

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 4 JUNE 2019

Present: Councillors Mrs Blackmore, Brindle, Cox, Fort, Mrs Gooch, Harper (Chairman), Hinder, Lewins and Webb

6. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Cuming.

7. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillor Brindle was present as a Substitute for Councillor Cuming.

8. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

9. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

10. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

11. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

12. TO CONSIDER WHETHER ANY ITEMS SHOULD BE TAKEN IN PRIVATE BECAUSE OF THE POSSIBLE DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION.

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

13. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 MAY 2019

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 May 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed.

14. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

15. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

16. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED: That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

17. REPORTS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports of Outside Bodies.

18. REFERENCE FROM POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The Head of Regeneration and Economic Development explained that further clarity, regarding the intended meaning of “the arts” and “rich assets”, was required. The Committee was reminded that Brunswick Street and Union Street were included in the Regeneration and Investment Plan. Furthermore, the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy recognised the benefits that parks and open spaces brought to the local economy. Finally, it was highlighted that spatial distribution issues were an important consideration, which was being taken into account through the Local Plan Review.

The Committee commented that:

- It was important that the wording of the motion did not lead to the reconsideration of decisions previously made by other service committees.
- The reference to “office space” was to be rephrased as “employment space” to ensure that the wording of the motion was not restrictive.
- Consideration was to be given to assets in urban and rural areas that could enhance the economy. This included assets that were not owned by MBC.

RESOLVED: That Members of the Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee submit comments to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee, ahead of the motion being redrafted and agreed for consideration during the review of the Economic Development Strategy.

Voting: Unanimous

19. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2018/19 - Q4 UPDATE

The Data Intelligence Officer introduced the report. It was explained that the camera used to calculate “Footfall on the High Street” had been

obscured during construction works on the High Street. This contributed to a lower performance for the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) during Quarter 4. It was stated that an automated counting system had been introduced at the Museum. Consequently, the "Footfall at the museum and Visitors Information Centre" had been calculated more accurately for Quarter 4. It was estimated that the year-end figure may have been 5000 higher had the automated system been operational for the full year. Finally, the "Number of users at the leisure centre" had increased when compared to Quarter 3. The Leisure Centre had hosted seven events during this period, which contributed to the increased number of customers.

In response to a question from the Committee, the Data Intelligence Officer replied that "Footfall on the High Street" was automatically calculated by a camera located on the HSBC building. This measured footfall on the pedestrianised area of Week Street.

RESOLVED: That the summary of performance for Quarter 4 of 2018/19 for Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) be noted.

20. FOURTH QUARTER BUDGET MONITORING 2018/19

The Director of Finance and Business Improvement outlined that there had been a small underspend against the revenue budget for 2018/19. Income from the Crematorium had also been higher than estimated. The capital budget had experienced slippage, partly due to a burst water pipe at Mote Park. This had impacted on the cost of the Mote Park Adventure Zone project. A claim had been made against Southern Water for this cost, however, the Quarter 4 figures did not account for a successful claim.

The Committee noted that the underspend would be incorporated into the Council reserves if there were no bids to spend the money. It was suggested that the underspend could be used to implement recommendations within the Cultural Strategy and Five-Year Action Plan, with the money used as match-funding when seeking contributions from the Arts Council. Alternatively, it was suggested that the underspend could fund work to define a "sense of place" for Maidstone Borough. Other Local Authorities, such as Knowsley Council, had secured substantial investment through generating a "sense of place" as this had been used to inform policy direction.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Director of Finance and Business Improvement replied that:

- Insurance claims excesses were a cumulative total for the year. These excesses were reviewed annually to ensure that they were considered appropriate.
- The income from fairs and circuses was a historical income stream. The budget could therefore be adjusted to reflect new income streams such as the Mote Park Adventure Zone.

The Committee thanked the Bereavement Service for their work during the 2018/19 year.

RESOLVED: That:

1. The Committee notes the financial performance of the services that were previously within the remit of the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee for 2018/19.
2. The Committee notes the slippage within the capital programme in 2018/19.
3. Delegated authority be granted to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee to prepare a bid to the Policy and Resources Committee, to use the underspend of the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee 2018/19.

Voting: Unanimous

21. DURATION OF MEETING

6.31 p.m. to 7.48 p.m.