

Shareholders Committee

Tuesday, 27th February,
2024

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Craig Warhurst (Chair), Councillor Emma Marshall (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Imran Altaf, Joe Baker and Sid Khan

Also Present:

B Clawson-Chan (Managing Director, Rubison Leisure Limited)

Officers:

Peter Carpenter and Nicola Cummings

Principal Democratic Services Officer:

Jess Bayley-Hill

14. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

There were no apologies for absence.

15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

16. COUNCIL FUNDING AND SUPPORT UPDATE

The Committee considered a report updating Members on Council funding and support for Rubicon Leisure Limited.

Members discussed the content of the report and in doing so commented that it was important for the Council to support Rubicon Leisure Limited moving forward. It was noted that the quality of the services delivered by Rubicon Leisure Limited had improved over the years and this was welcomed by Members.

Reference was made to the questions that had been raised at the previous meeting of the Committee and the inclusion of information in the report that addressed these points. This included consideration of arrangements for the Company Secretary support for Rubicon Leisure Limited moving forward together with

Chair

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information about the Directors who had been appointed to serve on the Rubicon Board. Members welcomed the updates in respect of these matters.

During consideration of this item, it was noted that Members had been contacted about their availability to meet with members of the Rubicon Board in the first two weeks of March 2024. This suggestion had been made following the previous meeting of the Committee, when the suggestion had been made that representatives of the Board could attend a meeting of the Committee. Officers explained that, on reflection, it had been determined that attendance by representatives of the Board at a meeting of the Shareholders Committee would not be appropriate as this did not align with the reserved matters for the Committee. However, this did not mean that a meeting between Committee and Board members could not take place, so instead a proposal had been made to arrange for a meeting to take place on a separate date. It was likely that this meeting would take place at the Arrow Valley Countryside Centre. Members who had not yet responded regarding their availability were urged to do so as soon as possible.

Members noted that at the previous meeting of the Committee it had been highlighted that Rubicon Leisure Limited was aiming to recruit a new Events and Marketing Manager. An update in respect of the recruitment process for this post was requested. The Committee was informed that interviews for the position had been held that day and it was therefore anticipated that there would be a candidate in post soon. As part of the work of this new member of staff, Members suggested that they should consider liaising with Councillors in terms of the ways that they could help to promote Rubicon events in the local community.

Consideration was given to the funding that had been proposed for the pump track and questions were raised about whether this funding would be supporting one track or two. Officers explained that the funding was intended to support one track and action would be taken to clarify that this was the case.

RESOLVED to note

- 1) the ongoing approach for the financial support and the delivery of financial support services to Rubicon by the Council;**
- 2) the investment being made in Rubicon operated facilities by the Council over the following three years as per the 2024/5 Medium Term Financial Plan; and**

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- 3) the delivery of improvements/savings facilitated by the £177k and £205k Grants from Sport England (DCMS).

17. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Shareholders Committee held on 28th November 2023 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

18. APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTORS

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that the subject of the Appointment of Directors had been added as a standing item to the agenda for meetings of the Shareholders Committee. This was because appointment of Directors was a reserved matter for the Committee to determine and, following the resignation of the Chief Executive as a Director on the Rubicon Board, changes were due to be made to the Board's membership. Officers were anticipating that a report in respect of this item would be available for Members' consideration at the following meeting of the Committee.

19. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that:

Under S100 A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following matters on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 of the said act, as amended.

Minute Item No. 20 – Arrow Valley Lake

Minute Item No. 21 – Quarter 3 Performance Monitoring Update Report 2023/24

20. ARROW VALLEY LAKE

The Committee considered a report on the subject of the Arrow Valley Lake and potential to make further use of the lake moving forward.

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In considering this matter, Members were asked to note that the Council had a contract with the sailing club for the use of the Arrow Valley Lake.

