COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

TUESDAY, 9 JUNE 2020

PRESENT: Councillors John Bowden (Chairman), Gurpreet Bhangra, Catherine Del Campo, Greg Jones, Helen Price and Parish Councillor Margaret Lenton

Also in attendance: Councillors Baskerville, Brar, Hilton, Rayner and Werner. Speakers from Norden Farm – Martin Kaye, Jane Corry, John Seymour, Ray Bauer and Graham Clarkson.

Officers: Hilary Hall, Shilpa Manek, Kevin Mist, Russell O'Keefe, Suzie Parr and David Scott

ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN & VICE CHAIRMAN

Councillor Bhangra proposed Councillor Bowden for Chairman. Councillor Bowden seconded that proposal. A named vote was carried out and Councillor Bowden was elected Chairman for the municipal year.

Councillor Price was also proposed for Chairman. This was not seconded so the motion fell.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Bowden be elected Chairman of the Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel for the municipal year 2020/21.

Councillor Bowden proposed Councillor Bhangra for Vice Chairman. This was seconded by Councillor Bhangra.

Councillor Del Campo proposed Councillor Price for Vice Chairman and this was seconded by Councillor Price.

A named vote was carried out for both motions and both were tied.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the election of Vice Chairman be deferred to the next Panel meeting.

WELCOME FROM THE NEW CHAIRMAN

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting of the Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Parish Councillor Pat McDonald.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Bhangra declared a personal interest, that Norden Farm was in his ward and he used it frequently.

Councillor Del Campo declared a personal interest that she lived close to the allotments site.

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Councillor Price raised the following points with respect to the actions from the last meeting, pages refer to the Agenda Report Pack:

Page 9 – Add action in Budget section about reconsidering the overlap of activities between O & S panels for the budget process next year. – This had been added and would be picked up in the Forward Work Programme Item.

Page 10 – SportsAble to work with borough to identify groups that could offer support for the outreach facilities – David Scott reported that the facility had closed down due to Covid-19 and the lockdown but work had been ongoing.

Page 11 – SportsAble to provide Panel Members with a redacted version of the Charity Commission Report – David Scott reported that the facility had closed down due to Covid-19 and the lockdown. The Chairman would be contacted to request the report.

ACTION: SportsAble to provide Panel Members with a redacted version of the Charity Commission Report

Page 11 – Councillor Price asked about the Alternate Giving and Kickstart funding, David Scott reported that Tracy Hendren, Head of Housing, Environmental Health, Operational Support and Housing, had been looking into alternate giving scheme.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the last meeting be agreed as a true record.

NORDEN FARM ANNUAL REPORT

Suzie Parr, Museum and Arts Team Leader, introduced the Norden Farm and pointed out that the report was with respect to 2018/19 activity. Jane Corry, Chief Executive, would share with the Panel all the past work and the benefits to residents and visitors in the borough. Suzie Parr suggested that a further presentation be give later in the year on the 2019/20 activities.

Martin Kaye, Chair of Trustees, gave an opening introduction to the Panel. Other Norden Farm representatives present at the meeting included Jane Corey, CE and Artistic Director, Ray Bauer, Financial Controller and John Seymour, Trustee and Chairman of Finance Committee. Martin Kaye continued and gave a background to where Norden Farm were currently and Jane Corey would cover the community engagement and the engagement with schools locally and then John Seymour would cover the financial results for the year ending 2019/19. Norden Farm had been closed since mid-March 2020 and were planning to reopen in September 2020. Planning of the reopening would take place during July and September, in order to make the venue safe for visitors and staff. Jane Corey had been working on the digital offering for residents to still be able to offer the services of Norden Farm, even after reopening, making the facility open for more residents. Martin Kaye thanked the council for their support.

