

19 JANUARY 2021

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMUNITY & LEISURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Minutes of a meeting of the Community & Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Panel held on Tuesday, 19 January 2021

- * Cllr Geoffrey Blunden (Chairman)
- * Cllr Neville Penman (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

- * Steve Clarke
- * Keith Craze
- * Arthur Davis
- * Barry Dunning

Councillors:

- * David Hawkins
- * Caroline Rackham
- * David Russell
- * Alex Wade

*Present

In attendance:

Councillors:

Diane Andrews
Ann Bellows
Steve Davies
David Harrison
Edward Heron
Alan O'Sullivan
Barry Rickman
Mark Steele
Christine Ward

Officers Attending:

Jamie Burton, Brian Byrne, Rebecca Drummond, Colin Read, Andy Rogers, Manjit Sandhu, Ryan Stevens and Nikki Swift

Apologies

60 MINUTES

The minutes were deferred to a future meeting.

61 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following members declared interests in item 5 (Community Grants):

Councillor Blunden declared a non - pecuniary interest in New Milton Men's Shed as a New Milton Town Councillor which actively supported the organisation.

Councillor S Clarke declared a non - pecuniary interest in New Milton Men's Shed and as the New Milton Town Council's representative on Forest Arts.

Cllr S Davies declared a non pecuniary interest as District Council representative on New Forest Arts.

Councillor Rackham declared a non pecuniary interest as a former employee of SPUD.

Councillor C Ward declared an interest as a representative for NFDC on Forest Forge

Councillor Dunning declared a non pecuniary interest in Saint Barbes Museum as a Lymington Town Councillor

Councillor A Wade declared an interest as an employee of Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service in respect of the item on Safer New Forest Partnership, and also in the item concerning the Handy Trust as his father, Cllr M Wade, was a Hythe and Dibden Parish trustee on that organisation.

Councillor Steve Davies declared an interest as the District Council representative on Forest Arts.

Councillor Edward Heron declared an interest in Item 4 as a member of Hampshire County Council in respect of the item on the Safer New Forest Partnership, and also as a member on the Fordingbridge Community Association Management Board.

Councillor Penman declared a non - pecuniary interest as chairman of the Totton and Eling Panel for Minstead Trust

Counsellor A Davis declared a non - pecuniary interest as a member of Totton and Eling Town Council.

Councillor O'Sullivan declared a non - pecuniary interest as member of new Milton Town Council on Forest Arts.

62 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no issues raised during the public participation period.

63 SAFER NEW FOREST PARTNERSHIP - CONSIDERATION OF CRIME AND DISORDER FIGURES FOR THE DISTRICT AND PROPOSED PRIORITIES FOR 2021/22

The Panel received and reviewed the annual strategic assessment which included crime and disorder statistics for the year 2020/21. Members were informed of the proposed priorities which would form the partnership plan for 2021/22 for the District.

Members noted an increase in recorded domestic abuse which in part, was explained that although there was an evidential increase, this was following a change in domestic abuse support services and their collation of recorded data. It was discussed by members the impact of Covid 19 and the risk this could be having on isolated individuals during lockdown. With staff working remotely, the council lead safeguarding officers have undertaken a more front facing support role for

NFDC employees to ensure safeguarding concerns continue to be identified and responded to accordingly.

Members commented on the rise in cyber scams in particular in respect to vulnerable adults which is acknowledged thorough the proposed priorities within the partnership plan of 2021/22.

RESOLVED:

That the draft Strategic Assessment be noted by members.

64 COMMUNITY GRANTS - 2021/22

The Panel considered the recommendations of the Community Grants Task and Finish Group with respect to the allocation of grants for 2021/22.

Cllr Edward Heron referred to the capital grant application from Martin Club and the Group's recommendation for nil grant award against a request for £75k. He had been asked to speak on behalf of the Club and sought the Panel's support in changing the recommendation to awarding a small grant. In response to the justification in the report, he pointed out that the club building was used by everyone in the community, and that the Club felt the proposed building was a modest one comparable to the size of local village halls, and had already been scaled back in line with funding. They requested that even a grant of £25k would be greatly welcomed.

