

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee

Meeting held 11 March 2024

PRESENT: Councillors Richard Williams (Chair), Marieanne Elliot (Deputy Chair), Tony Downing, Alan Hooper, Karen McGowan, Robert Reiss, Garry Weatherall (Group Spokesperson), Brian Holmshaw (Substitute Member) and Sioned-Mair Richards (Substitute Member)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bernard Little and Janet Ridler. Councillors Brian Holmshaw and Sioned-Mair Richards attended as substitute members.

2. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

2.1 No items were identified where resolutions may be moved to exclude the press and public.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 29 January 2024 were approved as a correct record.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

5.1 A petition had been received from John Gilbert on behalf of the Beauchief Environment Group which had received 426 signatures:

“We call upon Sheffield City Council to urgently act to stop any further deterioration in the condition of the Grade 2 listed Beauchief Abbey Barns and to put in place a plan to secure the future of this very important piece of Sheffield's heritage.

My name is John Gilbert. I am a committee member of the Beauchief Environment Group and organiser of the Beauchief Environment Monday Group, a group of 10 to 15 volunteers who carry out work in the area as agreed by Council Officers. Our work includes surfacing and repairing footpaths , work in the Nature Park, repairing dry stone walls, constructing benches, tree planting and working in the Abbey grounds and at the Hamlet and lots more.

To carry out these tasks we have the use of one of the workshops in the Barns to store tools and materials .

I was also the Treasurer of Beauchief Golf Club for 19 years so I am well

acquainted with the green keepers and golf course managers.

The Barns.

These are grade 2 listed buildings in the Beauchief Abbey Conservation Area. They are a group of attached workshops in a L shape behind Beauchief Abbey farm to the south of the Abbey. They must be more than 200 years old, built of local stone and roofed with either flag stones or slate. They are used by Beauchief Golf Course as the green keepers workshops and storage areas, but owned by the Council.

They are in a poor state of repair as no maintenance has been carried out on them for at least 30 years. The operator of the golf course, SIV / SCT is not required to carry out any maintenance as part of their contract.

So, What's Happened.

In early December the main roof support of one of the workshops collapsed nearly bringing down the whole roof. This is now very dangerous. SCT carried out their survey and decided the whole complex was unsafe and erected a metal fence to prevent access. I don't believe their surveyor entered the workshop we use which I believe is safe.

Later in December gales had a disastrous effect on the roof of the main barn. Something akin to a tornado sucked out roof slates leaving a gaping hole in the roof.

The Protest.

There has been lots of local concern that the barns have been allowed to deteriorate to such an extent that they can't be used. Hence the petition.

Possible Solution.

There needs to be a maintenance budget for the barns and the obvious income stream has to be the Golf Course. After all they use the buildings. It would cover future maintenance but urgent repairs are needed now.

As a solution to getting the green keepers back in the main barn, repairs to the slate roof could be relatively quickly completed, along with clearing out the old debris and rubbish collected over decades. To make the barns more accessible a wider door could be made and even an entrance to the back of the building. This would save the cost of hiring/renting more containers for greenkeepers equipment currently occupying space on the car park at the Club House.

Finally, could I refer you to a Council document dated 19 / 3 / 2007 entitled Beauchief Abbey Conservation Area - Proposals.

It states that the barns were in a poor state of repair then, particularly the main barn. It recommends that - and I quote - "effective repairs to make them water and weather tight be carried out; that their condition be monitored and appropriate steps be taken to secure their future".

It suggested it be reviewed every 5 years and possibly carried out under guidance

by community groups.

Well, Beauchief Environment Monday Group would be up for this!"

The Chair thanked the petitioner for presenting the petition and explained that, as the petition had been submitted after the deadline for public petitions, a full written response would be provided to the petitioner and an urgent meeting would be arranged with officers regarding the issues raised in the petition.

5.2 Rosemary Telfer attended the meeting and asked the following questions on behalf of the Friends of Norfolk Heritage Park:

"Q1. A survey was conducted by the FONHP, with the support of Parks & Countryside staff working in the Centre in the Park. 154 were completed & showed that park users are happy with the provision & enjoy using the park. However, there was little engagement from users under the age of 25.

What work has been done to encourage the use of our park by young people? What plans are there for working with schools or youth groups to find how best the enormous open spaces can be used for the benefit of young people across the city?

