



Operations & Amenities Committee

Present: Cllrs Bolanz, Cooper-Marsh, Dunford, Hitchin, Goodman, and Johnson

In attendance: Town Clerk, Operations Manager, Project Deliver Manager

Absent: Cllrs Chapman, Collins, Maslen

Minutes of the meeting of the **Operations & Amenities committee** held on **Tuesday 21st January 2025** at **7.15pm** in the Eaton's Centre, The Maltings, St Neots, PE19 8ES.

Public Participation

There were no members of the public present.

ACTIONS

089 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were noted from Cllrs Collins, Chapman and Maslen.

Admin

090 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

091 Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting of the Operations and Amenities Committee held on 3rd December 2024 as a true and accurate record.

092 Action list

Members received and noted the committee action list.

The Clerk advised Members that Jubilee tree planting had been completed, but that the HDC officer who led on the planting was in discussion with a resident about two trees planted close to a boundary which may grow to a substantial size and whether these can be relocated.

A Member reported on a meeting with the St Neots Inclusive Play Charity where it was suggested that there may be an option for the Charity to donate money to the Council for inclusive play equipment as part of any new play provision that the Council may provide.

093 Local Highways Improvement Bids (LHI)

- i) Members received and considered an update on the status the Luke Street and surrounding streets Local Highways Improvement bid following feedback from County Council Highways Officers and a site meeting held on 9th January 2025.

Members were advised that Cambridgeshire County Council will re-consult with residents due to the low response to a previous consultation. To ensure that all residents received a copy of the consultation letter the Town Council



will print off the letters and Members have volunteered to deliver them to ensure they reach all households in the impacted streets. The consultation will focus on two options and provide maps to make it easier to understand what is being proposed.

Officers were asked to look at ways to highlight the importance of the letter, either through a sticker or title on the letterhead.

- ii) Members received and noted information on a proposed Road Closure of Crosshall Road to install speed cushions agreed as part of the Crosshall Road 2023 Local Highway Improvement bid.

094 Eatons Centre Heating System

Members received and considered a recommendation from the Environment and Emergency Committee on investing in an alternative heating solution for the Eatons Community Centre to the current faulty bio-mass boiler. Members were advised that the energy audit for the Eatons Community Centre had recommended replacing the bio-mass boiler with an air source heat pump. As well as helping to improve the carbon footprint of the building, the bio-mass boiler is expensive to operate and has failed on several occasions, creating building management issues for the General Manager.

Members noted that a detailed report comparing options, costs and payback will be brought forward if the Operations and Amenities Committee recommend that the Council prioritise the replacement of the bio-mass boiler.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the Council prioritise replacing the bio-mass boiler at the Eatons Community Centre with an air source heat pump or alternative cleaner heating system and that costs and quotes are brought to the Finance and Governance Committee for consideration and recommendation to Council.

095 Operations Vehicle Fleet

Members received and considered a recommendation from the Environment and Emergency Committee and an accompanying report on the proposed approach to transitioning Council's diesel vehicles to plug-in hybrid and electric. The Town Clerk reminded Members that the Committee needed to consider the recommendation in terms of its remit around the delivery of operations and services, ensuring that the recommendations are appropriate for the operations team and the work it does.

The Project Delivery Manager outlined the proposals. It was highlighted that the Council's ride-on lawnmowers used far more diesel than the vehicles, which were used for minimal miles around the town to get team members to sites with equipment and resources. As such plug-in hybrid vehicles would allow the Council to reduce fuel usage of vehicles by running on electric for the majority of the low mileage they do. Transition to electric lawnmowers will have a bigger impact on reducing diesel usage. Trialling one electric mower will be a good approach to



measuring impact. It was noted that there were minimal suitable electric vehicles on the market which matched the Council's needs.

The Operations Manager supported the recommendations and spoke in favour of a larger lawnmower, which while more costly would allow the team to cut more grass within the battery life, which was important given the amount of grass cut and the number of large open areas.

It was noted that the life of the lawn mower was 8-hours in the right conditions. Use of the lawnmowers includes getting them to site, clearing and leaf blowing so they are not constantly used for 8-hours.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to the Finance and Governance Committee that;

- That the Council replaces the 2010 Ford Ranger with a plug-in hybrid box-van style alternative (second-hand) which meets the requirements of the Operations team in terms of size, capacity, security, and towing functionality.
- That the Council replaces the 2013 Nissan Navara with a plug-in hybrid box-van style alternative (second-hand) which meets the requirements of the Operations team in terms of size, capacity, security, and towing functionality.
- That the Council replaces one ride-on diesel lawn mower with a new electric ride-on lawnmower (96" deck).
- That the Council approve up to £115,000.00 in funding from the current year's budget (£30,000.00), EMR for vehicles and mowers (£34,567.00) and from the General Reserve (the remaining).
- That two charges for vehicles (EVs and Plug-ins, 7.2kW) are purchased.
- That a special charger for lawn mower batteries is purchased.

