

CORPORATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

HELD: 15 OCTOBER 2015

Start: 7.30pm

Finish: 10.10pm

PRESENT:

Councillors: Dowling (Chairman) West (Vice Chairman)

Mrs Atherley	G Hodson
S Bailey	Hudson
Barron	McKay
Mrs Blake	Mrs Marshall
Blane	Oliver
Delaney	O'Toole
Devine	Pendleton
Greenall	Savage

Officers: Assistant Director Community Services (Mr D Tilleray)
Deputy Assistant Director Housing & Regeneration (Mr I Gill)
Head of Leisure and Cultural Services (Mr J Nelson)
Technical Services Manager (Mr C Brady)
Assistant Member Services Manager (Mrs J Denning)
Partnership and Performance Officer (Ms A Grimes)
Senior Planner – Housing & Regeneration (Mr D Carr)
Principal Solicitor (Mrs T Sparrow)
Principal Overview and Scrutiny Officer (Mrs C A Jackson)

In attendance: Councillor J Hodson (Portfolio Holder for Planning)

Chairman, West Lancashire Community Leisure (WLCL) (Mr M Hayman)
Contracts Manager, WLCL (Mr M Snaylam)

19. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

20. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4, Members noted the termination of membership of Councillor L Hodson and the appointment of Councillor Pendleton, for this meeting only, thereby giving effect to the wishes of the political group.

21. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

22. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

23. DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of a Party Whip.

24. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Corporate and Environmental Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 9 July 2016 be received as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

25. MINUTES OF THE MEMBER DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Member Development Commission meeting held on 26 September 2015 be noted.

26. WEST LANCASHIRE LEISURE (WLCL)/SERCO ANNUAL REPORT

Consideration was given to the presentation by Malcolm Hayman, Chairman and Mark Snaylam, Contracts Manager of West Lancashire Community Leisure (WLCL) as contained on pages 167 to 186 of the Book of Reports.

In his presentation the Chairman of the Leisure Trust acknowledged the good work undertaken by the Trust Members throughout the year and included reference to:

- The Trustees of the Leisure Trust and its Mission within the community
- Neighbourhood Life and the three key areas (improving health and well-being; to establish its leisure centres as “community hubs” and the provision of a range of sports to the community.)

In relation to operations over the previous 12 months, the Contracts Manager referred to the following:

- The Centres managed by Serco and the integration of Beacon Park & Golf Course.
- Increased patronage; growth in business; development works at Beacon Park; increased swimming lesson usage; continuous improvement / development of staff; work undertaken with partners and community groups and the offering of more opportunities for participation.
- Patronage/Income (2014) – increase in visits / income wetside and dryside visits.

In relation to Beacon Park details were provided on the work that had taken place in relation to the 9 hole golf course, now nearing completion; the discount offered to Members’ golf contracts during the renovation period; the investment in the site, including the provision of new greens maintenance equipment, a children’s playground and details of the Park as a “mixed use” facility.

Operational highlights during the year had included: increase in patronage (year on year from 2004); community based special events (Chairman's Cup; Schools Triathlon; Cycling events); closer links with National Governing Bodies and partnership working with Young People's Service. Of special note was the growth in swimming lessons with nearly 2,000 children undertaking swimming lessons each week at Park Pool.

Other developments and investments highlighted included the proposed £100k investment to rejuvenate the disused tarmac pitch at Burscough Sports Centre to a new 3G football pitch and details in relation to PAISA investment plan for Nye Bevan and Burscough gyms.

The Contracts Manager made reference to the provision of funding, in partnership with Edge Hill University and West Lancs School Sports Partnership of a 3 year PhD study and intervention programme into childhood obesity and activity levels. The study would involve working closely with 10 primary schools in Skelmersdale to deliver the initiative.

Mr Snaylam's presentation also made reference to the opportunities and challenges being faced nationally and locally, including the increased competition to wetside facilities to be offered by Edge Hill University as a result of the opening of the "new" swimming pool at the Ormskirk campus.

In conclusion of the review the way forward for the coming year was featured which included reference to: the challenges to increase patronage; growth of the business; diversification / further investment in Beacon Park; increasing swimming lesson usage (Nye Bevan and Park Pool); continuous improvement of facilities and development of staff; working with partners and community groups to offer more participation opportunities.

Comments and questions were raised in respect of the following:

- Impact of the "new" sporting facilities at Edge Hill University – present and future.
- Downturn in dry-side activities – decline of former popular activities (badminton).
- Beacon Golf Centre – continuing decline of golf as a sport (nationally and locally); diversification into other outdoor activity areas at the Centre.
- Community Engagement – working with other groups; diversification of sporting activities at Sports Centres (martial arts); use by others (brass bands); hire charges; further opportunities.
- Childhood Obesity Study – involvement of West Lancashire Schools; areas of research; outcomes envisaged; widening participation (rural schools)
- Increasing use / popularity of West Lancashire sports facilities – advertisement / liaison with the wider community (via community centres and West Lancashire schools)

The Contracts Manager of WLCL contributed to the discussion and responded to questions. He made an undertaking to take away points made, particularly in relation to engagement with the wider community of the Trust's work; the sporting opportunities / facilities offered and comments made on future engagement with rural primary schools in respect of the joint study being undertaken with Edge Hill University related to childhood obesity.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman thanked the representatives from the Leisure Trust for their attendance, the informative presentation and contribution to the discussion.

