



LEAD MEMBER FOR RESOURCES AND CLIMATE CHANGE

DECISIONS to be made by the Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change,
Councillor Nick Bennett

THURSDAY, 28 APRIL 2022 AT 2.00 PM

VIA MS TEAMS

AGENDA

1. Decisions made by the Lead Cabinet Member on 31 March 2022 (*Pages 3 - 4*)
2. Disclosure of Interests
Disclosure by all Members present of personal interests in matters on the agenda, the nature of any interest and whether the Members regard the interest as prejudicial under the terms of the Code of Conduct
3. Urgent items
Notification of any items which the Lead Member considers urgent and proposes to take at the appropriate part of the agenda.
4. Ashdown Forest Parking Charges (*Pages 5 - 6*)
Report by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport
5. Ringmer Pool, Ringmer (*Pages 7 - 8*)
Report by the Chief Operating Officer
6. Any other items previously notified under agenda item 3

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20 April 2022

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NOTE: *As part of the County Council's drive to increase accessibility to its public meetings, this meeting will be broadcast live on its website and the record archived. The live broadcast is accessible at: www.eastsussex.gov.uk/yourcouncil/webcasts/default.htm*

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LEAD MEMBER FOR RESOURCES AND CLIMATE CHANGE

DECISIONS made by the Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change, Councillor Nick Bennett, on 31 March 2022.

++ The Lead Member was not present in person, but took the decisions remotely ++

59. DECISIONS MADE BY THE LEAD CABINET MEMBER ON 20 DECEMBER 2021

59.1 The Lead Member RESOLVED to approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 20 December 2021.

60. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

60.1 There were none.

61. URGENT ITEMS

61.1 There were none.

62. REPORTS

62.1 Reports referred to in the minutes below are contained in the minute book.

63. ANY NON-EXEMPT URGENT ITEMS PREVIOUSLY NOTIFIED UNDER AGENDA ITEM 3

63.1 There were none.

64. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

64.1 It was RESOLVED to exclude the public and press for the remaining agenda items on the grounds that if the public and press were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as specified in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

65. WRITE OFF OF DEBTS 2021/22

65.1 The Lead Member considered a report by the Chief Operating Officer.

DECISIONS

65.2 The Lead Member RESOLVED to:

- (1) Authorise the writing-off of five debts amounting to £90,968.46 in the Council's 2021/2022 accounts;
- (2) Note that provision is made for bad and doubtful debts; and
- (3) Note the positive steps being put in place to make improvements going forward.

REASONS

65.3 There is no prospect of recovering the five outstanding debts.

66. ANY OTHER EXEMPT ITEMS PREVIOUSLY NOTIFIED UNDER AGENDA ITEM 3

66.1 There were none.

Report to: Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change

Date of meeting: 28 April 2022

By: Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Title: Ashdown Forest Parking Charges

Purpose: To consider the parking charges proposed by the Board of Conservators following their decision to introduce parking charges in car parks across the Ashdown Forest

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change is recommended to:

- (1) Grant the approval required by Section 18 of The Ashdown Forest Act 1974 to the parking charges proposed by the Conservators of the Ashdown Forest**
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1 Background

- 1.1 The Conservators of Ashdown Forest are bound to manage the Forest under The Ashdown Forest Act 1974.
- 1.2 The Board of Conservators of the Ashdown Forest have identified significant budget pressures in managing the Forest. Consequently, the Board of Conservators sought alternative means of raising revenue and agreed in July 2021 to explore the potential and feasibility of charging for the use of Forest car parks. The Conservators then undertook a six-week consultation from October to December 2021 to seek views on the proposal to introduce parking charges.
- 1.3 On 31 January 2022, following the conclusion of the consultation, the Board of Conservators voted unanimously to introduce charges for parking in the car parks located on Ashdown Forest and operated by the Conservators.
- 1.4 The power for the Conservators to introduce parking charges is set out in Section 18(1)(e) of the Ashdown Forest Act 1974, which states:

“The Conservators shall have power to make reasonable charges for the parking of vehicles on the forest.”
- 1.5 However, this power is subject to the requirements of Sections 18(2)(a) and 18(2)(b), which provide as follows:

“(a) Before exercising the power conferred by paragraph (e) of subsection (1) of this section the Conservators shall submit details of their proposed charges to the County Council for approval and shall at the same time send a copy of such details to Wealden Council, the Royal Automobile Club and the Automobile Association.”

“(b) Before approving the proposed charges, the County Council shall have regard to any written representations made to the County Council by Wealden District Council, the Royal Automobile Club and the Automobile Association or any of them within one month of the date of the sending to them of details of the proposed charges.”

2 Supporting information

- 2.1 The proposed parking tariffs are yet to be finalised pending a tendering process to procure a parking management contractor. However, the Conservators have indicated that parking charges will be in the following range:
- £1.50 to £2.00 for up to 1 hour;
 - £2.50 for up to 2 hours;
 - £4.00 for up to 4 hours;
 - £5.00 to £6.00 for an all-day pass (16 hours) – no overnight parking;
 - £80 to £100 for an annual parking pass.
- 2.2 East Sussex County Council has no jurisdiction or responsibility for the enforcement of parking related matters across the Ashdown Forest. On-street parking enforcement across Wealden District remains a criminal matter and responsibility of Sussex Police.
- 2.3 No comments have been received from Wealden District Council, the Royal Automobile Club or the Automobile Association.

