

OFFICER: Rochelle Halliday, Executive Officer
DATE: 20th December 2023
MEETING: Council - 3rd January 2024
SUBJECT: Item 15 - Executive Officer's Report

1. Basingstoke Canal Funding Request (Item 10.)

The Recreation, Amenities and Leisure (RLA) Committee reviewed the proposal from the Blackwater Canal Authority requesting that the Council commits to funding the Basingstoke Canal for a three year period, starting in April 2024.

The Committee raised concerns about the proposed management committee will downgrade the participation and voting rights of funding partners. A further concern regarding the reduction of funding from higher tier Councils on the short term viability of maintaining the canal was also discussed, and Members wishes for some reassurance before considering a longer term financial commitment.

The recommendation to Council from the RLA Committee is that the Council commits to one further year of funding, as budgeted, and seeks further clarification regarding the management arrangements before considering longer term financial support.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- a) To commit to one years' worth of funding for the financial year 2024/25, as budgeted.
- b) To seek further information on the Basingstoke Canal Authority's management arrangements and viability before considering longer term financial support.

2. Communications Strategy 2024 (Item 11.)

The RLA Committee reviewed the draft Communications Strategy for 2024.

There were some positive comments made regarding the Strategy proposed, and some questions around evidencing the impact of improved communications and effectively managing negative social media.

RECOMMENDATION

To approve the Communications Strategy.

3. Greening Campaign (Item 12.)

- a) To appoint a Council Member to support the Climate Impacts on Health pillar

At the RLA Committee meeting, Members were appointed to support four out of the five Greening Campaign pillar themes (please see the draft minutes for details).

A pillar support for the Climate Impacts on Health pillar is requested from the Council.

- b) To confirm that the Greening Campaign launch event will take place on 9th March 2024 at The Views

The RLA Committee agreed that the Greening Campaign launch event will take place on 9th March 2024, at The Views. The Harlington Function Room and Café area has been booked as an alternative venue, in the event of wet weather.

The format of the launch event will styled like a summer fair / mini festival, with various events connected to the pillar themes, information about the campaign and activities to engage the attendees. The launch will coincide with the Greening Campaign Challenge cards being delivered.

Planning for this event will need to start early in the new year.

RECOMMENDATION

- a) To appoint a Council Member to support the Climate Impacts on Health pillar.
- b) To note the date of the Greening Campaign launch meeting.

3. Complaints (Item 14.)

A complaint was received on 20th December 2023 regarding the Council's grounds maintenance contractor blowing debris across ashes plots at Fleet Cemetery.

The matter was reported to the Contract Manager at the grounds maintenance company. The grounds contractor attended the site on 21st December to tidy and wash the whole ashes, to a high standard.

A full apology has been received along with an explanation, and the contractor has offered to apologise to the complainant directly.

The Cemetery Clerk has, also, offered to meet the complainant at the Cemetery.

A discussion will be had with contractor regarding maintaining the area during this time of year, when leaf fall and other debris are abundant.

4. Update on Draft Leases

The Harlington Lease

The Council's comments on the draft lease for The Harlington, as agreed at the last Council meeting, were submitted to Hart District Council on 8th December 2023, along with an invitation to meet with Hart District Council team to finalise the document.

A reply is awaited, most likely delayed due to the Christmas break.

Fleet Town Football Club Lease

The Lease Working Group met on 4th December 2023, to progress matters with the Fleet Town Football Club lease. The Club were invited to attend the first part of the meeting to set out several points, and a useful discussion took place.

The Club has requested that the lease is finalised as soon as possible. A meeting of the Lease Working Group will be convened early January to progress the discussion points prior to a final approval by the Council to in February.

5. HCC Budget Consultation

Following the letter sent to Cllr Humby, Leader of Hampshire County Council, regarding the cut to the Voluntary Services fund, a response was received requesting that a comment is made as part of the Hampshire County Council budget consultation, due to start early in January 2024.

Members will be alerted when the consultation is launched. The process for formally responding will be brought to the next Council meeting for approval, as there may be other matters the Council wishes to comment on.

6. FTC Stall at Fleet Market – Rota and Discussion Points

The table below shows the rota and discussion points for the next two Pop Up Hub sessions at Fleet Market, for the Town Council.

Feedback from the sessions so far is welcome, along with any further engagement ideas.

Date & Time	Council Member	Suggested Focus Topics
13th January 2024		
11.00am – 1.00pm	Cllr Tilley Cllr Woods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision – developing engagement and information sharing. • Vision – supporting young people. • Vision – supporting the vulnerable and elderly. • Greening Campaign activity calendar.
1.00pm – 3.00pm	Cllr Taylor <i>Available (RH to attend)</i>	
10th February 2024		
11.00am – 1.00pm	Cllr Schofield Cllr Tilley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision – promoting a safer environment for residents and businesses. • Vision – community partnerships and contribution to the community. • Open spaces draft projects.
1.00pm – 3.00pm	Cllr Taylor <i>Available (RH to attend)</i>	

7. HDC Community Grant

Members are informed that the submission to the Hart District Council's Community Grant for setting up the Repair café grant was unsuccessful, due to the project not directly impacting biodiversity.

An application will now be made to the HCC Waste Prevention Grant scheme. A meeting has been set up on 2nd January with Hampshire County Council to discuss the requirements. The application deadline is 12th January.

8. Upcoming Council Meeting Dates

- 8th January 2024, 7.00pm – Development Control Committee
- 17th January 2024, 2.00pm – Risk Management Working Group
- 22nd January 2024, 7.00pm – Development Control Committee
- 31st January 2024, 7.00pm – Establishment Committee
- 7th February 2024, 7.00pm – Council