

Subject:	Hollingbury Park and Waterhall Golf Courses Extract from the proceedings of the Tourism, Equalities, Community and Culture held on the 16 January 2020		
Date of Meeting:	23 January 2020		
Report of:	Executive Director, Economy, Environment & Culture		
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Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

TOURISM, EQUALITIES, COMMUNITIES & CULTURE COMMITTEE

4.00pm 16 JANUARY 2020

HOVE TOWN HALL - COUNCIL CHAMBER

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Robins (Chair) Grimshaw (Deputy Chair), Rainey (Opposition Spokesperson), Nemeth (Group Spokesperson), Childs, Ebel, Mears, Powell, Simson and O'Quinn

Other Invitees: Anusree Biswas Sasidharan, Joanna Martindale, Lola Banjoko and Nick May.

PART ONE

37 HOLLINGBURY PARK AND WATERHALL GOLF COURSES

- 37.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director, Economy, Environment & Culture regarding Hollingbury Park and Waterhall Golf Courses. The report was introduced by the Assistant Director Culture, Tourism & Sport.
- 37.2 The Assistant Director Culture, Tourism & Sport gave a brief overview of the report which sought to make recommendations to lease the Waterhall Course to a Community

Interest Company for re-wilding and to authorise officers to clarify the bids of Hollingbury Golf Course with a view to make recommendations to Policy & Resources Committee.

- 37.3 On behalf of the Conservative Party, Councillor Nemeth moved a motion to amend recommendations 2.2 and 2.4 as shown in strikethrough and bold italics below:
- 2.1 Notes the current management contract with Mytime Active to operate the council's golf courses at Hollingbury Park and Waterhall expires on 31st March 2020.
 - 2.2 Recommends to Policy & Resources Committee that it agrees to lease Waterhall Golf Course to the Community Interest Company (CIC) described in the bid appended to the Part 2 report for a period of 25 years ***with the caveat that having considered the legal, financial and practical implications it should ensure golf continues at one of the two courses.***
 - 2.3 Recommends to Policy & Resources that it delegates authority to the Executive Director, Economy, Environment & Culture to conclude the lease arrangements for Waterhall Golf Course as per 2.2.
 - 2.4 Authorises officers to continue to interrogate and clarify the bids received in relation to Hollingbury Park Golf Course and ***instructs notes that officers hope*** to make a recommendation to Policy & Resources Committee on 23 January as to the future of the site ***following consultation with the lead members of three political groups on the committee.***
- 37.4 Introducing the amendment, Councillor Nemeth stated that membership had been already affected as a result of neglect and that a negative impact on mental health as well as a dissolution of community bonds and local programs needed to be considered.
- 37.5 Councillor Mears formally seconded the amendment. Concern was raised regarding the possibility of a golf course being sold redevelopment and that the report did not reference this issue.
- 37.6 On behalf of the Green Group, Councillor Ebel moved a motion to add recommendations 2.4, 2.5 and 2.7 and to re-number the original recommendation 2.4 to 2.6. as shown in bold italics below:
- 2.1 Notes the current management contract with Mytime Active to operate the council's golf courses at Hollingbury Park and Waterhall expires on 31st March 2020.
 - 2.2 Recommends to Policy & Resources Committee that it agrees to lease Waterhall Golf Course to the Community Interest Company (CIC) described in the bid appended to the Part 2 report for a period of 25 years.
 - 2.3 Recommends to Policy & Resources that it delegates authority to the Executive Director, Economy, Environment & Culture to conclude the lease arrangements for Waterhall Golf Course as per 2.2.

