

## **DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GROUNDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**

#### **HELD AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, GROVE HOUSE, HIGH STREET NORTH, DUNSTABLE**

**ON MONDAY 9 MARCH 2020**

- Present: Councillors Sid Abbott (Town Mayor), Liz Jones (Deputy Town Mayor & Chairman), Lisa Bird (Vice-Chairman), Mark Cant, Philip Crawley, Greg George, Kenson Gurney and Johnson Tamara
- Apologies: Councillors Pamela Ghent and Gladys Sanders.
- In Attendance: Councillors Peter Hollick and Gloria Martin, David Ashlee (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), John Crawley (Head of Grounds and Environmental Services), Mary Dobbs (Cemetery Manager), Sharon Long (Democratic Services Manager) and Ian Swinnerton (Grounds Operations Manager).
- Public: None

#### **48 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of Grounds and Environmental Services Committee held on 13 January 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### **49 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no specific declarations of interest.

#### **50 PLANS-SUB COMMITTEE**

**RESOLVED:** that the Minutes of the meetings of Plans Sub-Committee held on 7 January, 28 January and 18 February 2020 be received.

#### **51 PRESENTATION TO COMMITTEE ON PHASE 2 HIGH STREET IMPROVEMENTS – AZIZA JEPPE OF CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL**

Ms Jeppe explained that the presentation covered Phase 2 of the proposed High Street improvement works but there were likely to be further phases depending on the availability of funding from external sources.

Draft plans for phase 2 were provided to Members for comment with a view to making modifications if appropriate. It was intended to finalise design by the end of March and go out to procurement from May to August, with implementation starting in August or September. The design had not been the subject of consultation at this stage and covered the area around the clocktower. The funding for the proposed works was in place; First Anglian Water had been required to provide funding to design the bus stand area and it needed to be spent by Spring 2021. Other sources of funding for

these and future works included the Housing Infrastructure Fund and the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership.

Ms Jeppe explained that the works gave Central Bedfordshire Council the opportunity to put in place additional drainage and an attenuation tank for storage of surface water by way of flood alleviation measures. Completion of the works would unlock the condition on the funding secured for the works at Priory House.

The following questions and issues from Members were raised:

- Would the work undertaken in phase 1 be affected by the planned works in phase 2? Ms Jeppe confirmed that the phase 1 works would not be affected;
- Where was the proposed parking? Ms Jeppe explained this would follow at the end of phase 2;
- Would there be planting on the attenuation tank? Ms Jeppe confirmed it would be similar to that on the West Street attenuation tank, and there would be full consultation with the Town Council and previous issues around the time of planting would be addressed;
- Would there be an opportunity for more trees to be planted into the ground? This would be considered but was unlikely in this location due largely to services;
- A query about the proposed crossing was raised by the Mayor. Ms Jeppe confirmed the crossing by Priory House would be a Zebra crossing with flashing Belisha beacons at either side to warn road users and tactile paving for blind and partially sighted people;
- Would there be a greater emphasis on enforcement to stop people parking on the kerbs and pavements in the area? Ms Jeppe explained Central Bedfordshire Council were looking at the issues around parking in Dunstable and how best to address them. Councillor Jones indicated that Councillor Young was working on the issue and looking at imposing further restrictions and increased enforcement. Problems particularly arose around Gents Barbering and the Vantage restaurant; and
- How would the works and disruption the works would cause be communicated to residents and the business community? Ms Jeppe confirmed a Communications team would be tasked with this and a Comms Plan developed. This was a lesson learnt from the phase 1 works, that there had been insufficient communication before and during the works to residents and businesses, including a failure to update.

Ms Jeppe then went on to explain about the further proposed works around Queensway (phase 2B) and the physical constraints to these because of the amount of underground services that are accommodated in the area. The proposed design would include additional flood alleviation measures including an attenuation tank and use of pipes to store surface water runoff. There would be further opportunities to introduce planters to give the area more of a boulevard feel. It had not been possible for a dedicated cycle lane to be provided but the pedestrian crossings would be relocated closer to the junction and in time a 20mph speed limit would be introduced. HGVs would also be diverted away from the road following its de-trunking.

