

Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee
11 October 2017

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the SOCIAL Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday 11 October 2017 at 7.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, The Campus, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 6AE.

PRESENT: Councillors D.Bennett (Chairman)

T.Bailey, A.Chesterman, L.Chesterman, J.Cragg
K.Holman (substituting for B. Fitzsimon), T.Mitchinson,
F.Thomson and K.Thorpe

ALSO Councillor T. Kingsbury (Executive Member for Policy and
PRESENT: Culture)

Tenants Panel (D. Goodson)
Tenants Panel (B. Rhodes)

Finesse (N. Palmer)
Finesse (A. Bedford)
Finesse (D. Sinclair)

OFFICIALS Executive Director (Housing and Communities) (S. Russell)
PRESENT: Head of Community and Housing Strategy (S. Chambers)
 Head of Policy and Culture (P. Underwood)
 Governance Services Officer (G. Paddan)

8. SUBSTITUTION OF MEMBERS

The following substitution of Committee Member had been made in accordance with Council Procedure Rules 19-22:

Councillor K Holman for Councillor B Fitzsimon.

9. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L. Brendon, B. Fitzsimon and P. Mabbott.

10. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 27 July 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee
11 October 2017

11. ACTIONS UPDATE

The Committee noted the report of the Executive Director (Housing and Communities) giving an update on actions from the meeting held on 27 July 2017.

12. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS

Councillor L. Chesterman declared a non-pecuniary interest as a Member of Hertfordshire County Council.

13. FINESSE MONITORING REPORT - QUARTER 1

Members received a report of the Executive Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) which formed part of the current client monitoring framework with Finesse Leisure, together with a presentation, which provided information on the current services and performance at the Panshanger Golf Complex.

Members asked about the membership numbers at the Hatfield Leisure Centre and were advised that following funding by Badminton England to improve conditions in the main sports hall, participation in the sport had increased by 34% in the quarter compared to the same quarter last year.

Members noted that the attendance at Panshanger for the first quarter was down by 1.6% from the same quarter last year. This is thought to be because a 'members only' golf club in Welwyn Garden City had recently allowed casual 'pay and play' customers to help increase its customer numbers. Measures to counteract the slow uptake in golf participation were discussed in terms of new marketing initiatives, the introduction of membership schemes, and golf buggies with GPS tracking devices. Finesse advised that facilities had been advertised in the press and in sport magazines to boost numbers. Other suggestions were made such as employee incentives and company discounts. Members were advised that the new golf professional had improved participation and the usage of his services was up by 25% in the quarter. Members asked whether it would be possible to investigate Top Golf.

The presentation highlighted the junior participation increases and WHBC's 'Big Summer of Fun' in which Finesse participated by providing both free and charged for sport and leisure activities. A new booking system online is making it easier and faster for their customers. Members asked about the new innovations and supporting Golf Club events.

Members enquired about the future plans for the King George V playing fields and Moneyhole Lane Park. A discussion ensued on the general upkeep plans, expanding activities, the estimated number of children who used the playing fields and possible future charging for car parking. Officers advised that more information on these two outdoor sites would be available at a future meeting. Members commented on the decline of football at King George V due to a lack of

teams registered to play there, and how this has had a negative impact on the users. It was agreed that recorded attendance would be shared with the Committee periodically at future meetings.

Members were pleased to see that usage at Stanborough Park had increased by 7.6%; in particular the use of the main sailing lake and other outdoor activities.

A visit to the changing facilities at the Hatfield Swim Centre was considered and it was agreed that, as the facilities were being refurbished and the project would not be completed until January, the proposed visit by Members to be deferred until next year.

RESOLVED:

That the Finesse monitoring information be noted.

14. PERFORMANCE INDICATOR REPORT - QUARTER 1

Report of the Executive Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) and accompanying presentation provided the Committee with the performance indicator data collected for those service that fell within its remit.

Members were invited to present questions and responses were provided on the data presented:

- 12 indicators had been met out of 18 which are reported to this committee.
- Indicator 37 – re-letting of property and use of bed and breakfast accommodation. Members were advised that due to complex needs there are periods when such accommodation is required but every effort is made to avoid young families with children. Members asked about the number of properties becoming available and timescales.
- Members also asked whether S106 funding helped to improve situations relating to property purchases.
- Indicator 35 – Members enquired about the Council tenant arrears as a percentage of the annual rent debit. The impact of welfare reform and in particular the universal credit roll out in the Borough on 6 December may have an impact on arrears in challenging times.
- Indicator 36 – number of evictions had reduced, as adequate support had been provided, also there was advice from the CAB. Number of local people using food bank was discussed.
- Average length of time households are currently living in temporary accommodation – this was currently 15 weeks.
- Allocation of funds for social housing and the work that is in progress to improve social housing.
- Officers explained the percentage of affordable housing available – family housing was now 60%.

Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee
11 October 2017

- Indicator 39 –performance had improved gradually month on month. The level of satisfaction was still below expectation and in order to improve tenant customer satisfaction and avoid escalation of complaints it was essential to develop a more robust complaint handing system. A new manager should be in the post soon and this would help with efficiency and target areas of improvement.

It was noted that attendance numbers for Roller City were also down and the drop during Quarter 1 was mainly associated with cost and private parties having to purchase food at the venue. This has now been changed.

RESOLVED:

That the information on the performance indicators for those services within the remit of this Committee be noted.

15. PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDER

Members considered the report of the Executive Director (Housing and Communities) which explored the options available and recommended the initiation of a consultation, to consider the introduction of a zoned Public Space Protection Order (PSPO), as set out in Appendix A. The PSPOs would replace the already existing Designated Public Place Order (DPP) in Hatfield.

Members reviewed the proposed locations for PSPOs and commented on the areas in question and the activities that have been reported. It was also pointed out that people did not feel comfortable walking across certain parts of these areas due to drinking and anti-social behaviour. In reply to a question concerning finance, day to day enforcement of the PSPOs and the review process, this was answered by the Officer; that the police would be the first point of call and a protocol for this would be drawn up with the police. To add, the Council would not want to raise expectations, so the consultation will cover the way in which enforcement would be managed. Officers further advised that the Consultation would be undertaken with police officers, land owners and community representatives that the authority felt appropriate.

Members considered the option being proposed and the public's expectations of such an Order together with its affect on businesses.

RESOLVED

That the consultation exercise be undertaken to gain opinions about the proposed introduction of a zoned PSPO for Welwyn Hatfield, as recommended by the local Community Safety Partnership Joint Action Group (JAG), to cover the areas of Hatfield town Centre and Parkhouse Court commercial zone as shown in Appendix A attached to the report.

Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee
11 October 2017

16. COMMITTEE OVERVIEW WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18

Committee's Overview work programme has been updated to enable forward planning of items to be considered.

Meeting ended at 9.10pm
GP