Q2. The notice boards in Norfolk Park are dilapidated and, in some cases, missing altogether. The FONHP have submitted a bid to the North East Sheffield LAC for funding for new boards, but this was rejected, on the grounds that the costings had been insufficiently researched.

Can Parks & Countryside fund the replacement of the notice boards? If not, can a plan be put together with the FONHP for costing & replacement of the boards?

Q3. The car park leading from Guildford Avenue to the Centre in the Park has been in a state of disrepair for a number of years and continues to deteriorate. The FONHP have brought this to the attention of Parks & Countryside on a number of occasions, as the car park is actually part of the park itself and so not a Highways issue. The surface has worn away and the deep potholes fill with water. Can the Committee raise this as an urgent issue with Parks & Countryside and assure the FONHP that costings will be undertaken and work for resurfacing planned?

Q4. Both FONHP members and local ward Councillors have been asking that the overgrown trees on Norfolk Park Avenue be cut back. They are trees which are growing in the park and were reported to Parks & Countryside in August 2023.

The problem is the number of self-seeded trees that are growing up in the park, just on the other side of the wall along Norfolk Park Avenue. They are very fast growing - they've grown several feet in the space of a couple of years. If left unchecked they will soon become a serious problem as they are very close to the wall and therefore, close to the houses.

In November 2023, it was reported that part of the park wall had collapsed into the

park at the beginning of Norfolk Park Avenue.

As we have received confirmation that the trees are part of the park, can we be assured that the necessary remedial work will be carried out as a matter of urgency, before there is damage to property or the safety of local residents is compromised?"

The Chair responded with the following answers:

1. Parks and Countryside have confirmed that there are family learning activities in the summer months provided by Children Services who set up a gazebo outside CITP and bring their mobile library van. In addition to this, the Youth Club operates from Centre in the Park weekly. I will ask Officers to contact the appropriate Council Services to highlight the opportunity to bring more young people into our parks for activities. I will also request that a meeting is arranged between the FONHP and officers to see how this work can be accelerated.

2. Parks and Countryside have confirmed that they plan to gather costings for both painting some of the signage in the park and also replacing signage, where required. There is currently no budget for these works, so Parks will work with the FONHP to come up with a plan and timescales, including reapproaching the East LAC with accurate costs.

The noticeboards and signage in Norfolk Park are bespoke to the park, therefore specific costings are needed which officers are working on. Once the costings are available, officers will work with the FONHP to secure funding and get the noticeboards replaced as soon as possible.

3. Parks and Countryside are aware that the car park has deteriorated significantly over the last few months as the park has been used more. Parks and Countryside are going to request quotes for the work to repair and improve the surfacing. Parks will update FONHP once these are received and talk to the Friends about possible funding options for the car park surfacing.

4. The tree team within Parks and Countryside survey trees and carry out any necessary remedial works regularly to ensure they are safe. We have asked the team to double check these specific trees and provide an update and reassurance to the FONHP.

6. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

6.1 There were no questions from Members of the Committee.

7. WORK PROGRAMME

7.1 The Principal Democratic Services Officer submitted a report containing the Committee's Work Programme which detailed all known, substantive agenda items for forthcoming meetings of the Committee to enable the Committee, other Committees, officers, partners and the public to plan their work with and for the Committee.

7.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee:-

1. approves the Committee's work programme, as set out in Appendix 1, including any additions and amendments identified in Part 1;
2. gives consideration to any further issues to be explored by officers for inclusion in Part 2 of Appendix 1 of the next work programme report, for potential addition to the work programme; and
3. notes any referrals from Council or other Committees detailed in Section 2 of the report and agrees the proposed responses.

8. **2023/24 Q3 BUDGET MONITORING**

8.1 The Senior Finance Manager presented a report that brought the Committee up to date with the Council's General Fund Revenue outturn position for 2023/24 as at quarter 3.

8.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee notes the updated information and management actions on the 2023/24 Revenue Budget Outturn position subject to a correction to paragraph 1.7.6 of the report regarding the overspend forecasted for Community Services: the funding for the Community Support Workers came from the Better Care Fund which was not overspent, the overspend came from the Team Around the Person. Since the month 9 forecast position, the service had now received funding to mitigate the overspend.