Jane Corey, CE and Artistic Director went through the following points for the Panel:

- 2018/19 had been a good year for Norden Farm;
- Had engaged with over 194,000 people
- Operational highlight was installing the new raked seating in the studio;
- Produced another original children's show where 9000 people attended and this would now tour the country.
- Produced the very first Maidenhead Kite Festival in the park;
- Launched the new Norden Farm night market series;
- Held the tenth lantern parade;
- The Community engagement events included groups at Norden Farm every month, these included Maidenhead Arts Society, Maidenhead Music Society, Maidenhead

- Drama Festival, Maidenhead Festival, Maidenhead painting club, all of the schools, local groups, Shakespeare projects, all of the choirs and Maidenhead Music Festival.
- There were 200 local volunteers including a new gardening team and talking tables, this is part of the challenge to address social isolation in the borough, where people taking part in shows are encouraged to join a table before and after the show run by volunteers and they would discuss the shows here and make new friends.
- The projects that were run included the Kite festival, Lantern parade, Jump In (family arts festival), Beach (last all summer), Social arts (arts programmes for socially isolated elderly residents), young leadership scheme and young creatives scheme.
- Norden Farm works with all primary and secondary schools in Maidenhead and fundraising takes place to provide art activities for them.
- Groups and classes well attended and for Adults, Children and pre-school;
- Work with disadvantaged groups such as DASH, AfC with looked after children, women in refuge, TVAP, family friends and the Alexander Devine Hospice.

John Seymour, Chairman of Finance Committee gave the Panel a detailed financial report to the Panel. The monies were earned from Norden Farm through the arts programs, classes, hires, memberships and catering, this all provided the income of 85% of the total cost. The cost of running the centre of which 60% covered staff costs, which were higher than the operating income. The difference was made up by the core grant that was received from the borough. Norden Farm aimed to make a small operating surplus to give some reserve. The SLA committed to Norden Farm not making a loss but this may have to be changed with the present emergency. The Royal borough grant currently covered 15% of total costs compared to 40% some years back. A lot of progress had been made to boost Norden Farm earnings. The costs had been rising more that the income mainly because of staffing costs such as the increase in the minimum wage and the introduction of work based pension. This had an effect on the operational surplus and in 2018/19, Norden Farm made a small surplus of £6.4K in the 2018/19 year. The make-up of the budget was made of live shows, these were the biggest contributor's at 25%, hires which were the most profiting activity, had been reducing. The biggest growth area was participatory events went up from just under 10% to just under 13%. This was as a result of the very busy community engagement agenda that Jane Corey had been presenting. The costs were made up mainly by marketing, administration and operating. The performance was set against the business plan and the financial scene showed that in 2018/19. Norden Farm had fulfilled its financial aspects as in the business plan. The Annual Report that was included in the statutory accounts that was prepared for the AGM. The accounts showed a depreciation of £158K in 2018/19 for site, buildings and plant, not a net cost but the cost was very high.

Jane Corey continued and reported that the box office attendance for 2018/19 was a total of 194,602 tickets until 18 March 2020 when Norden Farm was closed. Norden Farm had now lost all its income and the estimated loss was £134K. Jane Corey continued to inform the Panel that within two days of Norden Farm closing, they had their first online digital class. However, Norden Farm had continued all of its workshops for disadvantaged groups, these were real time workshops and classes, continued to work with schools, the community poetry project for the borough had been launched, adult and children classes had moved online, got many volunteers online and started fundraising to provide all the projects digitally.

Martin Kaye concluded the presentation thanking the Panel.

Councillor Del Campo commented that Norden Farm had done really well to continue and support the most disadvantaged groups. She asked why there had been a decrease in revenue. Jane Corey explained that with a participatory programme, the main aim was to get people involved at Norden Farm in activities and events vs corporate room hire which brought the funds in. The plan was to look to see if an extension could be created to allow both but this all came to a holt as a result of Covid-19.

Councillor Bowden asked if Norden Farm had received any grants and was informed that all but five staff had been furloughed and they were not entitled to any grants. They had applied

for the discretionary grant and were awaiting the decision. Norden Farm had decided against any loans at present.