3 Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

- 3.1 County Council Officers have been supporting the Conservators in drawing up their plans to introduce parking charges across the Forest and made no representation to their consultation in 2021.
- 3.2 The Board of Conservators have undertaken a great deal of work to explore the potential for introducing parking charges and have deemed that these charges are necessary for the long-term preservation, use and enjoyment of the Ashdown Forest as an amenity space for the public. The Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change is therefore recommended to grant the approval of the proposed parking charges, as required under the Ashdown Forest Act 1974.

RUPERT CLUBB

Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

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LOCAL MEMBERS

All members whose electoral Divisions are within areas covered by the Ashdown Forest

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

Agenda Item 5

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| Report to: | Lead Member for Resources & Climate Change |
| Date of meeting: | 28 April 2022 |
| By: | Chief Operating Officer |
| Title: | Ringmer Pool, Ringmer |
| Purpose: | To seek approval to commence a formal consultation in relation to the future use of Ringmer Swimming Pool, Ringmer. |

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change is recommended to:

- 1) Approve the proposal to hold a public consultation regarding the future use of Ringmer Swimming Pool, Ringmer.**
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1 Background

- 1.1 Ringmer Swimming Pool (the Pool) is located on the site of King's Academy, Ringmer. East Sussex County Council (ESCC) has freehold ownership of both the pool and the Academy site. In 2011, the school converted to Academy status, but Ringmer Pool was not part of the conversion.
- 1.2 The Pool was constructed in 1981 and has been in operation since that date. Initially under an original Joint Use Agreement between ESCC, Lewes District Council (LDC), Ringmer Community College (RCC) and the Ringmer Community Swimming Centre Association (RCSCA) with the purpose to provide recreational and sports development activities to pupils and the local community. In 2008, a change was implemented which reduced the number of organisations within the Joint Use Agreement. ESCC and the Community College (now King's Academy, Ringmer) currently operate the Joint Use Management Agreement.
- 1.3 The Pool is one of 14 sites subject to a Joint Use Agreement under which ESCC has a property interest in leisure facilities, typically involving school sites.
- 1.4 The Pool was closed Spring 2020 to September 2020 due to national lockdown in response to the Covid pandemic. Although the pool briefly reopened in September 2020, major failure of significant plant and equipment infrastructure at the property shortly after reopening has required the facility to remain closed since that time.
- 1.5 Historically, the Pool was used by King's Academy, Ringmer and other local primary schools during school term time hours and was open for community use outside of term time and school hours.
- 1.6 Since September 2020, local primary schools that used the facility for school curriculum use have found other local swimming pool facilities. King's Academy, Ringmer and community use of the Pool has not occurred since that date.
- 1.7 This joint use asset has previously been managed under a concession contract to Wave Leisure (WL) Trust. There have been several contract extensions over the last five years, primarily due to lack of interest from other leisure concession operators, as there is low income from community use.
- 1.8 Leisure services are the remit of district and borough councils. ESCC's interest in the Joint Use premises is therefore as property owner and not as a direct leisure commissioner or provider.
- 1.9 ESCC commissioned an independent advisor in Spring 2021 to consider options for the future management of the Pool. The consultant recommended that a market assessment was undertaken and Expressions of Interest (EOI) invited from operators/companies able to deliver financially viable and sustainable proposals.

- 1.10 During 2021 the EOI invitation was extended a number of times to maximise the opportunity for parties to respond. ESCC has engaged with local stakeholders, including Ringmer Parish and Lewes District Councils, throughout the process. Stakeholders were aware of the process and deadlines.
- 1.11 The EOI invitation concluded on 5 November 2021. There was a limited response, with only one EOI containing the required detailed information being received before the deadline. ESCC analysed the proposal, submitted by a commercial operator, and additional financial data was requested by ESCC and assessed. The proposal indicated that ESCC would need to commit to substantially increased ongoing financial support, primarily as a result of significant increases in energy costs (for which no budgetary provision currently exists), and undertake significant capital investment in the Pool, as indicated by specialist building surveys. ESCC would also need to accept additional financial risks, if a new provider were to be granted a medium to long-term lease.
- 1.12 ESCC will continue to engage with stakeholders who may still wish to come forward and provide full business details for consideration.
- 1.13 As ESCC is not a leisure commissioner or provider, it needs to seek views on a way forward via public consultation including residents and all stakeholders. ESCC has a duty to consult in respect of any potential changes to the future operation of this pool.

2 Supporting Information

- 2.1 ESCC wish to invite ideas and suggestions for the financially sustainable future management of Ringmer Pool. Use of the swimming pool could change if there is not a financially sustainable model for ongoing use.
- 2.2 The formal consultation process would be conducted by an online survey via the ESCC consultation webpage and hard copies of the survey would be available at County Hall, Lewes and by post, on request.
- 2.3 A proposed timetable based on a minimum 12-week consultation period is as follows:
- 28 April 2022 - Lead Member Resources and Climate Change decision regarding holding a consultation;
 - 5 May 2022 - Consultation start;
 - 4 August 2022 – Consultation end;
 - 5 August – 9 September 2022 - Analysis of consultation results and preparation of Lead Member paper;
 - Mid October 2022 – Lead Member Resources and Climate Change decision as to the future of the facilities.
- 2.4 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken and it will be updated using analysis of the results of the public consultation.

3 Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

- 3.1 The Lead Member Resources and Climate Change is recommended to approve a public consultation on future use of Ringmer swimming pool as ESCC needs to seek views on a way forward via public consultation including residents and all stakeholders. ESCC has a duty to consult in respect of any potential changes to the future operation of this pool.

Ros Parker
Chief Operating Officer

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Local Members

Councillor Denis - Ringmer and Lewes Bridge