

Subject: Stanmer Park Restoration - procurement of HLF project works and relocation of CityParks depot - Extract from the proceedings of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee meeting held on the 23 January 2018

Date of Meeting: 25 January 2018

Report of: Executive Lead for Strategy, Governance & Law

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Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

Action Required of the Policy, Resources & Growth Committee:
To receive the item referred from the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee for information:

Recommendation:

That the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee:

- 2.1 Notes the progress made on the Stanmer Park HLF Restoration Project as outlined in this report.
- 2.2 Recommends the report to Policy, Resources & Growth Committee as set out in paragraphs 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5 below.

That the Policy, Resources & Growth Committee:

- 2.3 Approves the relocation of the CityParks depot to Hangleton Bottom.
- 2.4 Recommends to February Budget Council the allocation of up to £400,000 capital resources to address the shortfall of funding identified in relocating the CityParks depot, subject to confirmation of costings as outlined in Table 2.
- 2.5 Grants delegated authority to the Executive Director for Economy, Environment & Culture to:
 - (i) Procure and award a contract for the Stanmer Park HLF Restoration Project, to undertake the works listed in paragraph 3.6 below.
 - (ii) Apply for planning consent for the building of new depot facilities at Hangleton Bottom.
 - (iii) Procure and award a contract(s) for the building of new depot facilities at Hangleton Bottom.

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT & SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

4.00pm 23 JANUARY 2018

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Mitchell (Chair) Horan (Deputy Chair), Wares (Opposition Spokesperson), Littman (Group Spokesperson), Atkinson, Brown, Nemeth, Peltzer Dunn, Robins and West

PART ONE**53 STANMER PARK RESTORATION - PROCUREMENT OF HLF PROJECT WORKS AND RELOCATION OF CITYPARKS DEPOT**

- 53.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Economy, Environment & Culture that summarised the progress made to date on the Stanmer Park restoration project and sought agreement to recommend to Policy, Resources & Growth Committee (PR&G) to proceed with tendering and appointment of the main contractor for the HLF project. Furthermore, the report sought approval to recommend to PR&G Committee permission to progress the relocation of the CityParks depot to Hangleton Bottom with the necessary competitive tendering and appointment of contractors.
- 53.2 Councillor West explained that whilst he fully supported the Stanmer Park project, he had a number of misgivings about logistical management that was the subject of this report. Councillor West stated that he could not understand why planning permission had not been sought to re-site the depot in Hangleton Bottom, particularly as the issue had been the subject of discussion for a long time. Councillor West expressed his disappointment that Members had only recently been provided with site maps. In relation to the plans, Councillor West stated that the depot would take up a significant space in the Hangleton Bottom area with the only level access via the link road. Councillor West stated that this would cause complications in the future if the site was deployed as a waste site in line with its current designation. Councillor West observed that such questions would be asked at the planning stage by the council's strategic partners and the council may be asked to choose an alternative location as a designated waste site. Councillor West noted that the site itself was not ideal as a waste site and had indeed been rejected as a site by Brighton & Hove Energy Service co-operative for a food waste composting facility due to the topography, size and access issues associated. Councillor West stated that Policy & Resources Committee had agreed to the move in principle two years before and he was very dissatisfied that the CityParks depot would have to temporarily move for nine months awaiting the development of Hangleton Bottom at a cost of £100,000 that could have been avoided if the project had moved forward more quickly. In addition to that, there was an additional £300,000 shortfall in the expected capital receipts from property sales meaning a request would

have to be made of Budget Council to make up the shortfall. Councillor West highlighted that such uncertainty potentially jeopardised the Stanmer Park project moving forward and he was very concerned about its future.

- 53.3 The Chair stated that she refuted Councillor West's claims adding that the current administration did not rush into decisions as the previous administration had done and instead took a careful and considered approach. The Chair stated that it would be unwise to submit a planning application without both this committee and PR&G having first considered and approved the project works and relocation.
- 53.4 The Executive Director, Economy, Environment & Culture stated that it was necessary to obtain landlord permission to use sites and PR&G Committee would be requested for that at its meeting on 25 January. The established process was for the permission to be obtained before submitting a planning application. Whilst planning permission had been sought ahead of a committee decision being approved on occasions in the past, this had sometimes led to criticisms of officers for pre-empting a committee decision. The Executive Director, Economy, Environment & Culture explained that the project had slowed since July 2017 due to a commitment of significant funding by Plumpton College. In order to accommodate the additional funding the council were able to attract, changes were made to the Stanmer Park walled garden that meant a slight delay to the project. The Executive Director, Economy, Environment & Culture stated that the CityParks depot would occupy a small portion of the Hangelton Bottom site and Planning Committee would consider the application in the context of planning policy. Estimates on capital receipts were always difficult to pre-judge and absolute assurance was needed that there was sufficient funding for the project from the outset.
- 53.5 The Parks & Green Spaces Operation officer clarified that the design of the access way in the yard would allow the rest of the site to be accessed afterwards and would not prohibit future use.
- 53.6 In relation to the points made relating to the advance submission of planning applications, Councillor Wares noted that PR&G Committee would receive a separate report at the same meeting this report would be considered for a proposed Animal Welfare Facility where planning permission had been applied for prior to any agreement by committee. Councillor Wares explained that he fully supported the Stanmer Park project however; he felt the report should have been more candid regarding the £100,000 temporary move costs as he found it unlikely that there would be much commercial opportunity in letting space next to a cemetery. Councillor Wares was of the opinion the relocation costs would be a one-off cost and as such the report should have reflected this. Councillor Wares agreed that it was possible to under-estimate capital receipts in this instance however, the capital receipts were less than half that estimated which was quite catastrophic. Councillor Wares stated that alternatively, the depot would now cost twice as much as forecast two years ago. Councillor Wares believed it erroneous that capital resources were deemed the only option to make up the shortfall in funding and instead, reconsideration should also be given to selling further assets and the capital resource used to spend to save and provide relief to the revenue fund and benefit overall services. In relation to the proposed site, Councillor Wares noted that there would be one building for the depot and one building for animal kennels. Councillor Wares observed that the two buildings were very similar yet the depot had an estimated £750,000 build cost and the kennels an estimated £150,000 build cost. Councillor Wares

