

REGENERATION, CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

12 MARCH 2018

ADDENDUM REPORT FOR CALL-IN AND PETITION REFERRAL: CLOSURE OF DEANGATE RIDGE GOLF COURSE

Report from: Richard Hicks, Director of Regeneration, Culture,
Environment and Transformation and Deputy Chief
Executive

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Summary

This supplementary report provides the following additional information to support the report circulated with the agenda for the meeting of the Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 12 March 2018:

Appendix D - Freedom of Information request and consolidated response

Appendix E - Letter from the lead petitioner confirming their request for the petition to be referred to the meeting of the Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee along with the Director's response.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

1.1 This was set out in the main committee report.

2. Background

2.1 This was set out in the main committee report.

3. Petitions

3.1 In accordance with paragraph 4.5 of the main report the consolidated response to the petitioners request for information under the Freedom of Information Act is attached at Appendix D.

3.2 The petitioners have confirmed in writing that they wish their petition to be referred to this Committee and a copy of this request is attached at Appendix E.

4. Director's response to the petition referral letter

- 4.1 The petitioner's letter dated 2 March 2018 gives reasons for wishing their petition to be referred to Committee, which echo many of the comments made in correspondence dated 4 February and 12 February 2018, sent by the petitioners to Cabinet Members in advance of their meeting on 6 February 2018. I understand that the Cabinet referred to the correspondence in their debate and issues raised. For those reasons I do not propose to address previously raised concerns.
- 4.2 One additional point does appear to be made in the 2 March 2018 letter, which is at the top of page 3 where the question is posed "...Why did the Council not liaise with Sport England and England Golf (as the governing body)...."
- 4.3 The Council did liaise with Sport England and with England Sport.
- 4.4 Sport England co-funded with the Council the Sports Facilities Strategy, which is referred to at paragraphs 2.8 and 2.9 of the Cabinet report.
- 4.5 The Deangate Sports Centre Manager and Development Officer met with Charles Molony, County Development Officer (Kent) from England Golf around April 2016, primarily about the Council's sporting community projects. He spoke about Beckenham & Braeside golf club closing down and becoming a public park. The meeting was more a general conversation about the state of golf rather than a specific business meeting regarding Deangate. Mr Molony did mention the virtual England Golf clubhouse, an online resource primarily for private clubs to assist with back-of-house activities, such as Human Resource advice, Legal advice etc. That was not relevant to the Council, as it has in-house teams who deal with such matters.
- 4.6 One initiative Mr Malloy did suggest was 'night golf' and sent Officers information about it. This was something the Council had tried several times over the years (the last time was March 2015) if the winter was not too wet. "Night golf" events have never proved particularly profitable (if profitable at all), due to the cost of the equipment needed and because of the cold. The event needs to be completed quickly, which means it is only open to around 30 players maximum.
- 4.7 The Council also spoke to Mr Malloy about 'get into golf' which is a group coaching scheme for new or returning golfers, run by the Kent golf partnership. Tom Crozer our head pro at the time had trialled this in 2013/14 and it was unsuccessful. We had no new golfers attend these sessions. In the end we had to ask Kent golf partnership to stretch the criteria for "get into golf" to allow our current members, that had not played for a few weeks, to qualify for this coaching. Thus, in

effect, we were merely giving existing members free coaching sessions.

- 4.8 To the best of Officers recollections there were no other suggestions from England Golf and nothing they put forward, which the Council has not tried.

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Background papers

As set out in the Cabinet report at Appendix A to the main report.

Appendices

Appendix D – Freedom of Information requests and consolidated response

Appendix E – Petitioner’s written request for the petition to be referred to this Committee