- 2.4 Requests a report on the progress of the rewilding and the use of the educational centre is brought to the Tourism, Equalities, Communities & Culture Committee once a year, and asks that officers engage with the tenant to request detail on the following:**
- **use of pesticides and herbicides;**
 - **public access plans - any increase in diverse habitats and species;**
 - **engagement with local communities**
 - **any environmental audit or similar**
- 2.5 Recommends to the tenant that they use sustainable materials for the renovation of the events venue and implement environmentally friendly solutions such as solar panels, air-to-air heating, rain water harvesting and grey water recycling.**
- 2.6 ~~2.4~~ Authorises officers to continue to interrogate and clarify the bids received in relation to Hollingbury Park Golf Course and notes that officers hope to make a recommendation to Policy & Resources Committee on 23 January as to the future of the site.
- 2.7 That if no clearly beneficial bid is identified for Hollingbury Park Golf Course, TECC recommends to Policy & Resources Committee that it orders a review 7 which considers whether to carry out a new bidding process which encourages proposals for rewilding or a mixed golf/rewilding use and that Policy & Resources considers extending the Mytime Active contract whilst the review and bidding process is undertaken.**
- 37.7 Introducing the motion, Councillor Ebel expressed concern regarding the tendering process and noted that golfers wanted better consultation. It was stated that BHCC had to consider access to the Waterhall site.
- 37.8 Councillor Rainey formally seconded the amendments.
- 37.9 Councillor Simson echoed concerns regarding the short period assigned to the tendering process. Further concern was expressed regarding the management of the site and that the duration of lease was too long.
- 37.10 Councillor Mears noted that both golf courses had already attained a certain level of rewilding. It was stated that the Asset Management Board was working with the South Down National Trust to consider this.
- 37.11 Councillor O'Quinn noted that Hollingbury ought to remain as a Golf Course and that Waterhall housed an abundance of wildlife.
- 37.12 Councillor Childs noted that provision of leisure facilities was critical for the City's health and wellbeing. It was noted that Hollingbury Golf Course had a legacy from being in operation for 112 years and that the issue lay with the potential of rejecting a bid as a result of unnecessary regulation. Clarification was sought as to the likely implications of allowing the bidding process to be reopened.

37.13 The Assistant Director, Tourism & Sport stated that following the end of the contract, should no action be taken, the golf course would continue to operate with mothballing costs. It was noted that a new consultation process would further prolong the issue by at least another 6 months.

37.14 Councillor Mears expressed concern in regard to the uncertainty brought about by the lack of clarity on this issue.

37.15 The Executive Director Economy, Environment & Culture referred to 3.21 of the report and stated that officers had actively been seeking this information. It was stated that the intention was to provide a positive recommendation to the upcoming Policy & Resources Committee.

37.16 Councillor Powell enquired as to what level members had been involved in the process.

37.17 The Executive Director Economy, Environment & Culture stated that it was usual for officers to undertake the marketing and tendering exercises of land and that the approach that BHCC had taken was the approach that was agreed as amended at the previous Tourism, Development and Culture Committee in June 2019.

37.18 The Chair put the Conservative amendment to the vote which was lost.

37.19 The Chair then put the Green Group amendment to the vote which was passed.

37.20 The Chair then put the recommendations as amended to the vote which were agreed.

37.21 **RESOLVED** that the committee:

1. Noted the current management contract with Mytime Active to operate the council's golf courses at Hollingbury Park and Waterhall expires on 31st March 2020.
2. Recommended to Policy & Resources Committee that it agrees to lease Waterhall Golf Course to the Community Interest Company (CIC) described in the bid appended to the Part 2 report for a period of 25 years.
3. Recommended to Policy & Resources that it delegates authority to the Executive Director, Economy, Environment & Culture to conclude the lease arrangements for Waterhall Golf Course as per 2.2
4. Requested a report on the progress of the rewilding and the use of the educational centre is brought to the Tourism, Equalities, Communities & Culture Committee once a year, and asks that officers engage with the tenant to request detail on the following: - use of pesticides and herbicides; - public access plans - any increase in diverse habitats and species; - engagement with local communities - any environmental audit or similar
5. Authorised officers to continue to interrogate and clarify the bids received in relation to Hollingbury Park Golf Course and notes that officers hope to make a recommendation to Policy & Resources Committee on 23 January as to the future of the site.

6. That if no clearly beneficial bid is identified for Hollingbury Park Golf Course, TECC recommended to Policy & Resources Committee that it orders a review which considers whether to carry out a new bidding process which encourages proposals for rewilding or a mixed golf/rewilding use and that Policy & Resources considers extending the Mytime Active contract whilst the review and bidding process is undertaken.

