

IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION
Thursday, 24th October, 2019

Present:- Councillor Mallinder (in the Chair); Councillors Atkin, Buckley, B. Cutts, Jacques, Jepson, Jones, Reeder, Sansome, Taylor, Tweed and Wyatt and co-optees Wendy Birch and Mary Jacques.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Elliot, McNeely, Sheppard and Whysall.

The webcast of the Council Meeting can be viewed at:-
<https://rotherham.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

27. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no agenda items requiring the exclusion of the press or members of the public from the meeting.

28. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

There were no questions from members of the public or press.

29. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 19TH SEPTEMBER, 2019.

In respect of Minute 18, (Minutes of the previous meeting held on 25th July, 2019) the information requested regarding the Evaluation Time for Action Initiative had not been received. The Governance Advisor would contact the Assistant Director for clarification.

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 19th September 2019 be approved as a correct record.

30. COMMUNICATIONS

The Chair put on record her thanks to Christine Majer for her work in supporting the Select Commission.

31. ALLOTMENTS SELF-MANAGEMENT - UPDATE

The Chair of the Rotherham Allotments Alliance Board, Cllr Brian Steele introduced the briefing paper along with the Cabinet Member for Waste, Roads and Community Safety, Cllr Hoddinott.

The Cabinet and Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting on the July 9,

2018 agreed to recommend to the Council the transfer of Council-owned allotments to a new borough wide self-management body.

Officers have been working with the Rotherham and District Allotment Association (RADAA) as the main umbrella organisation for Rotherham's Allotment Community. Work was also undertaken to examine if there were similar operating models adopted by other Local Authorities.

Following early discussions with RADAA representatives, Co-operatives UK were employed from August 2018 to help register a new Community Benefits Society to be known as Rotherham Allotments Alliance Ltd (RAA).

The RAA Board was established in January 2019 and RAA became a legal entity on April 2, 2019. Of the Board's eight members, three were RADAA representatives and two were Borough Councillors: Cllr Steele and Cllr Hoddinott. The requirement for two Councillors (one being the Cabinet Member with responsibility for allotments) was included in the new company's rules.

The transfer of Rotherham's Allotments from the Council to RAA was postponed to January 1, 2020. This later target date allowed Officers more time to undertake survey work and determine the heads of terms for the transfer lease to allow the RAA to take legal responsibility for the allotments sites and sub-let them either directly to tenants or to site societies.

An action plan has been prepared to guide the process and was updated regularly. Prior to transfer of the land holding responsibility a pro-rata share of the 2019/20 income already collected by the Council was needed to be transferred (£15,181) from the Council's revenue budgets.

A capital amount of £100,000 had also been made available to the RAA by the Council from 2019/20 for the benefit of improving allotments. It was envisaged that this funding was monitored by Green Spaces in a legacy role. Green Spaces had retained the Statutory Allotments Authority function under the Allotments Act. This function could not be transferred to the RAA.

All tenants and chairs and secretaries of allotment societies had been consulted on the transfer. RAA had set up its own finance and legal team and the Council had transferred a small revenue grant which would be used to fund an administrative post.

Cllr Hoddinott commented on the commitment and expertise of the alliance members in setting up this new entity and recorded her thanks to Cllr Steele for his work as Chair.

The following points were raised and clarified:

- Assurance was given outlining that RAA had obtained public liability insurance. In response to an offer of assistance from Rotherfed, the Chair thanked the co-optee and indicated that RAA were open to such discussions.
- The status of the allotments was clarified. It was reiterated that management of the allotments was undertaken by RAA however, the Council still retained ownership of the sites and statutory responsibility for provision of allotments.
- It was anticipated that there was no additional administrative burden on self-managed sites or individual tenants.
- A query was raised in respect of frequency of reporting to the Commission. Cllr Steele outlined actions taken by the Board to monitor progress and ensure due diligence was in place.
- Allotment rules had been adapted from existing Council guidelines and those issued by the National Allotment Society; these promoted what was allowed on sites and also gave guidance on how to be a good neighbour to local housing and amenities.
- The Chair expressed confidence in the action plan and the progress that had been achieved.

Resolved:

- 1) That this briefing is noted and a further update be reported in December 2020 following the transfer of the allotment management responsibility to the RAA.

32. IMPACT OF TRAFFIC FROM WALESWOOD CARAVAN PARK

The Transportation Infrastructure Service was asked to provide Members with information on any impact the opening of the Waleswood caravan and camping site in April 2019 had had on the local road network as a consequence of additional vehicle movements generated from this development.

A review of correspondence received within the Transportation Infrastructure Service, observations of the local road network and assessment of the traffic signal timings at Wales Bar Crossroads had taken place and had not identified any negative impact on the local highway network as a consequence of Waleswood Caravan and Camping site being operational. This was potentially due to the fact that the amount of additional traffic generated by the development was relatively small in comparison to general traffic flows in the area.

A small number of formal requests had been received from residents requesting a reduction in the existing National Speed Limit along Delves

Lane and a review had taken place. These surveys had taken over a 7 day period during February 2019. However, arrangements would be put in place for a follow up speed survey to be undertaken during 2020 to determine existing vehicle speeds.

The following points were raised and clarified:

- It was noted that the opening of the Gulliver's development would create a greater impact on the local areas and it was clarified that a further survey would be undertaken once the development was opened.
- It was noted that the survey was undertaken prior to the site opening and therefore the assertion about limited impact was questioned. The Assistant Director, Culture, Sport & Tourism gave assurance that due diligence had been exercised to ensure residents' concerns had been addressed including oversight of the complaints procedure and correspondence since the caravan park opened.
- Details of road traffic incidents in the locality had been monitored and it was advised that the opening of the caravan park had not had significant impact. However, it was suggested that this did not reflect near misses or other related issues.
- Clarification was sought of the timing of the review and the areas that this would cover. The Chair requested that a further detailed report be submitted outlining the impact of the Waleswood developments on residents and an assessment of noise levels and traffic/congestion.

Resolved

- 1) That a review of the National Speed Limit is programmed to take place during 2020 when the site is operating at, or near, capacity, to determine whether a lower speed limit is required.
- 2) That a further report be submitted outlining the impact of the Waleswood developments on residents and an assessment of noise levels and traffic/congestion.

33. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgency.

34. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

Resolved:

The next meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission will take

place on 19th December, commencing at 1.30pm in Rotherham Town Hall.

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