asked for clarification on whether one project would be subsidising the other or whether each project could be built on a standalone basis. Councillor Wares acknowledged that whilst that would be a matter for the members of PR&G Committee to decide, the proposals appeared to him to be dysfunctional. Councillor Wares expressed his surprise that the opportunity for a single, dual purpose development had not been considered as that approach could improve economies of scale, remove duplication and achieve better value with taxpayer's money.

- 53.7 The Chair reminded Members that they were considering the report and the recommendations that applied to this committee not separate reports to PR&G Committee. Therefore, this was a standalone project with associated budget.
- 53.8 Councillor Wares agreed with the comments made by the Chair however, this committee were asked to recommend the report to PR&G Committee who would in turn be considering the report alongside a separate report for a development adjacent. Councillor Wares stated that he did not want to object to the report recommendations, nor reject proposals for Stanmer Park however, it was important for PR&G Committee to receive the observations made by this committee on the possibility for economies of scale and joined up thinking.
- 53.9 The Executive Director, Economy, Environment & Culture stated the report before committee detailed a standalone project, specifically the relocation of the CityParks depot that would unlock the Stanmer Park project and that the content outlined estimated costs at this stage. The Executive Director, Economy, Environment & Culture clarified that PR&G Committee could consider a debate for joining up of the two proposals at their meeting.
- 53.10 Councillor Wares asked for confirmation that this was a standalone project and by definition, that the budget for the relocation of the CityParks depot would not support the construction of the kennels.
- 53.11 The Executive Director, Economy, Environment & Culture answered that the Animal Welfare Facility report that would be considered by PR&G Committee was not in his directorate but an update could be provided at the meeting of PR&G Committee on 25 January.
- 53.12 Councillor Peltzer Dunn asked for clarification on the specific cost of the access road.
- 53.13 The Interim Assistant Director - City Environmental Management stated this was not available immediately but could be supplied after the meeting.
- 53.14 Councillor Peltzer Dunn stated that he did not find that satisfactory as the cost of the access road was likely to be a decent proportion of a major project. Councillor Peltzer Dunn requested that this information be provided to PR&G Committee as whilst the issue would be considered by two committees, a final decision would be made as one council.
- 53.15 The Chair stated that the comments made, particularly in relation to joined up thinking had been very well made. The Chair noted that the two proposals discussed covered

different directorates and it had not been possible to provide answers to all the matters raised however, assurance would hopefully be made at PR&G Committee.

- 53.16 Councillor Atkinson stated that it was encouraging to see the restoration project move forward and he keenly anticipated its development into a major attraction in the city. Councillor Atkinson added that as ward councillor for a section of Hangelton Bottom, he would be representing his resident's views through the planning process.
- 53.17 Councillor Littman noted that paragraph 3.15 detailed a nine month delay between the parks operation moving from Stanmer Park to the new depot in Hangleton. Councillor Littman observed that should planning permission not be granted, the council would not be entitled to appeal the decision as landowner and asked if that would add cost and delay. Councillor Littman was of the opinion that an application for planning permission should have been made much earlier.
- 53.18 The Parks & Green Spaces Operation officer answered that in the event of a delay through the planning process; there would be indirect effects upon efficiency but no direct budget impact.
- 53.19 Councillor Wares stated that the project was an extremely positive step for Stanmer Park however; it was important to resolve the issues associated.
- 53.20 Councillor West stated that he was very unhappy to have been forced into a position however; he would be reluctantly supporting the proposals. Councillor West stated that there were significant risks associated with addressing the shortfall in budget and applying for planning permission and the council were in jeopardy of losing the HLF funding. Councillor West added that there had been an unacceptable two year delay and believed the administration should be held to account for that.
- 53.21 The Chair replied that it had been entirely prudent to wait for the outcome of the HLF bid.

53.22 RESOLVED-

That the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee:

- 1) Notes the progress made on the Stanmer Park HLF Restoration Project as outlined in this report.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND-

That the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee:

- 1) Recommends the report to Policy, Resources & Growth Committee as set out in paragraphs 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5 of the report.

