

SCRUTINY BOARD (CULTURE AND LEISURE)

MONDAY, 8TH OCTOBER, 2007

PRESENT: Councillor T Hanley in the Chair

Councillors A Barker, A Hussain,
B Jennings, G Kirkland, V Morgan,
L Mulherin and G Wilkinson

31 Exclusion of the public

RESOLVED - That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Appendix 1 in respect of Item 11 "Middleton Park Equestrian Centre". The appendix was confidential under the Access to Information Procedure Rule 10.4.3 – 'Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding the information).'

32 Late Items

In accordance with his powers under section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chair consented to the submission of a late appendix to Item 11, 'Middleton Park Equestrian Centre'. The appendix was not available at the time of the agenda despatch as it was awaiting clearance from Legal Services.

33 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

34 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Atha and Gettings.

35 Minutes

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2007 be approved as a correct record.

36 Executive Board Minutes

In relation to item 74, Regarding the Control of Ragwort, Councillor Kirkland requested information on whether roadside verges were the responsibility for Parks and Countryside or Highways.

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Executive Board held on 11 September 2007 be noted.

37 Wharfemeadows Fence Inquiry

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report regarding the Board's Inquiry into the decision to erect fencing at Wharfemeadows Park in Otley. Appended to the report was a summary of meetings of the working group that had been established to collate evidence.

Councillor Kirkland reported that it was a contentious issue for the residents of Otley and it had been felt that some of the actions in relation to the proposals had not been transparent, although there was support for fencing to be erected by the weir. Reference was also made regarding a planning application for signage.

Councillor Hanley referred to meetings of the Working Group and events since the last meeting of the Board. He introduced Sean Flesher, Principal Area Manager, Parks and Countryside to the meeting.

In response to earlier comments, Sean Flesher reported that the contractors were due on site this week to commence works. The application for planning permission was to be determined by 4 November 2007. Further to suggestions that the fencing should only be erected by the weir and other recognised danger points at this stage, it was reported that the contractors had been instructed to erect the entire fence and that this should be completed within one week.

Further issues discussed included the following:

- What implications could this have at waterways across the rest of the City?
- Why was Otley, and in particular Wharfemeadows Park chosen for this?
- Project costs would be approximately £126,000. This included bank stabilisation works. Costs of the fence alone were estimated at £27,000.

RESOLVED – That the Chair contacts the Leader of the Council and Executive Member regarding suggestions for part erecting the fence and allowing for further consultation on the rest.

38 Consultation on Strategic Outcomes and Improvement Priorities for the Leeds Strategic Plan

The Assistant Chief Executive (Planning, Policy and Improvement) submitted a report regarding the decision of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to invite feedback from Scrutiny Boards on the draft strategic outcomes and improvement priorities proposed for the Leeds Strategic Plan 2008-11. The report and an accompanying presentation provided the background to the

development of the Leeds Strategic Plan and the planned consultation process. It was recommended that the Board considered and commented on the draft improvement priorities from the perspective of fulfilling the city's ambitions in terms of culture and leisure.

The Chair welcomed Catherine Blanshard, Chief Arts, Heritage and Leisure Officer and Phil Maney, Head of Performance Management, City Development to the meeting.

Areas highlighted in the presentation as pertinent to the Board included the following:

- Sports
- Parks
- Libraries
- Museums
- Galleries

Members discussed the requirements across the City as a whole and not just the centre and also commented on poor public transport across the City.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

39 Major Projects Update

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which gave the Board an update on major projects undertaken within the Leisure Portfolio. Appended to the report, was a spreadsheet of milestones of the following major projects:

- Swimming and Diving Centre
- City Museum
- Discovery Centre
- Carriageworks
- Art Gallery

Catherine Blanshard gave the Board an update on the major projects. In summary, the following main issues were highlighted:

- Art Gallery – There had been a slight delay due to the discovery of asbestos in the building; all works were within budget.
- City Museum – There had been an injection of capital due to extra building works required. This had now been completed and the building was ready for internal fitting work to be carried out. It was anticipated that the Museum would be ready for opening in August/September 2008.
- Anti-skateboarding measures – It was reported that anti-skateboarding measures would be implemented around the City Museum and

Discover Centre. It was also agreed to investigate the possibility of these measures at Roundhay Mansion.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

40 Progress Update, Leeds Grand Theatre and City Varieties Music Hall

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which provided an update on the phase 2 refurbishment works at Leeds Grand Theatre and the proposed refurbishment of the City Varieties Music Hall.

In summary, the following issues were highlighted:

Grand Theatre

- Phase 1 works had been completed.
- Phase 2 works had been completed.
- The theatre should remain open during phase 2 works unless works are required to the safety curtain which would enforce a closure of 5 weeks.

City Varieties

- Executive Board approval for the improvements.
- The recent successful bid for Heritage Lottery Funding.

Fires safety issues at both premises were also discussed.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

41 Middleton Park Equestrian Centre Inquiry

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report regarding the Board's Middleton Park Equestrian Centre Inquiry. Included with the agenda was a copy of a report which had been considered by the Executive Board at its meeting of 14 March 2007 and outlined issues relating to the governance and status of Middleton Park Equestrian Centre.

The Chair welcomed the following to the meeting:

- Mrs Charlotte Bromet – Chair of Trustees, Middleton Park Equestrian Centre
- Doug Meeson – Chief Financial Officer
- Pat Kelly – Head of Property and Finance
- Dave Varley – Principal Legal Officer

Doug Meeson and Pat Kelly addressed the meeting and the following issues were highlighted and discussed:

- The relationship between the Council and the Middleton Park Equestrian Centre.

- Financial arrangements.
- Staffing arrangements.
- Governance arrangements.
- The lease of land from Leeds City Council.
- The agreement between the Council and Middleton Park Equestrian Centre made in 1999.

Mrs Bromet informed the Board that the Trust was keen to progress, though questioned the speed at which negotiations had taken place. She also referred to the necessity of the grant funding from the Council and of charitable donations that the Trust had previously received.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That a visit for the Board to Middleton Park Equestrian Centre be arranged.
- (2) That a further report be brought to the Board's November meeting and the Chief Officer be invited to attend.

42 Work Programme

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which detailed the Board's current work programme. Also attached to the report was an extract from the Forward Plan of Key Decisions which highlighted decisions that fell within the Board's remit.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

43 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Monday, 12 November 2007 at 10.00 a.m. (pre-meeting at 09.30 a.m.).