



MINUTES OF THE BARHAM PARK TRUST COMMITTEE

Held on Tuesday 18 July 2017 at 6.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor McLennan (Chair), Hirani (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Farah and Miller

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Southwood.

2. **Declarations of Interests**

None declared.

3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 April 2017 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

4. **Matters Arising (If Any)**

There were no matters arising.

5. **Update on Operational Issues Relating to Barham Park**

Chris Whyte (Operational Director Environment Services) introduced the report updating members on the operational issues relating to Barham Park. The committee heard that a job description had been created for the proposed Projects Officer post and recruitment to the position would be pursued as part of a wider reorganisation of the council's Environmental Services directorate. Members' attention was drawn to the twelve month summary provided by the Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT), which identified that eleven crimes had been reported in the Park, two stop and searches had been performed and twelve calls for police attendance in the park had been received. The SNT reported a reduction in street drinking in the park and confirmed that the park was patrolled daily.

Sarah Chaudhry (Head of Property) updated the committee with regard to property issues for Barham Park, confirming that the lease for Unit 1 of the Barham Park Buildings complex (Card Room) had been signed and was ready for completion following the expiry of a statutory notice period. A tenancy at will had been entered to allow early access by the tenants from the 30 June 2017. The lease for Unit 2 (Snooker Room) had also been agreed with the Barham Park Veterans and would be completed following the expiry of the statutory notice period.

In discussing the report, the committee cautioned sensitivity in the language used to discuss incidents of crimes in the park. Noting that a new ice-cream vendor was

needed for the park, Members questioned what arrangements were in place to ensure that this was filled for the summer period. In response, Amanda Haines (Resources Manager) confirmed that a vendor had been secured for the interim and the council would re-tender after the summer.

RESOLVED: That the report from the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment providing an update on the operational issues relating to Barham Park Trust Committee be noted.

6. **Annual Report 2016-2017**

Gareth Robinson (Head of Finance) presented the Annual Report and Accounts 2016-2017 for the committee's consideration. The Annual Report identified that as at 31 March 2017, the charity held cash reserves of £464,374. In accordance with the decision of the Trustees, all future receipts would be used for improvements within Barham Park. Specific comment was sought from the committee on Section D of the Annual Report, which set out the main achievements of the charity during the 2016-2017 year. An overview of the accounts was then provided to the committee and members' attention was drawn to the report of the Independent Examiner who had concluded that there was no indication that the requirements to keep accounting records and accounts in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 had not been met.

In the subsequent discussion, the committee sought a further breakdown of the costs recorded under the heading 'Consultancy' and were informed that the £3,997 comprised two different spends; a survey of the properties on site conducted by Rider Levett Bucknall for £2,247; and an MMP Design survey exploring possible improvements for the park cost £1,750. The committee agreed that the information provided in Section D of the Annual Report was a good summary of the achievements of the Trust for 2016-2017.

RESOLVED:

- i) that the Annual Report and Accounts 2016-2017 be agreed;
- ii) that the independent review of the accounts 2016-2017 be noted;
- iii) that officers update the Charity Commission with the Annual Report and Accounts 2016-2017.

7. **Officer Time Analysis**

Gareth Robinson (Head of Finance) presented a report examining officer time spent supporting Barham Park Trust and its activities. Members' attention was drawn to the methodology employed and the key findings identified, including financial implications for the Trust if the costs were to be recharged. It was highlighted that the majority of officer time had been spent in relation to leases for the Barham Park buildings complex, though producing reports and dealing with Freedom of Information requests were also common themes in the work undertaken. The total costs of the officer time spent in support of the trust were calculated as £59,055 for 2016/2017 and £14,269 for the 2017/2018 year to date. If these costs were to be charged to the Trust annually, they would equate to approximately 60 per cent of the income generated by the Trust.

The committee welcomed the report, noted that the council provided a large financial subsidy to the Trust by funding officer support, and sought comparative information for other parks maintained by the council. Councillor Miller noted his level of concern with the unusual amount of officer time spent on activities not directly related to the running of the park and how much more usefully it could be employed. Gareth Robinson emphasised that with the exception of costs relating to the physical maintenance of a park, much of the other work undertaken by officers would not be required for other parks. Chris Whyte confirmed that work was currently underway to analyse the spend on parks to support a further comparative analysis and this would be provided for the next meeting of the committee.

RESOLVED: that the amount of officer time spent on Barham Park Trust and its activities as set out in the report from the Head of Finance be noted.

8. **Any Other Urgent Business**

Councillor McLennan acknowledged receipt of a communication from the Vice Chair of the Sudbury Residents' Association and advised that officers would consider the suggestions provided as part of the forthcoming work to review the governance arrangements for the Trust. A report on the Trust's governance arrangements was expected to be brought to the next meeting of the Committee, which would be rescheduled for October 2017.

The meeting was declared closed at 6.27 pm

COUNCILLOR MARGARET MCLENNAN
Chair