8.3 **Reasons for Decision**

8.3.1 To record formally changes to the Revenue Budget and the Capital Programme.

8.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

8.4.1 The Council is required to both set a balance budget and to ensure that in-year income and expenditure are balanced. No other alternatives were considered.

9. **SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR POLICY**

9.1 The Service Manager – Anti-Social Behaviour Team and the Head of Service – Neighbourhood Intervention and Tenant Support presented a report that set out the work undertaken to review the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Policy and sought approval of the final version of the Policy.

9.2 Officers agreed to provide additional information on the out of hours service for noise nuisances.

9.3 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee:

1. approves the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy as a statement of the Council's approach to tackling anti-social behaviour subject to the inclusion of 'parking' into the bullet point on anti-social use of vehicles in the list of examples of behaviours generally considered to be anti-social behaviour in section 1.4 of the policy; and
2. grants delegated authority to the Director of Communities to finalise and agree the design and format of the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy document before publication and where necessary to make any minor amendments and updates to the policy required, in order to reflect any organisational or legislative changes which take place prior to the policy being formally reviewed by the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee.

9.4 **Reasons for Decision**

- 9.4.1 It is a statutory requirement for all local housing authorities, housing action trusts, non-profit registered providers of social housing and registered social landlords to have an ASB policy and procedures.
- 9.4.2 Sheffield is one of the safest cities in the UK. An effective ASB policy is key to ensuring that ASB is dealt with through proportionate action based on evidence and focussed on finding the best outcome for everyone involved.

9.5 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

- 9.5.1 The Council has a statutory duty to have an ASB policy and procedures. Therefore, no alternative options have been considered.

10. **PROPOSAL FOR ONE YEAR EXTENSION OF PARKS GRANT TO GREEN ESTATE**

- 10.1 The Head of Parks and Countryside presented a report that proposed that the existing funding and management arrangements with Green Estate for the Manor Fields site be continued for a 12-month period, with a further £141,481 being granted to Green Estate, subject to the prior completion of a subsidy control assessment and the approval of the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services. During the 12-month period, a proposal for renewing arrangements for the Manor Fields and associated sites would be developed, along with any necessary processes required for an appropriate longer-term management arrangement.
- 10.2 Members proposed the addition of an item to the Committee's Work Programme to report on how the land is managed by Green Estate to support a continued positive impact on climate and biodiversity.
- 10.3 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy

Committee:

1. approves in principle the extension of existing funding arrangements by 12 months with Green Estate, with a further £141,481 being granted to Green Estate for their management and maintenance of Manor Fields and associated sites for 2024/25; and
2. delegates approval of the extension of existing funding agreements (and award of £141,481 to Green Estate) to the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services, subject to the prior completion of a subsidy control principles assessment to demonstrate to the reasonable satisfaction of the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services that the extension of the funding agreements (and award of £141,481 to Green Estate) is compliant with the subsidy control principles.

10.4 Reasons for Decision

- 10.4.1 Continuing the existing arrangements for one-year provides Green Estate with the necessary security to continue their operations for the next 12 months. It also provides time to review the required processes to offer longer term security for the Manor Fields site, rather than relying on year-by-year arrangements.

10.5 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

- 10.5.1 The 'Do Nothing' option has been discounted as to cut or change the grant funding support to Green Estate with very little notice would be detrimental at this time to the Green Estate organisation, the people they work with and ultimately Council services. An alternative to the Green Estate's management of the Manor Fields site would also be required, so costs would likely increase in the short term.

11. LIBRARY OPENING TIMES

- 11.1 The Head of Libraries and Archive Services presented a report that provided an update on the current extended opening hours for libraries and sought endorsement from the Committee for the opening hours. The report also sought approval to open all Council run libraries from lunchtime for one day each month to allow for staff training and development.

- 11.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee:

1. notes the contents of the report;
2. notes the data analysis in Appendix 1;
3. endorses the change in opening hours and that these will continue as the standard opening hours for Council run libraries; and

4. approves the proposal for Council run libraries to open at a later time on day per month to allow for staff training and development.

11.3 Reasons for Decision

- 11.3.1 The new opening hours provide library customers with the optimum available hours.
- 11.3.2 The new opening hours provide stable staff resources.
- 11.3.3 The proposed monthly half day late opening will enable investment in our staff, furthering their development and ensuring they can offer the highest quality service to customers.