The works were expected to start in late summer with completion in September 2021.

The following questions from Members were posed/ issues raised:

- Issues with parking on the pavement by Argos;
- The hatchbox does not extend to the curb;
- How would the works be carried out? Ms Jeppe explained that for cost reasons, it was likely that the road would be shut in its entirety to enable the works to be completed as quickly as possible and traffic temporarily diverted elsewhere;
- The impact on local businesses and residents for the duration of the works, including their timing with other proposed major developments; the Communications team need to ensure residents and business operators are fully aware of the timeframe and extent of the works involved;
- Following the recent de-trunking of the A5 there should be no HGVs in the area but it remains a problem. These works should include more signage stating no HGVs and for the junction to be designed so HGVs can't negotiate the turn.

The Phase 3 works are subject to funding from Highways England and include further landscaping throughout. The outcome of the funding application should be known by the end of the month.

The Chairman thanked Ms Jeppe for attending and indicated the Town Clerk and Chief Executive had asked Central Bedfordshire Council for more updates on how proposed works to be undertaken by them affected the town.

## **52 CREASEY PARK COMMUNITY FOOTBALL CENTRE AND SPLASH PARK UPDATE**

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive presented a detailed progress report on recent operations at the Centre, including pitch and function hire and marketing and trading account figures.

He drew Members attention to the fact the proposed Valentine's Disco had had to be cancelled due to lack of interest, but function bookings are looking healthy and the trial of the Swirl Nightclub went well with bookings now in place for the next three months.

The provision of the additional ATP should be completed in 2020; planning and construction is anticipated to be straight forward.

Councillor Cant would forward to the Head of Community Services details of a local company that supplied recyclable food packaging.

Councillor Abbott raised, and the Town Clerk and Chief Executive clarified, that the new pitch surface for the ATP would be more environmentally friendly as it had a thinner layer of rubber crumb.

## **53 CEMETERY, ALLOTMENTS, RECREATION GROUNDS, TOWN CENTRE GARDENS AND RANGER SERVICE INFORMATION AND UPDATE REPORT**

The Cemetery Manager and the Grounds Operations Manager presented a detailed information report covering all areas of the Council's grounds maintenance responsibilities.

**a) Dunstable Cemetery**

Members received the burial figures for January and February 2020 along with the profiled income and expenditure figures as at the end of January 2020. These indicated a positive variance. The Cemetery Manager indicated that February burials were expected to deliver over £15,000 of income.

**b) Allotments**

Members received the detail of the waiting list in the new and improved format.

**c) Recreation Grounds**

The Grounds Operations Manager indicated the new wooden climbing tower, to replace the fire damaged Geo Boulder at Bennett's Adventure Play, was now in situ. The Grounds Assistant (Play and Outdoor Equipment) was also making good progress.

The Grounds Team were working hard to keep the football pitches playable for the remainder of the season including forthcoming cup finals. The tree contractors were making good progress with the programme of tree works they were tasked to undertake to keep the Council's tree stock in a healthy and safe condition.

**d) Dunstable in Bloom**

In response to a question from the Mayor, the Head of Grounds and Environmental Services indicated that he was not overly concerned if the proposed phase 2 High Street improvement works were ongoing during the Britain in Bloom judging; Dunstable in Bloom and the grounds team were ready to work around this issue and explain to the judges that the improvements would result in an improved landscape in the future. The floral displays were ordered and could be diverted to other locations if that proved necessary.

Councillor Corkhill undertook to approach the landlord of Kensworth Gardens to seek to introduce the Head of Grounds and Environmental Services to provide advice on planting that they could undertake that was in keeping with the In Bloom campaign.

The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services also indicated that he was investigating options to replace the pergola in Priory Gardens after it was damaged in the recent stormy weather.

**54 REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

**CBC Development Management Committee:**

Members had no updates to give.