Councillor Bhangra asked how Norden Farm had been fundraising after Covid-19. Jane Corey responded that they had been overwhelmed especially at the beginning with people donating funds, it had now become less. Norden Farm had been supported by Maidenhead United Football Club.

Councillor Price asked what had been the biggest challenge. Jane Corey informed the Panel that costs had been going up, people were scaling back, the venue was turning space usage around three to four times and this was the reason more staff were required. Jane Corey was very positive about the digital programme and this would really help.

Councillor Price requested to see the current SLA that was in place.

ACTION: Suzie Parr to provide SLA to Panel Members.

Councillor Rayner commented that Norden Farm had reacted amazingly and very fast to Covid-19 and had reached so many new audiences.

Councillor Werner commented that Norden Farm was a jewel in the crown for Maidenhead. He asked what could the council do further to help them through these times. Martin Kaye appreciated the core grant that was provided by the borough but some reassurance on next year's grant continuation would be beneficial for planning ahead.

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- taking part in shows are encouraged to join a table before and after the show run by volunteers and they would discuss the shows here and make new friends.
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BRAYWICK LEISURE CENTRE - PROGRESS UPDATE

Kevin Mist, Communities Project Lead, introduced Graham Clarkson to the Panel as the Development Manager for BLC.

Graham Clarkson informed the Panel that the planned completion date was due to be the end of August 2020 and the handover date would be 14 September 2020 and then the trial operation would follow. At the start of the Covid-19 outbreak, even with the restrictions, work had continued whilst social distancing.

There had been some delays due to Covid-19 due to staff being furloughed and no deliveries arriving from other countries.

Graham Clarkson gave the Panel an in-depth account of each area of the leisure centre, this included:

- The flooring in the sports hall was complete.
- The permanent lighting was all live and aiding the completion of the finishing and decoration.
- The heat and power unit had been brought over from the Magnet Leisure Centre and was currently being tested.
- The courts were underway and the fencing had been erected and the floodlights were in
- The flooring in the gym was complete.
- The operational staff from the Magnet Leisure Centre had started to move across.
- The quality of the build, detailing and finishing was very good.

Graham Clarkson went through the risks of the project. These included:

- The full impact of COVID19 effecting the delivery of materials and components from outside the UK and the productivity of the workforce due to the 2m social distancing laws is still yet to be determined.
- Furniture, Fittings and Equipment and Direct Client contracts, to ensure these dovetail in the building programme.
- Disposal of excess site material currently stock piled within the eastern section of the Braywick Park, behind the construction site. Disposal plans have not yet been agreed and finalised. Quotation for disposal is expected in the next few weeks.

The next steps of the project included the finishing and then the training of staff.

Councillor Del Campo expressed her concern as the update was an overview and therefore could not be scrutinised. Councillor Del Campo would have like to see project charts, cost mitigation and further details of the project itself in order to be able to scrutinise it. Graham Clarkson informed the Panel that there were Gant charts and these could be shared with the Panel. The impact of Covid-19 was still unravelling so it was difficult to get figures for this at the current time.

David Scott advised the Panel that this item was a standing item on the agenda, further detail could be provided at the next Panel meeting. David Scott continued that Waites had only closed for three days since Covid-19 and as a contractor had done really well. There had been a disruption to the supplies but Waites had worked hard to mitigate issues.

ACTION: To provide further detail on the project at the next meeting.

Councillor Price asked for confirmation if there was a two week delay and Graham Clarkson informed the Panel that the completion of the project and the opening currently had two dates. Government were still to confirm the regulations of the opening of leisure centres.

Councillor Rayner thanked Graham Clarkson as the Braywick Leisure Centre was looking stunning and the designs had all come to fruition. The project had been conceived in 2016.

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- The permanent lighting was all live and aiding the completion of the finishing and decoration.
- The heat and power unit had been been installed was currently being tested.
- The outdoor courts were underway and the fencing had been erected and the floodlights were in.
- The flooring in the gym was complete.
- The operational staff from the Magnet Leisure Centre had started familiarisation visits .
- The quality of the build, detailing and finishing was very good.