11.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

- 11.4.1 We could revert to the original opening hours. However, the way our service is currently structured, coupled with our available budget resources, mean that we would not be able to offer our customers consistency or the high-quality service they are now receiving.
- 11.4.2 Operating the previous opening hours often meant that we had to close our libraries at short notice because we cannot provide the right resources and the new opening hours has mostly prevented this from happening once the Service recruited to a significant number of vacancies over the summer of 2023.
- 11.4.3 There may be opportunities to integrate and co-locate library services with other government and partner agencies who share library values in the future, and we will continue to explore these opportunities. Any changes would need to include an impact assessment for customers and would be subject to further consultation.
- 11.4.4 There is an option to pay additional overtime for staff training and development. However, this would adversely impact our staff teams as they would need to complete all training and development activities outside of their normal working hours and full-time staff would routinely work 6 days a week. This would also adversely impact the libraries budget which is already committed to savings targets.
- 11.4.5 There is an option to not close our libraries for half a day each month to allow for staff training and development. However, this would mean that staff would need to take ad hoc time out of their working day to complete the necessary training, one to ones and any personal development. This would likely have an impact on customers as libraries would not be able to provide a consistent service.

12. FEEDBACK FOLLOWING TASK AND FINISH GROUP CONCLUSION

- 12.1 The Head of Parks and Countryside presented a report that sought Committee endorsement for the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group which met

between July 2023 and January 2024 and to approve the First Consideration for Biodiversity Report.

12.2 RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee:

1. notes the contents of the report and thanks everyone involved in the productive and useful discussions had during the Task and Finish Group;
2. endorses the recommendations proposed by the Task and Finish Group; and
3. approves the First Consideration for Biodiversity Report.

12.3 Reasons for Decision

12.3.1 The Task and Finish Group brought together a focused group of Members, Officers and external partners to examine key challenges around the nature emergency and provide clear advice and direction to officers developing an action plan for the Council and city.

12.4.1 The breadth and scale of the challenge means that the work of the Task and Finish Group represents one stage in a wider strategy that the Council and city work on to support nature recovery and the scale and cross cutting nature of this agenda is not yet fully understood.

12.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

12.4.1 Do nothing. Not responding to the nature emergency declaration and working across the Council and with partners across the city would prevent us capturing the work being undertaken and understanding the scale of the challenge going forwards.

(NOTE: During the discussion of the above item the Committee agreed, in accordance with Council Procedure rules, that as the meeting was approaching the two hours and 30 minutes time limit, the meeting should be extended by a period of 30 minutes.)

13. VERBAL UPDATE ON TRAMLINES

13.1 The Head of Parks and Countryside gave an update on the Tramlines event that takes place annually in Hillsborough Park. The Charity Trustee Sub-Committee, who are responsible for charitable parks, considered a report on the ongoing hosting of Tramlines at their meeting on 4 March 2024.

13.2 RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee:

1. notes the update; and

2. agrees to add an item to the work programme for the next meeting of the Committee to review the wider implications for parks regarding events following the decision at the Charity Trustee Sub-Committee on 4 March 2024.

13.3 **Reasons for Decision**

- 13.3.1 To keep informed of decisions that impact parks and to enable early input into the implications on parks where events take place.

13.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

- 13.4.1 The update was for noting only.

14. **YOUTH COUNCIL UPDATE**

- 14.1 The Interim Director of Communities and the Head of Community Youth Services presented a report that informed the Committee of the work of the Sheffield Youth Council and UK Youth Parliament in providing a local, regional and national voice for the young residents of the city.

- 14.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee:

1. notes the update about the Sheffield Youth Cabinet (SYC) Elections and the work of young residents through SYC and the UK Youth Parliament (UKYP); and
2. notes the increase in participations of young residents in local democracy and decision making in their communities, across the city and nationally.

14.3 **Reasons for Decision**

- 14.3.1 The elections to the SYC have been a great success, engaging over 12,000 young residents across the city in electing their representatives.

- 14.3.2 SYC and UKYP enable young residents to have a say on issues that matter to them and to influence decision making at a local, regional and national level. SYC members represent the voice, views and opinions of their peers in their local areas.

14.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

- 14.4.1 None.