



Sleaford Town Council
Notes and Report of Services Panel Meeting – 16th April 2021
2:00pm to 4:15pm

Panel members present:

Cllr H Lorimer (Panel Lead)
Cllr K Fernandes
Cllr D Darmon
Cllr D Suiter
Cllr J Thomas

Meeting and Panel supported by the Deputy Clerk and Administration Officer (MW)

1. **Panel Lead's Welcome**

The Panel Lead welcomed all to the meeting

2. **Apologies**

No apologies for absence were received.

3. **Notes from the last meeting 17th March 2020**

The Panel Lead introduced the notes and various items and actions from these were discussed, as follows:-

- Item 2 – Actions regarding storage containers. Councillor K Fernandes to finalise his written report and submit to the next Services Panel Meeting.
- Item 6 – Allotments. The Panel Lead reported it had been 14 months since the members of the panel have carried out site visits.
- Item 7 – Play Areas & Open Spaces & Item 8 - Trim Trail. There was some confusion regarding both these items as “Survey of Play and Exercise Equipment” was an agenda item discussed at Full Council on 24th March 2021. NOTE: Please see below the discussion and the recommendation from Full Council – see Appendix 1.

There were further discussions and questions raised as to the possibility of play/exercise equipment being consulted through the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Panel Lead felt that a separate consultation questionnaire was still needed and should be distributed to the Kiosk, Park Run, cafes and Scouts etc.

4. **Services Panel Terms of Reference**

The Terms of Reference were noted after members were refreshed of the remit of this panel.

5. **Services Panel Work Plan**

- a) The scheduled Work Plan was noted.
- b) Members discussed the Council's services and the areas of work that the panel wishes to focus on. These included:-

- Visit both allotment sites
- Maintenance of fencing
- Painting and preserving existing play equipment (maintenance that is not covered by the annual inspections)
- Maintenance to Service vehicles and equipment
- Car Parking provisions – electric charging points
- Open Spaces

6. **Trim Trail**

There was a brief discussion regarding the two quotes received in back in January 2020, being out of date.

Action: Office to seek a third quote and contact the two companies who have already quoted to see if the quotes are still valid.

7. **Consider options for grass cutting machinery**

The Deputy Clerk gave a verbal update on the current position regarding the grass cutting equipment, making the following points:

- The current grass cutting machinery has proved costly to repair and maintain; the two sit-on mowers (Stigas) are domestic machines which, whilst being manoeuvrable around the memorials and headstones, are perhaps not sufficiently powerful and robust to withstand the number of hours they are in use at the cemetery.
- Currently, one of the Stiga machines is out of service, awaiting a price for a repair.
- The Services Team Leader had advised that a replacement domestic-type mower from Husqvana would cost around £3k.
- The Deputy Clerk had done some initial research into other councils' grass cutting regimes and machinery. These varied and it was difficult to compare like with like, however, one option might be to consider leasing machinery.
- It had not been possible to get machines on trial due to the covid pandemic.
- Staff need to be properly trained in the use and maintenance of the machinery.

The Panel discussed the options of either purchasing or leasing machinery. One suggestion was to lease different models for the Service Team to try and then for them to give feedback.

Due to the time of the year and the start of the grass cutting season the panel put forward the following

Recommendation: that the options for grass cutting machinery for this season only be deferred to Full Council for a decision. The Deputy Clerk to write a report for Full Council.

8. **Eastgate Green Maintenance – trees, riverside etc**

Councillor K Fernandes introduced this item which was also an agenda item on 6th February 2020. The concern was around the erosion of the riverbank due to high water levels in the river Sleas channel. Photographs of the area in question were shared with the Panel. Wooden ‘pegs’ had been placed in the river channel to show the limit of the Town Council’s land boundary.

The panel recognised that any maintenance in this area would be a sizable project which would include:-

- Health & Safety
- Planning Permission
- Quotes for works to be carried out
- Consultation with the Environment Agency, Anglian Water, Sleas Navigation Trust, NKDC and any other agencies that would need to be involved.

The Clerk had recently contacted the engineer from the Sleasford Navigation Trust enquiring about adding coir rolls to the riverbank to prevent erosion of the green in Sleasford. No reply had been received.

Recommendation: To seek if Full Council would be willing to put the maintenance of Eastgate Green, trees, riverside as a project?

Action: Full Council to give permission for the Deputy Clerk to set up a dialogue with the Environment Agency, Anglian Water and any other agencies that would need to be involved.

9. **Agenda Items for the next meeting**

- Containers – Location, type and cost, need for - report from Councillor K Fernandes
- Trees & Nature – request from Councillor D Suiter
- Wildflower Meadow at George Street – Councillor H Lorimer. NB: notes of the Services Panel Meeting held on 17th March 2020 reported “*Scheduled work to commence 23rd March 2020. However, the Acting Town Clerk explained that with the current situation (Coronavirus) other this may override this.*” The Wildflower Meadow at George Street did not progress.
- Cycle Lockers – Councillor H Lorimer

10. **Date of next meeting(s)**

Tuesday 8th June 2021, at 10.00 am

APPENDIX 1

Survey of Play and Exercise Equipment - agenda item discussed at Full Council on 24th March 2021.

“To instruct the Clerk to supply Council with a survey of play and exercise equipment owned by the Town Council, and its respective condition, in order for Council to deliver a coherent 3-year plan of how to develop the recreational areas for the benefit of the children and adults within Sleaford.

Proposed by Councillor Oates and seconded by Councillor Brand.

Councillor Oates spoke about the motion. The purpose was to instruct the Clerk to prepare a report detailing the Council’s items of equipment on its recreation grounds, their maintenance needs over three years and total costs for existing items of equipment. This would support the Risk Register action on playground equipment.

There were views that the Services Panel would be best placed to carry out this work since they had carried out reviews in the past.

The Clerk confirmed that the motion was about a strategic approach; Council had annual inspection reports and these could help formulate a coherent strategic plan which would support the work of the Services Panel.

*It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** to approve the motion. Vote: for 9 – against 3 – abstained 4. The Resolution was carried.*