

## **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND LEISURE COMMITTEE**

#### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 18 JANUARY 2022**

**Present:** Councillors Cannon, Forecast, Harper, Hinder, Naghi, Round (Chairman), R Webb and S Webb

109. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Newton.

110. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no Substitute Members.

111. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

112. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

113. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

114. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

115. EXEMPT ITEMS

**RESOLVED:** That all items be taken in public as proposed.

116. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 DECEMBER 2021

The Head of Regeneration and Economic Development confirmed that the museum's Learning and Events Team had secured Arts Council funding for a further year.

The Committee commended the clerk on the quality of the Minutes produced.

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed.

117. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

118. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

119. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There was one question from a Member to the Chairman.

Question from Councillor Harper to the Chairman of the Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee:

*"Can the Chair please encourage all members of this committee to wear face covering when attending meetings of his committee? This is both a public health issue with Omicron, but also one of Community Leadership. As the Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee, our remit includes retail where the wearing of face covering is the law. Also all the officers of this committee are required to wear masks. As Councillors setting a standard by wearing masks in Committee Meetings shows we are doing what we can to encourage good public health."*

The Chairman responded to the question.

The full response was recorded on the webcast and made available to view on the Maidstone Borough Council website. To access the webcast recording, please use the link below:

<https://youtu.be/04AxhG9TxnA>

120. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Concern was raised at the number of items scheduled for the February meeting of the Committee, and it was felt that the Future of the Leisure Centre item should be moved to the meeting on 15 March 2022 to ensure enough time for a comprehensive discussion.

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

121. REPORTS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports of Outside Bodies.

122. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND BUDGET PROPOSALS

The Director of Finance and Business Improvement introduced the report and outlined the significant changes since the budget proposals were previously reported to the Committee. Following the announcement of the Local Government Finance Settlement 2022/23, the Council would receive £225,000 of Services Grant, £146,000 of Lower Tier Services Grant and the New Homes Bonus payments would be increased from £3.8 million in

2021/22 to £4.2 million in 2022/23. Inflation had caused additional pressure as it was significantly higher than the 2% base assumption in the budget.

Within the revenue budget, £99,000 had been allocated for a permanent Arts and Culture Officer and operational budget to continue a programme of events, and a reduced income budget for Maidstone market had been proposed as the market was not able to meet income targets. Within the capital budget, indicative figures of £30 million and £500,000 had been allocated for leisure provision and the riverside walk respectively.

In response to questions, the Director of Finance and Business Improvement confirmed that it was not possible to transfer money between capital and revenue budgets. Both the Tuesday and Saturday markets were operating, however the drop in income was largely due to the Tuesday market.

The Head of Regeneration and Economic Development explained that the Cobtree Manor Estate owned the majority of Cobtree golf course, but the portion owned by the Council provided a useful income stream. Due to the commercially sensitive nature of the contract with the golf course operator, the precise terms of arrangements with the operator could not be discussed in more detail during the meeting.

**RESOLVED:** That

1. The revenue budget proposals for services within the remit of this Committee, as set out in Appendix A, be agreed for submission to Policy and Resources Committee;
2. The capital budget proposals for services within the remit of this Committee, as set out in Appendix B, be agreed for submission to Policy and Resources Committee;
3. Officers be thanked for their work on the budget proposals; and
4. Museum Officers be thanked for their work in securing further grants from the Arts Council for the Museum's learning and events programme.

123. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30pm to 7.18pm.