



Mousehold Heath Conservators

14:00 to 15:15

16 March 2018

Present: Councillor Maxwell (chair), Price (vice chair), Bradford, Brociek-Coulton, Kendrick, Lubbock, Packer and Raby, and Clare Cohen (Mousehold Heath Defenders), Matthew Davies (Norwich Fringe Project) and John Trevelyan (The Norwich Society)

Apologies: Councillor Sands (M)

1. Public Questions/Petitions

There were no public questions or petitions.

2. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2018.

4. Mousehold Budget Monitoring Statement – April to December 2017

The finance business partner (LGSS) presented the report. He advised the Conservators that the top line of the table in paragraph 5 should be corrected to 2017-18.

The vice chair commented on the capital position and said that the 10 year plan would identify where it should be used. A reserve was being built up. He said that the accounts showed accurate forecasting.

The service accountant explained that the forecasts did not take into account central services such as HR where the recharge was 33 per cent and would not necessarily result in an underspend. He pointed out that the charge for PC use had been reduced because the wardens were not office based staff and therefore did not require the same level of support.

RESOLVED to note the current budget monitoring position.

5. Mousehold Heath 2018-2028 Management Plan Review (progress update and development of part two of the plan)

The parks and open spaces manager presented the report and apologised that the purpose of the report had not been updated from a previous report and was to update the Conservators on the progress of the management plan review, consider the development of the 10 year strategy and consider a proposal to revise the timetable for implementation and extend the current management plan for one year. Members were also advised that agenda pages 23 to 40 had been included in error.

During discussion, the parks and open spaces manager answered questions. He said that he had discussed the list of strategic projects with the chair, vice chair and the wardens, and it would be unrealistic to try to deliver more than one project in any one year. Appendix A showed the year that each project would be “active”. The review of formal and informal sports provision would take place in year one of the 10 year strategy. The review would inform any capital investment that needed to be made for both formal and informal sports provision on the heath. The tree safety inspection policy would be a risk based assessment of trees and could be used as evidence in court if someone was hurt or injured. This did not mean that where a tree was dead or dying it had to be removed if it was safe to leave it. The wardens monitored trees as part of the discharge of their duties.

The vice chair commented on the progress of the management review and commended the parks and open spaces manager and his team for their contribution to the review of the management plan. He welcomed the new approach and said that extending the implementation by 1 year would mean that they would be ready to commit to the 10 year strategy.

Discussion ensued on the strategic projects and the flexibility of the plan to move priorities from one year to the next. Some members were concerned about the practicality of the sports review in year 1 and that by not looking at interpretation until year 4, gave rise to concerns it would result in a piecemeal approach and result in a clutter of signs on the heath. The parks and open spaces manager explained the range of the interpretation strategy and said that it was set out in the project specifications. The formal and informal sports facilities review would need to consider a whole range of issues. The use of GIS mapping meant that pathways and defined routes for running or walking could be made available in pdf form for users of the heath. The chair pointed out that a map of the heath was included in the annual report. A member suggested that officers included links to the works of a local historian. Another member expressed concern that a new facility or sports activity might be agreed on in year 1 but not implemented until the interpretation strategy had been agreed in year 4. The vice chair said that the interpretation strategy would make the heath more inclusive with its activities and interpretation of history and other information.

A member said that she was pleased to see that the public toilet provision would be reviewed so early in the strategy as public conveniences were vital for users of the heath.

The chair said that she considered that the strategic projects listed in Appendix A were in the right order. The parks and open spaces manager responded to comments made by members. He explained that it was a realistic programme but

had some flexibility if it was necessary to bring forward a strategic project. The volunteer strategy was “active” in the plan for year 4. The current arrangements worked well and its position in the plan was not a reflection of the value that the council and the Conservators placed on the volunteers. However, should a problem arise and it was necessary to bring a strategic project forward it might be possible to move back another project. This could be the case for the Britannia car park or the car park resurfacing review. The programme would be reviewed annually and any changes subject to approval by the Conservators.

The chair thanked the members of the sub-group and officers for their hard work in putting together the 10 year management plan.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) note the progress to date:
- (2) approve the prioritised 10 year programme for large strategic and policy projects;
- (3) approve the revised timetable for the completion of the plan;
- (4) approve a one year extension of the current plan for the year 2018-19 based on the 2017-18 work programme.

6. Annual work programme 2018-19

The parks and open spaces manager presented the report and answered members’ questions. This included confirmation that the maintenance of disabled access routes was part of the general maintenance of the heath and the Mousehold Heath wardens’ patrols. As parks and open spaces manager he was aware of changes to legislation and best practice as applied to open spaces from journals and other sources. Matthew Davies represented the council on the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership. Legislation for natural areas was different from parks. As an outcome of case law it might be necessary to review tree safety policy across all of the council’s sites, including the heath.

RESOLVED to approve the draft work programme for 2018-19.

7. Mousehold Heath Quarterly Management Update 6 January to 5 March 2018

The parks and open spaces manager presented the report. Members’ attention was drawn to the approach officers had taken during the cold weather to assist rough sleepers and homeless people, and that a total of 904 volunteer hours had been undertaken during the last quarter.

During discussion the vice chair commented on the application of the council’s rough sleeping strategy and considered that it was a positive approach for the wardens to contact the council’s single homeless and rough sleeper coordinator who could then assist rough sleepers to find accommodation. The chair said that she was concerned that as the summer approached there would be more campers on the heath.

RESOLVED to note the content of the report.

8. Committee Schedule 2018-19

RESOLVED to agree, subject to approval at the city council's annual council, the schedule of meetings for the civic year 2018-19, all meetings to be at 14:00 and held at City Hall:

Friday, 15 June 2018
Friday, 21 September 2018;
Friday, 18 January 2019
Friday, 15 March 2019.

CHAIR