Members noted that the Sailing Club's contracted timeframes for use of the Arrow Valley Lake did not apply 24 hours a day seven days a week. There were four days in the week where there was scope for Rubicon Leisure Limited to use the lake for other purposes, including events. Members suggested that groups, such as the Sea Cadets, would also potentially be interested in making use of the lake.

Questions were raised about the quality of the water in the Arrow Valley Lake. Members suggested that water quality tests needed to be undertaken prior to any decision being made to introduce additional activities and events on the lake. Officers were therefore asked to arrange for water tests to take place accordingly.

During consideration of this item, the following suggestion was proposed by Councillor Emma Marshall.

"On days when the Arrow Valley Lake is free from the contracted exclusive use of the sailing club, Rubicon Leisure Limited should deliver activities at the lake."

Officers explained that recommending activities that Rubicon Leisure Limited could deliver at the Arrow Valley Lake was not a reserved matter for the consideration of the Committee. Therefore, this was not something that could be recommended by the Committee. However, the Managing Director of Rubicon Leisure Limited could be asked to present a report for consideration at a future meeting of the Committee on the subject of the company's potential use of the lake.

Reference was made to the pontoon in the section of the lake that was located immediately outside the Arrow Valley Countryside Centre. Members commented that the pontoon did not tend to be used and needed some investment to ensure that it was fit for purpose for use moving forward. It was noted that such investment to improve the quality of the pontoon was likely to have financial implications for the Council. Members were also asked to note that this request was being made in a context in which the Council had only just agreed the Medium Term Financial Plan 2024/25 to 2026/27. However, it was agreed that Officers should explore this matter further.

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RESOLVED that

- 1) That Rubicon Leisure approach the Sailing Club to discuss its proposals for future use of the Lake,
- 2) That Rubicon Leisure consider asking the Sailing Club to enter into a Shared Use Agreement to sit alongside the current Lease once it has finalised its proposals for future use of the Lake.

(During consideration of this item, Members discussed matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. It was therefore agreed to move to exclude the press and public prior to any debate on the grounds that information would be revealed which related to the financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)).

21. **QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE MONITORING UPDATE REPORT 2023/24**

Members considered the Quarter 3 Performance Monitoring Update Report 2023/24.

In considering the report, Members welcomed many positive developments in terms of the services that were delivered by Rubicon Leisure Limited. It was noted that the quality of services provided by the company had improved and the Managing Director was asked to report the Committee's positive impression of this work to Rubicon Leisure Limited staff.

Reference was made to the café at Pitcheroak Golf Course and Members complimented Rubicon Leisure Limited on the quality of the food that was available to customers. In particular, Members praised the quality of the food available at the Sunday carvery.

Members praised the shows and events that had been included on the programme for the Palace Theatre and compared this favourably to other theatres in the region. Members also praised Rubicon Leisure Limited for their involvement in arranging a recent boxing championship in the Borough.

The Committee noted that Birmingham City Council had recently announced various cuts to arts funding in the city and questions were raised as to whether this would create opportunities to attract more visitors to attend arts and cultural events and activities in the Borough. The Managing Director advised that venues such as the Palace Theatre already attracted visitors from across the region and

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the town benefitted from their secondary spend in local bars and restaurants.

Rubicon Leisure Limited's work with the Redditch District Collaborative was also referred to and Members praised the positive impact of this work, in terms of supporting mental health services. Questions were raised about the potential for this work to particularly focus in areas of the Borough where there were higher levels of mental health inequalities. The Committee was informed that Rubicon Leisure Limited was working closely with the Redditch District Collaborative to identify local priorities. There needed to be clarity of purpose in order to achieve the most effective results as a result of this work and this was therefore the subject of ongoing discussions between Rubicon Leisure Limited and the Redditch District Collaborative.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

(During consideration of this item, Members discussed matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. It was therefore agreed to move to exclude the press and public prior to any debate on the grounds that information would be revealed which related to the financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)).

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm
and closed at 7.25 pm