

Leisure and Culture Policy Development Advisory Group
23 SEPTEMBER 2020

Present: Councillors: Jonathan Chowen (Chairman), Christine Costin, Ruth Fletcher, Billy Greening, Lynn Lambert, John Milne, Roger Noel, Bob Platt, Josh Potts and Kate Rowbottom

Apologies: Councillors: Chris Brown

3 **NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The notes of the meeting held on 8 July 2020 were received by the group.

4 **PARKS AND COUNTRYSIDE**

The Head of Leisure & Culture presented the proposed increase to the car parking charges and standardisation of charge times for Southwater Country Park. The proposal also included an increase in the number of annual permits available for Station Road Car Park. These changes would lead to a reduction in dwell time within the park during busy periods, a reduction of the number of cars parked on residential streets and bring the charges in line with other destination country parks. The proposed changes will support local residents and dog walkers whilst increasing income.

The Head of Leisure and Culture also provided a general service update of the Parks & Countryside department.

The presentation updated on the Warnham Hub building, due to be completed by end of October 2020. The landscaping aspect of the project and interiors of the hub (containing the educational and interpretation material) were aiming for completion by spring 2021.

The team had been working in partnership with the police and the council's community wardens to manage anti-social behaviour in Southwater Country Park.

Horsham Park (along with all open spaces) had seen an increase in littering during the pandemic and was awaiting the results of the Green Flag Award.

The Cabinet Member gave an update on the Rookwood Strategic Site for potential allocation in the Local Plan. Webinars had been held to discuss the alternative proposal for the southern area of the site.

The Cabinet Member provided an update on the Wilder Horsham District initiative. Confirming that Sussex Wildlife Trust had appointed to the two funded posts.

The Cabinet Member provided a summary of the Carbon Neutrality report that would be going to Cabinet on 24 September.

5 **SERVICE UPDATES**

The Head of Leisure & Culture provided an update on the Capitol's refurbishment and implementation of new Government guidelines. Live theatre would return from Friday 2 October but several new cinema releases had been delayed. The Capitol had undergone a recent staffing restructure saving £230k per annum (after redundancy costs) and ensuring a much leaner operation.

The Head of Leisure & Culture updated the group on the Museum's plans for improvement ready for reopening in summer 2021. Plus outlined the £60k savings per annum (after redundancy costs) from the recent staffing restructure.

The Head of Leisure and Culture indicated that it was unlikely that the Leisure contract would be further impacted by the government's latest guidelines and restrictions. However, this would depend on the detail likely to be released over the following few days and would be assessed by our legal department. The financial and performance information from Places Leisure was being scrutinised (as per the legal agreement) on a regular basis. It was highlighted that it looked likely that Places Leisure was seeing stronger performance (particularly with swimming and exercise classes) than initially anticipated. However, it was likely that the evidence would need to be assessed at least over the first two months of operation in order to understand customer activity.

The Parks & Countryside service would ensure that the retendering of the grounds maintenance and arboricultural contracts would take into account the Council's carbon neutral aims.

6 **FORWARD PLAN EXTRACT FOR THE LEISURE AND CULTURE PORTFOLIO**

The relevant items on the Forward Plan were noted by the group.

The meeting closed at 7.31 pm having commenced at 5.30 pm

CHAIRMAN