RESOLVED: That the performance of West Lancashire Leisure/ Serco for the previous 12 months be noted and the representatives be thanked for their presentation and attendance.

27. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AT MEETINGS - DRAFT PROTOCOL

Consideration was given to the report of the Borough Solicitor as contained on pages 135 to 142 of the Book of Reports which provided detail in relation to the work undertaken by the Public Involvement in Meetings Working Group, the Public Speaking - Draft Protocol and the recommendations in relation to extending public speaking at meetings.

During discussion comments and questions were raised in respect of:

- Draft Protocol – number of speakers; length / duration of public speaking time; application of the Chairman’s discretion.
- Proposed revised start times of meetings where the public speaking time would apply.

The Assistant Member Services Manager attended the meeting, responded to questions and provided clarification on issues raised.

RESOLVED: That the agreed comment to Council be “that the recommendations as set down at paragraphs 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4(a) and 4.5 of the report, be supported.”

28. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AT MEETINGS WORKING GROUP

Members considered the decision of Council 22 July 2015 that the Terms of Reference of the Public Involvement at Meetings Working Group be extended.

RESOLVED: That the Terms of Reference of the Public Involvement at Meetings Working Group be extended to:

- (a) To undertake a formal review of:
- The elected membership of this Council
 - Current ward boundaries
 - The number of members per ward.

To assess the most appropriate, efficient, effective, democratic and cost effective membership structure for West Lancashire Borough Council.

- (b) To, as part of the review, consider the pros and cons of ‘all-out’ or ‘en-bloc’ elections versus the current ‘rotation’ elections and make recommendations for consideration by Members and residents via public consultation.”

29. QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (Q1 2015-16)

Consideration was given to the report of the Transformation Manager which detailed performance monitoring data for the quarter ended 30 June 2015, as contained on pages 143 to 157 of the Book of Reports. The report had previously been considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 15 September 2015.

In discussion Members raised questions and comments in respect of the following performance indicators:

- WL90 (% of Contact Centre calls answered) – minor downturn in performance; increase in use of “music” and “recorded messages”.
- Impact of the revised arrangements related to the disposal of inert waste (hardcore /rubble).

The Partnership and Performance Officer attended the meeting and responded to questions.

RESOLVED: A That the Council’s performance against the indicator set for the quarter ended 30 June 2015 be noted.

- B That, where applicable, any impact on performance of the revised arrangements related to the disposal of inert waste be reported to a future meeting.

30. A MARKET TOWN STRATEGY FOR ORMSKIRK REVIEW

The following three items, as part of this review, were considered.

31. ORMSKIRK TOWN CENTRE - A REVIEW OF TECHNOLOGY, MARKETING AND THE CONTRIBUTION OF EDGE HILL UNIVERSITY

Members considered information presented by the Senior Planning Officer (Housing and Regeneration) in relation to technology, marketing and the contribution of Edge Hill University and the impact on Ormskirk Town Centre.

Brand and Marketing

The presentation highlighted the need for a single marketing brand for Ormskirk and proposals to establish a Marketing Stakeholder Working Group whose remit would include: undertaking market research to establish a customer base; exploring perceptions and USPs; using evidence to support the development of an “Ormskirk” brand; looking at web and social media; provision of a calendar of events; encouraging footfall through targeted marketing; exploration of the town’s wi-fi provision and other technology to assist marketing.

Technology

Reference was made to the ideas in technology that had been put forward earlier in the review including the exploration of digital signage as an alternative to A-boards outside shops; the display of digital art in empty shops; exploration of a mobile app for Ormskirk (with assistance from Edge Hill University) and exploration of the establishment of a footfall base to assist the measurement / success of marketing.

Contribution of Edge Hill University

The good working relationship of the Borough Council and Edge Hill University (Edge Hill) was referred to. During the development of the Ormskirk Town Centre Strategy the University and Students' Union had been fully involved and would continue to be part via the working group. The role of Edge Hill in contributing to the economy to benefit the town centre was highlighted. This included drawing on their technology expertise, particularly through the development of a mobile app; becoming more involved in the town centre; harnessing student spending power and encouraging visitors not to bypass the town.

