

HEIGHTS FREE SCHOOL SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES - 23 MARCH 2016

Present: Councillor Livingston (Chair); Councillors Hoskin, Stevens, R Williams and Woodward

Apologies: Councillors Ayub and Steele

1. MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES

The Minutes of the meetings of the Mapledurham Playing Fields Management Committee of 25 June 2015 and 15 September 2015 were received for information.

2. QUESTIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND WARD COUNCILLOR

A question on the following matter was submitted, and answered by the Chair:

Questioner	Subject
Mr M Brommell	Actions by trustees to uphold and enhance the Recreation Ground charity.

(The full text of the question and reply was made available on the Reading Borough Council website).

In response to a supplementary question regarding the name of the Sub-Committee, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised that the Sub-Committee had been established by the Policy Committee. The full function of the Authority as Trustee of the Mapledurham Playing Fields had been delegated to the Sub-Committee. While its current name could not be taken to imply pre-determination, any change of name to clarify the role of the Sub-Committee would be a matter for the Policy Committee.

At the invitation of the Chair, Councillor Ballsdon, Ward Councillor for Mapledurham, addressed the Sub-Committee. She explained the range of views and representations expressed to her by her constituents with regard to the condition and operation of the Pavilion and the siting of the Heights Free School.

The Chair had accepted a request from Elisa Miles, a local resident, to address the Sub-Committee. Elisa Miles described the anger and frustration of the large number of volunteers and clubs involved with the Playing Fields and Pavilion regarding the closure of the facility due to its dilapidated state. Members of the local community had raised £100,000 towards the cost of refurbishment and there was concern that the facilities and activities provided at the Pavilion were at risk from the potential siting of the free school on the site.

3. MAPLEDURHAM PAVILION - BACKGROUND

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report detailing the recent history of Mapledurham Pavilion and Playing Fields.

The report and appendices explained that the Borough Council had been the trustee of the Recreation Ground Charity since 1985, with the object of provision and maintenance of the recreation ground. The report described the history and operation of the Pavilion and the

range of activities available for local residents. It explained that the Education Funding Agency had expressed an interest in the Playing Fields in 2014 as a possible site for the Heights Free School and that since January 2016 the Pavilion had been partially closed following an adverse condition survey.

The Heights Free School Community Newsletter for March 2016 was also attached for information.

Resolved - That the report be noted.

4. MAPLEDURHAM PAVILION REPORT TO POLICY COMMITTEE

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report to bring to the Sub-Committee's attention a report submitted to the Policy Committee regarding the Mapledurham Pavilion. The paper which had been considered by Policy Committee on 14 March 2016 was appended to the report. It included details of the recent structural survey of the Pavilion.

The report explained that the hall was currently closed due to concerns over its stability. While supports had been installed, these prevented the hall being used. Users of the hall had been displaced and were using alternative facilities, although the changing facilities were still in use.

The Sub-Committee was advised that on 14 March 2016 the Policy Committee had agreed to continue to support the Pavilion as per the current arrangement and to monitor until the Education Funding Agency (EFA) had completed and concluded its consultation on a proposed new site for the Heights Free School. The Policy Committee had also asked for the current position to be reported to the Heights Free School Sub-Committee and the trustees' view reported back to a future meeting of the Policy Committee.

Members of the Sub-Committee acknowledged a shared sense of frustration while a formal proposal was awaited from the EFA. They accepted that the decision of the Policy Committee was appropriate in the present circumstances.

Resolved -

- (1) That the report be noted;
- (2) That the views of the Sub-Committee be reported to the Policy Committee via the Minutes of this meeting.

(The meeting started at 6.30 pm and finished at 7.07 pm).