



**Mousehold Heath Conservators**

**14:05 to 15:30**

**19 January 2018**

Present: Councillors Maxwell (chair), Price (vice chair), Bradford, Kendrick, Packer, Raby; and Clare Cohen (Mousehold Heath Defenders) John Trevelyan (The Norwich Society) and Matthew Davies (Norwich Fringe Project).

Apologies: Councillors Brociek-Coulton, Lubbock, and Sands (M).

**1. Public questions/ petitions**

No public questions or petitions were received.

**2. Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. Minutes**

The chair advised that she had written to the prison governor regarding the hosting of beehives.

**RESOLVED** to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2017.

**4. Rangers House report**

The strategy and disposal manager presented the report. He emphasised that when the lease on the house was sold it was highlighted that enfranchisement was a possible risk.

In response to the chair's question, he confirmed that following the sale of the freehold there was no liability remaining with the council for the house. In response to a member question he confirmed that the boundary was set and the wardens would monitor any encroachment.

He advised that this sale did not set a precedent and that the only other property on the heath which was let was Zaks. As this was a commercial let the law around enfranchisements did not apply.

A member queried what remained of the capital from the original sale of the ranger's house. It was discussed that there was a caveat on the capital sum from the sale in

that it could only be spent on capital projects. It was agreed that the finance business partner would produce a report providing this detail by the date of the next sub group meeting 12 February 2018.

**RESOLVED to:**

- (1) note the Rangers House report; and
- (2) ask the finance business partner to produce a report detailing what had been spent from the capital sum received from the leasehold sale of the ranger's house and to confirm what the remaining amount could be spent on.

(The strategy and disposal manager left the meeting.)

**5. Mousehold heath budget and precept report 2018-19**

The finance business partner presented the report. He confirmed that in terms of risks these were built into the council's risk management strategy. The key risk mitigation was to build up the budget reserves. These currently stood at 2.4% and the parks and open spaces manager advised that the aim was to take the reserves up to 5%. Underspensing was targeted to build up these reserves.

The finance business partner summarised the proposed movements of the budget. The vice-chair noted increased charges to the council for the pension fund were due to a contractor failing and the council stepping in.

Members discussed the capital achieved from the sale of the ranger's house. A member asked if the decision to use the funds for capital projects only was an obligation on the conservators or could it be changed. It was agreed that the finance business partner would include this information in his report.

The parks and open spaces manager said the monies provided an opportunity to draw in match funding. A number of new ideas would come from the management plan review and the conservators could determine how to spend these funds.

**RESOLVED to:**

- (1) note the forecast balances position set out in paragraphs 3-4 of the report;
- (2) note the risk management arrangements set out in paragraphs 5-9 of the report;
- (3) recommend council to approve the budget proposals set out in paragraph 10 of the report;
- (4) approve 2018-19 budgets as set out in Appendix A; and
- (5) place a precept on Norwich City Council in the relevant amount for the financial year beginning 1 April 2018, as per paragraph 11 of the report.

(The service accountant left the meeting.)

**6. Mousehold Heath 2018-2028 management plan review progress update and development of part 2 of the draft plan**

The parks and open spaces manager presented the report.

He advised that there were no project specifications prepared to date. Appendix one contained the draft of the first four objectives; all eight would be completed by the March deadline. He asked if any suggested amendments could be sent to him by email by the 26 January.

Discussion ensued regarding the management prescriptions. The parks and open spaces manager stated that the aim was to produce a reference list of all work completed. A previous criticism of the management plan was that it held too much information and therefore was not very reader friendly. The intention in future was for this to reflect overall what was happening with less detail, with the management prescriptions providing the detail. One action might be duplicated under a number of objectives because it met a number of targets.

In response to a member's question the parks and open spaces manager said the refurbishment of the public toilets on the heath would go forward to be considered as part of the management plan. He confirmed in response to a question from the chair that the building of toilets would come under capital works. The chair also noted the lack of baby changing provision available in the toilets on the heath.

A member noted that under objective D, page 39 of the report, it was stated that the use of pesticides was minimal and requested more detail. The parks and open spaces manager confirmed it was used minimally; it had been agreed for stump treatment and was used in the management of the sports turf. There would be a project around pesticide use, which would detail what was currently happening and what the aspirations were for use going forward.

In response to a member's question regarding the erection of an interpretation panel in the car park, the parks and open spaces manager said the management plan would look at information hubs and information provision across the heath. A strategy which looked at common branding consistent across all panels would be developed.

Members discussed permissions for events taking place on the heath. It was noted permission should be asked of the conservators but that this was not currently happening. The vice chair emphasised that efforts were being made to encourage community participation and use of the heath and that the previous process of notification for use of the heath was burdensome. The chair said that the committee wanted the heath to be used but would like to know when so members could be advised.

The parks and open spaces manager said that the events team held the skills regarding risk assessments and health and safety for events. He said he would discuss with them what the parameters were for normal use of the heath and notifications would be given for these events and for any events outside these parameters permission would be sought.

It was agreed that the chair and the parks and open spaces manager would speak with the events team regarding advising committee members of events taking place.

**RESOLVED** to:

- 1) note the Mousehold Heath 2018-2028 management plan review progress to date.
- 2) review the management prescriptions and projects contributing to the delivery of them for the first four objectives of part 2 of the plan.
- 3) provide any amendments to the parks and open spaces manager by 26 January for the draft to be amended; and
- 4) to ask the chair and the parks and open spaces manager to speak to events regarding advising members of the committee on events which are taking place, whose is running the event and the number of people it is thought will attend.

**7. Mousehold Heath quarterly management update**

The parks and open spaces manager presented the report.

He provided an update following the recent heavy winds on damage to the heath. Seven or eight trees had been damaged but none presented an imminent danger and wardens would be tackling this work with assistance from volunteers and specialist services if required.

He highlighted the number of volunteer hours donated to works on the heath including path maintenance.

There had been an increase in camping on the heath and a number of sites had been cleared. Wardens had signposted those who identified themselves as homeless to support services.

He noted the large number of events that had taken place on the heath within the last quarter. A member asked that for each event could information provided in relation to who organised it, who led it and how many people attended.

Members discussed requests received for memorial benches on the heath. The parks and open spaces said that as part of the management plan a protocol would be introduced for the placing of seats and the process for locating and maintenance.

**RESOLVED** to note the Mousehold Heath quarterly management update.

CHAIR