

Performance Management is part of the duty of Best Value to drive up service improvement.

**REPORT BY THE CABINET MEMBER FOR A SAFER & HEALTHIER DISTRICT**

EX37 **Service Merger Report (Parking/Street Scene)**

The Cabinet Member for a Safer & Healthier District reported that, following an informal proposal by Cabinet members two years ago, the possibility of merging

EX37 Service Merger Report (Parking/Street Scene) (cont.)

certain compliance functions/roles had been explored further as part of the work of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee's Enforcement Working Group. The Working Group had concluded that the Council should investigate the potential for merging certain compliance functions, and more specifically those that were either uniformed or particularly customer facing.

The Directors for the two main service areas implicated in such a merger (Parking and Street Scene) had asked the appropriate officers to form a project group and conduct a feasibility study, returning to update the Enforcement Working Group with a business case in terms of how such a merger could proceed. The current report contained the findings considered by the group together with details of financial implications, risks and benefits, following a successful trial project that had commenced in July 2011.

In the light of the findings, it was proposed that the Council should proceed with a two tiered staffing service comprising a first tier pool of staff trained to deal with predominately, but not exclusively, parking operations matters linked to the car parks and a second tier of fewer but more highly trained staff (or District Wardens) who would undertake the full range of parking and street scene functions.

Other elements considered within the report included the views of stakeholders and financial contributors, including Horsham Hospital, Saxon Weald, West Sussex County Council and the Neighbourhood Councils, all of whom paid towards the services provided by both departments.

RESOLVED

That a District Warden scheme and timetable be adopted based on a two tiered service: a Car Parks Team and a District Warden Team, subject to the approval of an appropriate staffing structure by the Personnel Committee.

REASONS

- (i) To provide the public with a clearer understanding about who has responsibility for which service area and to promote improved public relations.
- (ii) Improve resilience and responsiveness to our communities with an aim of improving the speed and accuracy with which compliance matters are resolved.
- (iii) To protect the income stream generated by Parking Services.

EX37 Service Merger Report (Parking/Street Scene) (cont.)

- (iv) To improve efficiency and make best use of Council resources in delivering services.

**REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE RESOURCES**

EX38 **Budget 2011/12 – Progress Report to September 2011**

Cabinet received the report of the Director of Corporate Resources reviewing progress in respect of the revenue budget for 2011/12 and the potential impact of changes on future years' budgets.

In particular, the report highlighted that:

- Staff costs were slightly above budget for the first half of the year with the vacancy allowance incorporated in the budget
- Expenditure on Derv, insurance premiums and bed and breakfast accommodation for homeless families was likely to exceed budget
- Costs for vehicle repair and tyres were also running above budget
- Income from planning fees was well in excess of budget but income from car parking was unlikely to reach budgeted levels.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

EX39 **SCRUTINY & OVERVIEW COMMITTEE – MATTERS REFERRED TO CABINET**

There were no matters currently outstanding for consideration.

EX40 **FORWARD DECISION MAKING PLAN**

The Cabinet received a schedule detailing the revised forward decision making plan.

RESOLVED

That the Forward Plan of Key Decisions be noted.

REASON

To comply with the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000 and the Council's Constitution.

The meeting closed at 8.00pm having commenced at 5.30 pm.

**LEADER**