

MINUTES  
OF A MEETING OF THE  
**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

held on 25 November 2019

Present:

Cllr D E Hughes (Chair)  
Cllr M A Whitehand (Vice-Chair)

Cllr S Hussain	Cllr M I Raja
Cllr R Mohammed	Cllr J E Bond
Cllr C Rana	Cllr J R Sanderson

Also Present: Councillor Colin Kemp

Absent: Councillors G G Chrystie

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Chrystie.

**2. MINUTES**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on Monday, 21 October 2019 be approved and signed as a true and correct record.

**3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES**

The status of the Housing Infrastructure Fund conditions would be followed up by the Finance Task Group and included in a future update for the Committee.

The Community Safety item that was discussed under Urgent Business and taken to the Community Safety Task Group where it was discussed at the last meeting was addressed following the circulation of the minutes from the task group.

The Committee reviewed the response from the Leisure Partnership Board following the review of Freedom Leisure at the previous meeting of the Committee.

**4. URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business to discuss.

**5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

## **6. FREEDOM LEISURE - PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE CONTRACT**

The Chairman introduced the background to the recent review work undertaken alongside Freedom Leisure, including the site visit, town centre survey and presentation. David Loveless provided a presentation on the details of the contract, services provided and responsibilities of Freedom Leisure and Woking Borough Council. The presentation also provided an overview of current improvement works noting the strengthening of the roof, replacement of windows, and installation of new boilers and upgrades made to the heating/hot water systems.

Following a question regarding the refurbishment of the changing rooms, that was not included in the original proposals in the contract, where it was confirmed that it would be dealt with as a partnership arrangement.

Concerns were raised on the communication of works and habits of users, Angella Baillie confirmed that there were many signs encouraging hygienic habits of users and staff had undergone training to educate users too. Freedom had also been working on a marketing and communication plan with Andy Denner, Woking Borough Council's Marketing Manager.

It was reported that the Asset Management Improvement Plan had been heavily focused on Pool in the Park and was a rolling programme, Leigh Clarke would confirm the cost of service for the Council per annum.

The strong partnership and positive working relationships of both organisations was noted. The Chairman thanked Freedom Leisure and David for attending the meeting.

## **7. TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID-YEAR REVIEW**

Leigh Clarke, Finance Director, introduced the annual Treasury Management Mid-Year Review Report. It was noted that the information in the report was also reported monthly in the Green Book.

Following a question, Leigh confirmed that the £10 million investment with Surrey County Council enabled Woking Borough Council to secure further long term borrowing at a preferential rate as the funds would not be required immediately, therefore enabled a long term investment with the secure counterparty.

Leigh advised there had been new requirements implemented to Treasury Management in the current year, and were detailed in the report such as the Capital and Investment Strategy. It was noted that interest rates had risen slightly compared to earlier in the year, and rather than borrowing upfront it had been decided to borrow only when required in the near future.

Following a question, it was confirmed that the Treasury Management Panel had not met in the current year as there had been no debt rescheduling opportunities, and therefore no financial benefit in repaying it with a better rate.

The Government had implemented a 1% increase that was applied to all rates going forward and would not affect the rates of loans already taken out, the reason for the increase was to reflect the market to the same level it was a year ago however since the increase, rates had naturally increased and therefore it was believed that the Government may decide to remove the additional 1%.

The Chairman thanked Leigh for all the information provided.

## 8. CELEBRATE WOKING 2019/20 REVIEW AND FORWARD PLAN

The Chairman introduced Riette Thomas, Project Manager for Celebrate Woking, provided a presentation on the various events.

Riette encouraged Members to view the webpage - <https://www.wokingfoodanddrinkfestival.co.uk/>

The presentation detailed the Celebrate Woking Programme and highlighted the following:

- Woking Literary Festival at the Lightbox
- World War One Commemoration Service at the Peace Garden
- Dance Woking's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary
- First Pride event hosted in Woking
- Opening of Basingstoke Canal Town Quay
- Celebrating 130 Years of the Shah Jahan Mosque in Woking exhibition at the Lightbox
- Unveiling of Blue Plaque for the Muslim Heritage Trail in Brookwood Cemetery
- H.G. Wells Statue moved to the new Wells Plaza.

The statistics of the webpage were presented, which had an ongoing upward trend in visitors to the page. It was also noted that Woking had been named the Happiest Place in Surrey following the governments measure of wellbeing.

Attention was drawn to the Celebrate Woking events that had been nominated or won awards, noting the following:

- Britain's Muslim Heritage Trails nominated for 2019 International Tourism Awards
- Nominated for Best Local Food Event Surrey Life Food and Drinks Awards in 2019
- The Lightbox: Shortlisted for the Fantastic Families Awards – Best Age-Friendly
- The Lightbox: 'Commended' in the Beautiful South Access and Inclusivity Award which is for tourist attractions across the south and south east of the UK

The vision and ideas for future events were shared with the Group, with the key priorities of Woking Borough Council in mind and to reflect and respect all aspects of the Community.

Members praised the events of Celebrate Woking and the positive work that Riette and the team had done, continue to do and look forward to another successful year.

## 9. PLAY AREA MAINTENANCE

Arran Henderson, Green Spaces Development Officer, introduced the presentation on the 42 play areas, noting that all the play areas are maintained by Serco under the environmental maintenance contract. Serco undertake weekly routines and log any repairs. However the busier and most popular parks tend to be visited more frequently to empty bins and check sand pits etc.

Future planned worked included refurbishment at Sutton Green, Oakfield, Horsell Moor and Loop Road play areas. After the refurbishment works, the Play Strategy would be considered for a review, along with the condition of the existing play area stock and the development of a new play area refurbishment programme. Arran also provided information on multi-use games area's (MUGA's) and Skate Parks within the borough.

Following questions from members, Arran added that repair works were prioritised based on safety and that more aesthetic repairs such as painting would be incorporated into the programme for a later date. Other reactive works included vandalism and seasonal weathering issues that were often reported by the public in the time between Serco visits. Positive feedback from members was received on the improvement works at West Byfleet park. The Committee then discussed the change of management of the tennis courts, and questions were redirected to the Sports Development Team.

The Chairman raised concerns over signage and age designations to which Arran informed the Committee that there would unlikely be signage to parks unless it was a cultural or major area of importance (to justify the sign), and that age designations were purely guidelines.

#### **10. WORK PROGRAMME**

RESOLVED

That the Work Programme be noted.

#### **11. RECOMMENDATION TO SET UP A TASK GROUP**

The Chairman introduced the background to the suggested Task Group and the Committee reviewed the draft terms of reference. The membership of the group was confirmed as Cllrs Chrystie, Bond, Whitehand, Rana, Hughes and Hussain. The purpose of the task group was discussed along with the objectives. The Committee had no objections to the setup of the task group.

RESOLVED

That the Woking Football Club and Associated Development Task Group setup was agreed.

The first meeting of the task group was confirmed for Tuesday 26 November 2019.

#### **12. PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL MONITORING INFORMATION**

The Committee reviewed the October Green Book and it was highlighted that the street cleaning indicator appeared to be on a downward trend.

#### **13. TASK GROUP UPDATES**

The Committee received the Housing Task Group update and the Economic Development Task Group update.

An extract of the minutes from the Community Safety Task Group had been tabled following concerns raised around anti-social behaviour in West Byfleet, noting the outcome of increased patrolling.

The Chairman added that following the suggestion from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, a member of the Leisure Partnership Board would also attend the meetings of the Health and Well-being Task Group had been taken forward.

Finally, the Chairman informed the Committee on the feedback from the Peer Review, which mentioned that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had not generated anything of

significant change over the last few years, and the Chairman expressed the desire to be instrumental in generating change and robust scrutiny going forward.

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm  
and ended at 9.41 pm

Chairman: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_