

AT A MEETING of the Universal Services Select Committee of HAMPSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL held at the Castle, Winchester on Monday, 11th March,
2024

Chairman:

* Councillor Rob Mocatta

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| * Councillor Jackie Branson | * Councillor Rupert Kyrle |
| * Councillor Lulu Bowerman | Councillor Sarah Pankhurst |
| * Councillor Rod Cooper | * Councillor Stephen Parker |
| Councillor Debbie Curnow-Ford | Councillor Stephen Reid |
| * Councillor David Drew | * Councillor Kim Taylor |
| * Councillor Barry Dunning | * Councillor Rhydian Vaughan MBE |
| * Councillor Michael Ford | |
| * Councillor Tim Groves | |
| * Councillor Dominic Hiscock | |
| * Councillor Wayne Irish | |

Also present with the agreement of the Chairman: Councillor Nick Adams-King, Executive Lead Member for Universal Services / Councillor Russell Oppenheimer, Executive Member for Countryside and Regulatory Services / Councillor Jonathan Glen as Chairman of the Basingstoke Canal Joint Management Committee (Outside Body)

43. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Debbie Curnow-Ford, Councillor Sarah Pankhurst and Councillor Stephen Reid.

44. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter considered at the meeting they must declare that interest at the time of the relevant debate and, having regard to the circumstances described in Part 3, Paragraph 1.5 of the County Council's Members' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 1.6 of the Code. Furthermore Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Non-Pecuniary interest in a matter being considered at the meeting they considered whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 5 of the Code, considered whether it was appropriate to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with the Code.

45. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting were reviewed and agreed.

46. **DEPUTATIONS**

There were no deputations for the meeting.

47. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no formal announcements.

48. **BASINGSTOKE CANAL**

Councillor Rod Cooper declared an interest as a member of the Basingstoke Canal Society.

The Select Committee pre-scrutinised a report for the Executive Member for Countryside and Regulatory Services (item 6 in the minute book) on Basingstoke Canal.

The Committee received a presentation that summarised the report, highlighting the current operating model and a review that had taken place to look at how it could be best managed going forward in light of partner funding withdrawals and reductions. It was also noted that reference to the Joint Management Committee in the report should be the Board.

The preferred option included the commercial activity associated with Navigation. The requirement to keep the canal navigable was necessary to ensure access for key maintenance, therefore the additional cost to enable [Leisure] Navigation, would primarily reside with the employment of Lock Keepers to ensure safe passage through the canal system. The additional cost would be comfortably offset with the additional commercial income received by Moorings and associated reduced draw on reserves.

During questions of the Committee, the following points were clarified:

- Despite a recent news article, it was confirmed that there were not changes proposed to the services provided along the canal, only the responsibility and governance arrangements.
- There was a good working relationship with Surrey County Council, which would make a decision on the 26 March on the proposals.
- The canal would need careful and efficient management in the medium term and the number of boats traversing the canal that as deemed acceptable to Natural England would continue to be discussed in order to establish a suitable balance of protecting the SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) element as well as enabling the canal to be as commercially sustainable as possible.
- There had been no legal obligations for financial contributions as part of the original governance model and the Basingstoke Canal Authority (BCA) could not own anything or employ anyone itself, only via a landowner as it had no corporate identity.
- The disused Greywell tunnel had more roosting bats than anywhere else in Britain.

- Hampshire County Council self-insured and had insurance reserves without anything specifically budgeted for the Canal. There was a risk register in place.
- Residential and visitor moorings fell within the Surrey section of the canal and any income from those was put towards SCC's contribution costs.

Councillor Jonathan Glen spoke as the Chairman of the Basingstoke Canal Joint Management Committee, thanking the Assistant Director for her work in enabling the canal management to be explored fully. Councillor Glen looked forward to working with the Basingstoke Canal Society going forward in order to help the Basingstoke Canal continue to flourish.

Councillor Russell Oppenheimer, Executive Member for Countryside and Regulatory Services thanked the Committee for the questions and discussion and welcomed the benefits the Canal brought to Hampshire both environmentally and recreationally. Councillor Oppenheimer informed he would discuss writing to Rebecca Pow MP, Minister for Nature with the Executive Member at Surrey Council Council following their decision to enforce the importance of the Canal being managed as part of the wider waterways network to secure its continued support and success.

RESOLVED

The Universal Services Select Committee **supported** the recommendations being proposed to the Executive Lead Member for Universal Services in paragraphs 2. – 5. of the report.

49. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Work Programme (item 7 in the minute book) was approved by Committee and it was confirmed that the 'waste and collaborative working' item did extend to recycling.

RESOLVED

The Universal Services Select Committee discussed and agreed the current items for the work programme, which would be prioritised and allocated by the Chairman of the Universal Services Select Committee in consultation with the Director of Universal Services.

Chairman,