In answer, officers reiterated that the Martin Club project was of a large scale in proportion to its membership of 140, when compared to other applications. The Chairman of the Task and Finish Group explained that all of the grants were considered very carefully, and while the Group admired the Club's aspirations for the local area, he pointed out that agreeing the request would have used up most of the total overall capital grant fund on one organisation. He also explained that if such an adjustment was made, all of the other grants would have to be re-assessed. On that basis, he did not feel it was possible to make any allocation to Martin Club at this time.

Members also commended the work of the Minstead Trust and suggested extra funding.

The Chairman reiterated the points made on the overall budget and the time taken by the Group to reach its recommendations, and the complexities if their work was unravelled.

It was suggested that the membership of the Group be refreshed in the following year, whilst ensuring continuation of a good geographical representation.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Community Grant awards, totalling £127,000 in revenue grants and £80,300 in capital grants, as set out in Appendix 1, and in more detail in Appendix 2, be approved and recommended to Cabinet for inclusion in the Medium-Term Financial Plan and proposed budget for 2021/22.
- (b) That the Panel support the proposal to bring grants to the Care Groups into scope of the Grants Panel for their task and finish process during 2021, for

consideration in the 2022/23 budget, noting historic arrangements will continue for 2021/22.

- (c) That the Panel note the intent to publish a joint Portfolio Holder Decision Notice to confirm the Service Level Agreements to enable the continuation of the transportation themed grants across the District.

65 DIBDEN GOLF CENTRE UPDATE - VERBAL REPORT

The Panel received an update on Dibden Golf Course.

In early 2020, the Council had been working with Mytime to pursue investments at the course. The pandemic had meant that the course had been shut down three times.

The working group had been meeting with Mytime over the last few months to understand the impact of the pandemic on the facility and on the golfing industry. It was discussing how best to reopen the course in a safe way.

Although it had been a difficult year, there had been a 50% increase over the Summer of 2020 compared with the previous year. At times the course was at 95% capacity.

MyTime had however suffered significant financial losses as a result of the pandemic.

The Working Group had asked for monthly financial reports from MyTime, so as to have a good understanding of their position. The Council had offered some financial assistance by mitigating MyTime rental costs.

A small number of NFDC staff at the centre were on furlough, though winter works in the course were being undertaken to ensure the course was in good condition when it reopened. The Council was working MyTime on an action plan to ensure deferred works were reinstated over the coming months.

66 WORK PROGRAMME (INCLUDING PERFORMANCE DASHBOARDS)

The Panel considered its work programme and noted the information in the performance dashboards.

67 PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' UPDATES

The Panel received updates from the respective portfolio holders.

Cllr Andrews

- Many of the staff within the services had been redeployed from the normal role to assist in various ways with responding to meets in the community as a result of the pandemic.
- Customer services were partially reopened to assist vulnerable people.

- The Local Response Centre was open 7 days per week helping with referrals to Community First. Main support was for food, prescriptions and befriending services and financial hardship. 46 referrals in 2 weeks.
- Preparations for the elections on 6 May 2021.
- Covid ambassadors had been well received.
- The Community Grants had been recommended after robust discussions.

Cllr Steele

- Group exercise classes ceased from 26 December 2020.
- 31 December, all centre facilities closed, apart from Applemore and the vaccination centre. Planning for reopening
- In respect of Leisure procurement, he reported that the Council would be recommending that Freedom Leisure be the provider.
- Reported dates of customer briefings over January/ February involving Freedom. The sessions will be publicised via emails, the apps, and writing to clubs and stakeholders.
- Panel meeting on 9 February for Leisure decision will receive customer feedback.
- Thanks to Task and Finish Group

It was noted that a member briefing session on Leisure would be provided in the following week. This would be the culmination of work since 2018.

CHAIRMAN