

**Minutes of a meeting of the Leisure Services Committee held at the Oakwood Centre  
on Tuesday 19 November 2024 at 8:00 pm**

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**Present:** *Councillors D. Smith (Chairman); Y. Edwards; D. Errawalla; M. Firmager;  
K. Gilder; C. Jewell; P. Singh*

**Officers present:** *K. Murray, Town Clerk;  
E. Whitesmith, Leisure Services Manager*

**Also present:** *Councillor R. Horskins (Virtual Attendance)  
Councillor D. Bragg  
M. Filmore, Deputy Town Clerk (Virtual Attendance)  
G. Mephram – Berkshire Youth (Virtual Attendance)  
1 member of the public*

27. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Horskins, Kennedy and Lewis. Councillor Horskins attended the meeting virtually.

28. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest raised by Members.

29. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3 SEPTEMBER 2024**

**RESOLVED:**

- ♦ That the minutes of the Leisure Services Committee meeting of 3 September 2024 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

30. **ACTIONS / FOLLOW UPS**

Members noted the update on the actions and follow ups from previous meetings, as provided in the agenda.

**7 November 2023 – Minute 34**

In relation to potential improvements to the play equipment at Wheble Park, Councillor Edwards updated Members to state that she and Councillor Taylor had visited residents within the vicinity and there was overwhelming support for the improvements. Members noted a report is due to go to the Strategy & Resources Committee on 26 November to consider this matter further.

**16 January 2024 – Minute 56**

The Town Clerk clarified that the reason the potential cost of installing a path around the north end of Woodford Park is so high is because the most appropriate surface to provide is solid, tarmac. This is in light of the expected usage, especially considering runners who use this route.

31. **BUDGETARY CONTROL**

Members reviewed the Budgetary Control report.

**RESOLVED:**

- ♦ To note Report No. LS 30/24.

32. **WOODFORD PARK LEISURE CENTRE, SPORTS DEVELOPMENT AND ACTIVITIES**

The Leisure Services Manager presented Report No. LS 31/24.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 31/24.

33. **PARKS AND BUILDINGS**

The Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 31/24.

In relation to the proposal to install a Duck Feeding station by the lake, the Town Clerk advised that the recommended unit is fully solar powered and made from recycled plastic. Members noted that there was no cost for installation or maintenance, no contract, and that the Council would receive 10% of any income. The Town Clerk advised the cost of one portion of duck feed would be £1.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 31/24.
- ◆ To approve the installation of a Duck Feeding station at the lake in Woodford Park.

Voting: For: 6 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0 No Vote: 1

34.1 **YOUTH SUPPORT SERVICE TASK & FINISH WORKING GROUP**

Councillor Gilder, as Chairman of the Youth Support Service task & finish working group, presented Report No. LS 32/24 of the group's meeting held on 11 November, which included a report summarising their activities.

Gareth Mephram, Berkshire Youth, provided further context to the Youth Engagement Project report their organisation provided as part of the working group's activities. Members noted that engagement with schools had been difficult to get survey responses, although there was a good level of response from Waingels College. Gareth advised that the real qualitative information came out of face-to-face sessions. He stated that one of his key takeaways from those conversations was that young people felt safe in the area. He also advised that young people, their parents and other community members, through Berkshire Youth's engagements, had indicated there was a lack of youth provision during school holidays.

A suggestion was made that, when the youth service is being setup, grant funding might be sought from various sources, including the National Lottery and local housing associations, might be applied for to support this, and the Town Clerk confirmed Officers would look into this.

34.2 Members first considered and voted on the Service Provision recommendations, set out in paragraph 42 of the appendix.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ That the Council's youth support service provision will target all children and young people aged 9 to 21, with a specific focus on supporting those who are deemed to be, or preventing those who may become vulnerable, especially those not currently engaging with an existing youth provision.
- ◆ That the Council will primarily focus on providing their youth support service provision during school holidays and on Friday evenings between 3pm and late, whilst also seeking to provide further services, when / if achievable, on Mondays to Thursdays - between 3pm and 7pm – and during national holidays / events; i.e. Halloween.

- ◆ That the Council primarily seeks to provide its youth support service provision from a mobile venue (e.g. a van, converted bus or trailer), setup and operated by the Council for the benefit of young people.
- ◆ The supplement this, the Council will also provide services from other venues and facilities, either owned by the Council or not, where agreement can be reached, as appropriate to the activity / event being delivered.
- ◆ That the Council seeks, through its youth support service provision, to:
  - provide regular activity led sessions; for example, sports, music, arts or other appropriate workshops, training and courses.
  - provide irregular activity led sessions; for example, competitions, one off workshops / activity sessions, structured trips.
  - facilitate and coordinate the provision of a variety of youth services and activities, delivered in partnership with external agencies.
  - provide a setting for young people to casually meet, chat and spend time with friends.

A vote was taken on each of the above points individuals, with the results all as follows:

Voting: For: 6 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0 No Vote: 1

- 34.3 It was noted that the summary report did not include details of how the service recommendations would be achieved. The Deputy Town Clerk advised that the working group's objectives had included providing information on feasibility, cost and how the provision might be progressed. However, due to the lack of response to the Youth Engagement Project survey in the summer term, the survey had been extended into the autumn term and, with the group having a targeted end date of 20 November, time had run out to undertake this element of the group's objectives. Members noted that a further recommendation in the summary report was for the Committee to consider whether to extend the end date of the group or to ask Officers to complete this work.

- 34.4 In relation to working group's recommendations relating to the Strategy for Youth Services, Members:

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ That the Strategy for Youth Services be updated by Officers to:
  - Reflect the work of the Working Group in Strategy
  - Reflect the Service Provision approaches, approved above
  - Update the time period of the Strategy to cover 2025 – 2030.
- ◆ That, once updated, the draft strategy be presented to the Leisure Services Committee to consider recommending its adoption to Strategy & Resources Committee, with the strategy ultimately being presented to Full Council for adoption.

Voting: For: 6 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0 No Vote: 1

- 34.5 Following discussion regarding the working group's incomplete objectives, it was:

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To extend the end date of the working group until 26 March 2025 to allow the group time to complete objectives F, G and H, as set out in the group's terms of reference.

Voting: For: 6 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0 No Vote: 1

The Committee expressed their thanks to the working group and officers for the tremendous work undertaken.

35. **FRIENDS OF WOODFORD PARK UPDATE**

Members noted the report from the Friends of Woodford Park (FoWP), as set out in the agenda.

The Town Clerk expressed his continued thanks and appreciation to the FoWP for their work around the park, and for running a walk and tour event as part of the Council's Climate Action Week.

36. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

There were no future agenda items raised by Members.

37. **PUBLICITY AND WEBSITE**

It was requested that the new Strategy for Youth Services be publicised once the updated version has been formally adopted.

The meeting closed at 9:15 pm

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