

**Leisure & Culture Policy Development Advisory Group**  
**22 SEPTEMBER 2021**

Present: Councillors: Roger Noel (Chairman), Tony Bevis, Martin Boffey, Ruth Fletcher, Billy Greening, Liz Kitchen, Bob Platt, Josh Potts and Kate Rowbottom

Absent: Councillors: Jack Saheid and Ian Stannard

Also Present:

8 **NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The notes of the previous meeting held on 14 July were received.

9 **THE DRILL HALL**

Members received a presentation from the Chair of the local branch of the Royal British Legion detailing their business plan for their potential lease and occupation of the Drill Hall.

This included their proposals for the management of the hall along with funding streams and plans to carry out curative works to the building to make it more fit for modern use. This would include achieving at least a B energy rating with the potential to reach an A rating with minimal extra works.

RBL Horsham intend to establish a local branch HQ at the Drill Hall. The main hall and bar would remain a bookable community space for the general public and there is the aspiration to open other rooms for hire that are currently used as storage. Current users would be invited to continue to use the hall.

There was general support for the proposal. However, there were some concerns raised about the impact this could have on the current users, the protections in place for community access and the parking facilities available.

10 **HIGHWOOD COMMUNITY CENTRE**

Members received an update from the Director of Community Services on the proposed community centre at Highwood.

A local community consultation was now underway – online consultation went live on 22 September and there would be a residents meeting online next week. Local residents will have received a letter to inform them of these engagement opportunities.

11 **GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT**

Members received an update from the Head of Leisure & Culture on the Grounds Maintenance Contract Procurement. The report will go to cabinet on 23 September with the recommendation to approve the contract award to the highest scoring bidder and delegate authority to finalise the contract.

The contract will be a 7 year term with the potential to extend it for up to a further 7 year term. Some additional aspects have been incorporated into the new contract. These include the grounds maintenance of the cemeteries but not the more sensitive aspects of cemetery works such as grave digging, liaising with the general public and funeral directors.

The contract will also include litter collection at both Horsham Park and Southwater Country Park, reactive and ad-hoc works that have previously been outside of the core contract and minor works. As such, the size and cost of the contract will increase. However the overall cost of the Parks and Countryside budget will remain the same.

12 **SKATE PARK CAPITAL PROJECT**

Members received an update from the Head of Leisure & Culture on the Horsham Park Skate Park procurement. The skate park will be going out to tender in October and the team have already carried out some market engagement.

After consultation with users and national bodies it has been decided that the skate park will be made with concrete rather than wood as this reduces the amount of maintenance required and increases the lifespan of the site. This is the preferred surface for skateboarders and scooter riders, though less preferential for BMX users.

Tenders will be evaluated on a quality only basis with a fixed budget of £250k (as per the capital programme) to ensure no overspend. The design will be required to cater for all ages and abilities. Planning consent will be necessary, and it is expected that the winning tender will be presented to Cabinet in December 2021. Therefore the skate park should be completed in late spring or summer 2022.

There were questions regarding lighting and paths around the Skate Park which the Head of Leisure & Culture promised to confirm and feed back to Members.

13 **LEISURE CONTRACT**

Members received an update from the Head of Leisure & Culture on the current status of the Leisure contract.

Leisure Centres in the District reopened on 12 of April 2021 and the final legal Covid-19 restrictions have now been fully removed. The Council is negotiating with Places Leisure to reduce the level of support we are giving and return to receiving an income. It is likely we will not need to spend the entire £1.1M budgeted to support Leisure centres this year.

Attendance is now at 85% of pre-pandemic levels with swimming now nearly at 100%.

14 **MUSEUM RE-OPENING**

Members received an update from the Head of Leisure & Culture on the plans to re-open the Museum, introducing the new Associate Curator.

There will be a preview evening on 1 of October where Members will be able to see the two new exhibits on show and the refurbished permanent displays.

The Museum will start on reduced hours to allow for: the new team to receive appropriate support; the recruitment and training of new volunteers; and to ensure that visitors receive an excellent service. It is anticipated that the opening hours will be reviewed with a view to increasing them, at the beginning of 2022.

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

The Forward Plan extract was noted.

*The meeting closed at 7.35 pm having commenced at 5.30 pm*

**CHAIRMAN**