

## **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **COMMUNITIES, LEISURE AND ARTS POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

#### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 9 JANUARY 2024**

##### **Attendees:**

<b>Committee Members:</b>	<b>Councillors Forecast (Chairman), Eagle, Fort, Mrs Gooch, Harper, T Wilkinson, English and Hastie</b>
<b>Cabinet Members:</b>	<b>Councillor Russell (Cabinet Member for Communities, Leisure and Arts)</b>

68. MR PAUL OLDHAM

The Committee expressed their sadness at the passing of Mr Paul Oldham, a former Mayor of Maidstone.

It was felt that a letter of condolence should be sent to the William and Edith Oldham Trust, expressing the Committee's deepest sympathy and to thank them for their support in recent years.

**RESOLVED:** That a letter of condolence be sent to the William and Edith Oldham Trust.

69. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Bryant, Hinder and Naghi.

70. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The following Substitute Members were noted:

- Councillor English for Councillor Naghi
- Councillor Hastie for Councillor Bryant

71. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

72. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

73. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

Note: Councillor Hastie joined the meeting at 6.32 p.m.

74. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

75. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

76. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 DECEMBER 2023

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed.

77. FORWARD PLAN RELATING TO THE COMMITTEE'S TERMS OF REFERENCE

**RESOLVED:** That the Forward Plan relating to the Committee's terms of reference be noted.

78. REFERENCE FROM COUNCIL - NOTICE OF MOTION - MAIDSTONE LEISURE CENTRE

The Cabinet Member for Communities, Leisure and Arts introduced the motion, referencing the previous information provided that extension to the leisure centre operator contract would run until 2031, which was the optimum to construct a new facility, and that the Committee had been kept informed of all decisions relating to the leisure centre and operator. The matter had also been included within Item 11 - Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024 to 2029 - Capital Programme. The Committee was urged to recommend that no further action be taken in light of the actions already being taken.

The proposer of the expressed that they were happy that the matter was being progressed as included within Item 11 – Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024 to 2029 – Capital Programme; given the information provided in the agenda papers, the Committee supported no further action being taken on the matter.

**RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to the CABINET MEMBER:** That no further action be taken on the motion.

79. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2024 TO 2029 - CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Cabinet Member for Communities, Leisure and Arts introduced the report and highlighted the following:

- £180,000 would be spent on the museum development plan, which included upgrading the local history gallery and accessibility;
- £2.25 million would be spent on the existing Leisure Centre Capital Improvements, with £60 million proposed to be spent over several years on the construction of a new leisure centre;
- £250,000 would be spent on the Mote Park kiosk refurbishment.

It was stated that approving the capital programme was not approval to spend.

In response to the comments made, the Cabinet Member stated that:

- The Museum team was looking into installing a memorial to Mr Paul Oldham, possibly in the local history gallery;
- The ramp to improve accessibility within the Museum was for the upstairs floor; and
- The Mote Park Kiosk project would be reviewed by the Committee before a decision was made.

The Committee expressed support for the proposals and noted that thanks should be given to The William and Edith Oldham Charitable Trust for their significant financial support to the Museum.

**RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to the CABINET: To**

1. Agree the capital programme 2024/25 onwards as set out in Appendix B to the report; and
2. Note that agreement to recommendation 1 above will be subject to the prudential borrowing limit which will be recommended to Council as part of the Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25.

80. **MAIDSTONE LEISURE CENTRE OPERATOR CONTRACT**

The Cabinet Member for Communities, Leisure and Arts introduced the report and advised that the team had worked hard to re-negotiate the extension of Serco Leisure's contract for Maidstone Leisure Centre, including Lockmeadow Health Club and the Adventure Zone at Mote Park, for five years with the option of one-year extensions if required. This mitigated the need to go out to tender or take on an in-house operation, which were not recommended options.

The committee expressed support for the proposal, referencing that it would provide a consistency of service, that the other options presented too much risk, with no guarantee that tenders would be forthcoming or provide better prices, and the building's age. The proposed new facility and the £2 million to be spent on improvements was highlighted. It was requested that a further breakdown of the in-house option costs be circulated to the Committee for information.

**RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to the CABINET: That**

1. The current proposals from Maidstone Leisure Trust and Serco Leisure for a contract extension, be noted;
2. The leisure services contract for Maidstone Leisure Centre, Mote Park Outdoor Adventure and Lockmeadow Health Club for the period August 2024 onwards be extended for a period of five years, with up to three one-year extensions thereafter;
3. Delegated authority be given to the Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for

Communities, Leisure and Arts, to finalise details of the contract extension;

4. An additional £250,000 for minor capital improvements be included in the capital programme; and £1,000,000 for bringing forward plans for a new or refurbished leisure centre be included in the capital programme, with a view to a final decision on the way forward by August 2026.

81. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 6.56 p.m.