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Councillor Greg Jones joined the meeting.

ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT

Councillor Price raised that items that overlapped between Corporate O & S and Communities O & S be looked into to ensure clarity.

Councillor Del Campo requested that the most recent work programme be added to the report. This was agreed.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: that the Annual Scrutiny Report was agreed as the final version.

Q4/END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE UPDATE REPORT/IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON COMMUNITY GROUPS

David Scott, Head of Communities, went through the executive summary and report for the Panel. David Scott went through the statuses and confirmed that community safety was included.

Councillor Price asked if there was any way of measuring the importance of community groups, to look at the community structure especially the funding and mitigate the reduction in community activity. David Scott reported that the council were in the process of developing a recovery plan after Covid-19 and community groups was a strand of that work. There had been a fantastic community response during these Covid-19 times. The council were currently supporting the community groups through grants and would continue to look at what else the council could do.

ACTION: Provide a more detailed report at next meeting on community groups

Councillor Bowden requested a simple report on which organisations and how the organisation assisted during Covid-19.

ACTION: Provide a report with detail at a future meeting.

Hilary Hall, Director of Adults, Health and Commissioning, Strategy and Commissioning informed the Panel that she had been leading on community response and Hilary Hall endorsed what David Scott had said. Hilary Hall had also been working with health colleagues too and all had benefitted from the community support. Hilary Hall informed the Panel that community impact work was being carried out, surveys were being carried out with people who had got involved. There had been lots of commitment.

Councillor Bowden referred to the fly tipping in Windsor and asked if the extra cost could be quantified. David Scott confirmed that discussions were taking place to increase the enforcement for fly tipping. Fixed penalty notices could be issued and CCTV could be used to collect evidence.

Parish Councillor Margaret Lenton reported that the parishes in the south of the borough had worked really well together, there had been a fair bit of unemployment from the airport. Continued work was still required for communities.

Councillor Price asked how could the Panel support the work that Hilary Hall was doing. Hilary Hall responded that the ideas and thoughts of the Panel would assist to get the wider community view. Information would be presented to the Panel. David Scott, Head of Communities, went through the executive summary and report for the Panel. David Scott went through the statuses and confirmed that community safety was included.

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UPDATE ON RBWM ALLOTMENTS

David Scott, Head of Communities, presented the report to the Panel. David Scott informed the Panel that the Borough was rich in number of allotments, the borough was responsible for some and Parish Councils were responsible for some. The Maidenhead allotments were managed by the Borough and the Windsor allotments were managed by the Windsor Allotment and Home Garden Association.

Some of the points raised in the discussion included:

- A future policy required for considering people with little or no outdoor space.
- A quarter size space was not enough for most people.
- Would there be provision of community gardens at the Maidenhead Golf Club development space.
- There were spaces available in Cookham.
- There was a vermin issue in Courthouse Road allotments which needed looking into.
- The future may bring more people with more free time and less money so could be more creative.
- In some areas, farmers have let out some of their grounds could this be reviewed.
- In Windsor, any surplus of produce given to feed people who have no food.
- How many standard size allotments are still remaining? This is the size of a double tennis court. This needed to be considered.
- Old Windsor had capacity.

WORK PROGRAMME

Councillor Price suggested that it would be more beneficial to have shorter additional meetings.

David Scott reported that there had been an incursion at Braywick Park. They had been asked to leave on Monday and had left by Thursday. They had gained access through forced entry, damaging property. There was an ongoing programme at the site for site hardening. The borough had come to the end of the capital fund for those measures. Further sites were being considered when any incursion occurred.

Councillor Price asked if there was a travellers site or policy in place. David Scott informed the Panel that the borough had some settled traveller sites, they did not currently have any transit sites identified.

Councillor Del Campo suggested community wardens item be added to the work programme including the restructure and the impact on the local community.

ACTION: Further update on allotments at future meeting.

ACTION: Update at future meeting on Community Wardens.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY; That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting whilst discussion takes place on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1-7 of part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

CHAIRMAN	
DATE	