That the Operations Manager investigate options around trailers to transport the electric lawn mower and brings costs back to the Committee.

096 Council Building Energy Audits

Members received and considered a recommendation from the Environment and Emergency Committee on progressing recommendations arising from building audits as part of transitioning the Council's estate towards carbon net-zero. It was noted that the recommendations were all classified as 'quick wins' which would help work towards the Council's Carbon Neutral ambitions, while being low cost and quick actions. A number of the recommendations would have payback periods of one year or less making them cost neutral.



RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to the Finance and Governance Committee that the Council progresses with the recommended carbon net-zero improvements for Council buildings identified as ‘quick wins’ as set out in section 4.1 (attached to minutes) of the report. That funding for implementing the recommendations be considered for allocation from the Council’s earmarked reserve for Community Buildings.

097 Streetlight Ackerman Street

Members received and considered a report on the repair or removal of streetlights located on privately owned buildings. The Clerk informed Members that two lights had failed and that the owner of one of the properties on which a light is located has advised they would be willing to discuss repairing the light on the condition that the Council enter an agreement for its placement and pay backdated compensation for its location on the building. Members noted that the Council did not have any other agreements or cases where it paid a resident for the placement of a streetlight. The light, which is old may have been inherited or adopted by the Council at some point but had not been installed recently and would have been in place when the current owner bought the building.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk advise the resident that the Council will not pay for the placement of a streetlight located on a residential property in Ackerman Street and that the light is disconnected and removed subject to the owner’s permission for the removal work. That alternative locations for a streetlight are considered.

098 Town Council Play Provision

Members received a report from the Project Delivery Manager on addressing lack of play provision in Eaton Ford. The Town Clerk outlined the background to the recommendation, reminding Members that a previous play provision review had identified a lack of play provision in Eaton Ford.

The Project Delivery Manager outlined the recommendations in the report, explaining that the location of existing play provision had been mapped out across Eaton Ford/Eaton Socon and gaps in the provision identified. There are two large parks that with a 500m walking radius overlap each other and cover the east area of Eaton Ford, including overlapping Arnhem Close which is land in St Neots Town Council’s ownership and that was identified as a site for possible play provision. There is currently more than 1000m walking distance between current play parks for residential areas to the north and west. Creating a number of smaller parks, similar to Nelson Road, rather than one larger park would help address the lack of provision by putting parks designed for young children withing safe walking distance from more residences.

Work will need to be done to further look at feasibility and suitability of locations, demand and need for play and equipment and public engagement. Areas of land for potential play provision are in the ownership of Huntingdon District Council, which



has in the past agreed to peppercorn leases with the Town Council to install play equipment (Nelson Road). If the Committee agrees to focus on the approach recommended officers will develop more detailed plans, potential costs and feasibility.

RESOLVED that the Committee focuses on recommending delivery of the 3 (three) smaller play parks instead 1 (one) large in Eaton Ford in order to cover/serve the wider area, minimise overlapping with existing play parks, and to provide best possible solution regarding the time to travel to the playgrounds and safety of the travel.

RESOLVED that the Committee approves in principle proposed locations for potential new play parks in Eaton Ford and delegates the officers explore the suitability of these locations and negotiate the terms of potential use of land with the landlords Huntingdon District Council.

RESOLVED that the Committee delegates the officers to prepare detailed proposals, costs and project plan to deliver three new play parks as proposed in accordance and based on the outcomes of the negotiations with the landlord and report the proposals back to the Committee for consideration and recommendation to Council.

099 CCTV Reports

Members received and noted November & December 2024 CCTV incident report as provided by Huntingdonshire District Council.

100 Council Equipment Hire Policy

Members received and considered an amended Town Council equipment hire policy for external organisations.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to the Finance and Governance Committee that the Council adopt the draft Council Equipment Hire Policy.

101 Date of Next Meeting

Members noted that the date of the next Operations and Amenities Committee would be on 11th February 2025 at 7.15pm.

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON