

14 FEBRUARY 2019

COMMUNITY EXECUTIVE ADVISORY BOARD

14 February 2019

- * Councillor Adrian Chandler (Chairman)
- * Councillor Pauline Searle (Vice-Chairman)

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| Councillor Alexandra Chesterfield | Councillor Sheila Kirkland |
| * Councillor Angela Gunning | * Councillor Bob McShee |
| Councillor Murray Grubb Jnr | * Councillor Dennis Paul |
| Councillor Christian Holliday | * Councillor Tony Phillips |
| * Councillor Nigel Kearse | Councillor Matthew Sarti |

*Present

Councillors Michael Illman, Caroline Reeves and Iseult Roche were also in attendance.

C21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Alexandra Chesterfield, Christian Holliday, Sheila Kirkland and Matthew Sarti.

C22 LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT AND DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests.

C23 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive Advisory Board held on 18 October 2018 were confirmed as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman.

C24 NEW SPORT AND ENTERTAINMENT VENUE

The Lead Councillor introduced a presentation and accompanying EAB discussion paper concerning a proposed new sport and entertainment venue in Guildford and invited the Board's comments thereon.

The Leisure Services Manager delivered the presentation which explained the corporate objective to undertake a feasibility study for a new multi-use sports and entertainment facility and addressed the background and use statistics, current facilities, the building and other challenges, feasibility study and workstreams, initial vision and aspirations, key questions arising from work to date, next steps and timeline.

The discussion paper introduced the successful Guildford Spectrum Leisure Complex, which was opened in 1993, with its range of facilities which offered a mix between commercial and community facilities all under one roof remaining a unique site in the United Kingdom and making the venue a regional tourist destination with around 1.7 million visits and a turnover of over £10 million each year. The current building, installation of the combined heat and power unit, new build versus refurbishment, production of a draft vision and ongoing consultation were covered in the discussion paper. The vision featured the setting and arrival experience, car and other vehicle parking, satellite facilities, parkland and pitch maintenance, design of the main facility, utility and resource impact, facility quality, outreach work and next steps.

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The following points arose from related questions and discussion:

- The current premises were costly to maintain and were in need of replacement glazing seals. The current programme of maintenance should significantly reduce the ongoing problem of the leaking roof which was due to incorrect installation owing to poor workmanship.
- The vision included a goal to make the facility a pleasure to visit and operate.
- The existing reception area had originally been designed to be a pinch point to control visitor entry, however, this was no longer consistent with the modern customer expectations. A new build would enable the area to be opened up, have views of the adjoining facilities and accommodate the passage of a large number of people when pantomimes and other events were held.
- There would be a public consultation in respect of the proposals for a new sport and entertainment venue and the questions would vary according to what facilities were envisaged to be in a new venue. It would not be necessary to undertake a public consultation if a refurbishment of the existing building was being pursued.
- The expectations of the target demographics had changed since the Spectrum opened and a refurbishment may not be truly fit for purpose or future-proofed. The plant equipment and design were out dated. As the current provision did not meet the demand for more dedicated rooms to accommodate classes, which were now more popular, flexibility was required. A spa and wellbeing centre was suggested to offer mental in addition to physical health benefits, however, the existing small spa facility was not well used owing to significant local competition and was very expensive to run. A larger changing provision for the swimming pools was required.
- Additional provision for younger people, food outlets and open spaces were also sought. Whilst the market place was gradually changing, fast food remained more popular than healthier options to date so catering areas needed to be flexible and offer options for everyone.
- Although the inclusion of apartments was suggested, the Board was advised that housing on site may not be compatible owing to disturbance, access etc.
- A doughnut-shaped multi-use design for a new building with a central reception area overlooked by facilities around the edge and parking below was suggested. However, underground parking was considerably more costly to provide than surface parking and space under the building would need to be utilised for plant equipment and stores etc.
- The football pitch, which was located within the running track, had design limitations and may not meet the necessary Football Association standards in the event that Guildford City Football Club was significantly promoted up the leagues and wished to continue to play there. A Playing Pitch Strategy was being developed and would inform offerings at the Spectrum site and beyond.
- North Park and the existing car park were the obvious potential locations for a replacement building which would require a new road layout ideally enabling the separating of the goods access from the other accesses. An access slip road off the A3 was suggested as being beneficial but logistically very challenging and extremely costly. However, excavation work would be required at North Park and the location of the water table could be a complicating factor.
- A transport study would be undertaken to ascertain the correct amount of parking provision for a new or refurbished facility.
- A replacement building was estimated to cost in the region of £100 million and the interest payable on that level of debt would be approximately £4 million per annum. The Sport England model for affordable sports facilities had been utilised to estimate the potential costs.
- Planning conditions would inform the height and position for a new building.

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- The operation of the facility by a charitable trust would be the most cost effective method owing to the associated benefits such as reduced National Non-Domestic Rate liability and VAT implications. A public/private enterprise would be an alternative to reduce financial risk to the Council.
- There would be some difficult choices to make in respect of the facilities, examples included pool size and design and a second smaller ice rink for lessons.
- As cycling had grown in popularity in recent years consideration could be given to providing a velodrome, however, this would require a significant footprint and would be very unlikely to be financially sustainable.
- There had been some complaints on social media concerning cleanliness of the existing facility which was thought to be the result of cleaning staff being hampered by the high demand and having to negotiate small and poorly designed changing facilities.
- The EAB was interested to learn of the outcome of the related public consultation exercise.

In summary, the Chairman confirmed that the EAB favoured a new build replacement multi-functional sport and entertainment venue in Guildford for the reasons listed above and requested that further information be brought back to the Board following the related public consultation when proposals had been progressed.

C25 REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE ADVISORY BOARD REVIEW TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The Council, at its meeting held on 9 October 2018, considered a report concerning a review of the structure of the Executive Advisory Boards (EABs), which contained the following three options:

1. To disband the existing EABs and establish one overarching EAB making greater use of existing powers to establish task groups to look at specific issues and projects relating to the delivery of the nine strategic Corporate Plan priorities.
2. To disband the existing EABs and establish topic based advisory boards to be commissioned directly by the Executive as and when required.
3. To make no change to the current arrangements.

The Council resolved that, before any decision was taken in respect of the future of the EABs, a cross party task and finish group of nine councillors, comprising five Conservative councillors and one councillor from each of the other four groups, be established to consider the matter and report its findings to the Council.

Accordingly, the EAB Review Task and Finish Group was established and met on 20 November 2018 when it considered the future structure of the EABs. The Board was invited to consider a report outlining the findings of the Group's meeting and setting out its conclusions and recommendations to the Council on 26 February 2019, which were first being shared with the EABs with a view to gaining their support.

The Group's recommendations to Council were as follows:

- (1) That Option 2: "*To disband the existing EABs and establish topic based advisory boards to be commissioned directly by the Executive as and when required*" be not supported and discounted as a possible future EAB governance structure.

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- (2) That the existing arrangement of the two EABs be retained for the time being whilst the Forward Plan process is strengthened pending review following the Borough Council Elections in May 2019 to ascertain whether changes to the Forward Plan process and/or EAB structure are required.
- (3) That the review referred to in paragraph (2) above be carried out within 12 months of the Borough Council Elections.
- (4) That the Forward Plan be included on future EAB agendas as part of the standing item on the Work Programme to facilitate better agenda planning.
- (5) That lead councillors do not play a part in determining the Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme at work programme meetings.

The reason for the recommendations was to introduce a more efficient and effective EAB configuration.

The EAB noted that the inclusion of the Forward Plan on EAB agendas had already been implemented. The view was expressed that the discussion in respect of the previous item concerning the future of the Spectrum leisure complex had been valuable and was an example of the benefits of effective work programming to enable EABs to have early input into major projects and policies.

The Board indicated its agreement with the conclusions and recommendations in the report and commended them to Council.

C26 EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN

The EAB considered the most recent version of the Executive Forward Plan, dated 22 January 2019, which benefited from the recent drive to secure improved programming of work and decisions recommended by the EAB Review Task and Finish Group. It was reported that the Executive meeting originally arranged for 26 March 2019 had been brought forward to 19 March 2019 and that the Home Improvement Grant Policy item scheduled for that meeting had been postponed and would now be submitted to the EAB on 4 April and to the Executive on 23 April, 2019. As the Disabled Facilities Grants item listed for the EAB meeting on 28 May 2019 was a duplicate of the Home Improvement Grant Policy, the former item would be deleted and replacement items would need to be identified for this meeting.

C27 EAB WORK PROGRAMME

The EAB Work Programme was considered and noted by the Board. The strengthening of the Executive Forward Plan would be reflected in the Work Programme which could be populated with items for up to a year ahead. The Board was invited to submit any suggested changes via e-mail.

C28 PROGRESS WITH ITEMS PREVIOUSLY CONSIDERED BY THE EAB

Progress with items previously considered by the EAB were noted. The format of this summary report would be reviewed to ascertain whether any improvements could be identified.

The meeting finished at 9.05 pm

Signed

Date

Chairman