In discussion questions and comments were made in relation to:

- Business in the Community – liaising with town centre business owners; traders; Love Ormskirk; effect of business rate on encouraging retail investment in the town.
- Marketing Stakeholder Working Group – composition / membership / remit.
- Research – updating market research; establishment of a footfall base; recognising “our customer and visitors”.
- Priorities for the future – bus station refurbishment; refinement of the bus /rail/ cycle link; coping with traffic congestion in the Town Centre; involvement with the West Lancashire Masterplan for Transport; Derby Street rail bridge (anticipated works); development of the park & ride facility at Ormskirk Station; improvement “visual” impact of visitors alighting from trains / buses into the Town Centre.
- Edge Hill / Ormskirk Bus Station bus service – access by the public to access events at the Ormskirk campus.
- Attracting visitors to the Town – “market day” special bus service (Ormskirk as a tourist destination); advertising more widely (bus shelter hoardings; on transport); improvements to rail station parking facility / access to the town centre; improving the perception of the town as a “whole week” experience, not just for 2 “market” days; impact of car parking charges.
- Role of Merseyrail – liaison; improvements to station approach footpath / car parking arrangements at the station.
- Traffic management - on-going problem of traffic lights combinations; increases in volume of through traffic; bottle necks (Derby /Stanley Street/Wigan Road; Moor Street/Moorgate/Park Road)
- Edge Hill – utilisation as a resource (marketing / business programmes /opportunities for student involvement)
- Investing in technology in the Town Centre – wi-fi accessibility; interactive /touch screens; “big screen” advertisement on “market days”.
- Events Square – exploring effective usage /function.

The Senior Planning Officer (Housing and Regeneration) responded to questions and provided clarification on points raised during discussion.

The Technical Services Manager provided an update in relation to proposed works on the Derby Street railway bridge. He made an undertaking to raise with Lancashire County Council: progress on the railway bridge improvements; the current position relating to traffic-light management in the Town Centre and the proposed cycle link from the town centre to Edge Hill University.

The Deputy Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration, who was in attendance at the meeting, provided additional clarification on points raised in respect of on-going discussions with Merseyrail in relation to land affecting improvements to car parking arrangements at Ormskirk Train Station and on the parallel process of the review with the development of the Strategy.

The Portfolio Holder (Planning) who was in attendance, with the permission of the Chairman, addressed the meeting, supporting the value of the input of the review work being undertaken by the Committee as part of the on-going work associated with delivering the Ormskirk Town Centre Strategy.

RESOLVED: That the presentation be noted.

32. THE MARKET AND MOOR STREET IMPROVEMENTS

The Technical Services Manager gave an oral update on the changes to the Market and Moor Street Improvements as part of the Committee's review.

The Market

Members considered the update provided by the Technical Services Manager on the Market and Moor Street Improvements, including the location of the stalls and the space that had been created in the centre as a result of those changes.

He reported that the Market Traders' had made a request, since the introduction of the new arrangements, for additional space to be allocated to them in front of the stalls. It was explained this would only be for movable goods and would not include expansion of the canopied area over the additional space.

Mr Brady further reported that from October, on a trial basis, six specialists' food stalls would be located in Events Square. The stalls being trialled, it was envisaged, would not impact on the permanent stallholders or town centre traders.

Additionally, in consultation with the Council's Arts Development Manager, it was planned to introduce a 'vintage' element to the market. Discussions with existing stallholders in relation to this proposal were currently taking place and it was hoped to commence this venture from April next year.

The 'branding' of the market was also something that had been referred to earlier in the review and it was reported that from 1 April 2016 a relaunch would take place with the stalls displaying the new 'branded' canopies.

The Technical Services Manager further reported that the proposed market research into footfall would include consultation with current market traders as well as town centre retailers.

Moor Street Improvements

The Technical Services Manager reported that the Moor Street Improvements were finished on 28 August 2015, immediately prior to the Motorfest event. Further environmental works, including seating and placement of "trees" was expected to be undertaken in November.

He reported that the 'deep' drainage gullies that had been installed by the contractors were causing problems and that LCC, as the highway authority, would be undertaking remedial work on them. Whilst it was envisaged that the gullied would be replaced by shallower ones, to match those in Aughton Street, it was now understood that the depth of the existing gullies in Moor Street would be reduced with a resin bonded aggregate filler. It was stated that aggregate, whilst initially looking smart, was prone to displacement and breakage, particularly from the weight of goods traffic. It was understood that this may be a temporary fix.

Members expressed concern about the use of the resin bonded aggregate as a permanent solution and advised Mr Brady to seek clarification from LCC on the decision to fill the gullies with bonded resin aggregate.

- RESOLVED:
- A. That the presentation be noted and a further update on the Moor Street Improvements be provided to the next meeting.
 - B. That the Technical Services Manager seek clarification from the County Council to establish if the use of bonded resin aggregate in the gullies on Moor Street is intended to be a temporary or permanent solution.

33. NEXT STEPS

Consideration was given to the timetable, as set down in the Project Plan for the review.

In relation to the proposed Workshop in January 2016, it was agreed that a date for this be sought and confirmed at the next meeting.

- RESOLVED:
- A That in relation to the next steps of the review the proposals for the next meeting (December 2015) be noted.
 - B That arrangements be put in place for a workshop to be held in January 2016.

34. ITEMS FROM THE MEMBERS' UPDATE

There were no items under this heading.

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Chairman